

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAY

Level 2





Coordination

Amanda Moniz (NETWORK)
Elisa Cohen-Bucher (Mikana)
Geneviève Sioui (Concordia University)



Research, content creation and writing

Alexandrine Sioui

With contribution from

Amanda Moniz
Elisa Cohen-Bucher
Geneviève Sioui



Graphic design by

Leilani Shaw

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Foundation of Greater Montréal



DEAR READER,

In the first level of the Decolonial Toolbox, you learned how to speak about Indigenous realities with clarity and respect. That first step was about grounding yourself and sharing mutual vocabulary to **move into more difficult truths and conversations**. With this new foundation, we are ready to continue our journey.

Level 2 takes you into the history of so-called Canada—a **history built on colonial strategies meant not just to control Indigenous Peoples, but to erase them**. For over 150 years, Indigenous Peoples have been subjected to laws and policies that impact every aspect of life: governance, identity, land, culture and family relationships. This history is heavy and painful, but it's also shared. **If you live on these lands, it's part of your story too—and you carry a responsibility to learn it.**

Level 2 begins in 1876 with the passing of the Indian Act and walks you through more than a century of **colonial strategies that continue to shape the present**. Here, dear reader, the residential “schools,” the forced relocation of the High Arctic, the slaughter of Inuit sled dogs, the Sixties Scoop, the Millennial Scoop, and the ongoing violence against Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people, **no longer lives in the past, intentionally hidden, as they were**. They rise to the surface and are exposed for all to witness.

Engaging with this material is not easy. It may stir grief, sadness, guilt, and anger. We encourage you to find support as you navigate through these pages, and to remember that the emotions that surface can be **turned into fuel for action** that is grounded in accountability. **Decolonization is not a destination**. It's a journey of unlearning, relearning, listening and making space for these stories. It is the intentional practice of becoming a better ally, repeatedly.

As you begin this level, we ask you to be open-minded. **This is not only about looking back, it's about understanding the foundations of the present so that together, we can move toward a more just and honest future**. Take your time. Be gentle with yourself and know that this learning is part of a lifelong path of allyship and decolonization.

“You are not responsible for the past. However, now that you are educated, if, in 20 years, you have still done nothing, then yes, you will be responsible.”

Alexandre Nequado, Atikamekw linguist

STATEMENT OF GRATITUDE

In this level, we honour the Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, Survivors, and the families who have shared **their stories and experiences to make this education possible**. Their courage in speaking these truths, despite the ongoing violence of systemic racism and oppression, allows us to learn and work towards meaningful changes. Their voices form the foundation of our understanding, calling us to accountability. As you move through this level, **we ask that you carry their stories with respect and commit to turning this knowledge into action**.



COLONIAL STRATEGIES

When we talk about settler colonialism, we are referring to cases where settlers come to a new territory that does not belong to them in order to occupy it permanently and assert their sovereignty over it.²

Settlers rely on the displacement, elimination and assimilation of Indigenous peoples to gain access to the land. Their oppression becomes a structure; new political and economic systems are put in place to replace Indigenous societies.³ This colonial structure does not come to an end when the adherence to the European metropole ceases⁴ but rather it is an ongoing phenomenon characterized by the continuous occupation of the land.

I WANT TO GET RID OF THE INDIAN PROBLEM...

Our objective is to continue until there is not an Indian that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department...

DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT, INDIAN AFFAIRS DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT, 1920.⁵

In this section, we will present examples of colonial strategies that were used to eliminate, assimilate and displace Indigenous peoples:

- * THE INDIAN ACT
- * RESIDENTIAL "SCHOOLS"
- * SIXTIES AND MILLENNIAL SCOOPS
- * DOG SLAUGHTER
- * FORCED RELOCATION TO THE HIGH ARCTIC
- * VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND TWO-SPIRIT PEOPLE

² Wolfe, Patrick. *Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native*. *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no 4 (1 décembre 2006): 387-409

³ Kohn, Margaret, et Kavita Reddy. *Colonialism*. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2017.

