

Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls in Ontario:

A Submission to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women by the Indigenous Caucus of the Executive Committee on Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women

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INTRODUCTION

For decades, Indigenous organizations, communities and women have been advocating for the international, federal, provincial and territorial governments to acknowledge and address the atrocities being perpetrated against Indigenous women and girls in Canada. Amnesty International has recognized that violence being committed against Indigenous women and girls in Canada is a 'national human rights crisis'.¹ Statistics related to the rates of violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls across Canada consistently illustrate the need for a comprehensive national inquiry into this systemic, racialized, and gender-based issue that has been impacting Indigenous women and communities since contact.²

The most recent information found by Statistics Canada demonstrates that between 2006 and 2016 the Indigenous population has grown by 42.5%.³ This is four times greater than the non-Indigenous population.⁴ In Ontario, the Métis population grew 64.3% to 120,585 between 2006 and 2016.⁵ Canada and Ontario have also seen an increase in the urbanization of Indigenous peoples by 59.7% since 2006, with over half of the Indigenous population in Canada living in urban centres.⁶ Increased numbers of Indigenous women and girls results in more risks for them to experience violence. It is crucial for governments to take concrete steps and enact meaningful, strategic action to combat these increased risks.

In September 2014, the federal government made a \$200 million commitment under the Action Plan to Address Family Violence and Violent Crimes Against Aboriginal Women and Girls.⁷ Pillars under the plan propose to prevent violence, support victims and protect Indigenous women and girls.⁸ Led by the Status of Women Canada⁹, the Action Plan expands across four other federal departments/agencies including: Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Department of Justice Canada and Public Safety Canada.¹⁰ The Action Plan has largely faced criticism from both Indigenous organizations and international reviewers. Amnesty International stated the Action Plan is simply a piecemeal effort on behalf of Canada and a continuation of "inadequately supported programs and approaches".¹¹ Gaps in the Action Plan highlighted by critics include: zero measures to address the economic gaps experienced by Indigenous Women, zero discussions on heightened police training to address the violent crimes perpetrated against Indigenous women, and no commitment to additional funding for shelters on reserve.¹² Canada must do better if it wants to truly align with the Truth and Reconciliation's Calls to Action.¹³

On December 8th, 2015, the independent National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was announced. With this announcement, Indigenous families, communities and organizations finally had the opportunity to share their stories with the federal government. The Executive Committee to End Violence Against Indigenous Women has been observing and discussing the progress and obstacles of the National Inquiry. Respectfully, some of the Indigenous Caucus Partners that

comprise the Executive Committee, would like to submit the following report for your consideration.

This report is divided into five sections:

Part I: Root Causes of Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls

- This section includes information about Canada's colonial history (including *the Indian Act*, the residential school system and the Sixties Scoop), policing and the judicial system (including overrepresentation in incarceration facilities and abysmal treatment in the judicial process), and overrepresentation of Indigenous women and girls as victims of human trafficking.

Part II: Creation of the Executive Committee to End Violence Against Indigenous Women

- This section outlines how the Indigenous Caucus, alongside provincial ministry partners, came together to address violence against Indigenous women.

Part III: National and International Recommendations On Ending Violence

- This section illustrates national and international condemnation of Canada's failure to address ongoing violence against Indigenous women and girls.

Part IV: A Community Focus

- This section highlights the work being done by the Indigenous partners, which is work that aligns with national and international recommendations

Part V: Moving Forward – Recommendations

- This section highlights recommendations and guiding principles for best practices going forward.

PART I: ROOT CAUSES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

INTRODUCTION

As noted above, Indigenous women across Turtle Island are experiencing higher rates of violence, poverty, and discrimination compared to non-Indigenous women. These experiences and pressures stem from coordinated, intrusive, and assimilationist state actions committed against Indigenous communities. Lasting implications of these actions, policies, and legislation persist today. Therefore, to adequately respond to high rates of violence against Indigenous women and girls, there must be a fulsome understanding of historic wrongs. It has become the responsibility of Indigenous organizations and government to collaborate to ensure the broader Canadian public is aware of these historic wrongs and to create avenues for change to prevent reoccurring, systemic violence. The following will provide some of the foundational state and public agency actions that have led us to where we are today.

PRE-INDIAN ACT ERA

Ideologies ingrained in the *Indian Act*¹⁴ were rampant with the settling European's patriarchal notions of sovereignty over Indigenous people and their lands.¹⁵ The land now known as Canada was indoctrinated in Latin as *terra nullius*, which justified the usurping of uninhabited land. In this context, the land was considered uninhabited by the Europeans because Indigenous people were not of the Christian faith.¹⁶ It is important to note that in 2014, the Supreme Court of Canada held in *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia* that "The doctrine of *terra nullius* never applied in Canada, as confirmed by the *Royal Proclamation (1763)*."¹⁷ The denouncement of such a doctrine should permeate other areas of Canada's bureaucracy, legal and justice system.

In addition to this ideological dogma being expressed by settlers, there were three other main contributing factors that signalled change in the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.¹⁸ First, in the post-American Revolution Era there was an influx of settlers into Canada; second, the economic partnership that had initially forged between Indigenous peoples and settlers was slowly declining; and lastly, the change in military allies had crippled the valuable position Indigenous people had in the eyes of Europeans.¹⁹ These shifting relationships in the wake of early 17th century paved the way for legislation such as the *1857 Act to Encourage the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes In this Province*²⁰, the *Enfranchisement Act of 1869*, and the *Indian Acts of 1867, 1880* and the *Indian Advancement Act of 1884*.²¹

INDIAN ACT

With the introduction of the British North American Act (BNA Act) 1867, and the creation of what is now called Canada, the country's first Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald told Parliament, "do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all

respects with the inhabitants of the Dominion.”²² This assimilation policy was codified with the enactment of the *Indian Act, 1867* (the *Act*) and its subsequent amendments.²³ The *Act*, as it still persists today, devastates traditional governance systems and the entirety of the Indigenous way of life.²⁴ The imposition of foreign community structures, political ideologies and patriarchy onto Indigenous societies left them disjoined, fragmented and created a loss of cultural identity.²⁵

*The strength that Aboriginal peoples gain today from their traditional teachings and their cultures comes from centuries of oral tradition and Aboriginal teachings, which emphasized the equality of man and woman and the balanced roles of both in the continuation of life (Manitoba 1991: 476).*²⁶

It is important to note the gender disparities created through the *Indian Act* as these disparities have resulted in the abhorrent treatment of many Indigenous women and girls. The *Indian Act* created gender disparity between men and women through section 12(1)(b) of the *Act*, which stated “a women who married a person who is not an Indian ... [is] not entitled to be registered.”²⁷ Changing the structure of the entire community, the *Indian Act* ignored traditional matriarchal values in many nations and disrupted traditional female roles.²⁸ Despite decades of gender discrimination, Indigenous women persevered with resilience. It is critical to recognize the hard work of such women as Jeannette Corbiere Lavell and Sandra Lovelace who challenged this section in the *Act*, which eventually led to Bill C-31.²⁹

Most recently, Bill S-3: *An Act to Amend the Indian Act in Response to the Superior Court of Quebec decision in Descheneaux c. Canada (Procureur général)* received Royal Assent on December 12, 2017.³⁰ This amendment seeks to address gender inequality experienced by Indigenous women born after 1951 and their descendants; and requires the Minister to consult within six months with First Nations and other interested parties on “issues raised by the provisions of the *Indian Act* related to registration and band membership, including consultations on

- (a) issues relating to adoption;
- (b) the 1951 cut-off date for entitlement to registration;
- (c) the second-generation cut-off rule;
- (d) unknown or unstated paternity;
- (e) enfranchisement;
- (f) the continued federal government role in determining Indian status and band membership; and
- (g) First Nations’ authorities to determine band membership.”³¹

There is still heightened skepticism regarding this Bill and its inability to return the balance of traditional gender roles in Indigenous communities. *Bill S-3* in its current state does not remove complete gender discrimination from the *Indian Act* despite the advocacy for further amendments.³² It is also unclear whether the consultation proposed in the Bill will create any of the aforementioned changes.

