



Photo: Elder Grace Redsky in Shoal Lake #40

AFP FELLOWSHIP PROJECT

Philanthropic sector & Truth and Reconciliation

Submitted by:

Sharon Redsky, 2018 AFP Fellow member

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INTRODUCTION

My name is Sharon Redsky and my full time employment is with Dakota Ojibway Child and Family Services. I am a resident of Winnipeg and First Nation member of Shoal Lake #40, with mixed heritage Ojibway-German. As an AFP Inclusive Giving Fellow, my goal is to encourage the philanthropic sector to support Truth and Reconciliation calls. The 2018 AFP Canada Fellowship program provides education, professional development and mentorship to 20 mid-level and emerging non-profit professionals from across Canada.

Project Overview and background

My AFP Fellowship project was intended to be an exploratory exercise for the purpose of gaining insight and with various stakeholders in the philanthropic sector about their knowledge, success and challenges in supporting the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. The limitation in the project was the short timelines and small sample size. In spite of this, it has proven to provide me with helpful perspectives.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada over a six year period heard testimony from over 6,000 Residential School Survivors from across Canada. In 2015, the Commission released their final reports and [94 calls to action](#). My interest in this areas stems from my mother as a young child was forcibly removed from her community of Shoal Lake #40 and placed in residential school. She passed at the age of 49 and I know that she had never fully recovered from her experiences of residential school. Although my family has been directly impacted by the legacy of residential school, we are still strong and resilient. I see this strength and resiliency in Indigenous communities all across Canada.

In November 2018, I had the pleasure of spending some time with Senator Murray Sinclair, who reminded me that everyone can embrace the principles of reconciliation, these can be found in the What We Have Learned, TRC Report (<http://trc.ca/about-us/our-mandate.html#Principles>).

I had asked him, “what actions can the can the philanthropic sector take? ”, Justice Murray Sinclair said “ the sector can support Indigenous cultural and language”.

Acknowledgment

Miigwetch (thank you) to all the participants who completed the questionnaires and agreed to shared their insights. I would like to express gratitude to Joan Blight, my AFP Fellowship mentor for her advice and generous support. In addition, I would like to acknowledge the Government of Canada, who made this project possible through their financial support for the AFP Fellowship. A special Miigwetch (thank you) to Ronit Yarosky, National Director Fellowship in inclusion and Philanthropy Program for her enthusiastic support of this project.

Methods

The questionnaire consists of ten questions using both quantitative and qualitative methods. They were designed to encourage insight and input into knowledge, success and challenges in supporting the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action.

A total of 16 individuals (*contributed anonymously*) who are involved in the philanthropic sector from across Canada completed the questionnaire.

KEY FINDINGS

Embarking on this project was such a valuable opportunity to gain insight from members in the philanthropic sector and has truly inspired me to direct my efforts in the following themes:

1. **Build Relationships** based on respect, acknowledgement of Canada's history has been identified as critical building blocks in moving forward together towards an equitable future.
2. **Engagement** has been identified as an important action but must be done in a way that recognises the importance and value of the Indigenous community as an equal partner.
3. **Education** about Truth and Reconciliation has been identified as a need to gain greater understanding and leadership.
4. **Impact investing** has been identified as an immediate way for the philanthropic sector to contribute to reconciliation and building capacity in the Indigenous community.

It is noteworthy to mention that the Philanthropic Community's Declaration of Action has been mentioned by a few participants as an important commitment from the philanthropy sector. Signed in June 2015, members of the philanthropic prepared the Declaration of Action to ensure that positive action on reconciliation will continue.

The declaration can be found on the Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada website (<http://www.philanthropyandaboriginalpeoples.ca/declaration/>)

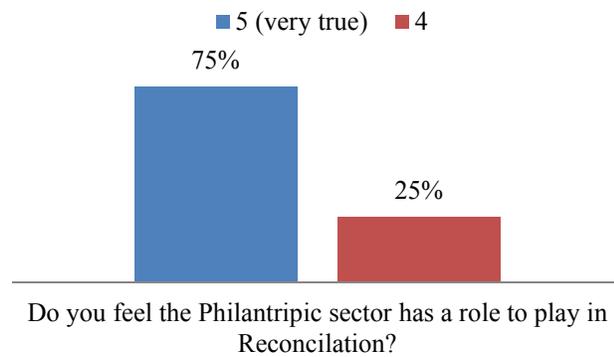
I feel it's important to mention an organization, who has been leader for the Indigenous community in the philanthropic sector, The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada. The Circle provides programs, education, training, and resources. I encourage everyone to join the circle.



