

DISRUPTING CURRENT COLONIAL PRACTICES AND STRUCTURES

IN THE IMMIGRATION AND NON-PROFIT SECTOR



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WELCOME



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AMSSA acknowledges that this work has taken place within the ancestral, traditional and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəy̓ əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Tsleil-Waututh nations.

STATEMENT OF LEARNING AND PEDAGOGICAL STRUCTURE OF THE BOOKLET

This work on disrupting current colonial practices in the immigration and non-profit sector centres Indigenous knowledge on the impact of colonization and the process of settler reflexivity. It also centres the calls to action of Indigenous nations as the pathway forward for settlers wanting to be accountable to Indigenous peoples. Settler reflexivity is considered a means to ethical action and solidarity with Indigenous peoples, communities and nations.

REFLEXIVITY IS A STEP IN A LARGER PROCESS

it is by no means the destination or end goal. As such, this work centres Indigenous peoples. This is critical to mitigating the erasure of Indigenous people's experiences by refusing the tendency to prioritize settler learning needs, emotional reactions and existential crises when confronting colonialism – a tendency that reflects a sense of entitlement that is indicative of the colonial domination that persists in all interactions and relationships with Indigenous peoples. The resistance of Indigenous peoples to this domination has been occurring on all levels of our existences for over 500 years on daily, weekly, monthly, yearly bases and this is important to honour.

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND CONSULTATION

Coast Salish Elder Roberta Price has been directly involved in different aspects of AMSAA's larger project to increase its accountability to and solidarity with Indigenous Peoples, communities and nations. We would like to extend great and most genuine thanks and respect to Elder Roberta for her support and for her blessing of this booklet.

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INTRODUCTION

To stand as settlers in genuine and authentic solidarity with Indigenous Peoples and nations in our ancestral, unceded and occupied Homelands is an exhortation to awareness, integrity, honour and accountability as well as a call to action. Standing in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples and nations is to first learn of what is and has been done in your name as a citizen, permanent resident, refugee or immigrant to Canada.

To stand in solidarity with Indigenous peoples requires settlers to hold the complexity of, at once, being overwhelmed, repulsed, disgusted, angry and heartbroken in the face of human atrocity while simultaneously realizing that you are a direct beneficiary of it. Canada is built on the attempted genocide of Indigenous peoples. And this genocide is still occurring. This ongoing attempted genocide of Indigenous peoples and the continued invasion and occupation of our unceded Homelands is the foundation of Canada's government, economy and larger society. What atrocities Canada has and continues to commit is being done in the name of its citizens and residents. As citizens and permanent residents of Canada, there is a collective accountability that is critical to realize.

Standing in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples and nations occurs within the current realities of colonial empire and global capitalism (Waziyatawin, 2012). These are powerful systems that rely on its individual citizens to lend legitimacy to its actions-no matter how egregious. To be in genuine and authentic solidarity with Indigenous Peoples and nations is to reject these claims to legitimacy and to intervene in the state-based violence being perpetrated in your name. Standing in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples and nations is to recognize, respect and centre the legitimate governing authority of Indigenous nations in our own territories. It is to work to hold the Government of Canada accountable for land theft and to insist that all that has been stolen from Indigenous Peoples and nations be returned and restored: territories, waters, forests, wildlife, plants, authority, knowledge and dignity. As Indigenous Peoples, it is our shared cultural responsibility to take care of the land. As settlers, it is your responsibility to intervene in Canada's desecration of our territories and its attempts to annihilate us, the Original Peoples.



Our hearts want justice. It is what unites us as human beings. Preparing and fortifying oneself in mind, heart and spirit for such solidarity is imperative-it is the precondition for relationships with Indigenous Peoples that are based on justice, respect and collective responsibility. Understanding that strong reactions to human atrocity is healthy is a first but important step. Feeling the sense of collective guilt, shame and blame for what has been done to Indigenous Peoples is a necessary pain and discomfort. Learning to channel the life force of these emotions is vital to generating a sense of individual and collective accountability that can begin to right what has been wronged against Indigenous Peoples. Developing integrity and honour as a settler means learning to not absolve oneself of the collective responsibility for ongoing genocide and to do something about it (Tuck & Wade, 2012).