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Accurately described in the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal People's* (RCAP) as “displacement”³³, the influence of colonialism and imperialist thought subjugated Indigenous peoples in numerous ways. Residential schools were introduced prior to Confederation by way of French and other European missionaries in hopes of erasing Indigenous culture and forcing the adoption of Christianity.³⁴ In 1844, George Vardon, the British Assistant Superintendent General of Indian Affairs requested Egerton Ryerson, the superintendent of schools for Upper Canada, to write a report that would advise on the “best method of establishing and conducting Industrial Schools for the benefit of the aboriginal Indian Tribes.”³⁵ This was the inception of the active policy-driven residential schools, which were founded on concepts of “Killing the Indian in the Child”.³⁶

Residential schools were rampant with physical, emotional, mental, spiritual and sexual abuse.³⁷ Because thousands of Indigenous children were forced to attend these schools, the resulting intergenerational impacts and trauma have led communities to a state of distress³⁸. Unresolved trauma from attending residential schools seeped through the generations and set the stage for ongoing negative impacts into daily life for women, their families and communities.³⁹ In a substantial amount of cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women, there is a history of family violence and/or children witnessing violence in the home.⁴⁰ Despite the loss of culture and identity through the residential school system and experiences of violence, the resiliency of Indigenous women and their families continues across Turtle Island.

THE SIXTIES' SCOOP & the CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

By 1960, 50% of the children were sent to residential schools because of child welfare.⁴¹ The era between 1960 and the mid-1980s is commonly referred to as the ‘Sixties Scoop’.⁴² During this period child welfare agencies were quite literally ‘scooping’ Indigenous children out of their communities and families into the yoke of government care.⁴³ Today, approximately half of the children and youth involved with the child welfare system are Indigenous.⁴⁴ The systemic impacts of the Sixties Scoop on Indigenous communities have led to a further increase in distrust of government-run and monitored institutions, a continued and further dismantling of traditional family and community structures, loss of culture, heightened poverty rates and continues the intergenerational impacts of trauma in community and the family.⁴⁵

POLICING AND JUSTICE

Many Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island have a largely negative relationship with the justice system. The justice system is responsible for the creation and enforcement of colonial law, which continues to have devastating effects on Indigenous peoples across Canada. In the justice system and its legacy, we see structural racism and a complete lack of understanding and knowledge around the epidemic of violence against Indigenous women. All levels of policing services and justice have been complicit in this violence, including provincial and municipal police services, the Royal Canadian

Mounted Police (RCMP), provincial and federal corrections facilities, and the court system.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Indian Agents and the RCMP were both instrumental in the 'success' of Residential Schools. They represented federal interests in different capacities and to this day Indigenous communities still have difficult relationships with the RCMP.

From the 1830s to the 1960s, Indian agents were appointed by the Canadian government to implement the policies dictated by the Department of Indian Affairs. These policies supported the federal government's attempts to forcibly assimilate Indigenous peoples, such as the creation of Residential schools. Indian agents were responsible for ensuring Indigenous youth attended residential schools, and thus contributed to long-lasting intergenerational traumas and general mistrust of the government. According to Cree Elder Mervin Dieter, "Possibly the best thing that could have happened to the Indian people is that if this person formerly known as the Indian Agent had never existed".⁴⁶

The RCMP also helped to ensure that Indigenous youth attended Residential schools. A 463-page report documenting their involvement in the Residential school legacy stated that they allegedly did not know about the extent of the ongoing abuses but were responsible for withholding information from parents about what was happening to their children, acting as truancy officers and forcibly brought many of the youth to the schools.⁴⁷ Some Residential School survivors have stated that RCMP involvement was more than what the report outlined. During the 2004 signing of the Public Safety Protocol between the Assembly of First Nations and the RCMP, RCMP Commissioner apologized for their involvement in Residential schools and stated,

"The RCMP is committed to working with Aboriginal people to continue the healing process. Your communities deserve better choices and better chances. Knowing the past, we must all turn to the future and build a brighter future for all our children".⁴⁸

Despite documented RCMP commitment to improving relationships with Indigenous communities, the relationship is still fraught with negative experiences. A Human Rights Watch research report revealed that the RCMP has been racist and abusive towards Indigenous women and girls, with "abuse" referring to acts of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.⁴⁹ When community members experience trauma at the hands of those who are supposed to protect them, the deep levels of mistrust many Indigenous peoples have with police are sedimented. These stories should serve as a reminder that concrete steps are needed to improve police services, their relationships with communities and the overall safety of Indigenous women and girls.

Judicial System

In the judicial system, Indigenous peoples are not usually granted justice and are often presented as criminals – even when they are the victims. Indigenous people often face all white juries, receive harsher penalties than their non-white peers, and experience further victimization. In the last few years, there have been several high-profile cases involving Indigenous people that have drawn national and international scrutiny for how the Canadian judicial system functions and responds to the needs of Indigenous communities.

Colten Boushie was a 22-year-old Indigenous youth who was shot at point blank range by farmer Gerald Stanley on August 9, 2016. There were conflicting reports about what had happened, but Stanley was ultimately acquitted of second-degree murder by an all-white jury.⁵⁰ All over Canada, protests were held to showcase their anger at the verdict. The Boushie family filed a lawsuit against the RCMP for treating them unfairly after the shooting occurred; the RCMP unlawfully searched their home and subjected the family at the home to breath tests. The RCMP conducted an internal investigation and concluded that there had been no wrongdoing in the officers' investigation.⁵¹ In another high-profile case, 15-year old Tina Fontaine of Sagkeeng First Nation in Manitoba was pulled from the Red River wrapped in a duvet cover and weighed down with rocks.⁵² Raymond Cormier, who was charged in her death, was found not guilty of second-degree murder on February 22, 2018. At the time of her death, Fontaine was in the care of Child and Family Services (CFS). When Cormier was released on the original charges, police launched an undercover investigation to get recorded admittance from Cormier on his crimes. Cormier admitted to raping Fontaine (he used the words "had sex with"), plying her with drugs, said that he threw her in the river (three people testified that it was his duvet wrapped around Fontaine in the river), and told a woman he beat two murder charges.⁵³ In a last case, Bradley Barton was acquitted of murdering Indigenous woman Cindy Gladue. Gladue bled out in a bath tub June 21, 2011 after allegedly having consensual 'rough' sex with her client. An 11cm wound made to her vaginal wall was showcased in court when Gladue's preserved vagina was presented in court as evidence. The National Post reports,

"[Medical examiner Graeme Dowling] rolled up his sleeves, snapped on a pair of latex gloves and demonstrated his testimony with Gladue's tissue. Later, a defence expert also used the tissue."⁵⁴

Throughout the trial and subsequent media coverage, Gladue was repeatedly derided as 'just' a Native prostitute and graphic details of Barton and Gladue's sexual relationship were provided in court. This violated Gladue's protection under Section 276 of the Criminal Code.⁵⁵

In each of these cases, the victims were consistently dehumanized and criminalized. They were not granted dignity in their deaths or the judicial process. Colten Boushie was made out to be a criminal, whose life was worth less than property in a court case

that was riddled with inconsistencies. Tina Fontaine's death was essentially blamed on drug use, completely negating the circumstances of how she was found in the river and the numerous admissions of guilt by Cormier. Cindy Gladue's dismembered remains were presented and handled as evidence in court, setting a new precedent for the lack of dignity Indigenous women would be afforded in the judicial process.