The goal of the Circle is to connect with and support the empowerment of First Nations, Inuit and Métis nations, communities, and individuals in building a stronger, healthier future.

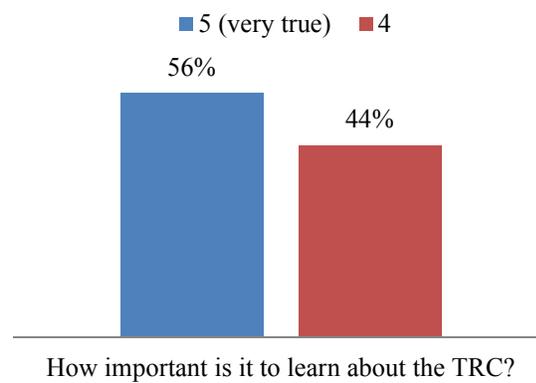
Philanthropic Sector Role in Reconciliation

There is an overwhelming response from the quantitative data (using a five-point scale, where: 5 = very true and 1 = not true) that there that the philanthropic sector has a role to play in reconciliation.



Need to learn more about Truth and Reconciliation

Participants identified a need to learn more about the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and Principles from the quantitative data (using a five-point scale, where: 5 = very true and 1 = not true).

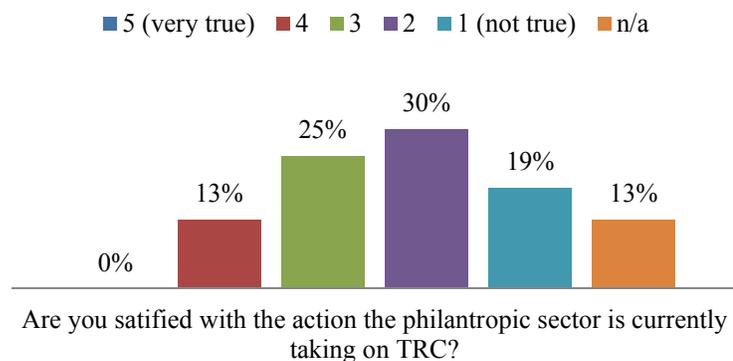


Medium to learn about TRC

Participants were asked the best medium to learn about the Truth and Reconciliation, their responses; reading stories off and online, through media, at courses and exercises, and by working directly with Indigenous people.

Satisfied with philanthropic sector actions on TRC

There was mixed responses when asked if they were satisfied with the action of the philanthropic sector was currently taking for Truth and Reconciliation from the quantitative data (using a five-point scale, where: 5 = very true and 1 = not true).



What successful reconciliation looks like

Participants were asked what successful reconciliation would look like to them, common themes;

- learning and acknowledgment of the past,
- building respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous,
- recognition of Indigenous people's rightful place, self-determination and full participation,
- true partnerships
- new ways to move forward,
- and redistribution of wealth.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In conclusion, this small sampling of data tells me there is a unique role for the philanthropic sector in contributing to the work of reconciliation. It will require the sector to do things differently by reaching out to invite the Indigenous community in shape the journey together. Reconciliation is a long term process and there is a need to develop good working relationships and a concerted effort to maintain these relationships. Positive actions we take today will have a direct impact on future generations.

I have learned critical values from my Ojibway culture and relatives, including that our connection to the land and each other is a sacred responsibility. There is so much richness and wisdom in traditional customs and practices that can influence transformative approaches. With this in mind and the opportunities for the philanthropic sector to take action, it brings me optimism for the future.