IN THE WORDS OF VIKKI REYNOLDS (2019)

***YOU DO NOT "RECONCILE" GENOCIDE.
YOU STOP IT!***

A NOTE TO READERS

As you read through this booklet, honour the feelings you experience as you learn about atrocity. Notice and observe your defensiveness. Acknowledge your collective responsibility for colonization and centre the Indigenous calls to action as a guide for how to proceed in a good way.



THIS BOOKLET WILL TAKE YOU THROUGH THIS PROCESS BY:

PART I: centering Indigenous Peoples and ways in our own territories;

PART II: speaking the truth of Canadian colonialism historically and currently;

PART III: describing how racism is learned and legitimized;

PART IV: supporting a reflective process to disrupt current colonial practices;

PART V: holding up the calls to action currently being made by Indigenous Peoples.



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PART 1

SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL: THE HEART OF INDIGENOUS HISTORY ON GREAT TURTLE ISLAND

Indigenous nations, in all of our diversity, have existed on Great Turtle Island (known by non- Indigenous people as North America) since time immemorial. We have existed on these territories based in our own diverse traditions: with our own complex governance and kinship systems, with our own profound and expansive worldviews, language systems and philosophies, with our own ways of teaching each other and passing time honoured knowledge down through the generations about how to exist in harmony and respect with the Earth and All of our Relations (the Earth, the Sky, the Spirit World, the waterways, the forests, the animals, birds and sea life, the plants and Sacred Medicines).

As Indigenous Peoples, we come from Great Nations and Confederacies. We are the rightful Hosts, Leaders, Teachers and Knowledge Keepers in our own Homelands. We hold these roles sacred and all of the profound and expansive responsibilities that come with it. This is a most essential acknowledgement of Indigenous history and culture. Our abilities and capacities to live in our own ways and to fulfill our sacred roles and responsibilities as Hosts and Leaders in our own Homelands has been deeply disrupted for over 500 years. However, it is important to honour that our Indigenous ways of existing in these territories have existed for thousands and thousands of years. We are here and we will be here for thousands and thousands of years to come. Our Indigenous cultures are based in respect, reverence, harmony, balance, courage, integrity and dedication to peace and good relations with All of our Relations. In the Indigenous way, the land does not belong to us, we belong to the land.



PART II

THE HISTORY OF CANADA: WHAT IS OFTEN NOT TAUGHT OR ACKNOWLEDGED

The land now known as Canada is unceded (which means stolen) and occupied territory. And within its borders, Indigenous nations, Peoples and cultures have been under attack for over 500 years. As Indigenous Peoples, we have been violently displaced and made refugees in our own Homelands. This is not our history. As Indigenous Peoples and nations, we have histories that exist on these lands since time immemorial. This history is the history of Canada, it is your history as a Canadian and it is one of "invasion, occupation and war" (Hill, 2010). Though Canada has an international reputation for being a humanitarian state and though many have been welcomed as refugees, immigrants, permanent residents and citizens, this has not been the experiences of the Original Peoples of these lands. In contrast to being a safe harbour and land of opportunity for many, Canada has deliberately attempted to annihilate Indigenous nations and Peoples in our own territories and in the process is responsible for mass land theft and ongoing atrocity.

500+ YEARS OF ATTEMPTED ONGOING GENOCIDE AGAINST INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

1492-1649

HONOURING OUR FALLEN RELATIVES

Within the first 100 years of colonization, 95 percent of our Indigenous relatives, who numbered in the hundreds of millions across Turtle Island, were killed because of military attack and the introduction of diseases like smallpox (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Duran & Duran, 1995; Thornton, 1987).

1650-1749

MASS DESECRATION OF OUR INDIGENOUS HOMELANDS

Treaties were entered into under threat of war, starvation, mass execution, fraudulent terms and/or have been violated by colonial governments that preceded the establishment of Canada. The vast forests, where trees averaged 250 feet tall, were being clear cut and destroyed, the waterways that were clean, clear and pure were being polluted and the wildlife that Indigenous nations coexisted with for millennia were being decimated en masse during this stage of colonization.