Time and time again, we are reminded that Indigenous people will not be granted justice in the judicial system, we will be humiliated throughout and after the process, and that perpetrators of the violence will see no consequences for their actions.

Correctional Facilities

Both Indigenous men and women continue to be overrepresented in the prison system. The 2017-2018 Annual Report compiled by the Office of the Correctional Officer states,

“In the ten-year period between March 2009 and March 2018, the Indigenous inmate population increased by 42.8% compared to a less than 1% overall growth during the same period. As of March 31, 2018, Indigenous inmates represented 28% of the total federal in-custody population while comprising just 4.3% of the Canadian population. The situation continues to worsen for Indigenous women. Over the last ten years, the number of Indigenous federally sentenced women increased by 60%, growing from 168 in March 2009 to 270 in March 2018. At the end of the reporting period, 40% of incarcerated women in Canada were of Indigenous ancestry. These numbers are distressing.”⁵⁶

Even as Indigenous men and women are overrepresented in corrections facilities, there is a lack of culturally-appropriate healing services available to them. At the end of 2017/18, there were 3,850 Indigenous peoples incarcerated in federal facilities and the total bed capacity for the five section 81 Aboriginal Healing lodges is 163.⁵⁷

More credence should be given to Gladue Reports to mitigate the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in corrections facilities. The Criminal Code of Canada amendment to Section 718(2) requires sentencing courts to consider the

“unique background and circumstances of Aboriginal people and alternatives to incarceration during sentencing. Subsequent judicial interpretation of the provision came to be known as the Gladue factors (e.g. effects of the residential school system, experience within the child welfare or adoption system, level or lack of formal education, poverty and poor living conditions) as a mandatory consideration whenever an Indigenous person is facing a possible loss of liberty. CSC has extended the application of Gladue factors to correctional decision-making, which means in practice that the circumstances of an Indigenous offender must be considered in security classification, penitentiary placement, institutional transfers and administrative segregation decisions”.⁵⁸

It is evident that the prisons are not designed for the rehabilitation or healing of Indigenous peoples. When healing lodges are available, they sometimes rendered almost totally unusable. During the Office of the Correctional Officer inspection and as reported in the 2017-2018 Annual Report,

“This past winter I was shown an Indigenous sweat lodge that was entombed in snow, enclosed in a cage and covered over in razor wire... That this situation shows little respect for Aboriginal culture and spirituality appeared rather obvious. Making the opportunity to participate in Indigenous spirituality part of the maximum security experience does not, in any way, mitigate its more dehumanizing and oppressive features. Caging or warehousing people has no redeeming public safety value and is contrary to effective corrections” (p. 6-7). See Figure 1



Sweat lodge in a maximum security yard

Figure 1

As recommended in the report, Corrections Services Canada should work with Indigenous organizations who can assist in the creation of more effective pathways out of corrections facilities for Indigenous inmates. Examples of this might include the supervision of Indigenous inmates and development of supports for their successful reintegration into community.⁵⁹

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Indigenous girls are overrepresented as victims of human trafficking in Canada. A 2014 report by Canadian Women’s Foundation states the following:

“Of the 534 organizations that responded, 266 reported they provided service and supports to trafficked and sexually exploited women and girls. These 266 organizations were found in every province and territory except Nunavut, with the majority located in Ontario (24%), BC (21%), Quebec (15%), Alberta (12%) and Manitoba (9%). They served large cities, small cities, towns and rural areas, including northern communities and those focused on resource development. When these organizations were asked about the women and girls they had served in 2012, they collectively identified: 1,929 trafficked women, 943 trafficked girls, 4,708 girls and 14,457 women who were sexually exploited --exchanging sex or sexual acts for drugs, food, shelter, protection and other necessities of life,

primarily through street level survival sex. The organizations reported most girls had been first trafficked at age 14, and the majority of trafficked and sexually exploited women were aged 18 – 25 years”.⁶⁰

It was reported that 50% of the trafficked girls 51% of the trafficked women were Indigenous.⁶¹

Regarding the high rates of Indigenous human trafficking victims, RCMP Assistant Commissioner Joanne Crampton testified at the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls that “current statistics on human trafficking fall short of capturing the scope of the issue...[it's a] very under-reported number”.⁶² Inspector Tina Chalk testified about her work training the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) to recognize the signs of trafficking and said, “there have been definite gaps in the OPP's training and [there] has been insufficient training around the vulnerabilities of Indigenous populations... Police trust is absolutely lacking. That's a long road and that's a road that police are responsible for.”⁶³

As part of the Aboriginal Policy Research Series, Anette Sikka examined the history of violence Indigenous women and girls in Canada. Sikka examined the differences between human trafficking narratives involving Indigenous women and girls, and non-Indigenous women and girls. Sikka writes,

“The unique ways in which Aboriginal women and girls are being trafficked have not been put in the ‘trafficking’ picture. This invisibility translates into a lack of services available to address the trafficking of Aboriginal women and girls and a general apathy from the criminal justice system towards the types of trafficking they face. The attention that law enforcement and governmental departments have focused on international trafficking has given rise to a number of victim support programs, all of which are accessible only to select types of victims.”⁶⁴

Diane Redsky, Executive Director of the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc, spoke at the March 1, 2018 meeting of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. She identified many factors that render Indigenous girls as young as nine to uniquely vulnerable to trafficking, such as online and offline grooming practices in rural areas.⁶⁵ The geography of the girls’ locations and their lack of worth in many ongoing narratives about Indigenous women and girls makes them ‘easy’ targets for perpetrators who will likely face no consequences if caught.

PART II: CREATION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN

INTRODUCTION

Each of the Indigenous Partners of the Executive Committee are deeply committed to addressing and eradicating violence against Indigenous women in their communities and the whole of Turtle Island. In a strategic way, the partners have been working collaboratively with one another and government since 2007 at the first Summit to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women. Over a decade later, Indigenous partners and the Ontario government are now half-way through a \$100 million, 3-year commitment in a Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women. Within this time frame, as shown in [figure 2], Indigenous community-driven organizations have gathered to create change, share ideas and strategically plan for the sustainability of future initiatives.

A STRATEGIC PATHWAY & JOINT WORKING GROUP

On March 20-22, 2007, the Ontario Native Women’s Association of Ontario and the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (then called the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres) convened a Summit to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women. The intention of the gathering was to bring together community leadership to create a strategic framework to end violence against Aboriginal women.⁶⁶ Participants included: Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, Ontario Native Women’s Association, the Union of Ontario Indians, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Grand Council Treat #3, Independent First Nations, Métis Nation of Ontario, and other community stakeholders.⁶⁷ From the Summit the following Strategic Directions were formulated and designed to be implemented through guiding principles, a flexible framework and key areas for change [figure 2].⁶⁸

