

# Fostering Safe Spaces for Dialogue and Relationship-building Between Newcomers and Indigenous Peoples

Wise practices for the relationship-building process and  
recommendations for the development of an orientation toolkit



By Aliraza Alidina,  
Darrien Morton  
& Jenna Wirch

JANUARY 2020



Immigration  
Partnership  
Winnipeg

WITH SUPPORT FROM  
THE  
WINNIPEG  
FOUNDATION



## Fostering Safe Spaces for Dialogue and Relationship-building Between Newcomers and Indigenous Peoples

Wise Practices for the relationship-building process  
and recommendations for the development of an orientation toolkit

By Aliraza Alidina, Darrien Morton & Jenna Wirch  
January 2020

This report is sponsored by The Winnipeg Foundation through the Emerging Leaders Fellowship (ELF) program with the requirement to work with a local registered charitable organization – in this case, Immigration Partnership Winnipeg – to help build our community.



**Design:** Sarah Wood, *Galley Creative Co.*

**Cover and back page art:** 'Moving the Load' by Leah Dorion

**Photo Credits:** Darrien Morton, Greg Littlejohn, Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM), Immigration Partnership Winnipeg (IPW), Islamic Social Services Association (ISSA) & Jen Doerksen

This report is accessible under limited copyright protection. As long as this report is accurately and completely credited and not used for commercial motives, you may download, distribute, photocopy, cite or excerpt this document.



**Immigration Partnership Winnipeg (IPW)**  
432 Ellice Ave, Winnipeg, MB R3B 1Y4  
(204) 943-2561 – [info@lipw.ca](mailto:info@lipw.ca)  
[www.ipwinnipeg.org](http://www.ipwinnipeg.org)

The Immigration Partnership Winnipeg is located on Treaty 1 territory, the original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene Peoples, and on the homeland of the Metis Nation.



## I have had newcomers ask me: what is it that we have to do... what's our role in this dialogue?

You may not have responsibility for the past but you do have a responsibility for the future because you made a commitment to this country. And the responsibility for the future is reconciliation. So, that means that you still have to understand what this history is, you have to understand what it has done to this country, you have to understand what it is doing to this country and you have to understand what it will continue to do, unless we change it. And the leadership from those newcomer communities that are occupying more and more leadership positions in government also need to figure out where they fit into that dialogue around change for the future, because they do fit. They are going to be influential leaders of this conversation.

### *Senator Murray Sinclair*

Lighting the way forward: the calls to action in *action*<sup>1</sup> –  
Vital Conversation: Winnipeg Vital Signs – The Winnipeg Foundation – March 25, 2019

---

<sup>1</sup> Full conversation video link:  
<https://www.facebook.com/wpgfdn/videos/2313357328908155?vh=e&d=n&sfns=mo>

Excerpt on newcomer video link:  
<https://www.facebook.com/137944872886822/posts/2624384977576120?vh=e&d=n&sfns=mo>

# Acknowledgements

## Treaty

Winnipeg sits on Treaty 1 territory which is the traditional territory of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and the homeland of the Metis Nation. Treaty 1 was negotiated and entered on August 1871 at Lower Fort Garry. Just like the overwhelming majority of treaties in Canada, Treaty 1 has yet to be respected. Acknowledging the harms and mistakes of the past, we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration. This is vital to keep in mind when working towards relationship-building and dialogue between newcomers and Indigenous Peoples. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has two Calls to Action related to newcomers, which in its spirit, the incumbent research aims to address.

### Newcomers to Canada<sup>2</sup>

**93.** We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the national Aboriginal organizations, to revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools.

**94.** We call upon the Government of Canada to replace the Oath of Citizenship with the following: I swear (or affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, Her Heirs and Successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada including Treaties with Indigenous Peoples, and fulfill my duties as a Canadian citizen.

## Jenna Wirch and Darrien Morton

This research would have not reached its current shape were it not for the contributions of my research partners and co-authors Jenna Wirch and Darrien Morton. Jenna connected me to Indigenous community members, leaders and activists. She also assisted me in conducting some of the interviews. Darrien guided me through research ethics and methods all along the way. He also rigorously edited and proofread the full report. I am deeply grateful to Jenna and Darrien for being part of this research and greatly contributing to it. Sincere thanks to Aboriginal Youth Opportunities (AYO!) for facilitating this collaboration.

## The Winnipeg Foundation

The Winnipeg Foundation played an instrumental role in having this project rolling. Through the Emerging Leaders Fellowship program, this project was funded in early 2017. I am deeply thankful to The Winnipeg Foundation for supporting this project and providing flexibility in getting this project completed. Special thanks to Brigitte DePape for always being of great help and assistance.

<sup>2</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: calls to action*. Winnipeg, Manitoba. Retrieved from [http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)



## Immigration Partnership Winnipeg

This research project was undertaken under the auspice of Immigration Partnership Winnipeg (IPW). Hosted by the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg (SPCW), IPW provides a collaborative framework to facilitate the development and implementation of sustainable local solutions for the successful integration of newcomers to Winnipeg. Reconciliation and relationship-building between newcomers and Indigenous Peoples is a key priority for IPW. This is manifested in its organizational and governance structure through the Indigenous Consultation Circle and the Indigenous and Newcomer Engagement Sector Table.

I am grateful to the entire IPW and SPCW team for their efforts and dedication in facilitating this research to be conducted. A special thanks to Director of IPW, Abdikheir Ahmed and Community Engagement Coordinator Hani Ataan Al-ubeady for their patience, mentorship and support throughout the course of this project. I would also like to thank Noëlle DePape (formerly with IPW) and Jessica Praznik for their help and support.

## Masters in Development Practice (MDP): Indigenous Development, University of Winnipeg

This project started as a three-months field placement (during the summer of 2016) as required by the MDP program at the University of Winnipeg. The objective of the field placement was to supplement a research conducted by IPW to create intercultural understanding between newcomers and Indigenous communities in Winnipeg's inner city. The outcome of this practicum was a research framework which was the foundation of the incumbent project.

I would like to recognize the efforts and support of the MDP program team, namely Claire Reid (former Director), Tamara Dionne Stout, and Jennifer Ledoux. I am also grateful to my then academic advisor, Eliakim Sibanda for connecting me to Abdikheir Ahmed, which is how everything started.

## Other Contributors:

I would like to acknowledge many others who have contributed to this project:

- Treaty Commissioner Loretta Ross for writing the forward to this report.
- Sarah Wood<sup>3</sup> for diligently and beautifully designing this report.
- Leah Dorion<sup>4</sup> for providing the 'Moving the Load' art piece displayed on the cover page. This piece is based on the traditional work in Metis communities to unload the boats as a community.
- Jackie Hogue and Niigaanwewidam Sinclair for reviewing the final draft of this report.

---

<sup>3</sup> Sarah is owner of Galley Creative Co. For more information, please contact her at [sarah@galleycreativeco.com](mailto:sarah@galleycreativeco.com) or visit: <https://www.galleycreativeco.com/>

<sup>4</sup> Leah Dorion is a Metis artist and educator from Saskatchewan. For more information on her works, please visit: <https://leahdorion.ca/>

- Clayton Sandy for sharing his thoughts on building a stronger relationship.
- Parenty Reitmeier<sup>5</sup> for translating this report to French. The translation involved a chain of hard-working individuals including the following: project coordinator, translator, proofreader, desktop publisher and quality check team.
- The wonderful photographers who shared pictures included in this report.
- Family, friends and colleagues for support beyond words.

## Research participants

Last and most importantly, I would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank research participants – who are elders, community workers, educators, leaders, and activists – for selflessly sharing their time, knowledge and experiences. This report attempted to muster the knowledge and insights of the following participants and the organizations they may have represented in some cases:

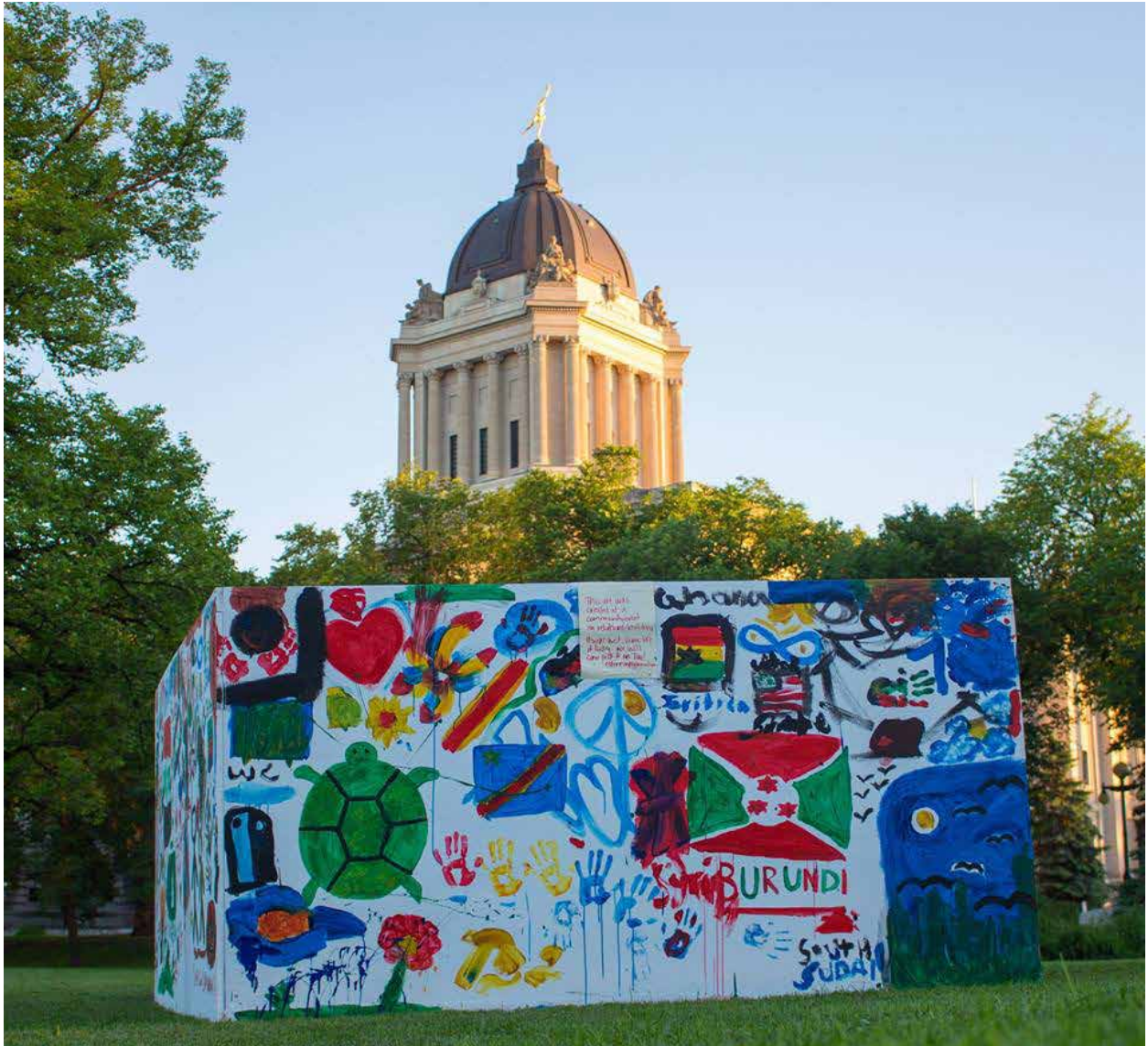
- |                             |                         |                     |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| • Adrienne Carriere         | • Deirdre Nelson        | • Maria Morrison    |
| • Albert McLeod (Elder)     | • Grace Eidse           | • Marina Grinko     |
| • Alfredo Barahona          | • Helen Robinson-Settee | • Michael Champagne |
| • Anny Chen                 | • Idris Elbakri         | • Michele Visser    |
| • Arisnel Mesidor           | • James Christie        | • Monika Feist      |
| • Ben Starkey               | • Jenna Wirch           | • Noëlle DePape     |
| • Bequie Lake               | • Jobb Arnold           | • Salwa Meddri      |
| • Bintou Sacko              | • Kerry Saner-Harvey    | • Shahina Siddiqui  |
| • Caroline (Naomi) Gichungu | • Kevin Settee          | • Shereen Denetto   |
| • Celia Enns                | • Leslie Spillet        | • Steve Henrichs    |
| • Dan Thomas (Elder)        | • Lubna Usmani          | • Tasha Spillet     |
| • Dana Connolly             | • Mandela Kuet          | • Wab Kinew         |
| • Dean Peachey              | • Marc Kuly             |                     |

It is hoped that this work will meaningfully contribute to reconciliation led efforts in the wider community.

Aliraza Alidina

---

<sup>5</sup> Based in Winnipeg, Parenty Reitmeier provides expert translation and localization services in more than 100 languages, including Indigenous languages. For more information, please visit: [www.parentyreitmeier.com/](http://www.parentyreitmeier.com/)



Indigenous Newcomer Relations event by 13 Fires, 2016 (Photo credit: Jen Doerksen)

# CONTENTS

10	.....	Foreword
12	.....	Executive Summary
16	.....	Introduction
18	.....	Where we currently stand
19	.....	Initiatives that have taken place
20	.....	Path forward: wise practices for relationship-building
20	.....	1. The relationship nucleus
		A. History: setting the frame right
		B. Culture: a strength based approach
21	.....	2. The need for safe spaces
22	.....	3. The modus operandi
		A. 'Territorientation': welcoming newcomers
		B. Land-based learning
		C. Storytelling
		D. Organic relationship-building
		E. Activism and allyship
		F. Meeting role models
		G. Institutionalizing relationship-building
		H. Sport
		I. Life skills
		J. Faith and spirituality
27	.....	4. Other considerations



30 ..... **Orientation toolkit recommendations**

30 ..... **1. What the toolkit should cover**

- History
- Treaties
- Stereotypes
- Positive stories
- List of resources

33 ..... **2. The method of delivery**

- Anti-oppression approach
- History and contemporary issues linkages
- Interactive and experiential
- Language and presentation

35 ..... **3. 'Living document'**

36 ..... **Conclusion**

38 ..... **APPENDIX**

- Methods
- Inventory Of Initiatives with Components that Have Fostered Relationship-building

## Foreword

The Treaties are the foundation of Canada and the guiding principles for relations between First Nation people and non-First Nation people. They are solemn agreements that were entered between the First Nations and the Crown and the Creator and bind us to a process of sharing the land for the mutual benefit of all. The Treaties contain the principles on which the relationship is based, including non-interference and mutual respect for each other's way of life and being. However, In the years following the Treaties, First Nations people were not treated in a manner reflective of an equal partnership and were subjected to policies and laws without their consent. Despite the sacred promises made in the Treaties, later actions of government and churches had devastating impacts on First Nations way of life.

Since the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission were released in 2015, many Manitobans have taken steps towards reconciliation in order to repair the relationship between First Nations and Canada. Many individuals and organizations have reached out to us at the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba (TRCM), and we are encouraged by these efforts. When the TRCM was approached by Immigration Partnership Winnipeg to partner with them in creating an Indigenous Orientation Toolkit, I was both excited and humbled by the prospect of being involved with the implementation of such an important project.

This report provides information on the effectiveness of the initiatives, programs, and projects that have taken place, as well as ones being planned for the future. The goal is to foster dialogue between the Indigenous and Newcomer sectors in Winnipeg. It is encouraging to see the initiatives outlined in this report is that Newcomer service organizations, such as Immigration Partnership Winnipeg, have recognized the need to ensure that Newcomers are provided with accurate information regarding the history of First Nations peoples and the importance of Treaties and the Treaty Relationship. It is vital that Newcomers be introduced to the historical relationship between First Nations and the Crown. It is not only important because we are all sharing this land together, but also because Newcomers now form part of the Treaty Relationship.

Newcomers should be introduced to the history of First Nations peoples in a way that includes the perspectives of First Nations peoples themselves. For too long in Canada, the historical perspective taught in our schools relied exclusively on the documentary record and the views of Canadian institutions. Learning the First Nations historical perspective and understanding of the Treaties is a critical component in countering any potential misconceptions or stereotypes.

First Nations and Newcomers stand to learn a great deal from each other and initiatives such as the Indigenous Orientation Toolkit will be effective in encouraging the exchange of stories and histories between the communities. This initiative represents an important step in this process, and it is my hope that First Nations and Newcomers can begin to develop a relationship that is based on shared understandings and respect for our respective cultures, values, and way of life.

*Migwech,*

Loretta Ross, Treaty Commissioner  
Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba



Ethno-cultural communities visit to Brokenhead Reserve, 2018  
(Photo credit: IPW)

# Executive Summary

Winnipeg, Manitoba has one of the largest proportions of urban-dwelling Indigenous Peoples in Canada and a rapidly emerging newcomer population. Both broad communities share much in common including histories of colonization; shared cultural, traditional, and communal values; and experiences of racism and socioeconomic challenges. This makes Winnipeg an important case study on relationship-building processes between the two communities.

In partnership with The Immigration Partnership Winnipeg and The Winnipeg Foundation, this study endeavored to gather diverse voices, perspectives and experiences to understand the importance of relationship-building between newcomer and Indigenous communities. Stories were collected through semi-structured interviews, and various community leaders, knowledge keepers, elders, academics, support workers, and activists with links to newcomer and Indigenous communities were interviewed.

The report focuses on the dynamic relations between the two communities in the present context of Winnipeg. Following insights and stories gathered, we suggest several wise practices for the relationship-building process as recommended by participants. In so doing, the report seeks to inform a framework related to the development of an orientation toolkit for newcomers.

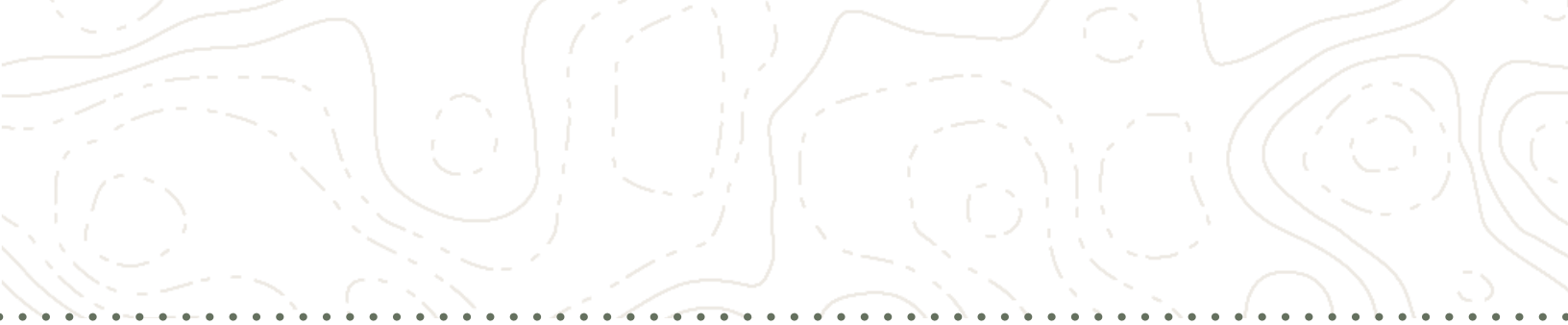
## 1. Where we currently stand

Relationships between newcomers and Indigenous Peoples are dynamic and ever-changing. There is momentum to bridge relations between the two broad communities in Winnipeg. Important conversations around reconciliation and decolonization have begun to occur, which have increased the level of awareness about Indigenous struggles, rights, and traditions. A core group of community advocates and activists are championing these efforts. In spite of the positive trend toward cross-cultural collaboration at an institutional level, the state of affairs on the ground remains tense and complex. These tensions are expressed in the form of xenophobia and racism, negative perceptions, and misinformation between individuals and segments of the two communities.

