



RED RIVER MÉTIS SURVIVOR SYMPOSIUM REPORT



Our Nation, Our Communities, Ourselves



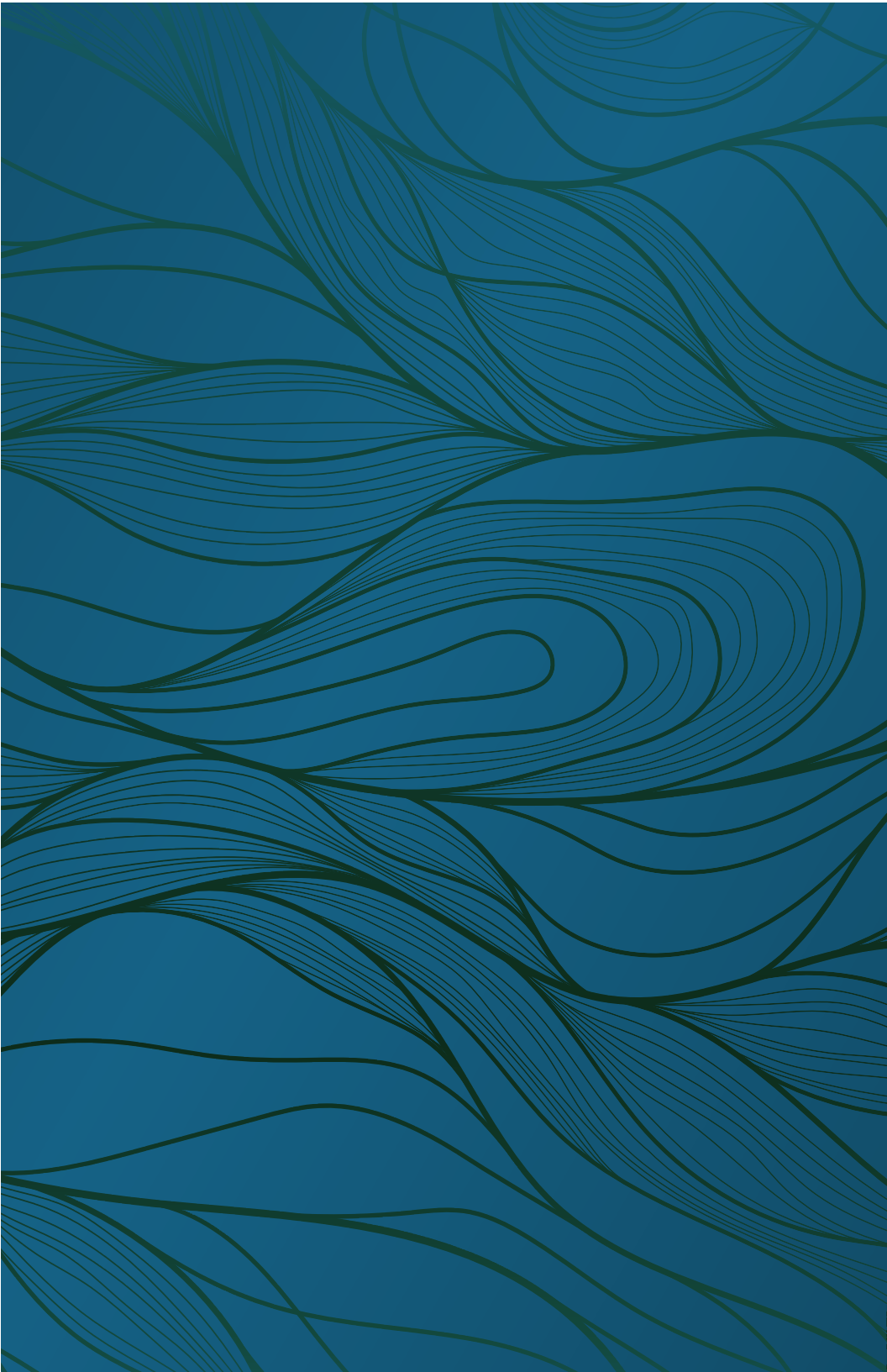
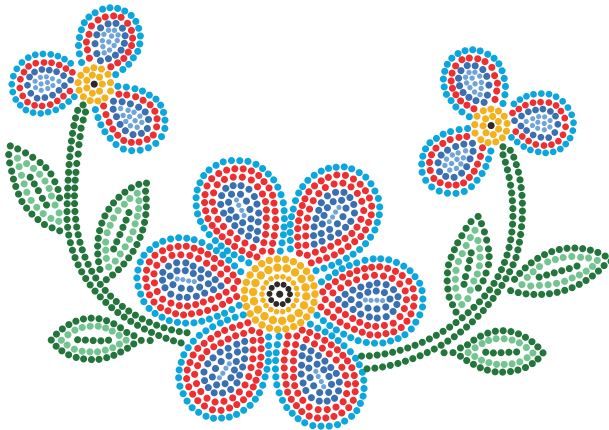


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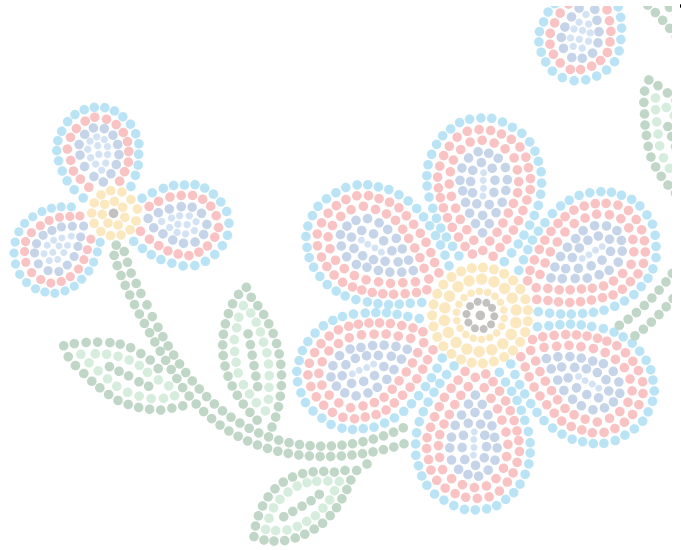


Dedication Statement:

To the survivors who bravely attended the Red River Métis Survivors Symposium, and to those who could not be with us in person but whose spirits were present, we dedicate this report. Your strength, resilience, and courage in sharing your stories have been the guiding light in our journey towards healing and reconciliation.

