

JUST SIX
QUESTIONS

RESEARCH
SUMMARY



A Roadmap to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #66

Key Details

KEY WORDS

Indigenous Youth; Youth Voice;
Truth and Reconciliation;
TRC Calls to Action;
TRC Call to Action 66

POPULATION GROUP

Aboriginal Youth

STEPPING UP THEMES

Health & Wellness
Civic Engagement & Youth Leadership
Diversity, Social Inclusion & Safety

RESEARCH ORIGIN

Canada

SOURCE

Community-Based

“It is my hope that TRC #66 is implemented so communities can support Indigenous youth in achieving their desired levels of self-determination rooted in the types of programs they desire, whether it is language training, a safe place to hang out, cultural knowledge hubs or community gatherings. I wish for these programs to be sustainable and long-lasting in a legacy way for people at the community level” (p. 34).

1. What is the research about?

The aim of this research was to collect insights from Indigenous youth across Canada about how to move forward with the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Call to Action #66. In 2015, the TRC released [94 Calls to Action](#) – practical directions for how the Canadian government can work towards addressing the lasting intergenerational trauma of Residential Schools that Indigenous people across Canada continue to experience. Call to Action #66 specifically refers to Indigenous youth programming and the establishment of a national youth network:

We call upon the federal government to establish multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation and establish a national network to share information and best practices.

The Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs appointed three Indigenous youth advisors – André Bear, Gabrielle Fayant, and Maatalii Okalik – to develop a roadmap for Indigenous youth themselves to implement Call to Action #66.

The main research question was: “How can we advance TRC Call to Action #66 in establishing multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver reconciliation programs and establishing a national network to share information and best practices?” (p. 22).

2. Where did the research take place?

This research took place in Canada. In order to be as inclusive and wide-reaching as possible, an online survey was made available to youth across the country, and a National Gathering of Indigenous youth leaders was convened in Ottawa in December 2017.

3. Who is this research about?

This research is about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit youth across Canada. There are considerable differences in the histories, customs, and traditions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people. The final document outlines these differences in more detail, and uses the term *Indigenous youth* as a broad categorization, while acknowledging the unique realities of each group.

4. How was the research done?

Data was collected in four ways:

a) Community dialogue with Indigenous organizations and leaders.

Indigenous Youth Voices met with a number of individuals and organizations working tirelessly towards improving the wellbeing of Indigenous youth in order to learn from their experience.

b) Online survey of Indigenous youth.

The Indigenous Youth Voices Survey was launched online in order to reach a wider range of youth across Canada. Over 500 youth responded. In order to make the survey more accessible, a toll-free telephone line was set up for youth to call and have their answers recorded, paper copies and iPads were sent to some schools, and translation services were provided for Inuit youth.

c) National Gathering of Indigenous youth leaders.

A National Gathering of Indigenous youth leaders was held in Ottawa in December 2017. The Gathering included 20 attendees, who were asked to discuss the best way to move forward with the implementation of Call to Action #66.

d) Review and summary of relevant past work and research.

Literature produced between 1763 and 2017, and authored by government, Indigenous advocates, and grassroots organizations, was reviewed.

5. What are the key findings?

Drawing from the opinions and responses of youth who attended the National Gathering and those who responded to the online survey, **five key themes of reconciliation** were identified:

Acknowledging the Past

For most youth, reconciliation is very complex, but must begin with the government, settlers, and non-Indigenous people acknowledging Canada's colonial history with Indigenous people, and the extremely damaging effects it has had. *All* Canadians should be educated on the uncensored history of Indigenous people.

Healing

Healing was a theme brought up by almost all survey respondents, who recognize that the violent treatment of Indigenous people by the Canadian government has resulted in deep trauma that has had devastating effects on their communities. In order for Indigenous communities to heal and grow, the oppression that they continue to face must be recognized and addressed.

Improving Relations

Indigenous youth expressed that improved relations between Indigenous people and government, settlers, and non-Indigenous people is imperative for reconciliation. They are aware that the government and non-Indigenous people must be a part of the process of reconciliation and that they can play a part in improving the wellbeing of Indigenous youth. Despite youth understanding that the government has an

important role to play, they are justifiably distrustful of the government, which has consistently failed to deliver on their promises towards Indigenous communities.

Treaty and Land Rights

The government must respect treaties, land rights, and the autonomy of Indigenous people. True reconciliation cannot be advanced if the government continues to disregard treaties, as they have done so often. The many Indigenous traditions that are rooted in land make treaties a particularly important aspect of reconciliation.

Equity

Equity is an essential part of reconciliation. Indigenous youth pointed out that racism towards Indigenous people creates a barrier to reconciliation, and it needs to be addressed before even beginning to think of working towards reconciliation.

In order to move forward with the implementation of Call to Action #66 (with youth at the heart of this process), the Government of Canada must be fully committed to supporting the work of the Indigenous Youth Voices Network. Given the countless times that the government has failed to deliver on their promises to Indigenous communities, many youth remain skeptical of the government. Despite this skepticism, youth pointed out that any meaningful change will have to involve the government working with Indigenous communities. The roadmap outlines a number of immediate and ongoing requirements of the government.

6. Why does it matter for youth work?

This research highlights the need for **programming that is specifically designed for Indigenous youth**. Indigenous youth programs must take a distinctions-based approach that addresses the unique realities and needs of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit youth.

Youth workers should take into consideration the areas of focus recommended in this roadmap, as these come directly from Indigenous youth, who are experts on their own lives.



Indigenous Youth Voices. (2018). *A Roadmap to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #66*. Ottawa, ON: Author.

FIND IT ONLINE

<https://exchange.youthrex.com/report/roadmap-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-call-action-66>