## 2. Path forward: wise practices for relationship-building

A path forward may necessitate that newcomers and Indigenous communities come together and lean on one another based on the historical and cultural dimensions of each community, forming in its essence the relationship nucleus. In terms of **history**, newcomers have to understand what has happened to Indigenous Peoples in ways they are able to perceive linkages to the present realities of Indigenous communities. In relation to **culture**, its sharing can be a foundational place to allow newcomers to understand the experiences of Indigenous Peoples considering the fact that both communities highly respect storytelling, ceremonies, and traditions.

In this context, the need for **safe spaces** where authentic experiences can form is of prime importance. Members of newcomer and Indigenous communities can come together in such spaces to learn about each other. At the present time, spaces supporting cross-cultural dialogue and interaction are for the most part generated by organizations. Even though these are valuable in their own right, these spaces created through programming offer a “controlled



experience” rather than an “authentic experience”. Few spaces are organically established at a grassroots level to nurture authentic interactions.

Moreover, based on this report, a range of methods and actions to facilitate processes of relationship-building are suggested through which engagement and interaction between newcomer and Indigenous communities can be initiated and strengthened. They include the following methods and actions:

- **‘Territorientation’:** There is interest from Indigenous community leaders and activists to be part of the welcoming process of their “newly arrived relatives”. This will require increased leadership from the Indigenous community.
- **Land-based learning:** Land-based learning requires newcomers to see and understand where and how Indigenous Peoples occupy ancestral homelands and territories both presently and traditionally. It implies leaving urban spaces and visiting places out on the land in natural environments.
- **Storytelling:** Storytelling is a powerful method to communicate complex experiences and values across cultural groups. Considering that newcomers and Indigenous communities both have a rich oral history tradition through which values and culture are transmitted, opportunities exist to make connections.
- **Organic relationship-building:** Building authentic relationships implies that the principles of trust, respect, and reciprocity should guide cross-cultural connections. Orientations and educational initiatives for newcomers should aim to build long-term and sustainable relationships with Indigenous communities.
- **Activism and allyship:** Building relationships through allyship to support each community’s causes as a way to bring newcomer and Indigenous communities together is essential. They allow communities to develop an understanding of each other and enact reciprocity and collective action.
- **Meeting role models:** Relationship building by having newcomers meet Indigenous role models is impactful. Intergenerational representation when meeting role models should be considered.
- **Institutionalizing relationship-building:** In the settlement sector, building the capacity of organizational leadership and staff is essential. Capacity building may be achieved through training, and ensuring culturally safe policies and practices are in place to support such efforts. Moreover, newcomer-serving agencies should hire Indigenous staff and Indigenous serving agencies should hire newcomer staff to support the institutionalization of relationship-building.
- **Sport:** Recreational activities that are easily accessible and not difficult to commit to can be attractive to build relationships between newcomer and Indigenous communities.
- **Life skills:** There is a need for cultural exchanges to have a greater purpose beyond understanding difference. Indigenous Peoples may have life skills that newcomers might find valuable and vice-versa. Creating safe spaces and mechanisms to ensure exchanges of life skills is necessary.
- **Faith and spirituality:** The sharing of spirituality and spiritual teachings that communities hold is important. These practices can help in healing from historical trauma and spiritual oppression that move beyond physical or material aspects.



### 3. Orientation toolkit recommendations

An orientation toolkit was recognized as an indispensable resource to support agencies serving newcomers. The development of a toolkit has been championed by community and organizational leadership involved throughout this study and previous discussions. Recommendations were gathered with the aspiration to develop a framework which can inform orientations upon arrival in Canada. Findings suggest that the development of a toolkit should involve the following components: 1) relevant information related to Indigenous history and culture; 2) treaty-related information; 3) discussions on stereotypes; 4) positive stories; and 5) a list of relevant resources.

In addition, Indigenous elders, knowledge keepers, leaders, and activists should lead the delivery of orientations, wherever possible, with the support of representatives from the newcomer community. Furthermore, gendered and intergenerational representation should characterize the delivery of orientations, and settler testimony on the harms of colonization and land dispossession, and strategies on how to repair them should be considered throughout this process. When delivering the orientation toolkit, it is suggested the following aspects should be emphasized, including: employing an anti-oppression approach; explaining the linkages between historical and contemporary issues; centring interactive and experiential methodologies; and ensuring the presentation and language of delivery is accessible and appropriate.

Through these considerations, a platform for the preservation of these tools should be developed to exist in the form of a ‘living document’. Its ownership should be vested with the community at large, and a centralized resource platform must be continuously updated to respond to current topics and trends.

In light of these insights and experiences, this report seeks to enhance our understanding of methods and processes through which relationship-building can be established between newcomers and Indigenous Peoples. Consequently, we hope it will equip newcomers to play an important role in shaping and contributing to the future of Canada; a future that embodies social and environmental justice, healing, and reconciliation.





Meet Me @ Bell Tower welcoming newcomer and Muslim communities, 2016 (Photo credit: Greg Littlejohn)

## Introduction

In June 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada<sup>6</sup> (TRC) released a historical and transformative document detailing the fraught relationship between Canada and Indigenous Peoples<sup>7</sup>. In addition to the report, 94 calls to action were outlined to redress the legacies of Indian Residential Schools and facilitate a process of reconciliation. It marked a new chapter in the history of Canada. Among the many action items outlined through the calls to action, they included a section on newcomers<sup>8</sup> arriving in Canada. In particular, calls to action 93 and 94 touch upon the need for newcomers to be familiar with the history of Canada as it pertains to Indigenous Peoples and the subsequent duties through faithfully observing the Treaties. As Canada welcomes newcomers on a consistent basis through its various immigration streams, calls to action 93 and 94 necessitate extra diligence.

Enjoying the largest Indigenous population<sup>9</sup>, and a rapidly growing newcomer population, Winnipeg represents an important case study on relationship-building processes between newcomer and Indigenous communities. The two communities share many commonalities including histories of colonization; shared cultural, traditional and communal values; and racism and socioeconomic challenges (e.g. housing, education, health-care, employment, etc.). In spite of these common grounds, knowledge about the interactions between the two diverse communities is minimal<sup>10</sup>. However, there exists many barriers and misconceptions between newcomer and Indigenous

6 This Commission was established in June 2008 with a mandate to document the history and lasting impacts of the Canadian Indian Residential School system on Indigenous Peoples.

7 Refers to the original inhabitants of the land now known as Canada. They comprise of status and non-status First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples.

8 Generally refers to newly arrived immigrant or refugee. This term is much contested as practically all Canadians aside from Indigenous peoples are/were newcomers to Canada. During the course of this project, some participants from the Indigenous community were more comfortable to use the terms 'newly arrived relatives'. For the purpose of this study, 'newcomers' refers to immigrants, refugees, and other temporary residents of all backgrounds. Further, this term does not exclude naturalized citizens.

9 See City of Winnipeg Indigenous Peoples Highlights based on 2016 Canadian Census: <https://winnipeg.ca/cao/pdfs/IndigenousPeople-WinnipegStatistics.pdf>

10 Gyepi-Garbrah, John, Ryan Walker, and Joseph Garcea. "Indigeneity, Immigrant Newcomers and Interculturalism in Winnipeg, Canada." *Urban Studies*, 1795-1811, 51, no. 9 (July 2014).



communities that are exacerbated by social distance. Newcomers are quickly learning harmful stereotypes about Indigenous communities and xenophobic tendencies exist among Indigenous communities towards newcomers. The lack of meaningful dialogue and interaction may only seek to reproduce stereotypes and racism.

The incumbent research aims to supplement a previous study conducted by Immigration Partnership Winnipeg in 2014 based on focus group conversations with youth, parents and community leaders from newcomer and Indigenous backgrounds. Many of the recommendations based on this study, which are reflected in the 2015<sup>11</sup> report, include the following themes:

- the recognition from both communities on the need for enhanced knowledge sharing and cultural exchange;
- the creation of programs that advance awareness on cultures from the two broad communities;
- the need for increased partnership between organizations representing both communities.

During the course of this present study, influential community leaders, knowledge keepers, elders, support workers and activists associated with newcomer and Indigenous communities were interviewed (see Appendix for more information on research methods). The present study examines the challenges and opportunities associated with building relationships between newcomer and Indigenous communities in Winnipeg. It outlines wise practices for the relationship-building process as recommended by participants. These wise practices are divided into four categories:

1. *the relationship nucleus* or the foundation for establishing relationships;
2. *the need for safe spaces* where meaningful cross-cultural exchanges can occur;

---

11 Adam, Muuxi and Jackie Hogue. *Creating Inter-cultural Understanding: Relationship between Urban Indigenous Communities and Immigrant and Refugee Newcomers in Winnipeg's Inner-city*. Report. April 2015.