1750-1900 INVASION AND WAR. TERROR AND DESPAIR

Colonial forces attacked Indigenous nations with relentless force and brutality: mass slaughter, executions, forced relocations and war marked this period of colonial history. The world as we had known it for thousands of years as Indigenous Peoples was being destroyed and our ways of life attacked with an inconceivable brutality. The relentless attacks on our Indigenous ways of life caused waves of shock, grief, terror and despair on collective levels.

1850-1950: INDIAN ACT AND RESERVATION PERIOD

Under the Indian Act, which is federal law in Canada, Indigenous Peoples were defined as less than human. All aspects of Indigenous Peoples' existences were controlled by and dictated under the Indian Act: Indigenous nations were displaced from vast traditional territories to desolate pieces of land called reservations; the Band Council system of governance supplanted traditional governance systems; Indigenous women were dislocated from leadership roles; Sacred Ceremonies were criminalized; a pass system confining Indigenous Peoples to reservations was instituted; and substandard living conditions marked by mass starvation, overcrowding, lack of housing, medicine and other resources were imposed.

1890-1990 RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL PERIOD

The federal government operated over 130 residential schools across Canada and forced over 150,000 Indigenous children to attend them. The last one closed in 1996. This number does not account for the hundreds of residential schools run by churches. Indigenous parents were forced under threat of death, termination of treaty rights and imprisonment to surrender their children to the government. The residential schools were marked by brutal abuse, starvation, disease and many Indigenous children died there. It was a system designed to "kill the Indian in the child" (Duncan Campell Scott, Minister of Indian Affairs, 1913-1932). There are more than 100,000 survivors of residential schools alive today. The effects of the residential school system are felt transgenerationally.

***THE EFFECTS OF COLONIZATION HAVE NOT RELENTED,
COLONIZATION CONTINUES TO HAVE AN ONGOING IMPACT ON
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ACROSS TURKLE ISLAND***

ONGOING COLONIZATION

RECENT FACTS

- Indigenous Peoples have been made a minority population in our own Homelands: we are 5% of the Canadian population. However, the Office of Correctional Investigator reports that Indigenous people make up 30% of those incarcerated in federal prisons.
- Indigenous children 14 and under currently represent 7% of all children in Canada. Yet they account for 48% of all the children involved in the child welfare system.
- There are 40% more Indigenous children in the child welfare system today than at the height of the residential school system's operation.
- In 2014, an RCMP report identified 1,181 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Community reports estimate over 2,200 "Stolen Sisters". Since the 1970s, when the movement to recognize the violence against Indigenous women began, over 5,000 Indigenous women have been declared missing or murdered in Canada.
- In this era of Truth & Reconciliation, Indigenous lands are still being invaded by force and occupied by Canadian military in the face of Indigenous resistance to ongoing colonization: 1989 Innu protesting low level NATO test flights on their land; 1990 Mohawk community of Kanehsatà:ke protesting the development of a private golf course on Sacred Ancestral burial grounds; 1995 Shuswap First Nation protecting a Sacred Ancestral site at Gustafsen Lake; 2002 Grassy Narrows First Nations fighting mercury poisoning and deforestation; 2013 Elsipogtog First Nation protesting shale gas drilling on their lands; and most recently the Indigenous peoples of the Wet'suwet'en Territory protesting the development of gas pipelines where RCMP mobilized snipers to stop them.
- Many reservations do not have clean water: in 2018 alone there were over 174 drinking water advisories in over 100 First Nations. Attawapiskat First Nation Band Council has declared a state of emergency concerning the lack of access to safe water.

PART III

AN EDUCATION INTO RACISM: COLONIZATION IS STRUCTURAL AND SYSTEMIC

Colonization is ongoing. It is a relentless force that continues to attack and devastate the relationships that we hold sacred as Indigenous Peoples: relationship to land, water, plants and sacred medicines, to the animals, birds and sea life, to our ceremonies, to our Indigenous identities, and to each other which include our languages, philosophies and governance structures that have existed, since time immemorial, on Great Turtle Island.