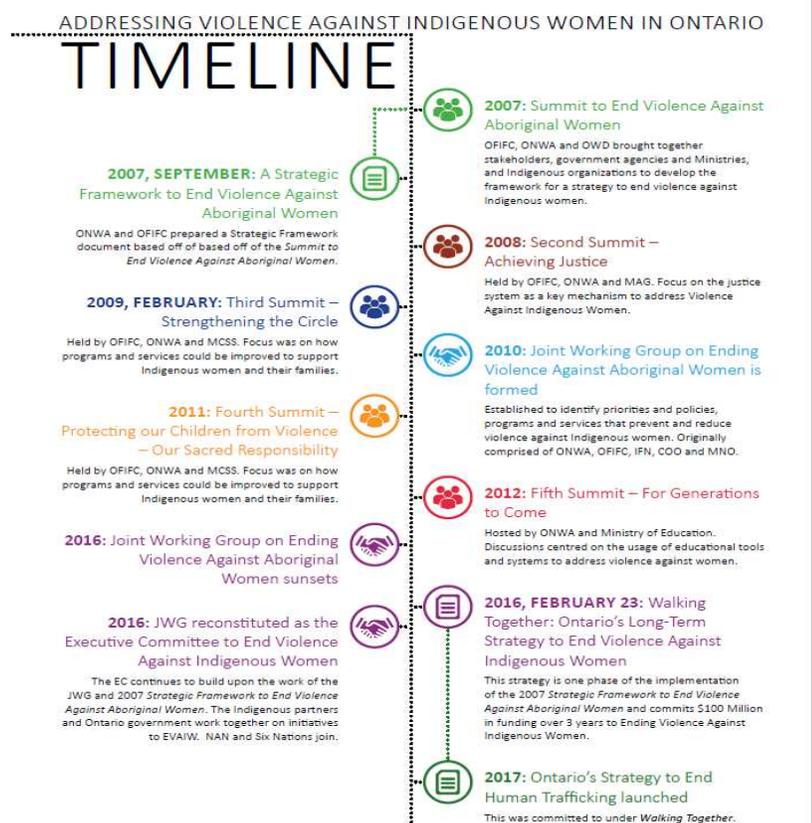


Figure 2

Strategic Directions

1. Undertake comprehensive research and data collection on issues related to Aboriginal women and violence
2. Legal reform and Legislative change
3. The Creation of Comprehensive policy to target and address violence against all Aboriginal women in Ontario
4. The creation of a sustained policy and program infrastructure
5. Public education campaign to raise awareness of violence against Aboriginal women



Figure 3

6. Build and sustain Aboriginal community and organizational capacity, as well as government capacity to end all forms of violence and abuse against Aboriginal women
7. Support and build community leadership that works towards ending the violence against Aboriginal women
8. Ensuring Accountability of broad commitment to the strategy

Within each of these strategic directions the Summit participants outline specific goals that should be undertaken as critical to the success of the strategy. For the full list of goals and specific actions please see Appendix A.

JOINT WORKING GROUP, 2010 and SUMMIT WORK

In 2010, the Joint Working Group (JWG) on Violence Against Aboriginal Women convened with a mandate to “identify priorities and opportunities for support, development and implementation of policies, programs and services that prevent and reduce, programs and services that prevent and reduce violence against Aboriginal women and their families.”⁶⁹ Before and after the introduction of the Joint Working Group, Indigenous women-led organizations⁷⁰ focused on hosting Summits to End Violence Against Indigenous Women.

Indigenous Membership of the Joint Working Group

- Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres

- Ontario Native Women’s Association
- Independent First Nations
- Métis Nation of Ontario
- Chiefs of Ontario

As seen in the timeline above, the Ontario Indigenous partners, came together as part of the JWG to participate and host Violence Against Aboriginal Women Summits on different topics.

- Summit to End Violence Against Indigenous Women, 2007
- Summit II: Achieving Justice, 2008
- Summit III: Strengthening the Circle, 2009
- Summit IV: Protecting Our Children from Violence – Our Sacred Responsibility, 2011
- Summit V: For Generations to Come, 2012

Each Summit was structured as a dialogue between the JWG representatives, relevant ministry partners and other Indigenous and non-Indigenous community stakeholders. Participants worked to enhance the work of the *Strategic Framework* and its implementation in specific areas, as the Summit topics changed from year to year. The Summit consisted of key notes, discussion panels, break out sessions, and best practice presentations – all of which engaged Indigenous and non-Indigenous attendees to further understand Violence Against Aboriginal Women and how to prevent and address such violence in community. For more information on each Summit please see Appendix B.

WALKING TOGETHER

Violence against Indigenous women has been tearing apart of the lives of women, their families and communities for generations⁵¹

In March 2016, Ontario’s Premier announced the province’s ground-breaking commitment to ending violence against Indigenous women⁷¹. With a three-year mandate and a financial commitment of \$100 million, the Walking Together Strategy was a whole of government collaborative approach to end violence by working with the Indigenous partners.

PILLARS OF WALKING TOGETHER

1. Support Children, Youth and Families
2. Community Safety and Healing
3. Policing and Justice
4. Prevention and Awareness
5. Leadership, Collaboration, Alignment and Accountability
6. Improved Data and Research

Figure 4

The strategy breathed life into a new committee structure known as the Executive Committee to End Violence Against Indigenous Women. Two new seats were added to the Executive Committee in 2017: Six Nations of the Grand River and Nishnawbe Aski Nation. In conjunction with the strategic guidance of the Executive, there are six

provincial committees that work in a concerted effort to address and prevent violence in specific areas.

- Community Safety and Healing
- Prevention and Awareness
- Policing and Justice
- Human Trafficking
- Children, Youth and Families
- Improved Data and Research

All of the work conducted at these Provincial Committees and the Executive Committee are based on the foundational principles of, relationship-based practice; changing norms, attitudes and values, strengthening culture identity; and restoring wholistic sustainable systems.

For details in the advancement of the work in each of these provincial committees please see Appendix B and Appendix C for Year 1 and Year 2 Progress Reports on the Strategy respectively. The terms of reference for both the Executive Committee and the Provincial Committee can be found as exhibits in the National Inquiry's Hearing on Sexual Exploitation as well as addition information in the testimony of Assistant Deputy Attorney General Juanita Dobson, Government of Ontario.⁷²

PART III: INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON ENDING VIOLENCE

This section outlines national and international recommendations to end violence against Indigenous women. These recommendations focus on different areas of policy, law, and existing services that impact Indigenous women and their communities. All work that moves toward a National Strategy or Action Plan to End Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SQLGBT+ individuals, must be with the same spirit and intent of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and its Consequences Recommendations.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

The Indigenous Caucus urges the Commissioners to ensure that all recommendations in the National Inquiry's Final Report are in alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action. The release of the TRC's Final Report in 2015 set out a renewed path for all Canadians in their recognition and honouring of Indigenous people, their histories and the shared history that exists in Canada.

Call to Action 40 states, *"We call on all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal people, to create adequately funded and accessible Aboriginal-specific victim programs and services with appropriate evaluation mechanisms".*⁷³

The unique challenges and experiences had by Indigenous peoples in Canada require nuanced, culturally-relevant approaches and cooperation by government for effective solution development. The Ontario Human Rights Commission's report on Indigenous peoples and human rights includes dialogues had with community members, leaders of Indigenous Friendship Centres, Band Councils, and Indigenous youth from across Ontario. Participants encouraged organizations to begin their reconciliation efforts by looking at their own institutional structures and arrangements rather than promoting various strategies and initiatives: "It can't just be about making space for us [in your institutions]. We need to see systemic change, a fundamental change to do things differently."⁷⁴ This includes finding and creating solutions for human trafficking of and violence against Indigenous women and girls.

There has been a lack of response to the TRC Calls to Action by the federal correctional system. Correctional Investigator Ivan Zinger said, "To address the enormity of the challenge of Indigenous over-incarceration, CSC and the Government of Canada must more fully devolve responsibility, but most of all resources and control, back to Indigenous people."⁷⁵

UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

It is important to situate the work and recommendations of the Indigenous partners in alignment with international legal instruments. The Indigenous Caucus recommends that the Commissioners look to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) in its entirety. Special attention should be paid to:

Article 22(2):

States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination⁷⁶

Article 23:

Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, Indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.⁷⁷

Article 44:

All the rights and freedoms recognized herein are equally guaranteed to male and female indigenous individuals.⁷⁸

It is imperative that the Final Report of the National Inquiry and its recommendations ensure that all levels of government comply with and honour the spirit of the UNDRIP.