Below are few helpful ways to take immediate action;

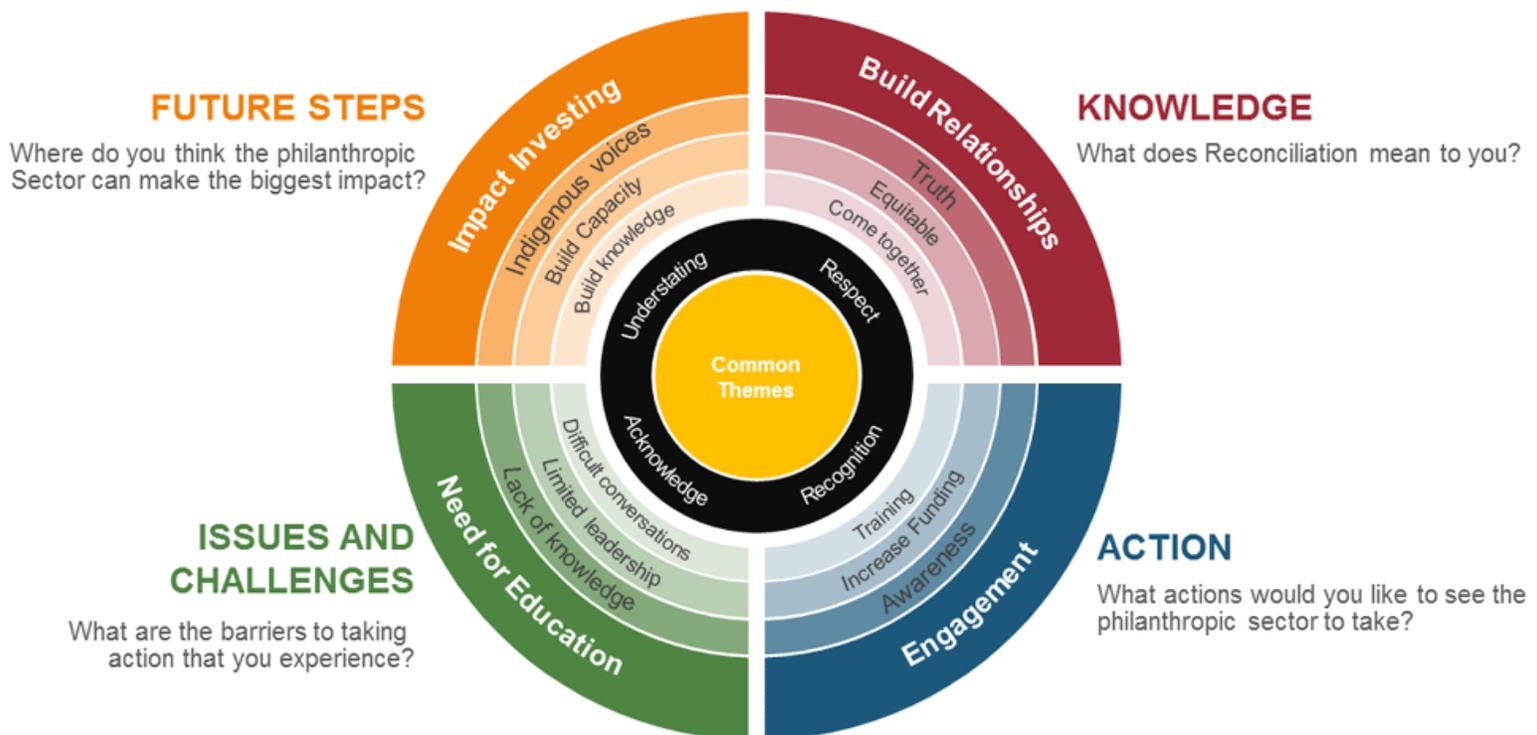
- Be an ally with Indigenous people in addressing inequalities
- Create spaces for voices to be heard
- Hire Indigenous people
- Procure service from Indigenous companies
- Elect Indigenous people to boards and leadership roles
- Invest in Indigenous led initiatives
- Promote the work of Indigenous agencies
- Make a donation to the National Truth and Reconciliation Centre



QUALITATIVE DATA SUMMARY

After review the qualitative data, it has confirmed that while there is genuine willingness to support the Truth and Reconciliation there remains a gap in understanding and leadership to see any impactful change. My hope is that this project report creates an urgency and renewed effort for the philanthropic sector and members to take actions.

A number of qualitative questions were asked and common themes from participants involved in the philanthropic are represented below. I felt it was important to reflect responses in the shape of a medicine wheel to reflect a holistic approach.



The following section goes into more detail on the qualitative data results and quantitative data results.