⁴ Barker, Adam J. *The Contemporary Reality of Canadian Imperialism: Settler Colonialism and the Hybrid Colonial State*. *American Indian Quarterly* 33, no 3 (2009): 325.

⁵ National Archives of Canada, Record Group 10, vol. 6810, file 470-2-3, vol. 7, 55 (L-3) and 63 (N-3).



THE INDIAN ACT

The Indian Act has been structuring the Canadian government's relationship with First Nations for the last 150 years. The law was passed in 1876 to control and govern all aspects of "Indian life". It only applies to First Nations, not to Inuit or Métis. Measures implemented by the Indian Act include:

- **Mandatory residential "school" attendance;**
- **Creation of reserves & Band Councils as a governing body;**
- **Outlawing cultural practices, objects and spaces;**
- **Renaming individuals with European names or numbers;**
- **Revoking First Nations status from women who married a non-Indian.**

The Indian Act received amendments over the years removing some of these measures but the law remains in place today and continues to affect First Nations' human rights.

- **It establishes reserve land as Crown land, which means First Nations are not allowed to own the land that they live on.**
- **It dictates the management of Band Council resources.**

The Indian Act Said What?

Native Women's Association of Canada

This infographic by the Native Women's Association of Canada provides a timeline of the various policies implemented by the Indian Act.



The Indian Act Explained

The Agenda

In this interview, Bob Joseph of the Gwawa'enuk Nation provides an in-depth explanation of many misunderstood aspects of the Indian Act.



The Indian Act: What to do with it

The Agenda

Roundtable between Dr. Suzanne Stewart of the Dene Nation, Professor Douglas Sanderson of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Russ Diabo of the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation, and Bob Joseph of the Gwawa'enuk Nation. They discuss the reasons the Indian Act is still in place today, and what we should do with this piece of legislation.



Got Status?

Indian Status in Canada, sort of explained

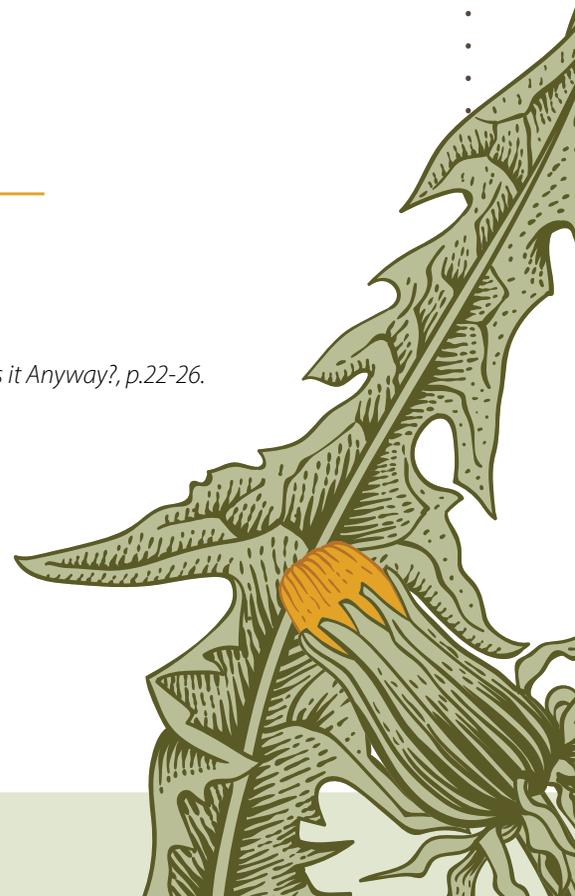
Indigenous Issues 101, Chelsea Vowel

In this blog publication, Métis writer Chelsea Vowel explains how the Indian Act determines who is and who is not recognized as an "Indian" and how these criterias continue to perpetuate gender discrimination.



Additional Resources about the Indian Act

- 📖 **21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act**, Joseph, B. Page Two Books.
- 📖 **Beyond Blood: Rethinking Indigenous Identity**, Palmater, P. Purich Publishing.
- 📖 **The Indian Act: The Foundation of Colonialism in Canada**, Diabo, R. *Whose Land is it Anyway?*, p.22-26.
- 🎧 **The Indian Act 101**, Unreserved with Rosanna Deerchild, CBC Podcasts.
- 🎧 **Is Canada's newest solution to the Indian Act worse than the problem?**, Media Indigena, Ep. #124 and #125.
- 🎧 **Reserve, Telling our Twisted Histories**, CBC Podcasts.