On September 13, 2007, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples. Former Chairperson Victoria Tauli-Corpuz of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues said in a press release, “This is a Declaration which sets the minimum international standards for the protection and promotion of the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Therefore, existing and future laws, policies, and programs on Indigenous peoples will have to be redesigned and shaped to be consistent with this standard”.⁷⁹ Eleven years later, current Chairperson Mariam Waleet M. Aboubakrine echoes these sentiments. Aboubakrine says, “I urge Member States, Indigenous peoples, the UN system and partners to work together to translate the vision of the Declaration into concrete action. Only then can we make a real difference for the survival, dignity and well-being of Indigenous people”.⁸⁰

The TRC Calls to Action and the UNDRIP should be implemented in consultation with Indigenous women and community-based organizations. This will give a necessarily gendered lens and allow for a more comprehensive analysis of the issues at hand, ultimately helping to begin the process of reclaiming Indigenous women’s place in

families, nations and communities.⁸¹ Critically, the UNDRIP spells out a wide range of Indigenous rights to self-determination, consent to development, culture, political expression, language and child-rearing for Indigenous peoples globally.⁸² Thus, the responsibility shifts from that of Indigenous peoples to that of nation-states to acknowledge the limitations of their power with respect to Indigenous populations within their borders, and, if necessary bring legislation and policy into alignment.⁸³

CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Committee is “the body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention.”⁸⁴ Established in 1979 by the UN General Assembly the CEDAW Committee works tirelessly to enforce the rights of women around the world and uphold their human rights. The combined 8th and 9th Periodic Reports of Canada included request for information regarding Canada’s responses to ongoing crises facing Indigenous women.⁸⁵

The CEDAW Committee requested information on steps Canada is taking to eliminate gender discrimination in the *Indian Act*, “in particular regarding the transmission of Indian status, that prevent them and their descendants from enjoying all the benefits related to such status”.⁸⁶ In addition to this there were several other requests for information regarding whether Indigenous women have access to culturally appropriate health care, education and training programs, language, employment, and safe water.⁸⁷ Through these reports the CEDAW Committee also challenged Canada to disclose statistics on reported cases of violence against women and their outcomes.⁸⁸ The Indigenous Caucus of the Executive Committee urges the Commissioner’s to review the recommendations made by CEDAW and determine how the Final Report of the National Inquiry can encourage the federal government and other governments in Canada to respond to several requests made.

THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, ITS CAUSES AND ITS CONSEQUENCES RECOMMENDATIONS

From April 11-23rd, 2018 Dubravka Šimonović, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and its Consequences, made her first official visit to Canada. The Indigenous Caucus as well as the Co-Chairs to the Executive Committee were able to meet, separately, with Ms. Šimonović on April 19, 2018. In her end of mission statement, the Special Rapporteur supported the Indigenous Caucus' recommendation that a specific National Action Plan be developed for Ending Violence against Indigenous women in Canada.⁸⁹ We encourage the Commissioners to review the UN Special Rapporteur's End of Mission Statement to her official visit to Canada and the specific recommendations regarding Indigenous women.

In this statement, Ms. Šimonović draws attention to the high rates of Indigenous girls who are trafficked in Canada, the high levels of violence facilitated against Indigenous

women and girls including sexual violence, technology-facilitated violence, lack of access to appropriate services and police misconduct, over-incarceration of Indigenous women, and the Inquiry process.

Related recommendations include:

- The creation of a federal law to combat and prevent violence against women.⁹⁰
- Incorporation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in all national jurisdictions using CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women “as a unifying benchmark for harmonization.”⁹¹
- A guarantee of the availability and enforceability of protection orders across all jurisdictions.⁹²
- The adoption of a National Action Plan on violence against women and domestic violence, and the adoption of a separate NAP that focuses on the unique circumstances experienced Indigenous women. This separate NAP should be in line with international human rights standards (as already accepted by Canada) and implemented at all levels of jurisdiction to ensure successful service provision and protection across Canada.⁹³ Indigenous led programs should “be the norm and not the exception”.⁹⁴
- The federal government, in cooperation with provinces and territories, should use federal spending to improve criminal justice responses to survivors. These responses should include access to free legal advice and provision of specialized sexual assault training to police officers and prosecutors that includes information about rape myths, consent, and on the specific needs and vulnerabilities of Indigenous women, 2SLGBT+ community members, women with disabilities and other vulnerable group.⁹⁵
- The adoption of a holistic, UNDRIP mandated consultation with Indigenous women.⁹⁶
- The separate NAP should also make justice-related services more accessible to Indigenous women.⁹⁷

Ms. Simonović will make her formal presentation at the 39th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in June 2019.

It is critical that the Commissioners take into consideration the ongoing international scrutiny that Canada is under to take appropriate action on systemic violence against Indigenous women and the rights of Indigenous peoples writ large. The commitments made by Canada to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action should already be embedded throughout the Final Report of the National Inquiry, but further analysis should be conducted to ensure recommendations are aligned with international instruments.

PART IV: A COMMUNITY FOCUS

Each Indigenous partner organization is unique in its history, the community they represent, and the expertise and knowledge brought to the provincial sphere of Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls. The benefits of the programming and services led by these organizations are insurmountable because they are Indigenous-led, community-driven, context-specific and inherently culturally appropriate. They already meet the recommendations given at national and international levels, and could do more for Indigenous women with increased capacity funding and support from all levels of government. It is important to note that the organizations often provide support and services to those who are outside of their official geographic service scope, such as connecting with community members who are outside of the organization's immediate locale.

CHIEFS OF ONTARIO

Legal Disclaimer

The Chiefs of Ontario is a coordinating body and as such, the Chiefs of Ontario section of this submission should not be used as a substitute for meaningful consultation with the First Nation communities in Ontario generally or the Chiefs of Ontario specifically.

This submission is without prejudice to the rights or interest of any First Nation affiliated with the Chiefs of Ontario.

About

The Chiefs of Ontario (COO) is a political forum and secretariat for collective decision-making, action, and advocacy for the 133 First Nations communities located in Ontario. Guided by the Chiefs in Assembly, we uphold self-determination efforts of the Anishinaabek, Mushkegowuk, Onkwehon:we, and Lenape Peoples in protecting and exercising their inherent and Treaty rights. The Political Confederacy consists of Grand Chiefs of: the Association of the Iroquois and Allied Indians; the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation; Anishinabek Nation, the Grand Council Treaty #3, Six Nations and Independent First Nations whom all provide direction on advancing First Nations interests in the multiple priority areas at the Chiefs of Ontario. The Chiefs of Ontario maintain that the First Nations are the rights holders and is an organization that coordinates and facilitates collective decision-making for First Nations on common issues, and advocates on certain issues mandated by First Nations political leadership.

About The First Nation Women's Caucus

Political Confederacy Motion #11/22, Establishment of a First Nations Violence Against Aboriginal Women Caucus mandated the First Nation Women's Caucus (FNWC) to

utilize community-based approaches to ending violence against First Nation women and girls. It additionally called for a collective voice and decision-making process. The establishment of the FNWC confirmed that ending violence against Indigenous women is a political issue.

The FNWC has worked on a number of community-based initiatives. The initiatives are their mandates are below:

- Declaration by First Nations Political Leadership to Support Ending Violence and Abuse in Our Communities and Against Our Peoples
 - Resolution #13-04 Adoption of a Declaration by First Nations Political Leadership to Support Ending Violence and Abuse in Our Communities and Against Our Peoples
 - Resolution #13-41 Support for First Nation Women’s Caucus Initiatives
 - In line with Political Confederacy Motion #11/22, this Resolution mandated FNWC to implement the Declaration and additionally use community-based approaches to end violence.
- WholsShe Campaign; a fundraiser and awareness campaign that seeks funding for awareness regarding Ontario families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women
- “Our Inquiry” Family Gatherings
- First Nations Women and Chiefs Leadership Summit

Highlights

Family Gatherings

The FNWC has coordinated, implemented, and established collective movement and decision-making for Ontario Families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Collectively, the Ontario Families who attended our gatherings engaged in solutions-based discussions and grief. The Family Gatherings were an effort to assist in the healing process for families by meeting and hearing other Families pain and grief. At each Family Gathering political and technical representatives from the Political Territorial Organizations, Independent First Nations, Six Nations, and the Unaffiliated attended.