KNOWLEDGE SECTION

Qualitative Data Results

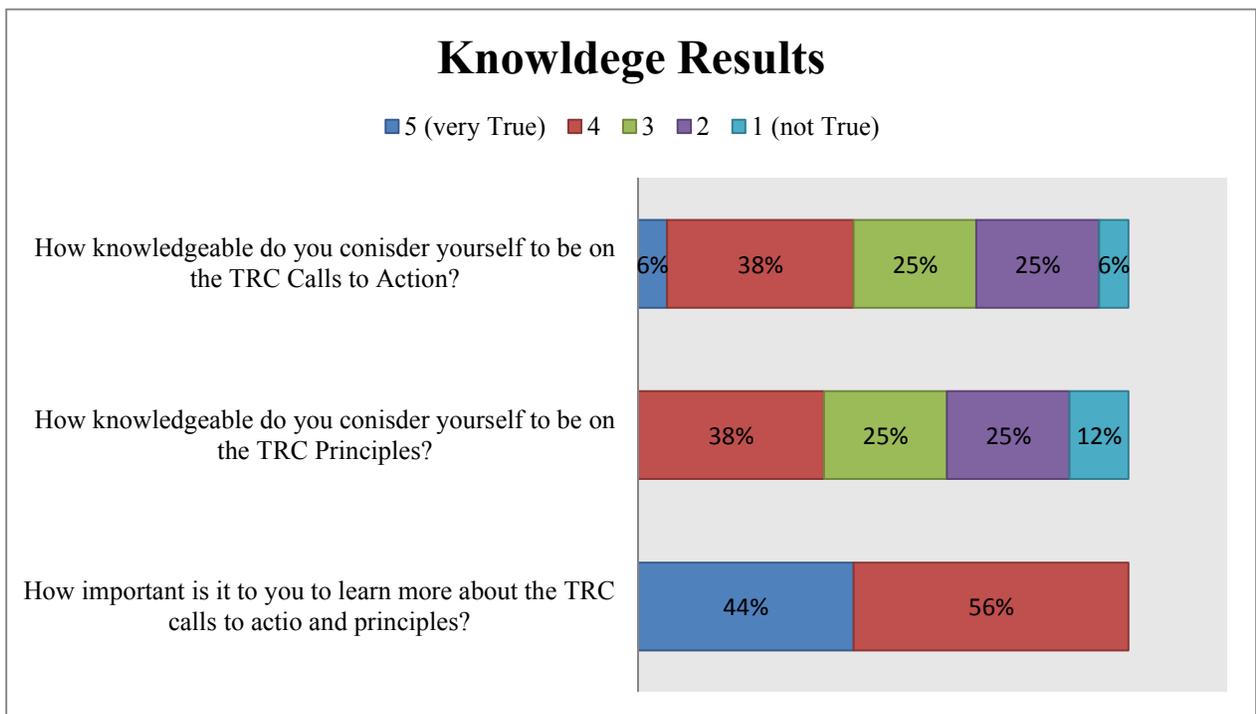
Participants were asked what reconciliation means to them. Below are common themes;

- Build Relationships based on respect and understanding
- Learning the truth of Canada's history
- Acknowledgement of the past
- Moving away from power imbalance to equitable partnerships
- Collaboration
- Decolonization



Quantitative Data Results

The responses (using a five-point scale, where: 5 = Very True and 1 = Not True) from participants involved in the philanthropic are represented below.