RESIDENTIAL "SCHOOLS"

Residential "schools" were officially imposed by the Canadian government through the Indian Act in 1920 and managed by religious congregations. The first church-run "schools" aiming to "kill the Indian in the child"⁶ was established in 1831.⁷

The *Indian Act* made attendance at these institutions mandatory for all Indigenous children. Approximately 150,000 children were forcibly removed from their families to be assimilated into settler culture. The majority of children experienced physical, emotional, psychological and sexual abuse, and many died while attending these "schools".

⁶ *The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). Canada's Residential Schools: The History, Part 1, Origins to 1939. Vol. 1. P. 105.*
⁷ *Residential School Timeline, National Center for Truth and Reconciliation.*

We are using quotation marks to express disagreement with the government's use of the word "schools" to designate these institutions.

Additional Resources about Residential "Schools"

- 📖 *Five Little Indians*, Good, M. HarperCollins Publisher.
- 📖 *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, Highway, T. Amsterdam University Press.
- 📖 *They Called Me Number One: Secrets and Survival at an Indian Residential School*, Sellars, B. Talonbooks.
- 📺 *Indian Horse*, Campanelli, S. Devonshire Productions and Screen Siren Pictures.
- 👉 *Aboriginal Peoples and Historic Trauma: The processes of intergenerational transmission*, National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health.
- 👉 *Residential School Timeline*, Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- 📖 *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, 6 volumes.



Second Stories – It had to Be Done

Tessa Desnomie, NFB

In this short documentary, two Indigenous women who lived through the experience of residential "schools" share how it profoundly affected their lives.



School

Telling Our Twisted Histories, CBC Podcasts

In this episode, we hear from Indigenous peoples who share their stories and the impact residential "schools" had on the hearts, minds and spirits of their communities.



Grave Concerns

Media Indigena [Ep #269]

The host leads a conversation after the bodies of 215 missing children were recovered in Kamloops, British Columbia. The number of graves recovered has multiplied to over 9,000 and is expected to increase.



Residential School History

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

The NCTR website provides a space for education and dialogue where the truth about residential "schools" is honored and protected for future generations.



My Auntie survived residential school. I need to gather her stories before she's gone

Inendi, CBC Docs

In this short documentary, Anishinaabe activist Sarain Fox gathers the stories of her aunt, a residential "school" survivor.



SIXTIES AND MILLENNIAL SCOOPS

The Sixties and the Millennial Scoops refer to two governmental processes, separate in time but similar in impact, by which Indigenous children were separated from their families and communities without their consent. Between 1950 and 1980 more than 20,000 Indigenous children were removed from their homes, placed in foster care or adopted by non-Indigenous families throughout Canada and other countries such as Australia and Germany.

Many children were stripped of their cultural identity, and experienced emotional, psychological, sexual and/or physical abuse. The Sixties Scoop extended beyond the 1980s and into the Millennial Scoop, as Indigenous children continue to be disproportionately placed in foster care. In Kanata, 52% of children in care are Indigenous.⁷

⁷ *The Sixties Scoop Payoff: Canada's Strategy for Settling Colonialism*, Colleen Cardinal, 60s Scoop Network.



The Sixties Scoop

Stepping Stone series

This document explains how Indigenous children went from being forcibly removed from communities to attend residential "schools" to being removed from families and communities by provincial child welfare agencies.



The Sixties Scoop Payoff: Canada's Strategy for Settling Colonialism

Colleen Cardinal, 60s Scoop Network

In this article, Colleen Cardinal, a survivor of the Sixties Scoop, tells us about the impact of losing her culture. She also recounts the events that led up to a large compensation by the Canadian Government, and the way in which the process reopened old wounds for a lot of survivors.