Mandates of the Family Gathering:

- Resolution #14-19 Our Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
- Resolution #15-06 Support for the Work of Mishkeegogamang First Nation on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Boys, and Men.
- Resolution #16-06 Second Our Inquiry Family Gathering for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
- Resolution #17-24 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Safety Planning Toolkit

In collaboration with the Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario, the FNWC will be releasing a Safety Planning Toolkit. The toolkit is for service providers, individuals, and communities to be able to provide safety planning for anyone. This toolkit includes steps and actions that Individuals and communities can take to develop a plan of safety. This toolkit is ideal for anyone who has experienced a traumatic incident, is leaving domestic violence, or is mitigating an emergency. The toolkit is available for all Ontario communities, shelters, and interested organizations.

Initiatives of COO Political Territorial Organizations that Do Not Hold “Walking Together” Membership

As noted before, Chiefs of Ontario is not a rights holder for First Nations. The Chiefs of Ontario is not a substitute for meaningful consultation; this legal assertion must be acknowledged again for Ontario Families. The Chiefs of Ontario holds a membership seat under the Walking Together Strategy; however, Anishinabek Nation, Grand Council Treaty #3, and The Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians do not hold membership under this strategy. As such, the initiatives of the three Political Territorial Organizations are noted below.

Anishinabek Nation

The Anishinabek Nation is a political advocate for 40 member First Nations across Ontario. The Anishinabek Nation is the oldest political organization in Ontario and can trace its roots back to the Confederacy of Three Fires.

Missing and Murdered Gatherings

In January 2018, Anishinabek Nation Social Department hosted a Gathering for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Transgender, and Two Spirits and for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Men and Boys. Following these gatherings was a Memorial Round Dance. Anishinabek Nation brought together 250-300 participants.

Sponsorship

Anishinabek Nation also offers opportunities for sponsorship for Families of MMIWGT2SMB to attend events they feel contribute to their healing and wellness. The sponsorship is decided on, individual, and case by case basis. The events must be trauma informed and culturally appropriate.

In December 2017, Anishinabek Nation sponsored 12 family members to attend the ‘Looking Ahead to Build the Spirit of Our Women Learning to Live Free From Violence’. This event was organized by Lisa Osawamick.

Cultural Supports

Anishinabek Nation also has a sacred Eagle Staff available to families and loved ones available for their healing. Additionally, Anishinabek Nation hosts Men's Gatherings as a service to assist with Indigenous men unlearning toxic masculine behaviors and to be kinder men.

Grand Council Treaty #3

At the National Inquiry, Nishnawbe Aski-Nation and Grand Council Treaty #3 have joint standing and as a result will be submitting together.

Youth Safety Planning Toolkit

The Grand Council Treaty #3 Youth Transitional Toolkit⁹⁸ provides youth who are in transitional stage of life the exact tools they will need to stay safe at all times.

INDEPENDENT FIRST NATIONS

Those Independent First Nations who chose not to belong to a PTO began forming an alliance with other like-minded First Nations in the early 1990's. The Independent First Nations (IFN) is 12 autonomous First Nation communities within the Province of Ontario with a membership of over 29,670 First Nations people. Geographically these communities' territories span North, East, South, West and Central Ontario, with representation from the Haudenosaunee, Ojibway and Oji-Cree Nations. The IFN's communities can be defined as urban, multi-jurisdictional, remote, semi-remote and isolated.

Today, The Independent First Nations in Ontario commits to working collectively together on issues of fundamental concern while respecting each other's autonomy through the establishment of a political and working relationship.

Highlights

IFN leadership established a collective priority to End Violence Against Indigenous Women and in recognition passed a resolution in February 2009 supporting partnership in support of EVAIW. The Independent First Nations collective efforts have been dedicated to support initiatives towards ending violence against indigenous women; by building upon the strengths of our communities, enhancing capacity and resources and shared action that will result in healthy, safe and prosperous communities. Our joint work in partnership with the Ontario Government and Indigenous Peoples in Ontario towards Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women has resulted in significant impacts towards healing, wellness and change for individuals, families, communities and in working together, our partnerships and collective efforts have strengthened our relations with other Indigenous Peoples and Government and allowed us to make significant contributions for our mutual benefit and prosperity.

The Independent First Nations in Ontario have completed a number of initiatives to support Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women. Each initiative addresses ending violence against Indigenous women from different perspectives including healing, prevention, awareness, intervention and support as well coordination, capacity and resources, research and education, policy, planning and strategic action in partnership between First Nation communities, IFN Leadership, Government and Indigenous Peoples.

This includes:

- Fostering mutually beneficial **partnerships and engagement** in conjunction with IFN Leadership, IFN EVAIW Network and IFN Communities including the Ontario Government and Indigenous Peoples through the EVAIW Executive Committee and Provincial Committees towards ending violence against indigenous women.
- The completion of **research** through an IFN EVAIW Literature Review and Environmental Scan to inform evidence based approaches towards ending violence against indigenous women.
- Facilitating **strategic planning and policy** through a “draft” IFN EVAIW Action Plan with a final IFN EVAIW Strategy currently in progress of being compiled to guide future action moving forward towards ending violence against indigenous women.
- Enhancing **capacity building and technical support** through the provision of training, assistance and resources for the provision of community based, culturally appropriate, wholistic programs and services within IFN Communities. This included training and resources for IFN EVAIW Network, IFN Family Well-Being Workers, Leadership and Community Service Providers in Cultural as Foundation, Trauma Informed Care, Healthy Relationships, Wholistic Program and Service Coordination, and Anti-Human Trafficking.
- Enhancing **awareness and education** through the development of an IFN EVAIW Educational Toolkit with promotional products
- **Coordination** and capacity of initiatives to address EVAIW including:
 - The engagement of IFN Communities, Leadership and EVAIW Network on **Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women**. The IFN have recommended long term strategic, sustainable initiatives which allow communities, collective/organization, provincial/regional, national/federal and international approaches to address EVAIW.
 - The design, development, delivery and evaluation of the **Family Well-Being Program**. The IFN facilitates Family Well-Being coordination and capacity at a collective level and 12 IFN communities have family well-being programs providing wholistic, community based, culturally specific, programs and services that are strength based and trauma informed to address priority needs of individuals, families, communities within life-span approach and framework that recognizes family at the center. There was a total of 128,339 client interactions reported in Ontario from Jan 2017 to June 2018. The IFN collectively served 10.55 per cent of these clients.

- Community awareness sessions on **Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation**. IFN recommended initial community-based awareness and prevention initiatives and recognized the gaps for intervention and support
- Community awareness sessions on **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls** and facilitation of an IFN presentation and submission to the National Inquiry on MMIWG and;
- The address of **Men's Issues** through hosting an IFN EVAIW Men's Summit resulting in significant recommendations to support healing and well-being of men and foster healthy relationships and families.

Ministry of Attorney General – EVAAW Fund – IFN Victim Support Programming

The IFN Victim Support Initiatives are based on a concept of community determined and driven activities and continues to build on the work accomplished so far at the local level. Since 2014, the IFN Victim Support Program have reached over **20,000** IFN Women and Girls through education and awareness activities by providing resource materials and utilization of Media/Education Campaigns, workshops for women and girls and building community worker capacity on training to support victims of violence.

Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport – Youth Cultural Camp Initiative – IFN Youth Cultural Camp Funding

As part of the Government of Ontario's response to Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action through the "Journey Together" plan, MTCS is responsible for delivering the new Youth Cultural Camp (YCC) initiative. This initiative is a response to Indigenous youth's desire to increase their traditional knowledge, enhance language skills and foster leadership skills.

In 2017 -2018 the IFN Youth Cultural Camps reached **363** Children and Youth between the ages of 7-29 years and;

- Increased children and/or youth's traditional knowledge and language skills, Increased new leadership skills and training opportunities to youth and/or children
- Increased self -esteem and individual growth from participating in land based activities
- Increased holistic mental health and well-being supports/activities for children and/or youth

This was achieved through Language Camps, Hunting Camps, Trapping Camps, Leadership Camps, Cultural Camps, Survival Camps, and Day Camps.

Feedback received back from youth participation in some of the IFN Youth Cultural Camps.

- Awesome experience!!!
- I loved this and would like to make more next year

- Was fun and we should do it again
- Learned so much
- I learned how everything has an important role to play
- it was fun and very educational

Ministry of Education – Safe and Accepting Schools Fund- *IFN Safe and Accepting Schools Toolkit*

The IFN’s share a common vision that all our First Nations students/learners are welcomed accepted and understood in all academic institutions/systems in which they attend.

We envision schools that provide safe environments for all First Nations students/learners; institutes that are inclusive and culturally sensitive for our students, institutes that respect First Nations contribution in Canadian history and also recognize the imprint our people will have on Canada’s future.

We want schools that encourage equality and equity for First Nations students, schools that work to dispel the myths about First Nations people and schools that promote First Nations student success.

The IFN SAAS Initiative engaged our youth throughout the development of the Toolkit and Poster Campaign. The SAAS Poster Campaign was a success as other IFN youth knew of someone in the poster, and could relate to the message, as it was First Nations youth driven and developed campaign.

NISHNAWBE ASKI NATION

NAN was established in 1973 as the Political Territorial Organization representing the political, social and economic interests of its 49 member First Nations in Ontario. These communities include four traditional language groups and seven Tribal Council Groups. There are approximately 45,000 NAN members on and off reserve in a territory of 210,000 square miles.

NAN continues to tirelessly advocate for First Nations women and girls. Through its Women’s Executive Council, various gatherings have taken place. Most recently, NAN held a women’s gathering on December 11 to 13, 2018 in Thunder Bay. At the National Inquiry, NAN and GCT#3 had joint standing as Treaty Alliance Northern Ontario and participated fully in the Part II and Part III Hearings, including leading witnesses in the area of Indigenous Policing at the Part II Police Policies and Practices Hearing in Regina, Saskatchewan on June 25 to 29, 2018, and the Criminal Justice System – Oversight and Accountability Hearing in Quebec City on September 17 to 21, 2018.

NAN lacks the services to prevent, intervene and respond to violence of our women and girls. This is true despite the high rates of violence and murders our communities

experience. In the submissions to the National Inquiry, recommendations were put forward to improve services to address the lack proper housing infrastructure, the child welfare system, the justice system, education, and health. Further, NAN provided specific examples of proactive versus reactive solutions that would be beneficial to women and girls living in NAN communities and urban centres alike. If support and basic services were available at the community level, NAN women and girls could make meaningful decisions about the best care for situations that they face. Instead, they are forced into vulnerable and dangerous circumstances to access basic services, services that most Canadians find close to home.

For NAN, it is especially important that Indigenous women and girls lead and oversee the implementation plan identified by the Inquiry's final recommendations.

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF INDIGENOUS FRIENDSHIP CENTRES

The Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC) represents the collective interests of twenty-eight member Friendship Centres located in towns and cities throughout the province of Ontario. Friendship Centres are not-for-profit corporations which are mandated to serve the needs of all Indigenous people regardless of legal definition. This requires responding to thousands of Indigenous people requiring culture-based services in urban communities across Ontario. Women and children account for 70 percent of program participants in Friendship Centres, and a majority of OFIFC and Friendship Centre staff are women, including senior management. See Appendix E for more information.

Collectively, OFIFC and the Friendship Centres across Ontario have been working holistically to address and prevent violence against Indigenous women and girls. OFIFC programs, research, policy, finance and training departments include culturally-based, trauma-informed approaches and actively engage with Indigenous partners.

Highlights

Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin

Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin – *I am a Kind Man* – is a program created by the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres. It grew out of a need to design and deliver a holistic program model that values the importance of engaging men as an integral component to ending all forms of violence against Indigenous women. The program creates space for men to strengthen Indigenous cultural values, wellness, and resiliency in their everyday lives.

The overall purpose of the program is to engage the men of our communities to end violence against Indigenous women:

1. To reclaim and revitalise men's responsibility to end violence against Indigenous women;

2. To ensure access to Indigenous cultural values and to increase understanding of traditional roles and responsibilities based on local Indigenous knowledge;
3. To promote resiliency by empowering men to acknowledge and resolve trauma; and
4. To improve men's well-being and foster community wellness
5. To lower rates of recidivism

As a result of *Walking Together*, the Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin program expanded to an additional twenty-one Friendship Centre sites. Kizhaay incorporates one-on-one counseling and support; peer circles; and group-based programming which is based on a 12-week module curriculum based on the Seven Grandfather Teachings. The enhancement of the program has seen coordinators continue to build relationships with local non-Indigenous community stakeholders and advance education and awareness of the program. For example, in some communities, the justice system is alternatively diverting Indigenous men to the Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin as opposed to a mainstream program.

Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin Coordinators has expanded toward an approach more focused on youth and engaging with specific community stakeholders, such as schools. Preventative approaches and strategies are being utilized as coordinators engage with youth community centers and secondary institutions to ensure that Indigenous male youth are educated in root causes of violence against Indigenous women and girls and how they can work to prevent violence in their communities.

“These sessions have helped me to be a better loving man and father and helped me to feel good about myself and treat others with love and respect. I have also learned how to control my anger by simply walking away ... by putting my mind in a place of happiness, like thinking about nice stuff such as watching my kids grow up happy, strong, healthy and being the best dad I can be. I want to live a happy life with my wife, kids and family.”

– Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin participant, Thunderbird Friendship Centre, Geraldton, ON

Kanawayhitowin

Kanawayhitowin – *Taking Care of Each Other's Spirit* – is an Indigenous prevention and education campaign initiative created by the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres to raise awareness of the signs of violence against women in communities.

The campaign reflects a wholistic approach to community healing and wellness and incorporates culturally-relevant activities, training, and materials to raise awareness. Kanawayhitowin recognizes the uniqueness of each Indigenous community and focuses on the development of local safety planning and violence prevention. The campaign

acknowledges that everyone in the community has a role in ending violence against Indigenous women and girls.

“The reason why I have decided to be part of the Kanawayhitowin committee was because I kept hearing about the project and the training and how much awareness it brings to communities through training and workshops ... I was able to attend a workshop at a youth forum in July, and after that I knew for sure that I needed to get involved and receive the training which has supported me so much.”

– Kanawayhitowin Youth Participant, N’Amerind Friendship Centre, London, ON

For more information about Kanawayhitowin please visit: <http://www.kanawayhitowin.ca/>

Cultural Resource Coordinator Program

The Cultural Resource Coordinator (CRC) program was developed by OFIFC, as part of *Walking Together*. It is funded by the Ministry of Children and Community Social Services (MCCSS) in alignment with the Ontario Indigenous Children and Youth Strategy (OICYS). The OFIFC has designed the CRC program to address the multigenerational effects of trauma, promoting reconciliation and healing through delivery of prevention-focused and culturally responsive supports.