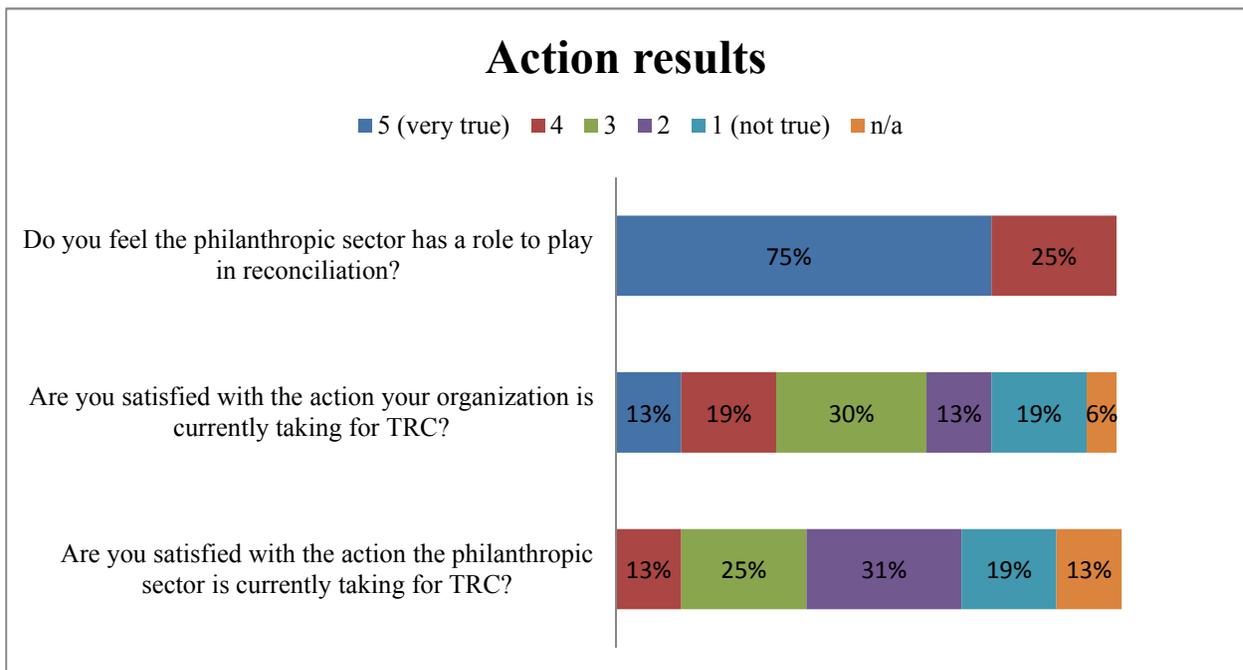


ACTION SECTION

Qualitative Data Results

Participants were asked what actions they would like to see the philanthropic sector to take. Below are common themes;

- Engagement and work collaboratively together
- Bring together the Indigenous and non-Indigenous
- Increase awareness
- Identify and funding for priorities
- Support training and education
- Develop policies and practices on inclusion and diversity
- Incorporate The Philanthropic Community's Declaration of Action



ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Qualitative Data Results

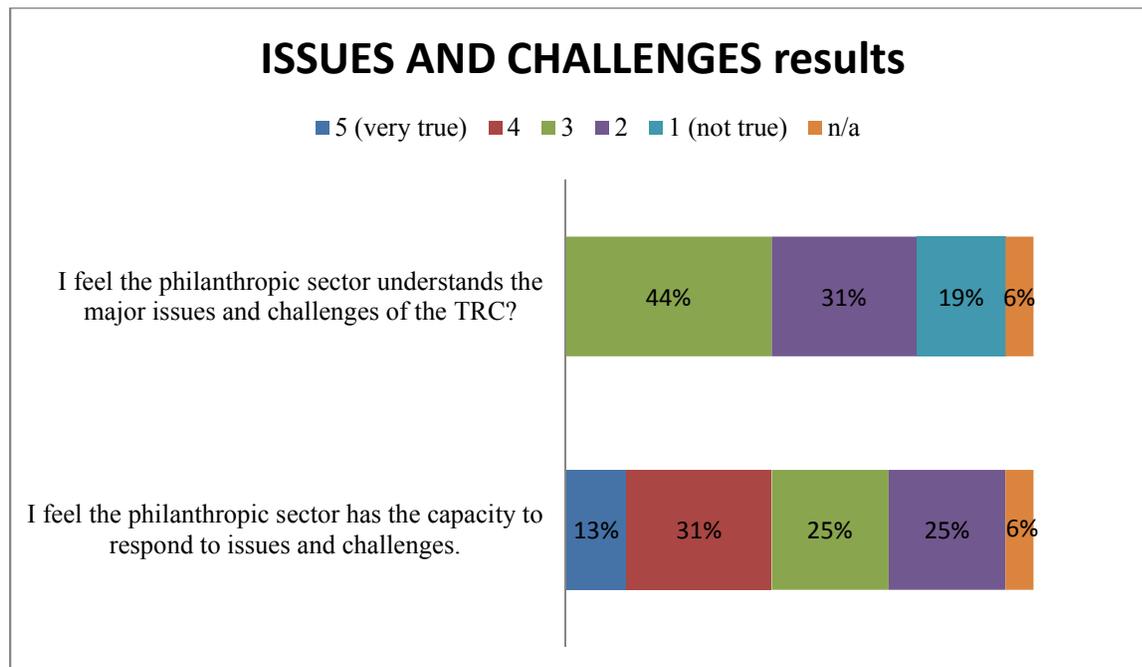
Participants were asked what barriers to taking action they experience. Below are common themes;