Cindy Blackstock on Justice for First Nation Children

Warrior Life [Ep #11, 12 and 13]

In this three-part interview, McGill professor and social worker Cindy Blackstock from the Gitksan Nation talks about her work with Indigenous children in care. She also explains the case she recently won before the Human Rights Tribunal, which concluded that the Canadian Government was discriminating against First Nations children.



Child Welfare as an Arm of the Colonial State

Media Indigena [Ep #89]

In this episode of the podcast Media Indigena, host Rick Harp speaks with Sarah de Leeuw about the ongoing crisis of Indigenous child apprehensions in the welfare system.



I was taken from my home and raised as a "nice Jewish girl," but I'm Indigenous

Becoming Nakuset, CBC Docs

In this short documentary, Nakuset, who was taken from her home in Thompson, Manitoba, and adopted into a Jewish family in Tiohtiá:ke, tells the story of how she reclaimed her Indigenous identity.

Additional Resources about the Sixties and Millennial Scoops

- **Fighting for a Hand to Hold: Confronting Medical Colonialism against Indigenous Children in Canada**, Shaheen-Hussain, S. McGill-Queen's University Press.
- **Ohpikiihaakan-Ohpihmeh (Raised Somewhere Else): A 60s Scoop Adoptee's Story of Coming Home**, Cardinal, C. Roseway Publishing.
- **Birth of a Family**, Hubbard, T. NFB.
- **Daughter of a Lost Bird**, Pepion Swaney, B. Maker Media and Same Land Films LLC.

 **Finding Cleo, Missing and Murdered.** CBC Podcasts, S.2.

 **Ma Steals Larry the Cree Baby, Surviving the 60s Scoop,** *Coffee With My Ma*, Ep #4.

 **Another class action for another lost generation,** *Media Indigena*, Ep #153.

 **Identity lost and found: Lessons from the sixties scoop,** *Raven Sinclair, First Peoples Child & Family Review*.



DOG SLAUGHTER

In the 1950s to the 1980s, the RCMP deliberately killed about 20,000 sled dogs. In Inuktitut, sled dogs are called “qimmiit.” Inuit use qimmiit for transportation and hunting; they are an integral part of their culture and family. The killings of the dogs had an intergenerational impact on the Inuit. Without the qimmiit, Inuit were forced to settle into a sedentary lifestyle because their way of life was cut off.



QTC Final Report: Achieving Saimaqatigiingniq Qikiqtani Truth Commission [p.38-45]

The Qikiqtani Truth Commission was put together after Makivik Corporation called upon the federal government to launch a public inquiry into the killing of sled dogs. Refer to pages 38 to 45 of the final report for a summary of the Commission’s findings.



Echo of the last howl Makivik Corporation

This documentary, produced by Makivik Corporation, is meant to address the issue of the Inuit dog slaughter.



If the Weather Permits Elisapie Isaac, NFB

Artist Elisapie Isaac explores the daily intersection of tradition and modernity in Kangirsujuaq, Nunavik.

Additional Resources about the Dog Slaughter

 **The Right to Be Cold: One Woman’s Story of Protecting Her Culture, the Arctic and the Whole Planet,** *Watt-Cloutier, S.* Amsterdam University Press.

 **Okpik’s Dream,** *Rietveld, L.* Catbird Productions.

 **Sled Dogs,** *Atagutsiaq, I.* Inuktitut Magazine, p.59-63.

 **Regarding the Slaughtering of Nunavik “Qimmiit” (Inuit Dogs) from the mid-1950s to the late 1960s,** *Makivik Corporation*, p.43.

 **QTC Final Report: Achieving Saimaqatigiingniq,** *Qikiqtani Truth Commission*.



FORCED RELOCATION TO THE HIGH ARCTIC

As a means of asserting Canadian sovereignty over the Arctic during the Cold War, more specifically in 1953, the federal government displaced 97 Inuit from their homeland to the High Arctic. Contrary to what they had been promised by the government, the Inuit were not provided with the housing, food, support or services that they needed in order to survive in this new environment. They were not used to the conditions of the High Arctic and had difficulty finding food, water and adapting to these new environmental conditions. Many community members died from this displacement.