The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) stands committed to honoring your experiences, advocating for your rights, and supporting your path to healing. This report is a testament to our unwavering dedication to addressing the historical injustices faced by our nation, ensuring that your voices are heard, and your stories are preserved.

We recognize the profound impact of the Sixties Scoop, Residential, and Day Schools on the lives of our people, and we are steadfast in our commitment to fostering a supportive environment where our children can grow up knowing their history, proud of their identity, and secure in their future.



Message from President David Chartrand

To the Survivors, Family Members, and the Resilient Red River Métis Community,

I was so proud to be with you all at the Survivors Symposium for Red River Métis Sixties Scoop, Residential and Day School survivors. The courage you showed, and the value you placed on the community as part of your healing journey, were very clear to me as I spoke with you and heard your stories. It's clear that the Symposium was an important way to unite us, highlighting our shared experiences and the steadfast support the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) has for you and all our survivors.

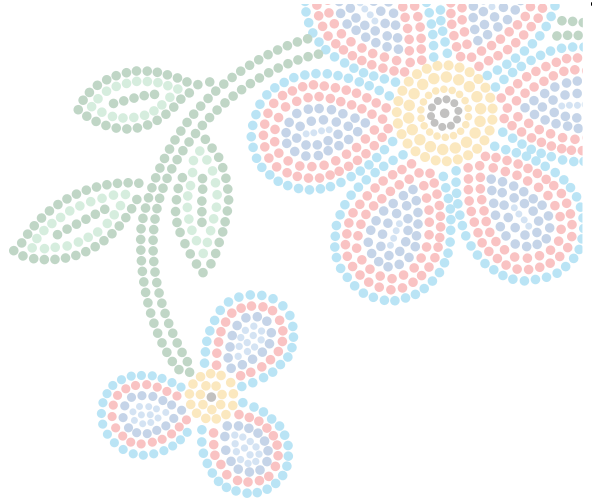
The report before you is a testament to our people's strength and resilience. It acknowledges your experiences as part of the overall spectrum of the historical efforts to erase us, while charting a course for a brighter future. The recommendations within these pages are based on what we heard from you, and serve as a call to action, guiding us in restoring severed cultural connections and affirming our strength today, secure in the knowledge that we will never allow this to happen to our people again.

Rest assured, your Red River Métis Government will continue to advocate for justice, support and healing, while helping you cultivate a sense of community and belonging. Together, we will continue to secure our proper place in Canada's confederation, so our children grow up knowing their history, proud of their identity, and secure in their future.

Let us move forward with hope, building a foundation for a future filled with possibilities. Embrace this moment with courage and determination as we write a new chapter in our history – a chapter of restoration, healing, and justice.

Thank you for your courage, strength, and unwavering commitment to your healing journey. You are a part of our Nation, and the MMF has your back.

Maarsi.



Message from Denise Thomas, Minister of Sixties Scoop

To the Survivors, Family Members, and the Red River Métis Community,

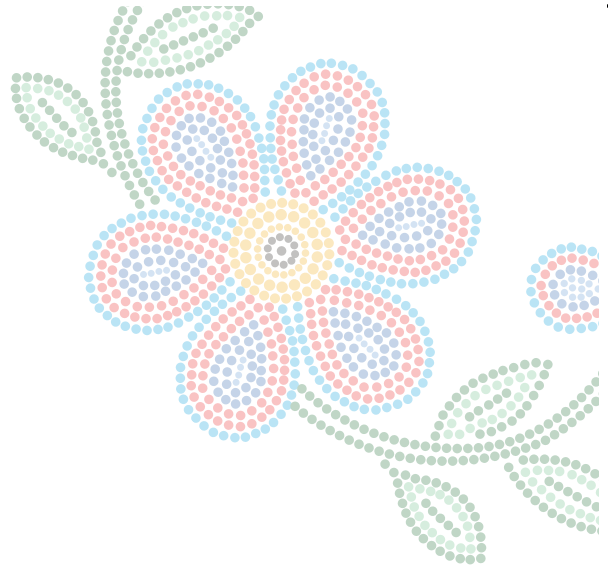
Reflecting on the Red River Métis Survivors Symposium and this report, I am deeply moved by our community's strength and resilience. The Sixties Scoop left a lasting impact on generations of our people.

This report underscores our commitment to healing and reconciliation. It acknowledges the pain of the past and outlines a path for a brighter future. The recommendations within are a call to action, guiding us in restoring cultural connections and addressing inherited trauma.

I pledge to ensure that survivors' voices are heard, and their stories honored. We will advocate for justice, support healing, and nurture a sense of community and belonging. Together, we will create an environment where our children know their history, take pride in their identity, and feel secure in their future.

Let us move forward with hope, building a foundation for a future filled with possibilities.

Sincerely,
Denise Thomas
Minister of Sixties Scoop



Message from Andrew Carrier, Minister of Residential and Day Schools

To the Survivors, Family Members, and the Red River Métis Community,

Confronting the legacy of Residential and Day Schools requires courage and compassion. This report marks a crucial step in our healing and reconciliation journey, capturing both the pain of the past and the hope for a healed future.

As Minister of Residential and Day Schools, I am committed to addressing the report's recommendations. We will seek justice for past wrongs, support healing initiatives, and foster community and belonging.

The road ahead is challenging but filled with opportunity. We can create a future where past trauma is acknowledged, and our nation's spirit is revitalized. Let us move forward with unity and purpose, overcoming past challenges to build a hopeful and promising future.

Thank you for your courage, resilience, and commitment to the healing journey.

Together, we will make a difference.

Sincerely,
Andrew Carrier
Minister of Residential and Day Schools



Red River Métis Survivors Symposium

REPORT

Resilience: Our Nation, Our Communities, Ourselves

Executive Summary

The Red River Métis Survivors Symposium held on March 8th-10th, 2024 at the Fairmont Hotel in Winnipeg, Manitoba and was a pivotal event that brought together 166 survivors of the Sixties Scoop, Residential, and Day Schools. The symposium was organized by the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) and aimed to provide a safe space for sharing stories, engaging in cultural activities, participating in discussions to advance reconciliation efforts and promote healing.

The event included presentations, discussions, engagement circles, and cultural workshops, fostering a sense of community and cultural connection. The symposium highlighted the resilience of the Red River Métis community and addressed the ongoing impact of historical policies, such as the Sixties Scoop, which led to cultural dislocation, abuse, and long-term psychological issues.

The symposium also unveiled the Oral Histories Archival project and addressed the impact of the Bill C-92 legislation on Red River Métis citizens. Key initiatives discussed included the Oral Histories Archival project, advocating fair settlements for Day School survivors, and searching for the missing Red River Métis children.

Survey data from the symposium revealed a demographic breakdown of participants, with a notable peak in the 35-44 age bracket and a near-equal gender distribution, including non-binary individuals. The survey also uncovered the profound impact of institutional trauma on survivors, with calls for cultural reconnection, mental health support, community engagement, education, and legal advocacy.

Recommendations

The symposium concluded with a set of recommendations to address the intergenerational trauma caused by the Sixties Scoop, Residential and Day Schools, advocating for a combination of short-term, mid-term, and long-term priorities to support healing and reconciliation.

- ∞ **Short-term Priorities:** Provide accessible and culturally sensitive mental health services, expedite support for aging survivors, establish cultural reconnection programs, increase public awareness, and advocate for government accountability.
- ∞ **Mid-term Priorities:** Enhance cultural reconnection programs, strengthen community support networks, support family reunification efforts, and increase education and awareness initiatives.
- ∞ **Long-term Priorities:** Conduct thorough investigations into abuse and missing children's cases, develop Red River Métis-specific services, establish holistic healing centers, advocate for policy changes, and memorialize the victims.

Survivor and Family Member Healing and Reconciliation Needs Survey

The journey towards healing and reconciliation is deeply personal and often marked by profound challenges. As part of our commitment to understanding and addressing the needs of those Red River Métis citizens impacted by the Sixties Scoop, Residential and Day Schools, and other institutions, we conducted a comprehensive survey to gather firsthand insights from survivors and their families.

This survey is divided into seven sections: Personal Information, Survivor Experience, Healing and Reconciliation Needs, Support Services, Suggestions for Improvement, "Pekeywaytahihnan nutr zanfaan leur zisprii" (We are bringing our children's spirit home), and Additional Suggestions.

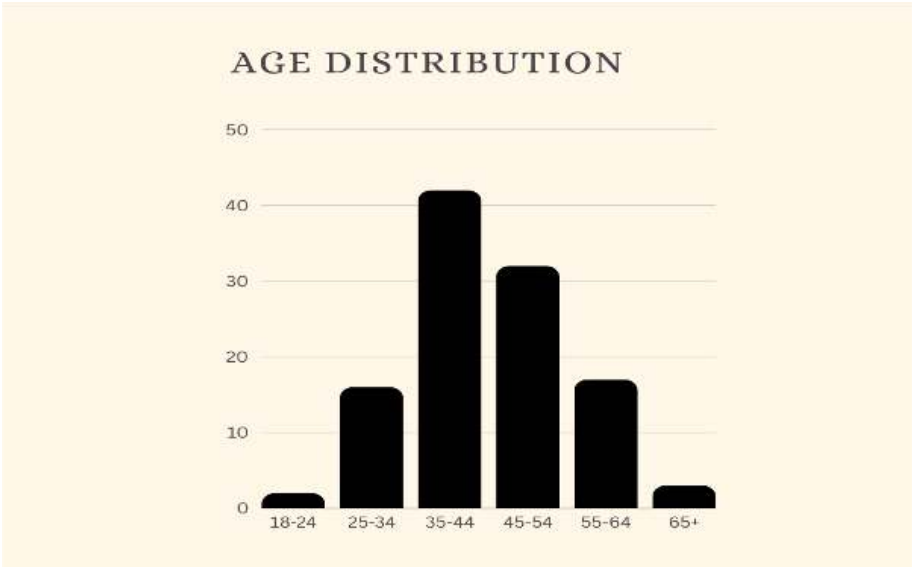
The following sections contain responses from the survey distributed at the symposium, along with the recommendations made. Our future goal is to hold more events like the Symposium, allowing us to compare results over time. This will enable us to comprehensively capture the stories and experiences of survivors and their families, and to pursue justice.

Section 1: Personal Information

This first section contains Personal Information collected that contained: Age, Gender, and Current Location. This breakdown provides a clear overview of the demographics and locations represented in the data provided by survivors and family members.

a. Age Distribution:

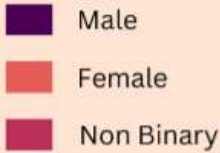
The survey results reveal an intriguing age distribution trend, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this report: the survivor population is experiencing a decline in the number of elderly citizens. This graph illustrates that the population peaks in the 35-44 age bracket and begins to decrease thereafter.



b. Gender Distribution:

The survey results paint an intriguing picture of gender diversity among the respondents. The distribution between male and female-identifying citizens is nearly even, with an almost perfect 50/50 split. Adding to this balance, there are 12 individuals who identify as non-binary. This blend of identities creates a comprehensive and inclusive representation of the participants who filled out the survey.

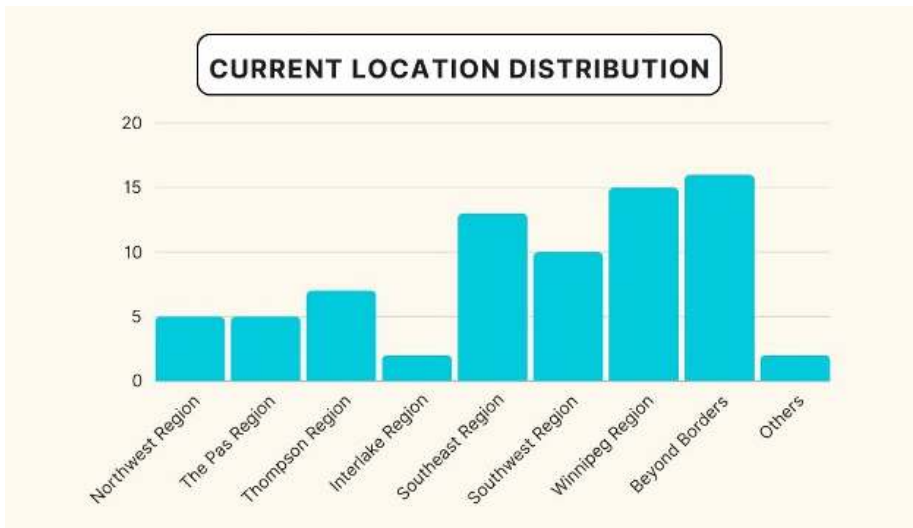
GENDER DISTRIBUTION



Male:48, Female:49, Non-binary: 12, Prefer not to say: 0

c. Current Location Distribution:

The next image depicts data collected and organized by the seven regions within our government concerning the current locations of our survivors. Notably, it includes information about Red River Métis citizens who live beyond Manitoba's borders and now reside in other provinces of Canada. The data highlights the following distribution of citizens living elsewhere: five (5) in British Columbia, one (1) in Ontario, one (1) in New Brunswick, and eight (8) in Alberta. Additionally, the dataset includes information from citizens who did not identify any specific region within our government or other provinces and cities in Canada.



Section 2: Survivor Experience

The responses in Section 2 of the survey on Survivor Experience highlight personal and familial impacts of the Sixties Scoop. The Sixties Scoop involved Red River Métis children being taken from their families and placed in foster or adoptive homes, often without proper care or connection to their cultural roots.

Respondents reported experiencing various forms of trauma including: physical, mental, and sexual abuse, as well as cultural dislocation and identity loss. Many recount being treated as laborers, subjected to abuse, and living in environments lacking love and support. These experiences have led to long-term psychological issues, such as: anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, and have disrupted family bonds and cultural continuity.

Analysis

The stories reveal a systemic pattern of neglect and abuse in institutions meant to care for our children.

Key themes include:

1. **Cultural Dislocation and Identity Loss:** Many respondents were removed from their cultural environment, leading to a loss of language, traditions, and a sense of belonging. This cultural dislocation has had lasting effects on their identity and mental health.
2. **Abuse and Neglect:** Physical, emotional, and sexual abuse were common in foster homes and schools. The abuse led to long-term trauma and mistrust of institutions.
3. **Family Separation and Disruption:** The separation from family members disrupted familial bonds, with many never reuniting with their biological families. This separation further deepened the sense of loss and disconnection.
4. **Psychological Impact:** The experiences led to severe psychological impacts including depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and other mental health issues. Some respondents reported ongoing struggles with addiction and difficulties maintaining stable employment due to anxiety and PTSD.
5. **Survival and Resilience:** Despite these hardships, some respondents have found ways to cope and rebuild their lives, highlighting stories of survival and resilience. This includes seeking sobriety, advocating for awareness, helping other survivors, and striving for better mental health.

Recommendations

1. **Cultural Reconnection Programs:** Establish programs aimed at reconnecting Red River Métis survivors with their cultural heritage including language classes, cultural teachings, and community gatherings. This could help restore a sense of identity and belonging.
2. **Mental Health Support:** Provide accessible and culturally sensitive mental health services tailored to the specific needs of survivors. This should include counseling, support groups, and trauma-informed care.
3. **Educational Outreach and Public Awareness:** Increase public awareness and education about the impacts of the Sixties Scoop and similar practices. This can foster understanding and support within broader Red River Métis communities.

4. **Compensation and Legal Support:** Ensure survivors have access to legal support for any ongoing claims related to their experiences and consider compensation schemes to acknowledge and address the injustices they suffered.
5. **Community-Based Healing Initiatives:** Support community-based healing initiatives that incorporate traditional Red River Métis healing practices alongside modern therapeutic methods.
6. **Family Reunification Services:** Develop services aimed at helping survivors locate and reunite with family members, facilitating the rebuilding of family connections where possible.

Implementing these recommendations can contribute to healing and support for survivors, helping them reclaim their identities and improve their overall well-being.

Section 3: Healing and Reconciliation Needs

The responses in Section 3 regarding Healing and Reconciliation needs reflect a variety of emotional well-being states from very poor to good with many expressing a need for specific types of support to aid in their healing and reconciliation processes. Key areas identified include:

1. **Mental Health Support:** A significant number of respondents prioritize mental health services such as: counseling, therapy, and ongoing mental health support, highlighting the need for both individual and family mental health resources.
2. **Cultural Reconnection:** Many respondents emphasize the importance of reconnecting with their cultural heritage through activities like cultural teachings, gatherings, and learning traditional languages.
3. **Community Support and Engagement:** Engaging with the community through group sessions, sharing circles, and community support networks is frequently mentioned as vital for healing.
4. **Family Reunification:** Some respondents prioritize reconnecting with family members, emphasizing the importance of familial bonds and communication.
5. **Education and Awareness:** Raising awareness and educating both survivors and the broader community about their experiences and cultural history is seen as crucial.
6. **Legal Support and Advocacy:** A need for legal support and advocacy to address past injustices and ensure they are not repeated is also highlighted.

Analysis

The emotional well-being of respondents varies, with many still grappling with the impacts of their experiences. The diversity in needs reflects the multifaceted nature of healing and reconciliation, encompassing mental, emotional, cultural, social, and legal dimensions.