3. *the modus operandi* or mechanisms supporting relationship-building processes;
4. *other considerations* to ensure relationship building that are beyond the scope of this study.

Moreover, this study presents findings to inform a framework related to the development of an orientation toolkit<sup>12</sup> for newcomers. An interest in the development of an orientation toolkit has been demonstrated by organizations serving newcomers. The toolkit serves as an actionable item derived from the findings of this study. Recommendations are organized in three areas:

- 1) what the toolkit should cover;
- 2) how the toolkit should be delivered;
- 3) the necessity for having a *'living document'* accessible to all community members, especially community workers.



Ethno-cultural communities visit to Brokenhead Reserve, 2018  
(Photo credit: IPW)

---

12 An orientation toolkit is a resource that can be utilized by newcomer serving agencies and other relevant actors to educate newcomers on Indigenous Peoples.

## Where We Currently Stand

Upon examining the current state of affairs in regards to newcomer and Indigenous relations in Canada, relationships appear to be dynamic and non-static. However, we cannot forgo the role Canadian governments and institutions play in governing and shaping these relationships. Canada is currently undergoing a historical shift as it seeks to redress the fraught relationship between the Canadian state and Indigenous Peoples. Recently, the grassroots movement Idle No More<sup>13</sup> (2012) and the national inquiry titled Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada (2015) have been instrumental in igniting conversations in respect to decolonization, and enhancing meaningful and respectful relationships built on trust across governments, policy sectors, organizations, grassroots collectives and residents. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples<sup>14</sup> (UNDRIP) and the calls for its implementation at different levels – federal, provincial and municipal – are playing an important role in bringing about this societal shift.

Similarly, there is momentum in regards to relationship-building between newcomers and Indigenous communities in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Behind this momentum is a strong network of groups that have prioritized work in this field. Critical conversations around reconciliation and

decolonization<sup>15</sup> have started to happen at different levels, and as a result, awareness about Indigenous rights has increased significantly when compared to efforts in the near past. This process has been facilitated by a core group of community activists championing efforts of relationship-building between the two broad communities. Strong role models within their respective communities, considerable energy, and a desire for increased interactions and collaboration are slowly changing how people are learning to live with one another. This group is composed of individuals from newcomer, Indigenous and mainstream Canadian backgrounds. The synergy between these groups has resulted in the creation of many programs, advocacy initiatives, and organizational policies.

The trend is changing but only because there are individuals and groups that are pushing organizations and systems to change. There are helpers and revolutionaries sprinkled all over the settlement sector that are trying really hard to bridge the divide between Indigenous and newcomer groups.

*Michael Champagne*

Despite the positive trend toward cross-cultural collaboration at an institutional level, the reality on the ground is tense and complex. These tensions are experienced in the form of xenophobia and racism, negative perceptions, and misinformation between individuals and segments of the two broad communities. The presence of racist attitudes and apathy on both sides are due

to a lack of knowledge and understanding about each other. Newcomers are quickly absorbing stereotypes and adopting dominant mainstream attitudes towards Indigenous communities. They learn stereotypes from relatives, other newcomers, and the mainstream population. In certain instances, this happens prior to arriving to Canada. Similarly, there are xenophobic tendencies in the Indigenous community towards newcomers. The *scarcity* mentality<sup>16</sup> in the Indigenous community has increased due to the perceived inflow

13 Idle No More is a social movement with roots in the Indigenous community which advocates for the protection of the environment (land and water) and Indigenous rights. Across Canada, this movement has received support.

14 International instrument adopted by the United Nations on September 2007 enshrining collective and individual rights of Indigenous Peoples globally. Free, Prior and Informed Consent and self-determination are covered as well.

15 As defined by Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, decolonization is the revitalization of Indigenous cultural lifeways, and repatriation of land: Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1).

16 The perception that more and more of the limited resources are being allocated to newcomers at the expense of resources allocated to Indigenous peoples

of refugees. However, scarcity related concerns from the Indigenous community are valid due to actual disparities in terms of resources allocated to both communities<sup>17</sup>. Resource scarcity and its resulting perceptions and institutional practices create a sense of competition, which has in turn stimulated social distance between the two communities.

## Initiatives that have taken place

To demonstrate the evolving relationship between newcomer and Indigenous communities, we attempted to catalogue a number of initiatives that have taken place and/or are still taking place in the community at various levels across settlement agencies, faith-based institutions, universities and colleges, organizations, grassroots collectives and advocacy groups. The inventory of initiatives is neither exhaustive nor is it strictly confined to newcomer and Indigenous relations. Rather, initiatives that have a component of newcomer and Indigenous relations – directly or indirectly – are considered. Most of these initiatives are delivered through organizations. However, it must be emphasized that there are many undocumented initiatives occurring at a grassroots level, which have not been captured.



See inventory of initiatives in Appendix.

Newcomers received many of these initiatives positively, for which a considerable amount of interest has been generated. Initiatives that had orientation and informational content were successful. Participants were truly touched on an emotional and spiritual level, and this allowed them to show greater empathy. Certain segments of the newcomer community were able to relate and connect to Indigenous communities due to shared experiences and circumstances. Many participants wished they had learned this information at a much earlier stage. They were astonished on how historical injustices continue to happen in Canada.

<sup>17</sup> Carter, Tom. "The Challenges of Increasing Diversity in Areas of Urban Decline: A Winnipeg Case Study." *Canadian Issues*, Fall 2010: 96-99.



Indigenous Newcomer Relations event by 13 Fires, 2016  
(Photo credit: Jen Doerksen)



100 Basketballs campaign, 2018  
(Photo credit: Darrien Morton)

# Path Forward: Wise Practices for Relationship-building

This section covers emerging wise practices for relationship-building between newcomer and Indigenous communities as recommended by participants of this project. Wise practices are organized into four main categories: 1- relationship nucleus, 2- the need for safe spaces, 3- the modus operandi, and 4- other considerations that are beyond the scope of this project. These wise practices have been generated with an underlying understanding that newcomer and Indigenous communities share many things in common, specifically in three main spheres:

- History (colonial encounter or experience with the Canadian state);
- Cultural, communal, and traditional values;
- Socio-economic challenges such as housing, employment, education, health care, etc.

## 1. The relationship nucleus

Two leading viewpoints emerged on how to approach the relationship-building process during the settlement stage for newcomers. The first opinion views newcomers as developing an understanding about the history of Canada and institutional violence against Indigenous communities. The second opinion is based on a strength-based approach by focusing on culture, positive representations, and community assets and strengths. Once relationships are strengthened through engagement in cultural activities, it is suggested that an understanding of history will follow. The two perspectives are not mutually exclusive, and perhaps there is a way to amalgamate them. Multiple sources of knowledge may be required for different groups of people.

## A. History: Setting the frame right

The first viewpoint considers that newcomers need to understand what has happened historically to Indigenous Peoples in a way they are able to make linkages to the present realities of Indigenous communities. Understanding how the colonial project has become part of the Canadian state structure is essential. Framing the contemporary realities of Indigenous Peoples in this manner refrains from reducing social problems as a symptom of personal moral failure. The objective should aim to understand the intergenerational effects of colonization and land dispossession, and how multigenerational efforts are required to enable healing and social change.

Participants suggested that newcomers should be educated about Indigenous Peoples and the history of Canada at an early stage of their arrival, if not prior to their landing. Although it is fair to introduce them to these ideas at the outset, it may be difficult to expect them to take collective action in their communities right away. The settlement and integration process of newcomers is a long process that has multiple challenges that are both contingent on and disparate from Canada's relationship with Indigenous Peoples. Nonetheless, prioritizing an understanding about history during the settlement orientation may serve as an important preventative measure to mitigate oppressive beliefs newcomers may develop about Indigenous Peoples.

The process to educate newcomers about Indigenous Peoples and fostering safe spaces for dialogue was considered by participants as a continuous and consistent process. It should start from day one of their arrival, and gradually build-up. Newcomers should be given time to interpret and reflect on this information, and how it relates to their roles and responsibilities in Canada.

## B. Culture: A strength based approach

The second viewpoint proposes the sharing of culture as a foundational place to allow newcomers to understand the experiences of Indigenous Peoples. This culture-based approach draws from sources of strength rather than weaknesses to promote understanding. From this perspective, introducing newcomers to a history of

There is a very superficial understanding of our culture, that its drums or beads. It's not that at all. It's a complete system, a complete body of knowledge. Drums are elements of that.

*Leslie Spillet*

colonization at the outset is considered a deficit-based approach. The two broad communities highly respect culture, ceremonies, and traditions. Sharing cultural practices does not require words, translators or even facilitators, which can transcend language barriers and expose cross-cultural similarities. Participants mentioned that cultural exchanges support the transmission of cultural knowledge that serves to enable cultural pride and facilitates relationship-building cross-culturally. Examples include eating and preparing food, crafts, beading, drawing, sewing, shared hobbies, shared sports, etc. Furthermore, cultural exchanges that involve activities can ensure inclusivity for people who have special needs, different learning styles, lower literacy levels, and language barriers.