- Lack of understanding on the Truth and Reconciliation and history
- Limited leadership in prioritizing TRC
- Lack of connection to the Indigenous community
- Uncomfortable and difficult conversations
- Lack of knowledge
- Prejudice and stereotypes



Quantitative Data Results

The responses (using a five-point scale, where: 5 = Very True and 1 = Not True, in addition n/a) from participants involved in the philanthropic are represented below.



FUTURE STEPS

Qualitative Data Results

Participants were asked In terms of supporting the Truth and Reconciliation, where they think the philanthropic sector can make the biggest impact over the next few years. Below are common themes;

- Impact investing in projects
- Recognition for Indigenous voices and values
- Build capacity for the Indigenous community to become part of the sector
- Need for educational sessions to build knowledge
- Hire and include Indigenous people
- Show examples and celebrate successes
- Incorporating The Philanthropic Community's Declaration of Action



Photo: Shoal Lake #40

REFERENCES

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA (TRC)

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was established in 2008 by the Government of Canada under the terms of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.

The purpose of the TRC was to:

- reveal to Canadians the complex truth about the history and the ongoing legacy of the church-run residential schools, in a manner that fully documents the individual and collective harms perpetrated against Aboriginal peoples, and honours the resilience and courage of former students, their families, and communities; and
- guide and inspire a process of truth and healing, leading toward reconciliation within Aboriginal families, and between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal communities, churches, governments, and Canadians generally. The process was to work to renew relationships on a basis of inclusion, mutual understanding, and respect.

Source - <https://nctr.ca/archives-pages.php#truth>

THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION (NCTR)

NCTR was created to preserve the memory of Canada's Residential School system and legacy. Not just for a few years, but forever. Officially opening in the summer of 2015, the NCTR will be the permanent home for all statements, documents, and other materials gathered by the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)*.

The NCTR will ensure that:

- Survivors and their families have access to their own history
- Educators can share the Residential School history with new generations of students
- Researchers can delve more deeply into the Residential School experience
- The public can access historical records and other materials to help foster reconciliation and healing
- The history and legacy of the Residential School system are never forgotten

Source - <http://nctr.ca/about-pages.php#mandate>

PRINCIPLES OF RECONCILIATION

1. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the framework for reconciliation at all levels and across all sectors of Canadian society.
2. First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, as the original peoples of this country and as self-determining peoples, have Treaty, constitutional, and human rights that must be recognized and respected.
3. Reconciliation is a process of healing of relationships that requires public truth sharing, apology, and commemoration that acknowledge and redress past harms

4. Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples' education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity.
5. Reconciliation must create a more equitable and inclusive society by closing the gaps in social, health, and economic outcomes that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.
6. All Canadians, as Treaty peoples, share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships.
7. The perspectives and understandings of Aboriginal Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers of the ethics, concepts, and practices of reconciliation are vital to long-term reconciliation.
8. Supporting Aboriginal peoples' cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, and connections to the land into the reconciliation process are essential.
9. Reconciliation requires political will, joint leadership, trust building, accountability, and transparency, as well as a substantial investment of resources.
10. Reconciliation requires sustained public education and dialogue, including youth engagement, about the history and legacy of residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal rights, as well as the historical and contemporary contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canadian society.

Source - <http://trc.ca/about-us/our-mandate.html#Principles>

UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is an international instrument adopted by the United Nations on September 13, 2007, to enshrine (according to Article 43) the rights that “constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world.” The UNDRIP protects collective rights that may not be addressed in other human rights charters that emphasize individual rights, and it also safeguards the individual rights of Indigenous people. The Declaration is the product of almost 25 years of deliberation by U.N. member states and Indigenous groups.

Source - https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf