



Key Terms

Siyam Consulting

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About the Author

Sxwpilemaát Siyám, also known as Chief Leanne Joe, of the Squamish Nation, is one of sixteen Hereditary Chiefs of the Squamish Nation and the first female Chief of her Lackett Joe Family. She shares her traditional name with her late father, Sxwpilem Siyám, Chief Philip Joe. Sxwpilemaát Siyám is also a descendent of the Kwakwaka'wakw speaking people and carries the traditional name of Q-Gee-Sea Loud, which was given to her by her late Cheecheeya (grandmother on her mother's side). She is also descendant of the Thomas family of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation on her late grandmother's side of the family (my late father's mother, Emma Thomas).

Sxwpilemaát Siyám was born and raised on the beautiful shores of North Vancouver while having close relations to her roots on the east coast shores of Vancouver Island. She moved to the Nicola Valley 17 years ago, after she met, fell in love, and married Timothy 'Spike' Manuel (N'petkwulax), from Upper Nicola Band with relations to the Nlaka'pamux and Shuswap People. They live in the Nicola Valley. Sxwpilemaát Siyám and N'petkwulax have a 17-year old son named Isaac, who carries Sylix, Skwxwu7mesh and Kwakwaka'wakw traditional names. Sxwpilemaát Siyám's husband is a traditional knowledge keeper/cultural teacher and works with youth and community to engage them in rebuilding their cultural teachings and knowledge. Their son is their life teacher as he engages them in healing, listening, laughter and patience.

Sxwpilemaát Siyám holds space in many organizations, focusing her work on Economic Reconciliation. One of her roles is as Transformative Storyteller for Economic Reconciliation, with Simon Fraser University, Faculty of Environment, Community Economic Development. To find out more, please go www.siyamconsulting.com and download **Step into the River: An Economic Reconciliation Framework** and so much more. She also supports SFU Beedie School of Business, Women in Leadership, and many other organizations through her consulting business.

Sxwpilemaát Siyám also serves as a Trustee for the Squamish Nation Trust; representing the benefactors in the management of this Community Trust and has is also a Board of Director for BC's [New Relationship Trust](#). She serves and has served as an advisory or board member for many other entities. Her educational background includes a B.A. in Business, CED Certificate, and many other related trainings and experiences.

Sxwpilemaát Siyám is a very passionate and resilient woman who is committed to working with others to keep her circle strong and continue the movement towards self-determination. She believes her People's greatest legacy is the children, thus, it is their responsibility to ensure that the children's future and the generations to follow have a good life based in a holistic approach to well-being. So, that all of the 'People Yet to Be' have the tools to engage in the world in a completely different way than we have and can walk in two worlds with ease...using the past to make a better a future.

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Siyam Consulting

Purpose

Support the ever-rising presence of First Nations and all Indigenous Peoples from coast to coast.

Vision

Nurture reciprocal relationships built on my 6 R's, bringing together Indigenous and corporate Canada, institutions, and communities to create transformative spaces for the next seven generations.

Mission

Create a desired future state where love and light is in everything we do.

The Riverbed: The Values of Economic Reconciliation

Reconciliation needs to be accompanied by purposeful actions in all spaces of society. These actions should happen through Indigenized approaches and processes. The riverbed is the channel in which a river flows. It helps guide the river's course. As seen through an Indigenous worldview, these values are interconnected and reinforce one another - none of them can be adopted on its own or ranked higher than the others. While Indigenous peoples already largely live by and embody these values, all people and organizations need to adopt and enact these values as it is only through our collective efforts that we can protect and care for what matters most for current and future generations.

- Accountability and truth telling
- Regenerative
- Embraces and celebrates diverse knowings and ways of being
- Connected to Land and Place
- Rematriation
- Reciprocal relationships
- Anti-racism, equity, and solidarity
- Self-determination, cultural sovereignty, and Indigenization
- Recognition and respect

For detailed understanding of these Values, please see appendix.



Introduction

There are many terms associated with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. These have evolved over time and are continuing to evolve. It is important to be respectful of this diversity and refer to First Nations, Inuit and Métis individuals and communities with the terms that most closely describe **how they want to be identified**. It is also critical to learn and acknowledge that certain terms have been used to belittle, oppress, and erase First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and their cultures. Utilizing culturally appropriate and responsive language supports collective efforts toward decolonization and reconciliation.

Context of Indigenous Terminology

Here is a bit of context before we jump into all the terminology. In this resource, we take a deeper dive on guidelines for usage. Terms for Indigenous Peoples have evolved since settlers arrived to this country, we call Canada and will continue to evolve. The **First Peoples** of this land have distinct communities with unique names within their traditional territories. There was not a need for collective nouns or complicated terminology. With the onset of European contact to these First Nations lands and ensuing colonization, the government required people to be defined and labeled for ease of governing. This, however, is not language First Peoples use.

There is no generally accepted definition of Indigenous Peoples in a global context. Some countries refer to Indigenous Peoples as the people who were there first at contact. Others refer to Indigenous Peoples as the nomadic peoples within their borders. Within the land, from coast to coast of Canada, the norm seems to be using a definition of Indigenous Peoples that mirrors the constitutional terminology of Aboriginal Peoples as stated in Section 35 that includes the Indian, Inuit, and Metis Peoples. So, when it comes to all these two terms what's the best terminology? A favoured answer is "it depends." It really depends on which 'hat' that person or people are wearing.

When in doubt, always go with what people are calling themselves. It requires some research, but it will be worth the effort.

For example, I am Sxwpilemaát Siyám / Chief Leanne Joe and I identify as:

***Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish),
səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), and
Kwakwaka'wakw***

as these are the territories where my families come from and the languages they speak. I prefer to be addressed by my ancestral name.

Why does terminology matter?

The history of relationships between the Canadian state and Aboriginal peoples is complex and has oftentimes been paternalistic and damaging. As a result, terminology can represent something more than just a word. It can represent certain colonial histories and power dynamics. Terminology can be critical for Indigenous populations, as the term for a group may not have been selected by the population themselves but instead imposed on them by colonizers. With this in mind, one might understand how a loaded word a term can be, used as a powerful method to divide peoples, misrepresent them, and control their identity. For example, what we witness today in Canada with “status” and “non-status Indians,” the legally defined categories of people under the Indian Act.

On the other hand, terms can empower populations when the people have the power to self-identify. It is important to recognize the potential these words may hold but it is also important and very possible to understand these terms well enough to feel confident in using them. Included below are general terms below, although many Indigenous people may prefer to identify themselves by their specific cultural group. As you will see, the most respectful approach is often to use the most specific term for a population when possible.

Terms to Use

Indigenous

“Indigenous” is an umbrella term for First Nations (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit. “Indigenous” refers to all these groups, either collectively or separately, and is the term used in international contexts, e.g., the ‘United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples’ (UNDRIP). Recently, it has been associated more with activism than government policy and so has emerged, for many, as the preferred term.

In some contexts, however, it can be ambiguous: a reference to ‘Indigenous Peoples in Canada’ could include Māori or American Indian (US) people living here, as well as Canadian Indigenous people. So in contexts in which legal specificity to people originating in Canada is important to use a more qualified term of ‘Indigenous’ such as, ‘The Indigenous Peoples of Canada’.

First Nations

Most, but not all, reserve-based communities in Canada refer to themselves as ‘First Nations’. For informal documents, use ‘First Nation,’ or, collectively in referring to reserve-based communities, ‘First Nations,’ but in specific references, it is more preferential to use the name that the community (or First Nation) uses publicly. For example, the *Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nation* or *Upper Nicola Band*.

The term ‘First Nations’ can be applied to individuals, but technically refers only to those who have Indian status under Canadian law as part of a recognized community. Many Aboriginal people in Canada do not have this formal connection, and those who are Métis or Inuit should never be referred to as ‘First Nations.’ Sometimes, the term ‘Nation’ is more generally applied to a whole cultural group, e.g., “the Mohawk or Okanagan Nation.”

Métis

Métis are a specific Indigenous group in Canada with a very specific social history. Until very recently, they have not been regarded as 'Indians' under Canadian law and are never considered 'First Nations.' The term 'Métis' may be used as singular or plural, and refers to individuals or groups, e.g., "Tom, a Métis student, is attending Queen's University," or "The Indian Act does not govern the Métis." Please be sure to use the acute accent over the 'e' in Métis unless quoting a name or source in which it is not used.

Inuit

Inuit are another Aboriginal group, historically located in the Arctic and legally and culturally distinct from First Nations or legally defined Indians and Métis. The singular of 'Inuit' is 'Inuk,' and because the translation of Inuit is 'the people,' it is redundant to add 'people' after it. Do not use 'Eskimo,' which the Inuit consider a derogatory term.

Language Matters

Language is important because it frames the ways in which we think about the world. Speaking, writing, and reading are integral to everyday life, where language is the primary tool for expression and communication. Becoming more aware of the words and phrases that we unconsciously choose and combine can help us better understand our own biases. By intentionally calling out antiquated language, we hope to encourage more Canadians to consider the ways in which they think about Indigenous Peoples in this country.

Resource

Len Pierre's [Indigenous \(Culturally Safer\) Terminology](#)

YouTube video on Indigenous Terminology and how to use it a culturally safer and relevant way.

It is also very important to understand, acknowledge and shift one's mindset when speaking, writing, sharing information about or teaching about Indigenous Peoples in the following ways:

- Historical – we aren't in the past.
- Relevancy – we still exist and are relevant to society.
- Problematic – we aren't a problem nor need colonial solutions or a savior mindset.
- Colonial – yours is not the only worldview, lens, perspective, etc.
- Tokenism – we aren't a check box for you to feel better about yourself or to lift yourself up for doing the bare minimum towards reconciliation.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**When in doubt, it's always best to ask how
someone identifies themselves and what
they would like to be referred to as.**

Terms to Avoid

Native

This term is rarely used in respectful conversations, and we advise this term not to be used unless there is a specific reason to do so, such as in an organizational name that derives from an earlier period (e.g., Queen's Native Students Association). However, those with Indigenous ancestry might use the term to refer to themselves or other Indigenous peoples. 'First Nations,' 'Aboriginal,' and more recently, 'Indigenous' are more current and are preferred by many in the community, though each has particular nuances.

Our Native People / Native Canadian / Indigenous Canadian

Indigenous peoples have been on these lands since time immemorial, thousands of years before Canada was settled by Europeans. **Indigenous peoples are NOT Indigenous or Native to Canada.** *Many Indigenous peoples DO NOT consider themselves Canadians.* They are part of their own sovereign nations and do not consider themselves part of one that has actively worked to assimilate their people. DO NOT say "ours" as Indigenous people do not belong to Canada. Canada is bound to many Indigenous peoples through treaties that were made by early representatives of the Crown, however BC is the exception as most of these lands are unceded. By saying "our" or "Canada's Indigenous peoples", you are reinforcing a false narrative that is paternalistic. This narrative is one that was created by the Canadian state and is not true; its false.

Aboriginal

"Aboriginal" is a general term that used to collectively refer to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people in Canada, and is found in the Canadian constitution. This distinction legalized in 1982 when the Constitution Act came into being. Section 35 (2) of the Act states, "Aboriginal Peoples of Canada" includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada. It is broad, on one hand, because it includes all Canadian groups, but specific, on the other, in that it is not widely used in international contexts. Though until recently a preferred term, it does carry a negative connotation because of its use in government policy, though not nearly as strong a one as its predecessor, 'Indian.' (which is still the legal term under the Indian Act). Please note that 'Aboriginal' should never be used as a noun, e.g., "Aboriginals think..."

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Be aware that Indigenous people, however named, do not belong to Canada; therefore, do not preface any of the terms considered above with a possessive, e.g., "Canada's Aboriginal (or First Nations, Inuit, Indigenous, Métis) people," or worse yet, "our Aboriginal people." This is insulting and derogatory, as it invokes an entire history of paternalism and control. Never use 'Aboriginal' as a noun, but rather as an adjective. The former, especially 'Aboriginals,' implies an early colonial time when poorly conceived synonyms like 'Indians,' 'primitives' and others such words were casually applied to describe Indigenous people around the world. It is also needlessly reductive, as it unnecessarily diminishes a collective of distinct Indigenous groups to a singular term that is not correct. For example, do not say "The Aboriginals of Canada..." or "the student is an Aboriginal". Instead say "The Indigenous Peoples of Canada..." or "He is an Indigenous student (person, athlete, leader, etc.) ..."

Indian

The term 'Indian', because of its very negative connotation, should be avoided in almost all contexts unless it is used as part of a historical reference or used in reference to a government policy (e.g. The Indian Act, 'status Indian'). You may encounter, particularly in legal or policy contexts, the terms: Status Indian, Indian status, or Status.

All refer to the Canadian government classification system in which 'status' confers certain agreements based on treaties with the Crown, however; historically, certain penalties were also handed down. This is a technical area with sensitivities, so you may want to consult with knowledgeable people before initiating the use of any of these terms.

Punctuation

Terms for Indigenous identities; Indigenous governmental, social, spiritual, and religion institutions; and Indigenous collective rights should be capitalized. For example:

- Aboriginal, First Nations, Inuit/Inuk.
- Elder, Potlach, Traditional Knowledge.
- Traditional Territory, Indigenous Rights, Status Indian.

The "I" in Indigenous is always capitalized. The "P" in People(s) is capitalized according to the following guidelines:

- An Indigenous person is a person who identifies as First Nations, Inuit, or Métis.
- Indigenous Peoples are the distinct societies of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in the country now known as Canada.
- An Indigenous People is a single one of the distinct societies of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Canada. As an example, the Syilx are an Indigenous People.

Style Choices to Avoid

Verb Tense: Whenever possible, avoid referring to Indigenous Peoples entirely in past tense. Doing so perpetuates the myth that Indigenous Peoples have been assimilated into mainstream Canadian culture and no longer exist as distinct cultures.

"They held Potlachs" becomes "They hold Potlachs" and

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"They had Traditional Territories" becomes "They have Traditional Territories".

In certain circumstances, such as when describing an activity or event that specifically and exclusively took place in the past, using past tense is acceptable.

Possessives: Avoid using possessive terms when describing Indigenous Peoples. For example:

- Canada's Indigenous Peoples
- Our Indigenous Peoples
- Indigenous Peoples of Canada

Instead, use phrases like "Indigenous Peoples in what is now Canada". Always remember that Indigenous Peoples are distinct nations that are not owned by colonial governments.

TERMS - Alphabetical

A

Aboriginal – the three groups of original inhabitants of the lands known today as Canada. These groups are defined as First Nations, Inuit, and Métis in the Constitution Act, 1982. This an old term to describe what is now termed Indigenous People in Canada.

Additions to Reserves (ATR) - refer to the process of converting Crown / fee-simple lands to reserve status. Reserve lands are lands set aside by the federal Crown for the collective use of a respective First Nation. Unique in this regard is the fact that a First Nation or the legal termed used is, Indian Band, has the ability to exercise some jurisdiction over lands defined as reserve.

Ally - someone from a privileged group who is aware of how oppression works and struggles alongside members of an oppressed group to take action to end oppression.

B

Band / First Nation – an old term to describe a First Nation community yet it also the legal term until the Indian Act to describe these communities.

Band /First Nation Council – the administrative/political organization of a First Nations community overseen by Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC). Most First Nations just use the term Council. Others can refer to it as a First Nations elected Council.

Band / First Nation Councillor – an elected council member of a First Nations band under Section 74 of the Indian Act. Band Councillors administrate all aspects of the community. Special appointments of band councillors are sometimes made to specific policy areas that are relevant within their community and may include band councillors who are responsible for the

administration of economic development and partnerships for their community. Most First Nations only refer to these elected positions as Councillor or First Nation elected Councillor.

British Columbians - The term 'British Columbians' is often used to reference people living in B.C. This term excludes Indigenous Peoples who may not identify with it. For many, they identify as members of their own sovereign nations and do not consider themselves part of one that has actively worked to assimilate their people. 'British Columbians' also excludes other groups such as newcomers and refugees. We recommend instead saying 'people living in B.C.'

This also holds true for the term Canadian(s).

C

Chief

An **Elected Chief** is the political leader of a Band Council of a First Nation under the Indian Act electoral system. Some First Nations have Elected and/or Hereditary Chiefs, while some self-governing First Nations use the term Executive Director or President.

A **Hereditary Chief** is not an elected official under Section 74 of the Indian Act. A Hereditary Chief is the traditional leadership system of First Nations communities, with title passed down within family bloodlines generally following either a matriarchal or patriarchal line.

Constitution Act, 1982 (formerly the British North America Act, 1867) - Section 91(24) of the British North America Act, 1867 states that legislative authority for Section 35 of the repatriated Constitution Act, 1982 states the following:

1. The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.
2. In this Act, “aboriginal peoples of Canada” includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.
3. For greater certainty, in subsection (1) “treaty rights” includes rights that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired.
4. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the aboriginal and treaty rights

Colonization - occurs when a new group of people migrates into a territory and then takes over and begins to control the Indigenous Peoples of that territory. The settlers impose their own cultural values, religions, and laws, seizing land and controlling access to resources and trade. As a result, the Indigenous People become dependent on the settlers.

Cultural Appropriation - using intellectual property, traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, or artifacts from someone’s culture without permission. It is most likely to be harmful when the source culture is a group that has been oppressed or exploited in other ways

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(as with Indigenous Peoples), or when the object of appropriation is particularly sensitive or sacred.

Cultural Oppression - shared societal values and norms that allow people to see oppression as normal or right.

Cultural Humility - a lifelong process of self-reflection and self-critique whereby the individual not only learns about another's culture, but one starts with an examination of her/his own beliefs and cultural identities.

Cultural Safety - the recognition that one needs to be aware of and challenge unequal power relations at the level of individual, family, community, and society. In a culturally safe environment, each person feels that their unique cultural background is respected, and they are free to be themselves without being judged, put on the spot, or asked to speak for all members of their group.

D

Decolonization - the process of deconstructing colonial ideologies of the superiority and privilege of Western thought and approaches. Decolonization involves valuing and revitalizing Indigenous knowledge and approaches and rethinking Western biases or assumptions that have impacted Indigenous ways of being.

Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) - The Declaration Act aims to create a path forward that respects the human rights of Indigenous Peoples while introducing better transparency and predictability in the work we do together. There are four key areas of the [legislation](#):

- **Section 3** mandates the government to bring provincial [laws into alignment](#) with the UN Declaration,
- **Section 4** requires the Province to develop and implement an [action plan](#), in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, to meet the objectives of the UN Declaration,
- **Section 5** requires regular reporting to the legislature to monitor progress on the alignment of laws and implementation of the action plan, including tabling [annual reports](#) by June 30 of each year, and
- **Sections 6 and 7** allow for flexibility for the Province to enter into agreements with a broader range of Indigenous governments and to exercise statutory [decision-making](#) authority together.
 - View guidance on the Province's approach to [Indigenous governing bodies in the Declaration Act](#).

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Doctrine of Discovery - includes all doctrines, policies and practices based on advocating superiority of peoples or individuals on the basis of national origin or racial, religious, ethnic or cultural differences. The Doctrine of Discovery has an enduring impact on indigenous peoples and the right to redress (article 28 and 37 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples).

Duty to consult and accommodate - essentially means that when the Crown contemplates conduct that could have a prejudicial effect on a potential Indigenous rights or title, it must consult with the relevant Indigenous groups and reasonably take into account their interests.

E

Economic Development Corporation (EDC) – the economic and business development arm of a First Nation government. The community-owned corporations invest in, own, and manage businesses with the goal of benefiting the Indigenous citizens they represent.

Elder - Elders are recognized because they have earned the respect of their community through wisdom, age, and balance of their actions in their teachings.

Enfranchisement (Indian Act) - Enfranchisement is a legal process for terminating a person's Indian status and conferring full Canadian citizenship. Enfranchisement was a key feature of the Canadian federal government's assimilation policies regarding Indigenous Peoples. The Indian Act made enfranchisement legally compulsory. Under the Indian Act from 1876 until 1961, Status Indians would lose their legal and ancestral identities (or Indian Status) for a variety of reasons, such as serving in the Canadian armed forces, gaining a university education, for leaving reserves for long periods (e.g. employment) and specifically for Indigenous women, if they married non-Indian men or if their Indigenous husbands died or abandoned them.

Extinguishment - The history of extinguishment of title has its roots in old or historic treaties which contained the words "cede, release, surrender" of their rights, title and privileges to the lands included within the limits of that particular treaty.

F

Fiduciary obligation - A legal duty described by the Supreme Court as the obligation of one party to look after the well-being of another. Canada has fiduciary obligations to Indigenous People, meaning that Canada must consult and negotiate with Indigenous People whenever their interests are concerned.

First Nation People - First Nation people have inhabited the lands of Canada for thousands of years and were the first Indigenous identity group to be recognized under the Indian Act. 'First

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Nation' is a term used to identify Indigenous Peoples within Canada who are neither Métis nor Inuit.

First Nation Community - any of the groups of indigenous peoples of Canada officially recognized as an administrative unit by the federal government or functioning as such without official status. The term is generally understood to exclude the Inuit and Metis.

First Peoples - Another, less frequently used collective term to describe the original peoples in Canada.

H

Holism/Holistic learning - engaging the four knowledge domains that interweave all aspects of learning: emotional (heart), spiritual (spirit), cognitive (mind) and physical (body).

I

Indian - A term commonly used to describe the hundreds of distinct nations of Indigenous Peoples throughout North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. It can be traced back to Christopher Columbus in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries during his expeditions to find Asia. Widely used by explorers and missionaries, the term was later adopted by the Government of Canada and incorporated into the Indian Act of 1876. It is a legal used in the context of historical government departments, documents, policies, and laws. Indians are one of three recognized Indigenous Peoples in Canada—Indian (First Nation), Inuit and Métis—according to Section 35(2) of the Constitution Act, 1982.

Under the Indian Act, **Indian** means “*a person who pursuant to this Act is registered as an Indian or is entitled to be registered as an Indian.*” In the Act there are three classifications of Indian:

Status Indian: A person entitled to have their name included on the Indian Register, an official list maintained by the federal government. Certain criteria determine who can be registered as a Status Indian. Only Status Indians are recognized as Indians under the Indian Act. Status Indians are entitled to certain rights and benefits under the law.

non-Status Indian: An Indian person who is not registered as an Indian under the Indian Act, who lost their status or whose ancestors were never registered or lost their status under former or current provisions of the Indian Act.

Treaty Indian: A Status Indian who belongs to a First Nation that signed a treaty with the Crown and as a result are entitled to treaty benefits.

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Indian Act, 1876 - The Canadian legislation, first passed in 1876, which defines an Indian in relation to the federal government's fiduciary responsibility as it applies to "Indians" living on-reserve. The Act sets out certain federal obligations and regulates the management of Indian reserve lands, Indian monies and other resources, as well as approves or disallows First Nation bylaws. It has been amended several times, in 1985 with Bill C-31 and again in 2011 with Bill C-3 pertaining to identity. Today, Bill C-38 is yet to receive Royal Assent to amend the Indian Act once again to address remaining inequities in registration and First Nations membership under the *Indian Act*.

Indian Band - The Indian Act's definition is as follows:

"Band" means a body of Indians:

- (a) for whose use and benefit in common, lands, the legal title to which is vested in Her Majesty, have been set apart before, on or after September 4, 1951,
- (b) for whose use and benefit in common, moneys are held by Her Majesty, or
- (c) declared by the Governor in Council to be a band for the purposes of this Act.

Inuit - The Inuit are Indigenous Peoples of Arctic Canada. Inuit communities are located in regions based on modern land claims known as the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (the Northwest Territories), Nunavut, the Northern Québec region of Nunavik, and the Northern Labrador region of Nunatsiavut. The singular of Inuit is Inuk.

Indigenous Financing Institution (IFI) – An Indigenous community-based organization that provides business financing, including business loans and non-repayable contributions, and resources to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit-owned businesses.

Indigenization - the process of naturalizing Indigenous knowledge systems and making them evident to transform spaces, places, and hearts. In the context of post-secondary education, this involves bringing Indigenous knowledge and approaches together with Western knowledge systems. It is a deliberate coming together of these two ways of being.

Indigenous Epistemologies - theory of knowledge that is based on Indigenous perspectives, such as relationality, the interconnection of sacred and secular, and holism. The emotional, spiritual, cognitive, and physical dimensions of knowledge are common in Indigenous epistemologies.

Indigenous Interest - A broad term referring to the range of rights and entitlements that arise from long use and occupation of all their territories by Indigenous People. Application of common law, statute law, treaty provisions, and the Constitutional protection provided to "... the existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal people of Canada" by section 35 of The Constitution Act, 1982, to the facts of the particular case, determines the scope of "Aboriginal interest."

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Indigenous Knowledge/knowing - unique Indigenous knowledges (based in Nations & Communities) are conveyed formally and informally amongst kinship ties throughout many Communities in social encounters, language, song, storytelling, ceremony, land-based activities, etc.

Indigenous Peoples - Ethnic groups defined as “Indigenous” according to one of several meanings of the term. Historically it refers to the original inhabitants of a territory. For this purpose, the term refers to people classified as indigenous under international law in such documents as the “Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Traditional Knowledge - can be defined as a network of Indigenous based knowledges, beliefs, and traditions intended to preserve, communicate, and contextualize Indigenous relationships with culture, land, resources, place, etc. over time.

Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Being & Doing - refers to the way of knowing that Indigenous Nations and people accumulate over generations of living in and experiencing a specific environment, resulting in them making sense of their world. Indigenous ways of knowing inform decision-making about fundamental aspects of day-to-day life. This knowledge is integral and fundamental to Indigenous cultures that encompasses language systems, sustainable resource use practices, cultural and social interactions, ritual, and spirituality. Many people continue to generalize Indigenous experience and lived realities. The intent of the phrases "Indigenous Ways of Knowing" or “Indigenous Knowing” is to help educate people about the vast variety of unique knowledge that exists across diverse Indigenous communities throughout Canada.

Indigenous Sovereignty - The term “sovereignty” has been used in many different ways in Canada. It is understood as the right of self-government, which Canadian Indigenous Peoples neither surrendered nor lost by way of settlement, colonization, and the like.

Indigenous Title - In general, "Indigenous title" refers to the rights of Indigenous Peoples to the occupation, use and enjoyment of their land and its resources. The classic legal definition was provided by the Supreme Court of Canada in *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* [2]:

"... aboriginal title encompasses the right to exclusive use and occupation of land; second, aboriginal title encompasses the right to choose to what uses land can be put, subject to the ultimate limit that those uses cannot destroy the ability of the land to sustain future generations of Aboriginal Peoples; and third, that lands held pursuant to aboriginal title have an inescapable economic component."

Inherent Rights - Pre-existing rights that a person is born with into their nation; officially recognized by Canada under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982: Indigenous peoples of Canada have the right to govern themselves in relation to matters that are internal to their communities, integral to their unique cultures, identities, traditions, languages and institutions, and with respect to their special relationship to their land and their resources.

Intergenerational trauma - where the effects of traumatic experiences are passed on to the next generations.

Impacts and Benefits Agreements (IBA) - A broad term used to describe various contractual commitments related to development of land or resources subject to Indigenous rights. IBAs usually impose negotiated limits on a project's impacts on the environment, on fish and wildlife, on the land and First Nations traditional use and enjoyment of same; and IBAs usually define a range of negotiated economic and preferential benefits to flow to the First Nation(s) whose lands are to be impacted by the development.

L

Land acknowledgement - an honest and historically accurate way to recognize the First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit territories of a place. They can be presented verbally or visually: signage, short theatre presentations or simple spoken-word greetings.

Inspired by the 94 recommended calls to action contained in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (now known as the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, or NCTR), land acknowledgements are a necessary first step toward honouring the original occupants of a place. They also help Canadians recognize and respect Indigenous peoples' inherent kinship beliefs when it comes to the land, especially since those beliefs were restricted for so long.

Land Claims

Specific claims deal with First Nation grievances against the Crown and arise where Canada is deemed to have failed to meet its obligations under Treaties or other agreements, or in how it has managed First Nation funds or assets.

Comprehensive land claims, sometimes referred to as modern Treaties, arise when First Nation rights and title have not been dealt with by treaty or through other legal means. In areas where this has occurred, comprehensive land claim and self-government agreements can be jointly negotiated between a First Nation and Canada and, where applicable, provincial, and territorial governments.

Land claim agreement - A term used by the federal government to refer to a negotiated settlement with a First Nation on lands, land usage, and other rights.

M

Métis - Métis are the descendants of European settlers and the First Nations people of Canada, particularly the Cree and Anishinaabe. These unions resulted in a distinct collective culture and nationhood along the central and prairie regions of Canada. Today, there is a wide array of Métis communities across Canada, with Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta having the highest density of Métis people.

O

Oral History - It has been suggested that if a culture did not have a written language, then it was considered primitive. Indigenous Peoples in North America have relied on oral histories, as opposed to written languages, since the dawn of time. History is frequently passed to future generations through stories, songs, ceremony, protocols, practices, land based learning, oral communications and so much more.

P

Pretend Indian - Pretendian (portmanteau of pretend and Indian) is a pejorative colloquialism used to call out a person who has falsely claimed Indigenous identity by professing to be a citizen of a Native American or Indigenous Canadian nation, community, or Peoples or to be descended from Native American or Indigenous Canadian ancestors.

Protocols - ways of interacting with Indigenous people in a manner that respects traditional ways of being. Protocols are unique to each Indigenous culture and are a representation of a culture's deeply held governance and ethical systems.

Reconciliation - addressing past wrongs done to Indigenous Peoples, making amends, and improving relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to create a better future for all.

R

Reserve (Reserve Lands) – lands set aside under the Indian Act and treaty agreements for the exclusive use of an Indian band (legal term under the Indian Act). Band or Nation members possess the right to live on reserve lands, and band administrative and political structures are frequently located there. Reserve lands are not “owned” by First Nations but are held in trust for them by the Crown.

On-Reserve:

A term used to describe First Nations living on a reserve for which the Crown has jurisdiction over and a fiduciary responsibility.

Off-Reserve:

A term used to describe First Nation Peoples who live away from their original home, territory, or reserve. It may also refer to services or objects that are not part of the reserve or territory but relate to First Nations.

Rights

Asserted or established rights as referred to under Section 35 of the Constitution and Nation-specific Treaties.

S

Scrip - Certificates redeemable for land or money issued to Métis during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Métis would have to apply for the scrip in order to qualify; it was a system designed to extinguish Métis title.

Sovereignty - Both the Indigenous Peoples and Canada are sovereign nations. This means they are two separate governing bodies living on the same landmass. However, sovereignty is not absolute, it is conditional - with rights come responsibility. Sovereignty is not something that is static. It is a concept that is used to promote the interests of First Nations people.

Self-determination - A term introduced to gradually replace the term, “self-government.” The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development’s Community-Based Self-Government Policy of 1984 was perceived as more of a municipal government model and did not fully recognize the authoritative powers to the extent envisioned and asserted by many Aboriginal peoples.

Self-identification - Self-identification refers to the voluntary, confidential, self-described declaration of Indigenous identity.

Key Terms

Self-government - A term originally conceived and used by Indigenous Peoples in the late 1970s to describe their right to govern their own affairs. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development adopted the term and applied it to the Community-Based Self-Government Policy of 1984. Such a government is designed, established, and administered by Indigenous Peoples under the Canadian Constitution through a process of negotiation with Canada and, where applicable, the provincial government.

Self-reliance - A key objective of Indigenous Peoples. They want the ability to participate in the political, and more importantly, the economic mainstream without having to rely on federal funding to meet their Nation and community needs. In addition to business opportunities, they also want to get into the realm of taxes, royalties and revenue sharing on land developments which are viewed as key to the self-reliance puzzle.

Stakeholder - is a common corporate term for partners which has negative connotations to many Indigenous Peoples. When land acquisition was happening, this term referred to the allotment of land to settlers. Settlers were given wooden stakes to claim their plot of land prior to any treaty or land negotiations with Indigenous Peoples. It's more appropriate to refer to Indigenous Peoples as partners rather than stakeholders. Indigenous Peoples are not stakeholders; they are Indigenous rights holders whose rights are protected under the Constitution of Canada.

Structural (or systemic) oppression - the manifestation of oppression in societal institutions, such as governments, religions, education systems, health care, law, and the media. For example, the fact that Indigenous People are overrepresented in the criminal justice system and child welfare systems is a form of structural oppression.

Surrender - A formal agreement that confirms the conditions and terms when a First Nation exchanges part of its territory for equitable compensation.

T

Terra Nullius - “nobody’s land” – unexplored landscapes drawn by European mapmakers as blank spaces representing empty land waiting to be settled, rather than territories occupied by Indigenous Peoples for thousands of years.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) - broadly describes systems for understanding one's environment, based on detailed personal observation and experience, and informed by generations of elders. TEK is recognized and used around the world as an important environmental assessment tool.

Traditional territory - the geographic area identified by a First Nation as the land they and their ancestors traditionally occupied and used.

Key Terms

Treaty - A formal, ratified agreement or contract usually made between two nations, such as those between Indigenous peoples and governments.

Historic treaties - treaties signed by First Nations and the British and Canadian governments between 1701 and 1923.

Modern treaties - treaties being negotiated today in B.C. through tri-partite negotiations with three levels of government: the First Nation, the Government of Canada, and the Province of British Columbia. The first modern treaty in B.C. was completed in 1999 with the Nisga'a First Nation. Some First Nations in B.C. do not agree with the treaty process.

Numbered Treaties - 11 treaties signed by the First Nations peoples and the reigning monarchs of Canada between 1871 and 1921, providing the settler government with large tracts of land in exchange for promises that varied by treaty.

Peace and Friendship Treaties - treaties signed in the Maritimes between 1725 and 1779 intended to end hostilities and encourage co-operation between the British and Mi'kmaq and Maliseet First Nations.

Treaty Rights - The specific rights of the Indigenous Peoples embodied in the treaties they entered into with the Crown, initially Great Britain and after Confederation, Canada. They often address matters such as the creation of reserves and the rights of Indigenous communities to hunt, fish and trap on Crown lands. Treaty rights are protected by section 35(1) of the Constitution Act, 1982.

Treaty Settlement Lands - Lands identified under a treaty over which a First Nation has law-making authority and title.

Tribal Council - Not defined under the Indian Act, a Tribal Council usually represents a group of First Nations to facilitate the administration and delivery of local services to their members.

Turtle Island - refers to the vast traditional lands of the First peoples of Canada (Indigenous Peoples). For most Indigenous Peoples, the term is inclusive of the lands encompassing the continent of North America and all that live and have lived within these lands. Turtle Island comes from Indigenous oral traditions with differing variations among Indigenous Peoples, notably, between Algonquian, Iroquoian and Anishinaabe or Ojibwe. This traditional story represents the turtle as an icon of life and creation.

Two-eyed seeing - the guiding principle of seeing the strengths of multiple perspectives in an interconnected and respectful way rather than as binaries or opposites. Shared by Mi'kmaq Elder, Albert Marshall, the word Etuaptmuk is a way to see the strengths of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives with one eye and to see the strengths of Western knowledge and perspectives with the other eye; then you learn how to see with both eyes together to benefit all peoples.

Two-spirit - people are part of the LGBTQIA2S+ community, specific to the Indigenous community. The term 'Two-spirit' can be abbreviated as '2S.' An older term, 'Two-spirited' may be preferred by some people when referring to themselves.

U

Unceded - means that First Nations people never ceded or legally sold nor signed away their lands to the Crown or to Canada. A traditional territory is the geographic area identified by a First Nation as the land they and their ancestors traditionally occupied and used. **Ninety-five percent of British Columbia, including Vancouver, is on unceded traditional First Nations territory.**

United Nations Declaration Rights on 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.

Urban reserve - There are two types of urban reserves: one is a reserve that was rural but became urban when a neighbouring town expanded around them. An example is the Musqueam Reserve in Vancouver. The second type of reserve is created when a First Nation acquires a block of land in a city and works through the process of acquiring reserve status for the land.

Usufructuary Rights - Communal or community rights to share in the use of property. This concept has been used by the courts in attempting to distinguish between Crown title and Aboriginal title.

Terminology Resources:

- [Terminology Guide: Research on Aboriginal Heritage](#)
- [Indigenous Peoples: A Guide to Terminology](#) – [the entire guide can be found here](#)
- [UBC Foundations-So what term do I use?](#)
- [Background Information: NWC First Nations of B.C.](#)
- [Pulling Together: A Guide For Curriculum Developers](#)
- [What are land acknowledgements and why do they matter?](#)

Appendix

The Riverbed: The Values of Economic Reconciliation

Reconciliation needs to be accompanied by purposeful actions in all spaces of society. These actions should happen through Indigenized approaches and processes. The riverbed is the channel in which a river flows. It helps guide the river's course. As seen through an Indigenous worldview, these values are interconnected and reinforce one another - none of them can be adopted on its own or ranked higher than the others. While Indigenous peoples already largely live by and embody these values, all people and organizations need to adopt and enact these values as it is only through our collective efforts that we can protect and care for what matters most for current and future generations.

- Accountability and truth telling
- Regenerative
- Embraces and celebrates diverse knowings and ways of being
- Connected to Land and Place
- Rematriation
- Reciprocal relationships
- Anti-racism, equity, and solidarity
- Self-determination, cultural sovereignty, and Indigenization
- Recognition and respect

Accountability and Truth-telling

Taking responsibility includes our accountability to our children, the land and its creatures, and future generations. It also includes taking responsibility for past and ongoing impacts of settler colonialism on Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing in Canada. It is a commitment to truth-telling and taking actions that are accountable to the truth. There are also planetary levels of accountability and transparency and through all levels of systems.

For First Nations and more broadly, Indigenous Peoples, storytelling is the foundation of articulating lived values that form the basis for Indigenous governance and regeneration. The sharing of this experiential knowledge and living histories through storytelling, comprises part of the core teachings that Indigenous families transmit to future generations. Canada's version of history is very different from Canada's Indigenous Peoples' lived experience. This is demonstrated by Paulette Regan, Euro-Canadian scholar and academic liaison to Truth and Reconciliation Commission:

“Settler violence against Indigenous peoples is woven into the fabric of Canadian history in an unbroken thread from past to present that we must now unravel, unsettling our comfortable assumptions about the past. At the same time, we must work as Indigenous allies to “restory” the dominant culture version of history; that is, we must make decolonizing space for Indigenous history—counter-narratives of diplomacy, law, and peacemaking practices—as told by Indigenous peoples themselves.”



We must stop the colonial story being the only story of Indigenous lives. The narrative of this history not only has to be told, with the truth and followed by accepting that truth, but also being accountable by fully appreciate the ongoing impacts of colonization has on First Nation communities, families, and peoples and the lived experiences of resilience and resurgence that need to be shared with intergenerational survivors. In short, meaningful reconciliation efforts, commitments and actions must confront colonialism not only historically but as part of an ongoing process that continues to impact present generations of Indigenous youth and families.

Recognition and Respect



Practicing openness to different perspectives and experiences, including Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing. Respect is a foundational piece to all the other values and aspects of this framework, and all the work required for economic reconciliation. Honouring and acting upon Indigenous rights to self-determination, including the inherent right of self-government and that they are Title and Rights holders to their traditional territory. This includes committing to actions and principles of Land Back, and upholding the rights of individuals whether they live on- or off-reserve.

Governments, Industry, Institutions, etc. speak to recognition of Indigenous People in Canada and respect for the relationships with Indigenous peoples and First Nations, which are absolutely required for reconciliation to be meaningful. However, let us be honest about how serious we are in ensuring sovereignty of Indigenous peoples and their communities. As a majority of the time, it's only to the point where settler Canadians are comfortable and not disturbing their well-being. We are recommending that we must get unsettled in our comfort zones and move through the uncomfortable spaces to truly recognize and respect our Canadian history, Indigenous Title and Rights (without a fight), and their sovereignty.

Regenerative

“Indigenous” refers to how living things learned a way of inter-relating within a specific place to achieve the dynamic optimum efficiency ensuring constant renewal.”

-Dr. Jeanette Armstrong

As Dr. Jeanette Armstrong has emphasized, to live regeneratively requires that our whole society does things in such a way that we do not destroy the lands and all beings' ability for constant renewal. A circular and regenerative economy is one that is iterative and gets better over time as we learn. It is based on ecological restoration, land protection, equitable relationships and partnerships, justice, and fair participatory processes. Rather than extract from the land and each other, how do we do things that are consistent with the rights of nature, valuing the health and well-being of Mother Earth by producing, consuming, and redistributing resources in harmony with the planet and all its creatures? Embracing a culture of spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical well-being, our economic system encourages and generates collective healing.



Connected to Land and Place

For Indigenous peoples, the land does not belong to them, but rather they belong to the land. This inherent connection to place since time immemorial is the foundation of their societal laws and ways of being. The knowledge and spiritual connection that comes from being tied to the land creates respect, recognition, and the ability to be in reciprocity with it.

An economic system that is connected to land and place is locally designed to redistribute goods so that all organisms can thrive and provide for future generations. It requires re-localization and democratization of how we produce and consume goods, ensuring all have full access to healthy food, renewable energy, clean air and water, good jobs, and healthy living environments.

This value asks us to move away from treating the land solely as something to be used, manipulated, and extracted from to treating the land as a part of ourselves, where we are rooted and understand the relationship to family, community and land through our responsibility and accountability to it and all those connected to it.



Reciprocal Relationships



Relationships are built on respect and in the spirit of exchange. For Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals, communities, organizations, and institutions, this means that knowledge, capacity, and wisdom is not one-sided or hierarchical. Collaboration and partnership with Indigenous Peoples and communities can generate transformative spaces and can shift us away from dominant western ways of being. This is about working side by side as equal partners in the economy, in partnership with Indigenous communities in every aspect of economic development. This is particularly important in BC because most of the land is unceded territory.

This reciprocal relationship also extends to how we as humans relate to the land and other creatures. Interlinked with the value of Connected to Land and Place, each place has its own system of reciprocity to be respected.

Justice, Anti-racism, and Solidarity

A just world means that all children, families, and communities are thriving, not just surviving. Injustices experienced by Indigenous people are not separate from other injustices. We honour the resilience of Indigenous, Women, Black and all People of Colour, as well as LGBTQIA2S+ community members who have endured this system of oppression and continue to be leaders in dismantling it. We are committed to social and ecological justice and learning to move away from performative or token allyship towards true solidarity with one another as we move forward together.



Self-determination, Cultural sovereignty, Indigenization



Indigenous worldviews, culture, values, protocols, practices, are embedded in decisions, processes, and outcomes across various contexts of community economic development. Immersing local people into regenerative knowledge together as a whole community, not divided as it is in many communities throughout BC. By learning from Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing communities can make decisions that reflect the original peoples of this land and honour their inseparable relationship to the land, committing to transformation through decolonization and Indigenization.

Rematriation

Rematriation is a core act of reconciliation, which involves acknowledging, respecting, and supporting matriarchy in our everyday roles and responsibilities personally and professionally. This comes about through human-equity and not gender-equity (equality based in humanness on not just gender only), decolonization, destruction of male sexism, toxicity, abuse and violence, continuation of revamping laws and policies to create greater access to women for equality in employment and compensation, board positions, access to capital, and so much more. This is about the rebalance of responsibility in our communities and not about power and control. This work is required internally within our communities and more importantly, externally throughout non-Indigenous communities.

It is through the process of Rematriation that Indigenous peoples and Nations reclaim their identity, culture, and ways of being. Indigenous women's spiritual connection to matrilineal ancestors and relations that extend beyond this world, and their role as life givers means that they are in a unique position to lead in a way that consistently places children and families at the center. Honouring and supporting women to lead in their fullest potential is required not only to enable the full sovereign expression of all Indigenous relatives, but also for the benefit of all communities by helping people overcome fear and move towards love.