## 2. The need for safe spaces

Safe spaces where people from newcomer and Indigenous communities can come together and learn about each other are essential. A safe space refers to a place where people feel respected, valued, and are able to express differences without interference or interruption. Based on an environmental scan of different spaces available to foster cross-cultural connections, they are largely lacking. Currently, spaces supporting cross-cultural dialogue and interaction are primarily generated by organizations. Many of these spaces are tied to organizational mandates and top-down driven approaches. Although valuable in some cases, these spaces created through programming offer a “*controlled experience*” rather than an “*authentic experience*”. Few available spaces are organically formed at a grassroots level to promote authentic interactions.

However, opportunities exist for the creation of safe spaces among newcomer and Indigenous communities that would like to organize community engagement activities. Community and organizational leaders may need to actively ensure that safe spaces for cross-cultural dialogue and interaction are equally independent of organizational mandates and guidelines in order to gradually stimulate spaces for diverse people to have authentic experiences. Moreover, participants suggested that in order for safe spaces to emerge organically, a high level of trust between the different communities must inform their creation.

You create this space, and people will come. People feel comfortable where there are open-doors.

*Mandela Kuet*



Ethno-cultural communities visit to Brokenhead Reserve, 2018  
(Photo credit: IPW)

### 3. The modus operandi

The modus operandi includes different elements that can facilitate the relationship-building process between newcomer and Indigenous communities. These elements include methods and actions through which engagement between the two communities can be initiated and strengthened.

#### A. 'Territorientation': welcoming newcomers

There is interest from Indigenous community leaders and activists to be part of the welcoming process of their “newly arrived relatives”. For instance, welcoming newcomers at the airport has previously occurred in a few cases. However, it may require increased leadership from the Indigenous community. This welcoming process followed by an orientation to the territory was coined by participants as “*territory-orientation*” or “*territorientation*”. These acts of welcoming may be the first step to ensure relationship-building and shared learning.

#### B. Land-based learning

Land-based learning requires newcomers to see and understand where and how Indigenous Peoples occupy land both presently and traditionally. It implies leaving urban spaces and visiting traditional territories out on the land in natural environments. These include reserves, petroforms, waterways, and sacred places. Land-based learning about teachings and ceremonies can happen through activities such as hunting, fishing, medicine picking, and canoeing to name a few. These activities can likewise happen through learning about different seasons and their relation with the land and the roles of communities.

Get them out of the city.

*Kevin Settee*

Furthermore, certain segments of newcomers who come from rural agrarian areas may appreciate land-based activities as cities may become alienating. Outdoor



IRCOM trip to a Petroform, 2019 (Photo credit: IRCOM)

excursions on the land may serve to stimulate lived experiences through land-based ways of knowing and commonalities with a collective way of life. When appropriately carried out with the necessary knowledge and teachings, excursions may produce enhanced cross-cultural experiences for both newcomers and Indigenous communities.

For newcomers visiting reserves or rural areas, and witnessing the challenges Indigenous communities face, they may be pivotal in exposing shared experiences of challenges newcomers face in their home countries. Through these land-based learning activities, an understanding of Indigenous Peoples' history may emerge. However, these activities must be treated with caution and sensitivity so as not to reduce the learning experience to a shallow spectacle.

Learning about the land that they are in is very important. Minnesota has 10,000 lakes. Manitoba has 100,000 lakes. We have the cleanest water in the world. This is your future, your children's water. It's your water, your grand-children's water, you have to be invested in protecting it. So that's why land-based learning is important.

*Elder Albert McLeod*

## C. Storytelling

Storytelling is a powerful method to communicate complex experiences and values across cultural groups. Considering that newcomers and Indigenous communities both have a rich oral history tradition through which values and culture are transmitted, there is a great opportunity to make connections. Stories create profound curiosity, understanding and the emergence of acceptance

When students connect on the level of sharing stories of culture and stories of personal experience, they recognize commonality. In order for that to happen, you have to have spaces where it can happen.

*Marc Kuly*

through diversity and similarity. Stories on themes that are accessible and relatable for people of different backgrounds – such as commonalities of life, families, childhood, play, and cultural stories – can create emotional and cognitive connections. In everyday life, such profound familial, cultural and historical connections aren't honored. While many participants considered that practices of storytelling can be achieved through community organizations, they must move beyond organizations. For example, relationship-building can draw from the strengths of community people to become facilitators within their families and communities using sharing circles and other storytelling approaches. As powerful as stories are to propagate negative stereotypes, they are just as powerful to change mindsets, understandings and behaviors.

## D. Organic relationship-building

Many participants stated that building authentic relationships implies that the principles of trust, respect and reciprocity should guide cross-cultural connections.

The process of relationship-building must evolve at a slow pace with incremental steps taken. These perspectives suggested that orientations and educational initiatives for newcomers should aim to build long-term and sustainable relationships with Indigenous communities. Although organic relationship-building primarily relies on cross-cultural interactions between individuals and groups, organizations can play a significant role in facilitating these processes. Oftentimes organizational and community leadership can support efforts to build trust and safe spaces to facilitate interactions.

Eating samosas, bannock together is not enough ... The challenge we have is how to build long lasting knowledge-based relationships, not superficial relationships.

*Shahina Siddiqui*

One approach proposed to ensure meaningful processes of relationship-building was mentorship. Mentorship enables people to work with and get to know each other. Wherever possible, mentorship should be delivered through land-based and experiential activities. The active involvement of mentors of Indigenous ancestry was considered necessary in organizations serving newcomers. Furthermore, participants also prioritized alternative opportunities for cross-cultural relationship-building based on gender, age, religion and place of residence.



'Sister to Sister' bringing together Indigenous and Muslim women, 2015  
(Photo credit: ISSA)

## E. Activism and allyship

There are various forums where newcomer and Indigenous communities are gathering and rallying together to support one another. These one-time or ongoing activities exemplify how activism and other forms of allyship encourage relationship-building. For instance, the make-up of people attending Meet Me at the Bell Tower, a weekly anti-violence and community-building initiative, demonstrates how spaces are beginning to bridge gaps for cross-cultural dialogue and interaction. Other examples include rallies and walks; anti-racism events and campaigns; and solidarity building engagements through community gatherings and mainstream media.

Indigenous Peoples and newcomers particularly those who have been displaced from different parts of the world, are disproportionately impacted by global capitalism, extractive industries that go along with resource capitalism... For me, one way to connect, one way that I see a way forward, this is in everybody's best interest if we find ways to transition from a carbon based economy to a renewable economy. That involves changing economic relations, power relations in general. The best way of doing that is to learn from Indigenous Peoples.

*Jobb Arnold*

Participants prioritized building relationships through allyship to support each community's causes as a way to bring newcomer and Indigenous communities together. They allow communities to develop an understanding of each other and enact reciprocity. Three main struggles where newcomers can show greater support are the anti-pipeline movement; the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls movement; and the over-apprehension of children

within the child welfare system. A number of other causes that move beyond differences toward shared struggles and goals include environment degradation, climate change and food security.



Moose Hide Campaign Breaking of the Fast at the Mosque, 2018  
(Photo credit: ISSA)

In addition, participants emphasized the roles youth can play in fostering cross-cultural collaboration through activism, social justice work and allyship. As young Indigenous Peoples are increasingly assuming leadership roles through established activist networks, newcomer young people may find value in seeking out these connections. It was stated that many newcomer youths do not have the necessary platforms to begin engaging in community organizing and activism. Thus, there are significant opportunities for newcomer youth to learn, partner and draw from the experiences of young Indigenous leaders.

## F. Meeting role models

Many participants explored the relationship-building through the practice of having newcomers meet Indigenous role models. It was suggested that hearing positive stories among Indigenous individuals and communities can foster a space to meet role-models, perhaps through orientation sessions. However, intergenerational representation when meeting role models was also prioritized. Given the high proportion of Indigenous young people, their inclusion was considered important. Inclusion may be in the form of speaking, standing beside knowledge keepers, or translating information to ensure it is accessible for younger audiences.





Bear Clan Award at ISSA fundraising dinner, 2017  
(Photo credit: ISSA)

Having the presence of community leaders who are Indigenous in newcomer circles shifts things really significantly.

*Noëlle DePape*

Participants also offered several examples on how newcomer communities can meet Indigenous role models. On the one hand, newcomers can visit grassroots organizations or collectives such as Aboriginal Youth Opportunities (AYO!), Red Rising Magazine, and Bear Clan Patrol. On the other hand, they can meet professionals such as physicians, lawyers, athletes, business people, academics, and other professionals.

### **G. Institutionalizing relationship-building**

In the settlement sector, building the capacity of organizational leadership and staff is essential. Many staff working in the settlement sector did not grow up in Canada or may not have had the opportunity to learn about Indigenous Peoples in school. Participants suggested that capacity building may be achieved through training on Indigenous related topics, and ensuring policies and practices are in place to support such efforts. They may also require organizational partnerships and trust building at a senior management level. Furthermore, participants advised that newcomer serving agencies should hire Indigenous staff and Indigenous serving agencies should hire newcomer staff to support the institutionalization of relationship-building. In addition to training, ensuring experiential opportunities such as volunteering among organizational leadership and staff is essential.

### **H. Sport**

Recreational activities that are easily accessible and not difficult to commit to can be attractive to build relationships between newcomer and Indigenous communities. Participants identified sport as one activity that can fulfill these needs. The younger generation also gets a chance to interact with other youth through



Public Square Series – An evening with the Indigenous community, 2013  
(Photo credit: ISSA)

sports, which can support opportunities for cross-cultural exchange. However, engagement in sport requires more sports programs, facilities and affordable equipment to engage different segments from both communities.



100 Soccer Balls campaign, 2018  
(Photo credit: Darrien Morton)

## I. Life skills

While many cultural and recreational activities may play an important role, there is a need for cultural exchanges to have a greater purpose beyond understanding difference. Indigenous Peoples may have life skills that newcomers might find valuable and vice-versa. Creating safe spaces and mechanisms to ensure exchanges of life skills is necessary. Thus, it is important to have both communities engage in practical projects with specific outcome goals in areas related to business, community development, poverty alleviation, food security, taking care of the land, parenting, and so forth.

## J. Faith and spirituality

The sharing of spirituality and spiritual teachings that communities hold is important. These practices can help in healing from historical trauma and spiritual oppression that move beyond physical or material aspects. For instance, a few participants explained how prayers work in different communities and how they nourish the heart, or emotional responses, from spiritual perspectives. More importantly, conversations that focus on core values (e.g. truth, respect, and love) allows diverse individuals and groups to connect with each other through a shared notion of humanity.

I think sharing of mutual stories, including the deep hopes and deep spirituality that respective communities hold, is an incredible gift when all are treated with reverence and love. Though some might not be prepared to enter into such, I think creating invitational opportunities for different communities to share and experience spiritual practices is important and healing.

*Steve Henrichs*



Meet the Neighbour BBQ at IRCOM, 2017  
(Photo credit: Darrien Morton)

## 4. Other considerations

The following list consists of important recommendations that are relevant to the broader topic of fostering safe spaces for dialogue and interaction, but are beyond the scope of this study.

## **Mainstream Canadians**

Mainstream Canadians can play a significant role in supporting processes to bridge gaps between newcomer and Indigenous communities.

## **Governments**

While non-profit organizations play an important role to bridge gaps between newcomer and Indigenous communities, all three levels of government (i.e. municipal, provincial, federal) play an equally important role. At a federal level, the oath of citizenship and citizenship guide should be more inclusive of Indigenous Peoples. At a provincial and municipal level, it is essential to allocate more resources to support initiatives and projects that aim to foster relationships.

## **Newcomer Serving Agencies**

It is essential for newcomer serving agencies to recognize Indigenous communities and ensure they are part of and consulted during the integration process for newcomers. There should be special agreements signed acknowledging the responsibility of agencies to inform newcomers about Indigenous Peoples, and to build relations as part of their integration. Agencies should not limit themselves to providing information on health, transportation and laws.

## **Centralized Orientation Sessions**

The centralization of orientation sessions within Indigenous spaces should be prioritized. These sessions should be consistent and compulsory for newcomers, but open to the public as well. They can provide a clear mechanism for newcomer serving organizations to direct individuals.

## **Openness in Provision of Services**

The perceived and actual disparities in the government allocation of funding and other resources among newcomer and Indigenous serving organizations has caused conflict and competition between the two communities at an institutional level. However, these disparities in funding are often artificial and depend on government priorities; usage of resources by organizations; and target population mandates that may appear welcoming to other communities. Although difficulties are encountered to open up services to different communities based on funder and organizational mandates, a degree of openness may be achieved through organizational partnerships and collaborations.

## **International Students**

International students primarily do not go through any orientations from agencies. They become permanent residents and citizens without having a meaningful understanding on Indigenous Peoples and their history.

## **The Media**

The media play an important role in shaping the representations and narratives of newcomer and Indigenous communities. Media coverage often reinforces stereotypes and negative perceptions about newcomer and Indigenous communities.

## **Sustainability**

Orientation programs should be developed with the intention that they can be sustained independently of organizations. In other words, programs should empower and equip participants to transmit knowledge and practices within their own families and communities, and provide equipment and tools to engage different segments from both communities. The younger generation also gets a chance to interact with other youth through sports, which can support opportunities for cross-cultural exchange.



Meet Me @ Bell Tower welcoming newcomer and Muslim communities, 2016.  
(Photo credit: Greg Littlejohn)

## Orientation Toolkit Recommendations

An orientation toolkit was identified as an essential resource to support agencies serving newcomers. The toolkit can be used to educate newcomers on Indigenous Peoples and build a positive relationship with Indigenous communities. Recommendations were specifically taken from participants of this study with the objective to develop a framework which can inform orientation related work in the settlement sector. This is an important area of focus for Immigration Partnership Winnipeg.

### 1. What the toolkit should cover

#### History

Specific themes related to Indigenous and settler history should be considered in the development of a toolkit. The following points are a list of themes recommended by interviewees:

## 1. Definitions

- Terminology about Indigenous Peoples and cultures

## 2. Pre-colonial context

- Life prior to contact: how communities and Nations organized themselves
- Value and belief systems organizing society
- Different Nations and their unique ways of living: cultures, languages, traditions and governance systems
- Indigenous food sovereignty (before industrialization and the reserve system)
- Health and healing practices
- Clothing

## 3. Colonization

- Impact of colonization on the human and natural world
- Violence of the process and methodical strategy that benefited a group of people
- Key tools used to systematically remove Indigenous Peoples: starvation, diseases, etc.
- Treaties and conditions around treaty making
- The Indian Act
- Indian Residential Schools
- Sixties Scoop

## 4. Legacies and resurgence<sup>18</sup>

- Displacement of people today: first to reserves, now through flooding
- Child welfare systems (e.g. Child and Family Services)
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
- Resource extraction and its impacts on Indigenous Peoples
- Disparity in resource access
- Challenges faced by Indigenous communities living on reserves

---

<sup>18</sup> It is essential to incorporate in this section how Indigenous communities are responding to the listed legacies of the colonial project. Resurgence and resistance should be at the center of the discussion

## Treaties

Treaties and their intent are an essential component to explore when welcoming newcomers. Education about treaties and treaty rights should be a critical piece to any engagement with newcomers. Furthermore, it is also vital to make distinctions on what it means to be a settler and newcomer, and the implications of identifying as such in terms of responsibilities. Such an approach may provide the opportunity for newcomers to understand themselves as part of the process of respecting treaty agreements and establishing positive relations with Indigenous Peoples.

As new Canadians you are all  
Treaty people. As you are here, you  
are the other signer of this Treaty.  
We are all Treaty people.

*Maria Morisson*

## Stereotypes

The toolkit should consider common stereotypes about both newcomer and Indigenous communities. Many community leaders have asked for the creation of tools that can address common stereotypical perceptions. This resource will require the documentation of harmful stereotypes and positive representations that complement them. Orientations should offer a safe space, including facilitation, to allow newcomers to discuss stereotypes openly without censorship that prevents genuine dialogue. An approach suggested by participants to address stereotypes is through storytelling from a personal or biographical perspective. This approach aims to humanize conversations that otherwise would be construed as labeling communities. For example, if the question is about alcoholism, the facilitator should engage in a discussion about the health, social and historical causes and effects of people dealing with alcoholism.

## Positive stories

Following the theme of stereotypes, the toolkit should prioritize and highlight positive stories related to Indigenous communities, and ways newcomer and Indigenous communities have worked together. It should incorporate the successes and achievements of individuals and communities followed by discussion questions that aim to deconstruct harmful stereotypes. As part of the delivery of the toolkit orientation itself, it is extremely important to involve Indigenous-led programs and initiatives. This method of delivery will encourage cross-cultural person-to-person interactions as well as experiential opportunities to witness positive stories in action.

Expose them to positive stories,  
peoples, and role models: like  
Michael Redhead Champagne and  
Althea Guiboche (Bannock Lady)  
... The two of them have so much to  
teach, just by who they are, and they  
are so welcoming to newcomers  
and everyone.

*Adrienne Carriere*



Discussion about refugees at a Meet Me @ Bell Tower event, 2016  
(Photo credit: Greg Littlejohn)



## List of resources

The orientation toolkit should have a list of resources that the community can reference. These may include lists related to:

- Key individuals that are influential and can mobilize their respective communities (i.e. newcomer and Indigenous) to address immediate needs (e.g. elders, knowledge keepers, community organizers, activists, etc.)
- Institutions, organizations, or community groups that provide spaces where individuals can engage and learn more about each other (e.g. agencies, community centres, universities, events and gatherings, etc.)
- Educational or informational resources that newcomers can refer to for more information on different topics (e.g. articles, books, websites, videos, etc.)

## 2. The method of delivery

Indigenous elders, knowledge keepers, leaders and activists should lead the delivery of orientations, wherever possible, with the support of representatives from the newcomer community. Moreover, gendered and intergenerational representation should characterize the delivery of this orientation. While including newcomer and Indigenous representation is essential, orientations should also allow for settler testimony on the harms of colonization and land dispossession, and strategies on how to repair them. As a goal of delivering the orientations, they should ultimately equip and empower participants to transmit this knowledge within their own informal networks.

### Anti-oppression approach

An anti-oppression framework is a tool to explain how individuals or groups are oppressed in society based on race, class, gender, religion, geographic residence, ability, and so forth. It moves beyond identifying how

I think it is critical to have at least one settler testimony, naming that the fundamental issue that needs repair is the theft of land (Indigenous people having jurisdiction only over 0.2 of Canada). Newcomers need to hear settler peoples name this, and to hear how we are working to address this present injustice.

*Steve Henrichs*

privilege and penalty are reproduced, and encourages the development of meaningful strategies to mitigate further subjugation and promote equity. In this manner, orientations should seek to identify how state sponsored practices and legislation has historically affected Indigenous Peoples, and how Indigenous Peoples are marginalized and engage in resistance on their own land. Such an approach would further seek to understand how newcomer populations are implicated in these processes while simultaneously experiencing advantage and disadvantage. When conducted in a safe space, these conversations should be critical, respectful and courageous in order to incorporate genuine dialogue about white supremacy, capitalism, Eurocentrism, and so on.