Mental health support emerges as a predominant need, suggesting that many individuals are still dealing with trauma and require professional assistance to cope and heal. Cultural reconnection is also crucial, indicating that reclaiming Red River Métis cultural identity is a key part of the healing process.

Community support and engagement highlight the importance of collective healing and the role of communal ties in fostering resilience.

Recommendation

To effectively address the healing and reconciliation needs of survivors and their families, a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach is recommended:

1. **Expand Mental Health Services:** Increase the availability of mental health resources, including individual and family counseling, therapy sessions, and support groups tailored to the specific experiences of survivors. Consider training therapists in Red River Métis cultural practices.
2. **Enhance Cultural Reconnection Programs:** Develop and support programs that facilitate Red River Métis cultural teachings, traditional practices, and language learning. Creating spaces for cultural gatherings and sharing circles can help individuals reconnect with their heritage.
3. **Strengthen Community Support Networks:** Foster community engagement through regular group sessions, community events, and peer support networks. Encourage the formation of survivor groups that can share experiences and support one another.
4. **Support Family Reunification Efforts:** Provide resources and assistance for family reunification, including family therapy and mediation services to help rebuild and strengthen family relationships.
5. **Increase Education and Awareness Initiatives:** Implement educational programs that raise awareness about the historical and ongoing impacts of the experiences faced by survivors. These programs should be aimed at both the survivors and the public to foster a broader understanding and support system.
6. **Provide Legal Support and Advocacy:** Offer legal assistance to survivors seeking justice and advocacy for policies that protect against future injustices. Ensure that survivors have access to legal resources that can help them address past grievances and secure their rights.
7. **Holistic and Integrated Healing Centers:** Establish centers that offer a combination of mental health services, cultural reconnection activities, and community support in one location. These centers can serve as safe spaces for survivors to access various resources and begin their healing journey comprehensively.

By implementing these recommendations, the healing and reconciliation process can be more effectively supported, addressing the diverse needs of survivors and fostering a sense of belonging and identity within the survivor community.

Section 4: Support Services

The data provided in Section 4: Support Services, outlines the various support services and resources that individuals have accessed for healing and reconciliation. These services include a broad range of counseling options, cultural programs, psychiatric consultations, and community support services. Specific mentions include:

- ∞ Richmond Sixty Scoop
- ∞ Unit 49 Rockyview General Hospital (inpatient and day programs)

- ∞ Provincial health resources and IRSSS initiatives
- ∞ Therapy, mindfulness, yoga, drumming, singing, writing
- ∞ Cultural programs, Ancestry DNA, attending symposiums
- ∞ AI-Anon - Family Service
- ∞ Hotline services (e.g., 60s scoop hotline)
- ∞ Church services and cultural events
- ∞ Reading and watching APTN
- ∞ Various forms of counseling (general, provincial, and through community programs)
- ∞ Psychiatric and psychological support (including specific mentions of long-term weekly sessions)

Analysis

The responses indicate that individuals are actively seeking a wide array of support services to address their healing and reconciliation needs. There is a notable reliance on both traditional (e.g., counseling, psychiatric consultations) and Indigenous (e.g., sharing circles, Sweat Lodge, Sundance) forms of support. Key observations include:

1. **Diversity of Support Services:** Individuals are utilizing a mix of clinical, cultural, and community-based services. This variety underscores the multifaceted nature of their needs.
2. **Long-term and Ongoing Support:** Many respondents have been engaged in long-term support, such as weekly sessions with psychiatrists or psychologists, indicating the chronic nature of their needs.
3. **Gaps in Service Availability:** Several respondents highlight the inadequacy of current services, such as the need for 24-hour hotlines and more than 8-hour counseling availability. Some feel ignored or unsupported by existing services.
4. **Cultural and Community Engagement:** Engagement in cultural programs and events is a significant component of the healing process for many. This suggests that culturally relevant support plays a crucial role in their recovery.
5. **Barriers and Challenges:** Some respondents mention challenges in accessing support, such as not being believed by victims of crime services or feeling that system changes are insufficient.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the responses, the following recommendations can be made to improve support services for healing and reconciliation:

1. **Expand Availability of Services:** Increase the availability of support services to include 24-hour hotlines and extended counseling hours to accommodate those in crisis during non-traditional hours.
2. **Enhance Cultural Relevance:** Continue to develop and support cultural programs that resonate Red River Métis heritage and practices. This includes ensuring access to cultural healing methods like beading, jigging, and land-based activities.

3. **Improve Accessibility and Believability:** Ensure that all individuals seeking support are believed and provided with the necessary resources. This may involve training for service providers on the unique challenges faced by the Red River Métis community.
4. **Increase Community-Based Support:** Foster more community support programs that provide local, easily accessible resources. These programs should be designed to address both immediate and long-term needs.
5. **Promote Awareness and Education:** Educate the community about the available resources and support services through outreach programs. This can help those in need to know where and how to seek help.
6. **Regular Feedback and Adaptation:** Establish mechanisms for regular feedback from survivors and their family members to continuously adapt and improve services. This can help in identifying gaps and areas for improvement promptly.

By addressing these recommendations, support services can become more effective and responsive to the needs of survivors and their families seeking healing and reconciliation.

Section 5: Suggestions for Improvement

Survivors of the Sixties Scoop and their family members have provided feedback in Section 5 on how support services can be improved to better meet their needs. They emphasized the importance of:

- ∞ Continuing the current efforts.
- ∞ Recognizing the aging demographic of survivors and the urgency of timely support.
- ∞ Enhancing public education about the Sixties Scoop history.
- ∞ Providing more Red River Métis-specific services and support, including talking circles and community gatherings.
- ∞ Improving communication and connection with the Sixties Scoop and Residential School Department.
- ∞ Offering continuous and accessible mental health support and counselling.
- ∞ Ensuring support services are widely available across all regions in Manitoba and Beyond the Borders.
- ∞ Addressing the needs of marginalized groups within the community, such as men and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.
- ∞ Increasing awareness and access to services, including genealogy resources and assistance in locating missing family members.
- ∞ Building wellness centers and providing life services in local regions.

Analysis

The feedback reveals several key areas for improvement in support services for Sixties Scoop survivors and their families:

1. **Urgency and Age Considerations:** Many survivors are aging, so timely support is crucial. Delays in connecting them to services can be detrimental.

2. **Education and Awareness:** There is a strong call for continued education of the public and the community about the history and impact of the Sixties Scoop. This can help reduce stigma and promote understanding.
3. **Accessibility and Communication:** Improved initial communication and ongoing support from the Sixties Scoop and Residential School Department are needed. Clear communication about available services and how to navigate them is essential.
4. **Cultural and Community Support:** Culturally specific services, such as talking circles and Red River Métis-specific support, are highly valued. Community gatherings and shared experiences are important for healing.
5. **Mental Health and Counselling:** Continuous and accessible mental health support, rather than one-time interventions, is necessary. Counsellors should be knowledgeable about the specific experiences of Sixties Scoop survivors.
6. **Inclusivity:** Support services need to be inclusive of marginalized groups within the community, ensuring that everyone feels represented and supported.
7. **Physical Infrastructure:** The establishment of wellness centers in more locations across the Homeland is recommended to provide a physical space for support and services.

Recommendations

Based on the feedback, the following recommendations are proposed to improve support services for Sixties Scoop survivors and their families:

1. **Increase Timely Access:** Expedite the process of connecting survivors to support services, particularly considering their age and immediate needs.
2. **Expand Public Education:** Develop more educational programs and resources to inform the public about the Sixties Scoop. This could include school programs, public speaking events, and informational pamphlets.
3. **Enhance Communication:** Improve initial and ongoing communication. This includes sending new survivors comprehensive information packages and making follow-up phone calls to ensure they are aware of and can navigate available services.
4. **Develop Red River Métis-Specific Services:** Create more culturally relevant support services such as talking circles and community gatherings that address the unique needs of Red River Métis survivors.
5. **Provide Continuous Mental Health Support:** Establish ongoing counselling services with professionals knowledgeable about the Sixties Scoop. Offer regular check-ins rather than one-time sessions.
6. **Ensure Inclusivity:** Develop specific programs for men and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community to ensure they have safe spaces to share and receive support.
7. **Build Wellness Centers:** Establish wellness centers in key locations, including Winnipeg, to provide a central place for support services.
8. **Increase Awareness and Access:** Enhance efforts to make survivors aware of available support services, including those related to family genealogy and legal support for family reunification.

9. **Promote Community Engagement:** Organize regular community events and support groups to foster a sense of belonging and shared healing among survivors and their families.

Section 6: “Pekeywaytahihnan nutr zanfaan leur zisprii” - We are bringing our children’s spirit home.

This section of the survey titled “Pekeywaytahihnan nutr zanfaan leur zisprii” - We are bringing our children’s spirit home, collects data about Red River Métis children’s attendance and experiences at various Residential and Day Schools.

It gathers personal testimonies from individuals about their own experiences or those of others they knew, detailing names, schools attended, time periods, and current statuses, where known. The testimonies highlight significant issues such as children running away from schools, the deaths and current whereabouts of attendees, and cases of children going missing or being subjected to abuse.

Analysis:

The section reveals a disturbing pattern of trauma and dislocation among Red River Métis children who attended these schools. Several key points emerge from the testimonies:

1. **Widespread Attendance:** Many Red River Métis children attended a variety of Residential and Day Schools across different locations, with some families having multiple members affected.
2. **Abuse and Trauma:** There are multiple accounts of physical abuse, harsh punishments, and the psychological trauma endured by children at these institutions. A particularly harrowing account includes a child being killed by nuns for eating orange peel, with the family not being informed about the true cause of death.
3. **Missing Children:** The survey notes instances of children who went missing during their time at these schools, with little information on their whereabouts or fate.
4. **Dispersal of Survivors:** Many of those who survived the schools are now deceased, and the survivors are spread across different parts of Canada, indicating the long-term impact on community cohesion.
5. **Escaping and Survival:** Some testimonies include accounts of children running away from schools, highlighting the extreme measures they took to escape the conditions.

Recommendations:

1. **Comprehensive Documentation:** Create a centralized database to document all known instances of attendance, missing children, and survivor stories. This would help in establishing a clear historical record and support ongoing reconciliation efforts.
2. **Support Services:** Provide robust psychological and social support services for survivors and their families, recognizing the multigenerational impact of the trauma.

3. **Investigations and Accountability:** Conduct thorough investigations into the cases of abuse and missing children. Hold institutions accountable and seek justice for the victims and their families.
4. **Community Healing Programs:** Develop community-based healing programs that include traditional Red River Métis practices and counseling. Facilitate gatherings for survivors and their descendants to share their stories and support each other.
5. **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Increase public awareness about the history and ongoing impact of Residential and Day Schools on the Red River Métis community through educational programs, media campaigns, and inclusion in school curricula.
6. **Memorialization:** Establish memorials and hold commemorative events to honor the memories of those who suffered and went missing. Ensure that the stories of Red River Métis children are preserved and acknowledged in public history.
7. **Advocacy for Policy Change:** Advocate for policy changes that address the systemic issues stemming from the Residential School system, ensuring that similar abuses cannot occur in the future. This includes better oversight of educational institutions and protective measures for indigenous children.

By addressing these areas, it is possible to move towards a more just and healing future for the Red River Métis community.

1. List of Day Schools Attended:

- ∞ Day School R.C.C. in Winnipegosis
- ∞ Assumption & Blessed Sacrament Schools (Catholic Schools in Winnipeg)
- ∞ Hillridge School (Bacon Ridge, Beside Ebb & Flow)
- ∞ Day School, Gillam, Manitoba
- ∞ St. Eustache Convent, Arborg MB Convent
- ∞ Powerview Day School
- ∞ St. Charles
- ∞ École Ste Marie

2. List of Residential Schools Attended:

- ∞ Camperville Residential School
- ∞ Pine Creek Residential School
- ∞ Frontier Collegiate Institute, Cranberry Portage
- ∞ Manitoba Home for Boys, Foster Homes, Ninette Pelican Lake Day School
- ∞ Roseau River Residential School
- ∞ Marymount
- ∞ St. Boniface Industrial School
- ∞ Fort Alexander Residential School

3. Other Schools Attended:

- ∞ Provincial Day School (St. Lazare)
- ∞ Leonard School, Powerview
- ∞ Lynn Lake
- ∞ St. Joseph Vocational School
- ∞ Dunrea, Manitoba
- ∞ Maison Chapelle (St. Boniface)

Section 7: Additional Suggestions

This section captures diverse perspectives on healing and reconciliation, primarily related to addressing the intergenerational trauma caused by the separation of Red River Métis children from their families across the Homeland. Survivors emphasize the importance of bringing the children home, honoring them with proper burials, and acknowledging their names aloud. Holding the government accountable for past actions and seeking justice through apology and legal means are advocated.

Participants express gratitude for the symposium and suggest its continuation, emphasizing the need for ongoing support, including therapy and mental health services. They call for increased education, cultural inclusion, and financial support, along with more opportunities for sharing circles and gatherings. The need for accessible and timely assistance is stressed, especially for those navigating the trauma of the child welfare system. Overall, participants commend the efforts of the MMF while acknowledging the personal challenges and unresolved pain experienced by survivors and their families.

Analysis:

The suggestions reflected in Section 7 are a multifaceted approach to healing and reconciliation, addressing not only personal trauma but also systemic injustices. Participants emphasize the importance of cultural practices such as smudging and storytelling in the healing process. There's a clear call for accountability from the government and a desire for concrete actions such as apologies and legal repercussions for past wrongs.

The need for ongoing support, both emotional and financial, is highlighted, indicating a recognition of the long-term impact of trauma. There's also an acknowledgment of the challenges in accessing timely assistance and the importance of community support networks. The participants' diverse experiences and perspectives underscore the complexity of the healing journey and the varied needs of affected individuals and communities.

Recommendation:

1. **Government Accountability:** Advocate for continued pressure on the government to take responsibility for past actions, including issuing apologies and providing reparations where necessary.
2. **Cultural Healing Practices:** Encourage the promotion and preservation of Red River Métis cultural practices as integral components of the healing process.
3. **Ongoing Support Services:** Advocate for increased funding and accessibility of

mental health services, including therapy and counseling, to ensure timely and continuous support for survivors and their families.

4. **Community Engagement:** Facilitate more opportunities for community gatherings, sharing circles, and storytelling sessions to foster a sense of belonging and collective healing.
5. **Education and Awareness:** Promote education initiatives that raise awareness about Red River Métis history and trauma to foster understanding and empathy within society.
6. **Financial Support:** Lobby for increased financial support for survivors, their families and communities affected by historical injustices, recognizing the socioeconomic disparities that contribute to ongoing challenges.

By addressing these recommendations, the department can contribute to a more comprehensive and sustainable approach to healing and reconciliation, supporting the well-being of Red River Métis survivors and fostering meaningful societal change with the Red River Métis community.

Engagement and Consultation in Focus Groups

Introduction

As part of the Survivor Symposium, breakaway sessions for engagement and consultation were organized through focus groups, which included both survivors and their family members. These sessions aimed to create a safe and supportive environment for participants to share their stories, with health support workers available to provide necessary support.

Similarity to Survey Findings Analysis

The questions posed to participants in these focus groups were similar to those in the survey distributed to all symposium attendees. The discussions in these sessions highlighted recurring themes such as: anger, neglect, family separation, loss of identity, and abandonment issues and the associated outcomes that include alcoholism, addiction, suicide, abuse (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual). These conversations underscored the profound negative impacts of the Sixties Scoop, Day and Residential schools on individuals and their families.

Importance of Actionable Steps

The findings from these focus groups underscore the necessity of a strategic course of action, divided into short, mid-term, and long-term priorities. Consequently, these priorities align with the “What We Heard Report”- Report of the Métis Nation’s Engagement with Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors and the Five Pillars of Reconciliation: Reparations, Apologies with Contrition, Commemorations, Accountability Measures, and Healing. Addressing these issues is crucial for the ongoing recovery and reconciliation process.

Based on the results provided through the engagement and consultation sessions and the survey, it is of utmost importance that steps be made to address these issues: short, medium and long term. Below are calls to action.

Short term Priorities

1. **Mental Health Support:** Provide accessible and culturally sensitive mental health services tailored to the specific needs of survivors. This should include counseling, support groups, and trauma-informed care.
2. **Urgency and Age Considerations:** Many survivors are aging, so timely support is crucial. Delays in connecting them to services can be detrimental.
3. **Cultural Reconnection Programs:** Establish programs aimed at reconnecting survivors with their cultural heritage, including language classes, cultural ceremonies, and community gatherings. This could help restore a sense of identity and belonging.
4. **Educational Outreach and Public Awareness:** Increase public awareness and education about the impacts of the Sixties Scoop and similar practices. This can foster understanding and support within broader communities.
5. **Government Accountability:** Advocate for continued pressure on the government to take responsibility for past actions, including issuing apologies and providing reparations where necessary.
6. **Cultural Healing Practices:** Encourage the promotion and preservation of Red River Métis cultural practices as integral components of the healing process.
7. **Ongoing Support Services:** Advocate for increased funding and accessibility of mental health services, including therapy and counseling, to ensure timely and continuous support for survivors and their families.
8. **Community Engagement:** Facilitate more opportunities for community gatherings, sharing circles, and storytelling sessions to foster a sense of belonging and collective healing.
9. **Education and Awareness:** Promote education initiatives that raise awareness about Red River Métis history and trauma to foster understanding and empathy within society.
10. **Financial Support:** Lobby for increased financial support for survivors, their families and communities affected by historical injustices, recognizing the socioeconomic disparities that contribute to ongoing challenges.
11. **Increase Timely Access:** Expedite the process of connecting survivors to support services, particularly considering their age and immediate needs.
12. **Comprehensive Documentation:** Create a centralized database to document all known instances of attendance, missing children, and survivor stories. This would help in establishing a clear historical record and support ongoing reconciliation efforts.
13. **Community Healing Programs:** Develop community-based healing programs that include traditional Red River Métis practices and counseling. Facilitate gatherings for survivors and their descendants to share their stories and support each other.
14. **Compensation and Legal Support:** Ensure survivors have access to legal support for any ongoing claims related to their experiences and consider compensation schemes to acknowledge and address the injustices they suffered.

Mid-term Priorities

1. **Enhance Cultural Reconnection Programs:** Develop and support programs that facilitate Red River Métis cultural teachings, traditional practices, and language learning. Creating spaces for cultural gatherings and sharing circles can help individuals reconnect with their heritage.
2. **Strengthen Community Support Networks:** Foster community engagement through regular group sessions, community events, and peer support networks. Encourage the formation of survivor groups that can share experiences and support one another.
3. **Support Family Reunification Efforts:** Provide resources and assistance for family reunification, including family therapy and mediation services to help rebuild and strengthen family relationships.
4. **Increase Education and Awareness Initiatives:** Implement educational programs that raise awareness about the historical and ongoing impacts of the experiences faced by survivors. These programs should be aimed at both the survivors and the public to foster a broader understanding and support system.
5. **Provide Legal Support and Advocacy:** Offer legal assistance to survivors seeking justice and advocacy for policies that protect against future injustices. Ensure that survivors have access to legal resources that can help them address past grievances and secure their rights.
6. **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Increase public awareness about the history and ongoing impact of Residential and Day Schools on the Red River Métis community through educational programs, media campaigns, and inclusion in school curricula.

Long term Priorities

1. **Investigations and Accountability:** Conduct thorough investigations into the cases of abuse and missing children. Hold institutions accountable and seek justice for the victims and their families.
2. **Develop Red River Métis-Specific Services:** Create more culturally relevant support services such as talking circles and community gatherings that address the unique needs of Red River Métis survivors.
3. **Holistic and Integrated Healing Centers:** Establish centers that offer a combination of mental health services, cultural reconnection activities, and community support in one location. These centers can serve as safe spaces for survivors to access various resources and begin their healing journey comprehensively.
4. **Advocacy for Policy Change:** Advocate for policy changes that address the systemic issues stemming from the Residential School system, ensuring that similar abuses cannot occur in the future. This includes better oversight of educational institutions and protective measures for indigenous children.
5. **Expand Mental Health Services:** Increase the availability of mental health resources, including individual and family counseling, therapy sessions, and support groups tailored to the specific experiences of survivors. Consider training therapists in culturally relevant practices.

6. **Memorialization:** Establish memorials and hold commemorative events to honor the memories of those who suffered and went missing. Ensure that the stories of Red River Métis children are preserved and acknowledged in public history.
7. **Expand Public Education:** Develop more educational programs and resources to inform the public about the Sixties Scoop. This could include school programs, public speaking events, and informational pamphlets.
8. **Enhance Communication:** Improve initial and ongoing communication. This includes sending new survivors comprehensive information packages and making follow-up phone calls to ensure they are aware of and can navigate available services.
9. **Provide Continuous Mental Health Support:** Establish ongoing counselling services with professionals knowledgeable about the Sixties Scoop. Offer regular check-ins rather than one-time sessions.
10. **Ensure Inclusivity:** Develop specific programs for men and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community to ensure they have safe spaces to share and receive support.
11. **Support Services:** Provide robust psychological and social support services for survivors and their families, recognizing the multigenerational impact of the trauma.
12. **Build Wellness Centers:** Establish wellness centers in key locations, including Winnipeg, to provide a central place for support services.
13. **Increase Awareness and Access:** Enhance efforts to make survivors aware of available support services, including those related to family genealogy and legal support for family reunification.
14. **Promote Community Engagement:** Organize regular community events and support groups to foster a sense of belonging and shared healing among survivors and their families.

A Path Forward with Hope and Action

As we conclude this report, it is with a sense of profound responsibility and a heart full of hope that we look to the future. The stories shared, the experiences recounted, and the recommendations made during the Red River Métis Survivors Symposium have illuminated a path forward—a path that is both challenging and filled with promise.

We recognize that the journey to healing and reconciliation is a long one, marked by the courage and resilience of our survivors and their families. It is a journey that requires unwavering commitment, intentional action, and a collective effort from all of us.

The short-term, mid-term, and long-term priorities outlined in this report are not just words on a page; they are a call to action. They are a blueprint for change, a roadmap to a future where the wounds of the past are healed, and the spirit of our nation is restored.

We are committed to providing accessible and culturally sensitive services, reconnecting our people with their cultural heritage, and fostering a sense of community and belonging. We will advocate for justice, seek truth, and ensure that the voices of our survivors are heard and honored.

Together, we will work to create a supportive environment where our children can grow up knowing their history, proud of their identity, and secure in their future. We will educate our communities and the broader society about the impact of the Sixties Scoop, Residential and Day Schools and the importance of reconciliation. As we move forward, let us be guided by the wisdom of our ancestors, the strength of our communities, and the resilience of our people. Let us approach this work with optimism, knowing that with each step we take, we are building a foundation for a brighter tomorrow.

We are not just survivors; we are thrivers. We are a nation that has faced unimaginable challenges and yet continues to stand strong, united, and determined.

In closing, we extend our deepest gratitude to all those who have shared their stories, offered their insights, and contributed to this report. Your courage inspires us. Your resilience motivates us. Your hope sustains us. Let us now take the next steps together, with purpose and with pride, on the path to healing, reconciliation, and a future filled with possibility.

Bibliography

Métis Nation (2019) What We Heard Report: Report of the Métis Nation's Engagement with Métis Sixties Scoop Survivors. www.mmfsixtiesscoop.ca/department