Grise Fiord

Quikiqtani Truth Commission [p.21-34]

This report on the community of Grise Fiord explains how the community was founded, the events that led up to the High Arctic Relocation and how the government broke many promises made to the people it relocated. Pages 21 to 34 of the report focus on the years 1950 to 1960, when the relocation took place.



Broken Promises - The High Arctic Relocation

Patricia Tassinari, NFB

This documentary presents how in the summer of 1953, the Canadian government relocated seven Inuit families from Northern Kepek to the High Arctic under false pretenses.



Martha of the North

Marquise Lepage, NFB

This documentary focuses on Martha Flaherty's lived experiences during the Canadian government's Inuit relocation project. This is the only resource you will have to pay for during this pathway.



Additional Resources about the Forced Relocations to the High Arctic

- 📖 **What I Remember, What I Know: The Life of a High Arctic Exile**, Audlaluk, L. Inhabit Media.
- 📺 **One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk**, Kunuk, Z.
- 📄 **QTC Final Report: Achieving Saimaqaatigiingniq**, Qikiqtani Truth Commission.
- 📄 **Resolute Bay**, Qikiqtani Truth Commission.
- 📄 **The High Arctic Relocation**, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.



VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND TWO-SPIRIT PEOPLE

With the colonial implementation of binary gender roles, Indigenous peoples saw their community roles dismantled. Most notably, the implementation of the Indian Act and other colonial policies eliminated their rights. The stereotyping and sexualization of Indigenous women coupled with their lack of rights led to the general acceptance of the violence affecting them. There is a lot of disagreement on the number of Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people that have gone missing, but Indigenous women's groups estimate the number to be around 4,000 from the 1980s to 2012.⁸

⁸ Brant, J. (2017). *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada*. Dans *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.

⁹ *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. (2018). *Lexicon of Terminology*.

TWO-SPIRIT

*"Two-Spirit or two-spirited is used by many Indigenous people for both sexual orientation and gender identity. It is a term to describe Indigenous people who are not limited to the gender binary, and who can move freely between the gendered identities. Two-Spirit describes a societal and spiritual role that people hold within traditional societies, as mediators, keepers of certain ceremonies, transcending accepted roles of men and women, and filling a role as an established middle gender. It is important to note that this is an English language umbrella term and that some Indigenous peoples have multiple recognized genders with their own terms."*⁹



Tina Fontaine Taken the Podcast

In this first episode of Taken the Podcast, Lisa Meeches, an Anishinaabe woman from Long Plain First Nation, sheds light on the story of Tina Fontaine, a 15-year-old girl whose body was pulled from the Red River in Winnipeg in 2015.



SQ Abuse, Women Break the Silence Enquête

In 2015, the TV show Enquête broadcasted their investigation into the sexual violence and abuse of power committed by Sûreté du Québec police officers towards Indigenous women living in Val D'Or.



Alisa Lombard on Forced & Coerced Sterilization Warrior Life, [Ep #38]

Mi'kmaq lawyer Alisa Lombard, who is currently working on a class action suit concerning the forced sterilizations of Indigenous women in Kanata, explains how the practice is a product of colonization.



Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada Jennifer Brant, The Canadian Encyclopedia

This article, written by Dr. Jennifer Brant of the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation, addresses the disproportionate rate of violence experienced by Indigenous women compared to the settler population.

Additional Resources about Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People

-  **Where will Tina Fontaine's Family Find Justice**, *Media Indigena*, Ep #104.
-  **Who killed Alberta Williams**, *Missing and Murdered*, CBC Podcast, S.1.
-  **Rustic Oracle**, *Bonspille Boileau*, S. Nish Media.
-  **Finding Dawn**, *Welsh, C.* NFB.
-  **Forever Loved: Exposing the Hidden Crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada**, *Level-Harvard, M. and Brant, J.* Demeter Press.
-  **The Break**, *Vermette, K.* House of Anansi Press.
-  **Reclaiming Power and Place: Final Report**, *National Inquiry into Missing Indigenous Women and Girls*.
-  **A Legal Analysis of Genocide**, *National Inquiry into Missing Indigenous Women and Girls*.