### History and contemporary issues linkages

The orientation toolkit should link historical processes of privilege and penalty to contemporary realities so that newcomers understand that Indigenous Peoples have made active choices to create a good life despite cultural and economic interference and domination. Furthermore, these linkages should show how newcomer experiences are implicated in these processes as discussed previously. However, there should be sensitivity and caution paid to two problematic tendencies:

#### Pan-Indigenization:

linkages should refrain from erasing the diversity of Indigenous communities and representing them as homogenous.

### Equating cross-cultural differences:

linkages should refrain from representing newcomer and Indigenous communities as the same, as manifestations of colonization and resistance are distinct and situated.

- Watching and discussing videos on creation stories and various Indigenous traditions in relation to newcomer traditions

## Interactive and experiential

The orientation sessions should be interactive and experiential. They should be led by Indigenous Peoples to incorporate land-based learning and storytelling methods as discussed in the previous section. Orientation programs should include activities that generate ongoing engagement and reflection, wherever possible. These can be impactful especially among young people. Young people should be given the chance to build an emotionally intelligent knowledge base by showing them various scenarios and experiences about their feelings. Below is a list of examples suggested of appropriate initiatives:

- The Blanket Exercise<sup>19</sup> (EAL version) adapted by Canadian Root Exchange Students
- Interactive games (e.g. Star Power<sup>®20</sup>)
- Teaching circles with Elders and knowledge keepers
- Media analyses to interpret and discuss relevant news articles
- Land-based learning
- Visiting residential schools and meeting survivors or their families
- Visiting Indigenous-led community organizations or cultural places

19 The Blanket Exercise was developed by KAIROS and is based on a participatory popular education methodology. This exercise walks participants through different phases of the history of Canada and allows them to engage on an emotional and intellectual level. For more information, see: <https://www.kairosCanada.org/what-we-do/indigenous-rights/blanket-exercise>

20 Star Power<sup>®</sup> is a popular simulation game for students from 8<sup>th</sup> grade and older, which provokes participants to rethink their assumptions about the use and abuse of power. For more information please see: <https://www.simulationtrainingsystems.com/schools-and-charities/products/starpower/> and <http://www.whatsrace.org/pages/starpower.htm>



Bell Me @ the Bell Tower welcoming IRCOM, 2017  
(Photo credit: Greg Littlejohn)

Although young people may be more receptive to interactive and experiential approaches, adult learners may require further engagement to show them the importance of such approaches. Moreover, activities should encourage young and adult learners to lead similar sessions within their own families and communities. Keeping in mind that settlement orientation typically happens in informal settings, a significant step is to involve learners wherever possible in the planning process with an overarching goal to equip and empower them with tools.

## Language and presentation

The language used to deliver orientations should be accessible and avoid complex jargon. It is important to ensure that words used to communicate are relevant for people. In addition, the toolkit should be visually appealing and may contain pictures, comics, caricatures and colorful representations. For each topic there should be guided readings followed by discussion questions. Whenever possible, it would be wise to draw from topics or examples that are inclusive of both newcomer and Indigenous communities. For example, the term ‘internally displaced’ can be connected to the experiences of both communities. Easy to access resources such as pamphlets or fact sheets can be developed on a variety of topics such as reconciliation, treaties and the history of colonization.

### 3. 'Living document'

A critical recommendation is to develop tools that can remain present in the lives of people, rather than “*sitting on shelves*”. A ‘living document’ should be current and continuously updated. Its ownership should be vested with the community at large. In other words, a living document should be available to the public to utilize as a reference for ongoing learning. Perhaps this living document can exist as a centralized resource. It can be represented in the form of an online forum or website supported by social media tools such as podcasts, audio-visual multimedia, blogs, and a digital library composed of articles and informational resources. The purpose of such a platform is multi-dimensional:



Ultimately, there is a great opportunity for Winnipeg to take a lead in the development and maintenance of a ‘centralized living document’. An endeavor of this scope can promote nationwide relationship-building between not only newcomers and Indigenous communities, but also the mainstream population. A centralized resource toolkit platform may offer shared benefits to diverse groups including settlement workers, school teachers, community activists, and others willing to learn.

## Conclusion

This study attempted to bring together a collection of voices and perspectives to understand the importance of relationship-building between newcomer and Indigenous communities. Winnipeg is an important case study on relationship-building between the two communities where critical conversations around decolonization and reconciliation are occurring. We hope the findings and recommendations outlined in this report can be of relevance to other cities that are embarking on the same path.

Although considerations to institute relationship-building between newcomer and Indigenous communities are increasingly taking place at an organizational level, the realities on the ground are still tense based on a visible distance that cannot be ignored. The path forward may require the relationships between the two communities to gravitate in a balanced way that is underpinned by an understanding of history and culture. Hence, the need for safe spaces where authentic experiences can happen is of paramount significance. Based on this study, a variety of methods to facilitate these processes of relationship-building were proposed through the development of orientations for newcomers, including *territorientation*, land-based learning, storytelling, organic relationship-building, meeting role-models, institutionalizing relationship-building, sports, life skills, and spirituality. However, caution must be taken to ensure other aspects of relationship-building are addressed to close any gaps. Namely, the role mainstream settler communities and various levels of government can play.

The development of an orientation toolkit has been championed by community and organizational leadership involved in this study. Findings suggest that the development of a toolkit should involve relevant information related to 1) Indigenous history and culture, 2) treaty related information, 3) discussions on stereotypes, 4) positive stories, and 5) a list of relevant resources. The method of delivery should emphasize anti-oppression approaches, linkages between historical and contemporary

issues, interactive and experiential learning styles, and easily accessible and relevant information. Through these considerations, it would be vital to provide a platform for these tools to exist in the form of a *'living document'*. This centralized resource platform would be continuously updated to respond to current topics and trends.

In the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions calls to action 93 and 94, newcomers have an important role to play in molding and contributing to the future of Canada. A shared commitment mobilized among newcomer and Indigenous communities is for newcomers to understand how their identity in Canada is inseparable from Indigenous struggles toward justice, healing and processes of reconciliation. Consequently, relationship-building between the two communities becomes indispensable.



Meet Me @ Bell Tower welcoming newcomer and Muslim communities, 2016 (Photo credit: Greg Littlejohn)



Ethno-cultural communities visit to Brokenhead Reserve, 2018 (Photo credit: IPW)

# APPENDIX

## Methods

This study employed a qualitative research design. It emerged from the completion of a literature review on the subject matter, followed by gathering of existing organizational documents and past observations. These allowed for a framework to be developed for the incumbent research. Data was collected primarily through semi-structured interviews that respected diverse cultural research protocols.

A total of 38 participants were interviewed. Initially, participants were purposefully selected by Immigration Partnership Winnipeg (IPW) through invitation via its community-based network. Snowball sampling was subsequently used to identify participants beyond this network. A balance was ensured in terms of the number of participants from members of newcomer and Indigenous communities. Members from faith based institutions and educational institutions were also invited to participate in the research. Out of the 38 participants, 13 are associated to Indigenous communities, 13 to newcomer communities, 8 to faith-based institutes and 4 without explicit ties to either community (academics and/or general activists). Participants shared their knowledge in a personal capacity or by representing their respective organizations. The following organizations/institutions were represented in this research, albeit all views presented by participants did not necessarily represent the organization/institute:

- Aboriginal Youth Opportunities (AYO!)
- Access and Aboriginal Focus Programs – University of Manitoba
- Accueil francophone du Manitoba
- English Language Institute – Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology (MITT)
- Entry Program – Altered Minds Inc.
- Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba Inc. (IRCOM)
- Indigenous Family Centre
- Indigenous Inclusion Directorate – Manitoba Education
- Islamic Social Services Association (ISSA)
- Ka Ni Kanichihk
- KAIROS
- Language Training Centre – Red River College
- Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO)
- Manitoba Islamic Association (MIA)
- Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)
- Mennonite Church Canada
- Success Skills Centre

Interviews were designed to last between 30 min to 1 hour. Most interviews were conducted face-to-face except for a few which were done over the phone and via correspondence due to limitations of distance and scheduling conflicts. Most face-to-face interviews took place at a location chosen by participants or in some cases at mutually agreed upon locations.

For interviews with members of the Indigenous community, interviews were conducted in a way that respected community culture and values. Jenna Wirch, who is a member of Aboriginal Youth Opportunities, accompanied the principal researcher during interviews. When appropriate tobacco was offered to participants in exchange for sharing their stories, and ongoing consent-seeking was prioritized during the interpretation and publication of information.

In terms of the guiding interview questions, various combinations of the questions below were asked to participants depending on their organizational affiliation and/or their roles in the community. Furthermore, participants had an opportunity to direct the discussions through the knowledge and stories that were shared.

1. Can you talk a bit about yourself, your role in the community/organization, and different initiatives you are/have been part of?
2. How do you view the current state of affairs on Indigenous newcomer relations? How can relationships be bridged?
3. Is your organization involved in any work on Indigenous/newcomer relations? What are some of those initiatives? What do these initiatives involve?
4. Can you talk about some of the initiatives you have been part of that foster understanding, dialogue and relationship-building between the two communities?
5. Why was such an initiative deemed necessary?
6. If your organization is not involved in any such initiatives, what could have been the reason? Would your organization consider working on such initiatives? What would you want newcomers get out of such an initiative?
7. How was the initiative designed? What are the elements incorporated in this initiative, and what are the expected goals?
8. Have you consulted (or planning to) Indigenous stakeholders in regards to the initiative? Can you talk about partnership prospects in this arena?
9. How has the response been to the initiative? Do you expect more of such initiatives? What are the next steps?
10. Did you face any challenges? Can you talk about it?
11. Any recommendations on creating an orientation tool for newcomers on Indigenous topics?
12. Anything else that you would like to share?