The CRC program includes both direct supports for service users and coordination of ongoing cultural activities. Direct supports include the facilitation of healing circles (especially for Indigenous children, youth and families), traditional counselling services and education, peer support, participation in action-planning and child-welfare related case conferencing, maintenance of culturally-relevant educational tools and resources (such as language materials, history books, art and sacred items), promotion of language restoration, and the ongoing transmission of cultural knowledge. Coordination actions include connecting with Elders and/or carriers of traditional resources to conduct ceremonies, supporting the planning of traditional ceremony (including dancing, singing, drumming, community and seasonal feasts), coordinating community events (including culture/social nights and community feasts, Elder socials and Elder/senior appreciation activities, and Elder and youth knowledge exchange activities), coordinating land-based activities (e.g. fishing, trapping, etc.), and providing space and opportunities for traditional arts & crafting.

The CRC program supports wellness promotion, healing, and reconciliation through facilitating an increased access to culture for urban Indigenous children, youth, and families to reduce violence, reduce Indigenous children involvement with the child welfare system, and improve the overall health of communities. This program is guided by wholistic approaches that favour violence prevention and includes ongoing support for those who are currently experiencing violence.

“The CRC is the ripple effect that is taking back our light.”-N’Amerind Friendship Centre

SIX NATIONS OF THE GRAND RIVER TERRITORY

Six Nations of the Grand River is the largest First Nation in Canada, with a total membership of 27,885.

Six Nations of the Grand River Territory has been actively working to end violence against both Indigenous women and men for over 30 years. Ganohkwasra Family Assault Support Services is the designated family violence prevention organization for the Six Nations territory. They provide an array of programs and services including a 29-bed emergency shelter; women, men and children's comprehensive community counselling programs, 8-bed children's mental health facility for youth impacted by family violence and abuse, 9-unit second stage housing program, and as of December, 2017, an On-Reserve Sexual Assault Centre that offers counselling and support for Indigenous women, men and children impacted by sexual violence.

Ganohkwasra has worked on a number of initiatives over the years, too many to list, but summarized in the following:

- Community education initiatives ie. Community Walk Against Community Violence, Development of Family Violence Prevention Safety App; Development of Sexual Assault Awareness Books and Children's Books.
- Conferences, Workshops and Trainings on Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women, Men and Children, ie. 30- hour Family Violence Prevention Training.
- Community Concert on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, in conjunction with the Six Nations MMIWG families and Chief Ava Hill.
- The Embrace Her With Love Collective (Six Nations families of MMIWG, Ganohkwasra and Chief Ava Hill) were awarded the 2016 recipient for Exceptional Achievement on Behalf of Victims and Victims Services by the Ministry of Attorney General for their programming they deliver to our community providing education and awareness on MMIWG at Six Nations.
- Mentorship for new Ontario Indigenous Shelter and all Ontario Indigenous Shelters in Ontario, ie. The development of a 15- hour Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Distance Learning DVD for Indigenous Shelter Providers.

On average, Ganohkwasra provides counselling services to 2,000 individuals per year who are seeking safety, support and healing from family violence, sexual assault and abuse. Ganohkwasra is definitely one of the leaders on ending violence against Indigenous women, children and men in the province. Their unique counselling services which integrate Indigenous family violence prevention expertise with Haudenosaunee culture/tradition and energy-based healing modalities has resulted in their long waiting list of community members awaiting counselling services from their organization.

In January of 2017, Ganohkwasra/Six Nations historically was approved for one of the very first Sexual Assault Centres on a First Nation Territory in Canada. Ganohkwasra has strongly advocated for a Sexual Assault Centre for over 30 years. The

Ganohkwasra Sexual Assault Centre officially opened its doors on March 5, 2018 to a waiting list of Six Nations women, men and children waiting for sexual violence counselling services.

Six Nations and the National Inquiry on MMIWG

Many of the Six Nations families of MMIWG have decided to not participate in the National Inquiry due to concerns about the management of the Inquiry process, and instead focus on supporting each other and educating the community on MMIWG. The Six Nations Elected Council and Ganohkwasra Family Assault Support Services understand and respect the value and intent of the National Inquiry and its possible implications for positive change for our current membership and future generations. Therefore, Six Nations of the Grand River remains deeply committed to ending violence against Indigenous women and men on all levels. It is our hope that the final report of the National Inquiry on MMIWG identifies recommendations to eradicate violence, injustice and abuse from our families, communities, systems, societies and nations.

PART III: MOVING FORWARD – RECOMMENDATIONS

The Indigenous Caucus of the Executive Committee is prepared to continue its work in the Ontario landscape and to further the scope and contribute on a national scale collectively with other provinces, territories and Indigenous organizations.

Indigenous partners have written these principles and recommendations in spirit with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, the United Nation's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other international recommendations.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- All recommendations must be implemented with the understanding of historical and current colonialist, assimilationist attitudes and practices by mainstream and the public.
- All recommendations must be implemented with the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous people and community organizations.
- All recommendations must be implemented in a collaborative, co-developed manner with Indigenous women and Indigenous community organizations.
- All recommendations must be implemented with the understanding that a strategy to address violence against Indigenous women and girls must be led by Indigenous women and girls on every level of implementation.
- All recommendations must be implemented with a culturally-relevant gender-based analysis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Create a sustainable National Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous women and girls
 - a. Based on the structure of the *Walking Together* Executive Committee to End Violence Against Indigenous Women
 - b. Create a permanent, legislated body, such as a Secretariat, that can provide administrative support to the Executive Committee to the National Strategy
 - c. Develop sustainable funding allocation models to address and prevent violence against Indigenous women
 - d. The National Strategy must be a true cross-governmental approach, engaging all relevant federal departments and agencies
 - e. The National Strategy must receive commitments and fulsome engagement by each province and territory
2. Cross-jurisdictional legislative and policy review to ensure compatibility with guiding principles to end violence against Indigenous women and girls.

3. Create an Indigenous-led body for research data on the issues related to violence against Indigenous women and girls.
4. Transparent Communications Strategy be implemented in order to promote accountability.
5. To participate in such a strategy Indigenous community organizations require capacity funding and support, especially when their service scope is often much greater than what is officially recognized as their role.
6. Community-based programming to support victims and witnesses of violence.
7. That safe houses and shelters which can also act as community gathering spaces be available to support women in their home communities without the necessity of travelling to urban centres to be safe.
8. Funding, training, and capacity to administer sexual assault kits in every Indigenous community for victims who do not wish to leave their home community in the immediate period of time following an assault.
9. That all health services, including mental health supports, be available at the community level for all First Nations people without the necessity of leaving home.
10. To bring back child welfare into the exclusive jurisdiction of Indigenous communities.
11. To implement a system whereby youth who have transitioned out of care are supported through follow-up and tracking.
12. Federal government immediately address the housing crisis in Indigenous communities through the funding of the development and construction of additional housing solutions that are grounded in the everyday, real-life experiences of community members and their right to live in safe and livable communities.
13. To support the establishment and implementation of Community Justice Centres to improve the experience of Indigenous people with the criminal justice system by offering them a wholistic and culturally appropriate experience with a central focus on restorative justice.
14. To ensure that government funding reporting requirements be minimized with less bureaucratic oversight with more autonomy and flexibility at the community level for how funding is utilized.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: *A Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women*

Appendix B: *Walking Together* Year 1 Progress Report

Appendix C: *Walking Together* Year 2 Progress Report

FIGURES

Figure 1: Sweatlodge in a maximum security yard

Figure 2: Addressing violence against Indigenous women in Ontario timeline, from *Walking Together Year 2 Progress Report*

Figure 3: Strategic Directions from *A Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women*

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