Violence against Indigenous people is at the foundation of Canada's existence. It is systemic and structural. It is historical and ongoing. It is pervasive and insidious. This education into racism is in the water that we drink, it's in the electricity that powers and heats our homes, it's in the gasoline that fuels our cars, the real estate that is bought and sold as well as in the settler careers, families, communities and dreams that are built on Great Turtle Island.

Non-Indigenous people who live in Canada are educated into racism every time the federal, provincial and municipal governments usurp the legitimate governing authorities of Indigenous nations and control what are now defined as "resources" in our own Homelands (i.e., trees, mountains, wildlife, plants, rivers and land are our relatives in the Indigenous way). The dams that have and continue to displace Indigenous nations and Peoples from our territories; the industries that have polluted the air and the water of Indigenous communities; the pipelines that are currently threatening to disrupt and further destroy Indigenous Homelands and environments; and the very existence of the Canadian State on Turtle Island all educate settlers into racism by normalizing the oppression of Indigenous Peoples and the desecration of our territories.

The enactment of colonial power deeply affects our daily existences. Colonial systems are profoundly authoritative in shaping our realities. For settlers, who are the beneficiaries of colonization and attempted ongoing genocide, this is often unseen and unrecognized. The next section of this booklet will provide focused questions aimed at making transparent some of the ways that colonial power is active and enacted.

PART IV

PROVOCATIONS FOR REFLECTION: SETTLER ACCOUNTABILITY, ALLYSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

INDIGENOUS NATIONHOOD & HOMELANDS

- Do I know whose Indigenous homelands and ancestral territories I am on?
- What do I know and what do I need to learn about the Indigenous systems of governance, ways of life, histories, languages and philosophies that have existed on Great Turtle Island since time immemorial which continue to this day?
- How can I learn about the protocols of the Indigenous nations, on whose land I live and work, for settlers, newcomers and refugees?
- How is the protocol different from nation to nation?

SETTLER IDENTITY

- How am I positioning myself, individually and collectively, on unceded and occupied Indigenous Homelands and ancestral territories?
- Where are my people from?
- What are my migration/immigration paths to these territories in relation to Indigenous nations, communities and homelands?
- As a non-Indigenous person, what are the messages that I receive about my own belonging and entitlement to reside in unceded and occupied Indigenous territories?
- What are some of the ways that I accept these messages?
- What are some of the ways that I resist these messages?
- How do I understand my accountability to Indigenous Peoples and nations in their unceded Homelands in relation to my own specific experience of migration and settlement?
- Given the history of colonization, what are the social and political implications of identifying as a “Canadian”?

PART IV

PROVOCATIONS FOR REFLECTION: SETTLER ACCOUNTABILITY, ALLYSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

CANADIAN COLONIZATION HISTORICALLY

- What do I need to learn about the history of colonization in Canada?
- How can I understand the history of and between Indigenous nations as being distinct from the history of Canada and Canadian colonization?
- What do I know about the specific and unique impacts that colonization has had on the particular Indigenous communities and nations with whom I have (or hope to have) relationships?
- How can I bring an awareness of current and historical colonialism to all of my work in the immigration and non-profit sector-even when working with non-Indigenous individuals and organizations?

CANADIAN COLONIZATION CURRENTLY

- In this era of truth & reconciliation, what am I and my organization doing to honour Indigenous Peoples' rights to have the lands that were stolen returned to them?
- How am I participating (overtly, covertly, unintentionally or with ethical blindness) in the ongoing colonization of Indigenous Peoples?
- In what ways am I benefiting from colonization, individually and in relation to systemic settler privilege, such as disproportionate access to housing, education and employment?
- In what ways do I perpetrate colonialism and oppression through the construction of Indigenous Peoples, families and communities as unwell, broken and incapable?