Interviews took place between September, 2016 and December, 2017, with the bulk of interviews between October and December, 2017. Over 24 hours of data were collected through interviews. Most interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed. During the interviews, notes were extensively taken. This included information shared as well as observations.

Raw data in the shape of notes and transcripts were organized and prepared for analysis by manually coding and categorizing information. Subsequently, themes were developed and interrelated, followed by interpretation and writing. After finalizing the findings and undertaking analysis, these were shared through multiple oral presentations to selective groups such as the IPW Indigenous Consultation Circle and the Indigenous Newcomer Sector Table. Feedback was provided and taken into consideration.

The selected quotes in this report were shared with the respective participants for approval. The final draft of the report was shared with two distinctive experts in the field to ensure the report had appropriate language and representations. The findings are expected to be shared through a public launch of the report where participants as well as the wider community will be invited. The launch is expected to happen on January 15, 2020 from 10 am to 12 pm at Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre. Copies of the report will be available in English and French in paper and digital formats.

# APPENDIX

## Inventory Of Initiatives with Components that Have Fostered Relationship-building

Initiatives / projects	Organizations / Institutions	Details
100 Campaigns: 100 Soccer Balls campaign, 100 Basketballs campaign	AYO, Basketball Manitoba, Manitoba Soccer Association, Immigration Partnership Winnipeg, Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM)	The initiative aims to host sports equipment drives, relationship-building through sport for newcomer and Indigenous groups.
Workshops for staff	Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM)	IRCOM has internally developed workshops for staff training on key themes regarding Indigenous Peoples (e.g. reconciliation, history). They share this training with partner organizations.
Building Bridges Between Canada's Indigenous and Newcomer Groups [2017]	Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM), University of Manitoba, The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation	A two-day conference with the objective to strengthen relationships between Indigenous and newcomer communities at the Circle of Life Thunderbird House.
First Nations History Simulation for Newcomers	Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM)	Naomi Gichungu, Dana Connolly, and elder Gladys Marinko developed the simulation. The simulation provides participants an understanding about residential schools, reserves and colonial legacies that have affected Indigenous Peoples. The project was piloted at IRCOM.
Live from 95 [2009]	Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM)	After-school program for youth. Wab Kinew gave a training program on media awareness for newcomers.



Racialized and Indigenous Students' Experience (RISE) [2016-present]	Canadian Federation of Students (Manitoba chapter)	The gathering brings together Indigenous students and students of color to learn about and share experiences of racism and colonialism within post-secondary institutions and communities.
Indigenous course requirement [2016-present]	University of Winnipeg	The university has made it mandatory for first year students to take a course that will fulfill the university's Indigenous course requirement.
Orientation for newcomers	Success Skills Centre	With the goal to prepare newcomers for the workforce in Canada, sessions are dedicated to Indigenous Peoples and lead by an Elder.
Indigenous and Newcomers Engagement Sector Table	Immigration Partnership Winnipeg (IPW)	The sector table at IPW attempts to create and maintain bridges between Indigenous and newcomer communities by creating opportunities for learning, understanding and support.
Indigenous Consultation Circle	Immigration Partnership Winnipeg (IPW)	The consultation circle consists of members who represent various facets of the Indigenous community in Winnipeg. They have expertise on partnership building with a focus on newcomer communities.
Career that Fight Climate Change Network (CFCCN) [2017-2018]	University of Manitoba, Menno Simons College, Winnipeg School Division, and Immigration Partnership Winnipeg	CFCCN connects university students, Indigenous & newcomer youth, and community leaders around climate change resiliency. Students help facilitate a mentorship program in two schools with objectives to introduce youth on careers that fight climate change, and improving relationships between newcomers and Indigenous Peoples.
13 Fires Winnipeg [2015-2016]	AYO, Manitoba Moon Voices Inc. , Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives MB, Food Not Bombs, Spence Neighbourhood Association, etc	Conversation series addressing racism in the city. 13 racism-focused topics were covered in total with objective of having more racially-inclusive city.
Indigenous education, Indigenous heritage fair [2017-present]	Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology (MITT)	Course given to international students with Indigenous content. Themes covered include residential schools, treaties, Indian Act, health and healing practices etc. At the end students work on a project which they present at the Indigenous heritage fair. Course led by Deirdre Nelson.

<p>Youth Peacebuilding Project (YPP) [2010-2015]</p>	<p>Canadian Mennonite University</p>	<p>YPP modeled out of SEEDS of Peace project and consisted of a five days' camp outside the city, involving white Canadians, newcomers and Indigenous Peoples. The project had a three level process: trust-building, countering stereotypes, and action (i.e. how to take what was learned back to community and challenge racism). The project was highly successful.</p>
<p>Reconciliation workshops</p>	<p>Returning to Spirit (RTS)</p>	<p>RTS designs and delivers workshops with the objective to reconcile one's spirit with the perceived "other".</p>
<p>Meet Me at the Bell Tower (MM@BT) [2011-present]</p>	<p>Aboriginal Youth Opportunities, Bell Tower Family</p>	<p>Gathering on every Friday at 6 pm next to the Bell Tower on Selkirk and Powers in the North End. Each week the gathering takes a different focus with the aim to bring hope to the community, especially to young people. A wide range of issues such as reconciliation, violence and racism are touched upon. Often times an outside group is also invited to come and share. MM@BT has been welcoming to the newcomer community.</p>
<p>United Against Racism (UAR)</p>	<p>Ka Ni Kanichihk</p>	<p>This initiative worked for the purpose of eliminating racism and discrimination in the society. Indigenous youth played a central role in community-led program, through the development of anti-racism tools and resources. The program was extended to newcomers through partnership with newcomer serving agencies and community organizations. UAR published a booklet titled 'The Aboriginal Peoples of Manitoba - Welcome Newcomers to Our Homeland!' as a way to introduce newcomers to Indigenous Peoples.</p>
<p>Indigenous Insights</p>	<p>The University of Winnipeg, Department of Indigenous Affairs</p>	<p>Indigenous Insights is a package product which consists of videos and a facilitation guide covering themes that will help understand the truth for Indigenous Peoples in contemporary Canada. The writer and executive producer is Wab Kinew, and the facilitation guide authors are Kevin Lamoureux and Steve Greyeyes. The product is more apt for staff training with a quite educated audience.</p>

Circles for Reconciliation - Reconciliation in Manitoba [2016-present]	Circles for Reconciliation	With the objective of establishing trusting and meaningful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples as recommended in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to action, participants meet as a group - for ten gatherings in total - on a weekly or biweekly basis.
'Indigenous Peoples of Manitoba - A guide for newcomers' [2017]	Mennonite Central Committee	This is a good resource for newcomers on Indigenous Peoples of Manitoba. It includes and introduction to their histories and cultures. The resource is available online free of charge (PDF format).
Fundraising dinner - Honoring Indigenous Community Service [2017]	Islamic Social Services Association (ISSA)	ISSA organized a fundraising dinner where they honored The Bear Clan for their community service.
Fundraiser for the Coalition for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women [2016]	Manitoba Islamic Association	A special fundraiser and Ramadan celebration (breaking of the fast) was organized bringing the Muslim community and Indigenous community together.
Building Bridges, Creating Ties: Getting together as One Voice [2018]	KAIROS, Immigration Partnership Winnipeg (IPW)	Part of a series of reconciliation events, an event took place in Winnipeg on March 1 with the objective to build and strengthen relationships of respect and solidarity between newcomers and Indigenous Peoples.
Contextual Theologies: Christianity-Indigenous Encounter [2016-2017]	United Centre for Theological Studies (University of Winnipeg)	This course was developed and taught by Rev. Dr. James Christie. It addressed critical events and outcomes of the Christian Indigenous encounter over generations, and examined reconciliation and relationship as emerging in the 21st century.
Real Talk Winnipeg	N/A	Started in September 2019, Real Talk Winnipeg is a podcast focused on current events and community action. The show is hosted by Mandela Kuet and Michael Champagne. Episode 1 (Intro) was released on November 8.
Celebrating Reconciliation - Building Bridges, Creating Ties, Reconciliation Together [2019]	Immigration Partnership Winnipeg, Circles for Reconciliation	In celebration of the National Indigenous Peoples' Day, this event brought together community members to take part in various activities.



Meet the Neighbour BBQ at IRCOM, 2017  
(Photo credit: Darrien Morton)



IRCOM trip to a Petroform, 2019  
(Photo credit: IRCOM)



Meet the Neighbour BBQ at IRCOM, 2017  
(Photo credit: Darrien Morton)



SPACES  
decolonization  
CILIATION  
TOOLKIT  
ONSHIP-  
NG COLONIZATION  
collaboration action  
land-based language  
ion SPACES  
OUS experiential  
orientation  
WCOMERS  
rituality  
ng  
knowledge resource organic initiative  
leaders peoples allyship initia resurg  
TR  
action  
communities  
authentic  
DIALOGUE  
CONCILIATION

“Reconciliation means something different to everyone. I have witnessed in my life’s journey that when Indigenous Peoples and newcomers come together, we too, get treated different sometimes from the settlers in this country. We need to reach out to each other and embrace our differences and celebrate our similarities.

Wopida Tanka (Thank you in Dakota)”

Clayton Sandy

Indigenous Ambassador, *Circles for Reconciliation*



© Immigration Partnership Winnipeg