PART IV

PROVOCATIONS FOR REFLECTION: SETTLER ACCOUNTABILITY, ALLYSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

ALLYSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- How might I be directed by, and accountable to, Indigenous Peoples in my work?
 - How do I prepare myself and my organization for it?
 - What would that look like in practice?
- How can I align my personal and professional actions with the protocols of the Indigenous nations on whose land I live and work?
- How can I and my organization hold the federal, provincial and municipal governments accountable for historic and ongoing colonization and injustices against Indigenous Peoples?
- How might I be taking spaces at the table with governments and social agencies in the absence of Indigenous people, communities and organizations? How can I resist this, individually and within my organization?
- How can I learn about what Indigenous nations and organizations consider acts of solidarity and allyship? And how can I support them?
- What does being in solidarity with Indigenous nations mean to me? What does it look like in practice?
- When did I engage in a recent act of solidarity in relation to Indigenous people and on-going resistance to colonization and genocide?
 - When did I refuse a recent invitation to act as an ally? Why?
 - What are the obstacles to my allyship? What small act of solidarity can I enact immediately?
- Despite my efforts and intentions to not replicate colonial oppression, and my acts as an ally in specific moments, how will I stay implicated as a settler, and not side with a potential sense of righteousness, or thinking I am a “good settler”?

PART IV

PROVOCATIONS FOR REFLECTION: SETTLER ACCOUNTABILITY, ALLYSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

IMMIGRATION AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

- What am I and my organization doing to centre Indigenous Peoples and nations as the rightful Hosts, Leaders and Governments in their own Homelands-especially as it concerns questions of immigration to their own territories?
- How can my organization be in right relations with Indigenous nations that respect Indigenous Peoples' terms?
 - How will we know this?
 - How can we engage Indigenous leadership in evaluating this accountability?
- How does my organization's current practices replicate colonial dynamics?
- What messages are given to my organization about its rights to access funding for Indigenous nations and communities?
 - How have I accepted these messages?
 - Where do I think those rights to a sense of legitimacy come from?
- How might the immigration and the non-profit sectors address the ways that colonial structures are entrenched in their organizational practices and policies? What changes would be needed?
- In what ways do I consider myself and/or my organization as being 'in partnership' with Indigenous People? Why/why not?
 - Does my consideration of "partnership" change when thinking of a context of collective accountability where I and my organization are on the benefiting side of attempted and ongoing genocide and violence against Indigenous people done in the name of Canadians?
 - If so, how does it change?
- Are my actions and my organization's acts of "reconciliation" aligned with what Indigenous Peoples are saying or are they being informed by settler governments and organization?

PART V

CALLS TO ACTION BY INDIGENOUS NATIONS (2020): WHAT YOU & YOUR ORGANIZATION CAN DO TO ACT IN SOLIDARITY & ALLYSHIP

- Support the Tsleil-Waututh Sacred Trust Initiative whose mandate is to stop the proposed Trans Mountain Expansion (TMX) tanker and pipeline project that threatens to destroy Tsleil Waututh and Coast Salish territory
(<https://twnsacredtrust.ca/>)
- Commit as an organization to reading and supporting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action
(<http://nctr.ca/reports.php>)
- Support the First Nations Caring Society who promotes the rights of Indigenous children who are harmed in the child welfare system
(<https://fncaringsociety.com/7-free-ways-make-difference>)
- Commit as an organization to reading the Red Women Rising Report on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and to supporting the calls to action
(<http://dewc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/MMIW-Report-Final-March-10-WEB.pdf>)
- Additional reading is the report from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the recommendations
(<https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>)
- Support Ellen Gabriel and Kanien'kéha:ka (Mohawk) of Kanehsatà:ke in protecting unceded Homelands from further development (calls for action at the end of the press release:
(<https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/canada-must-stop-land-fraud-press-release-of-the-mohawks-of-kanesatake>)
- Support the Wet'suwet'en Peoples resistance to the TransCanada Coastal GasLink pipeline
(<https://unistoten.camp/supportertoolkit/>)
- Support Attawapiskat First Nations in pressuring the federal government to build the necessary infrastructure for the community to have clean and safe water
(<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/attawapiskat-water-quality-emergency-1.5204652>)
- Support Grassy Narrows First Nations' call for action against mercury poisoning of the community from corporate mining and against deforestation
(<http://freegrassy.net/>)
- Support Indigenous Peoples calls to action to stop the opioid crisis
(https://www.ubcic.bc.ca/ubcic_recognizes_opioid_crisis_as_a_state_of_emergency)

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**THANK YOU FOR TURNING YOUR GOOD MIND AND YOUR GOOD
HEART TO WHAT HAS BEEN SHARED HERE.**

ALL MY RELATIONS

