



Here since time immemorial

- Indigenous peoples and their societies have occupied Turtle Island longer than written history
- There are many sovereign nations, each with their own worldview, teachings, and languages
- Although diverse, there are some common teachings and philosophies including:
 - Relationship to the land
 - wâhkôhtowin
 - wîkiwin

Indigenous worldview: nêhiyaw (Plains Cree) lens

Relationship to land

- + We are from the land, not separate from it
- + The land is tied to and sustains our culture and way of life
- + We are loaned that land from Creator
- + We have an obligation to protect the land and our animal relatives for the next seven generations to come

wâhkôhtowin

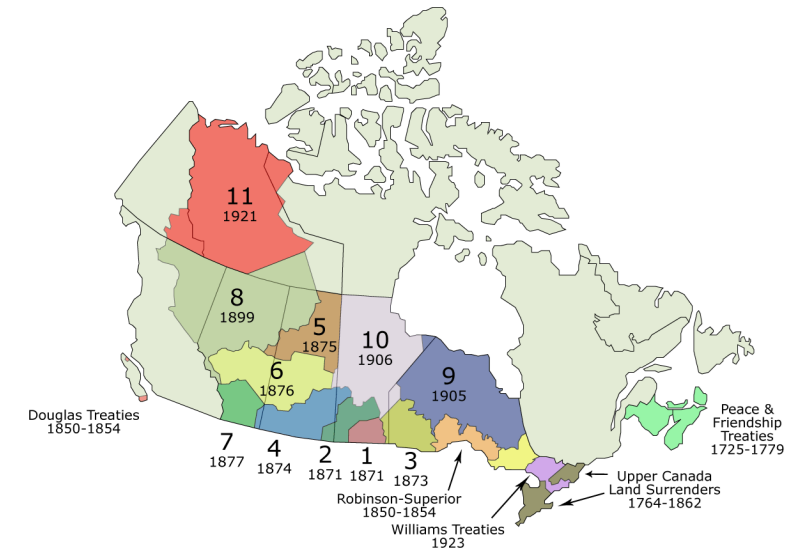
- + “We are all related”
- + Kinship and respect
- + With winged ones, crawling ones, four-legged, two-legged, plants, trees, rivers, lakes and all of creation
- + The community raises the child
- + Adoption culture

wîkiwin

- + “Home”, “housing”
- + On the land: medicines, traditional harvesting, and stewardship
- + Multigenerational
- + Community-based
- + Matriarchal
- + Connected to culture, language, and ceremony

Treaties in Canada

- Treaty was a sacred way for Indigenous nations to come to agreements
- Settlers began to use “treaties” to pave the way for settlement and accruing resources
- Now treaties are used by Indigenous nations to reclaim stolen land



Indigenous treaty

- + The oral Treaty Teaching
- + Indigenous principles of Treaty
 - + Grandfather Teachings
 - + Pipe Ceremony
 - + Tâpwêwin
 - + Wâhkôhtawin
 - + Wampum Belt

Historical treaty

- + Numbered treaties (1-11)
- + The context of the prairie treaties
- + Preserving a way of life
- + Land-Sharing agreements
- + Still persists today
 - + askîwipimâcihowascikêwin
 - + pimâcihowin

Modern treaty

- + Comprehensive land claims
- + Addition to Reserve/ Reserve Creation
- + Still falls under the Indian Act
- + determined in court
- + self-governance



The Scream, by Kent Monkman (2016)



Camp pekiwewin, Edmonton (2020)

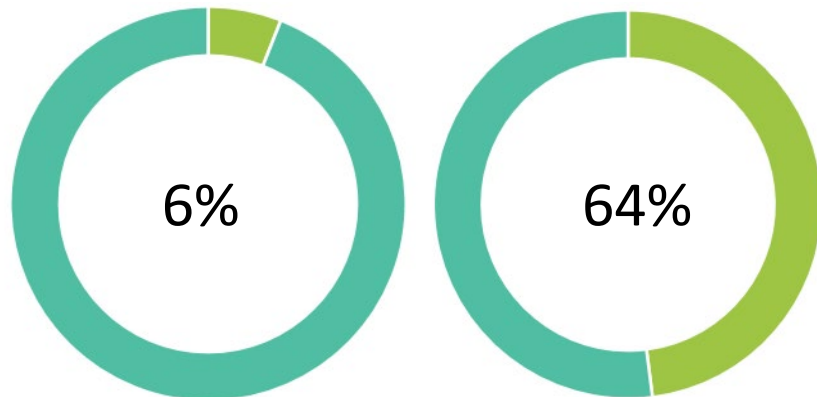


The legacy of colonialism: Indigenous homelessness

- Broken Treaties
 - Stolen land and resources
- Displacement
 - Reserve system: creation, annulments, moves
 - The Pass system
- The Indian Act
 - Disenfranchisement
 - Assimilation policy: Language, Ceremony (ex. Potlatch)
- Cultural genocide
 - Residential schools
 - Child welfare (Birth alerts)
 - Patriarchy (MMIWG)
- Historic trauma
 - Intergenerational trauma
 - Addictions

Indigenous peoples are overrepresented in the homeless population

- Although Indigenous people make up 6% of the general population in Edmonton, they make up 64% of the homeless population (Current State of Homelessness in Edmonton, 2017)



United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples: Article 23

Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions

- Social policy in Canada is fundamentally colonial - not effective, even harmful
- Cultural differences may play a role in this, i.e. definitions of success
- **Indigenous-led** solutions are needed to address Indigenous homelessness

Pathways to change: LandBack

LandBack is a movement that calls for:

- Land restitution and returning public land and resources to tribal nations
- Self-determination, sovereignty, and control over policy affecting Indigenous people
- Return of land stewardship and management to tribal nations
- Reparations to Indigenous nations for past injustice and theft
- Dismantling the white supremacist and colonial systems of power that has allowed for the oppression of Indigenous people

Examples

- Real Rent Duwamish (RRD)
- 2Land 2Furious land trust
- 1942 LandBack Lane
- One House Many Nations (OHMN)





Case study: Camp Pekiwewin

- Grassroots anti-police violence prayer camp
- Served as an encampment protected by concerned community members due to the frequent displacement of homeless encampments

Notable features

- + Met the needs of Edmonton's homeless during COVID-19:
 - + closing of Edmonton Shelters and doubling of homeless population
 - + medical system breakdown and record-high overdoses in 2020 & 2021
- + Operated from a harm-reduction lens, service with dignity, wikiwin
- + Grassroots and non-for-profit
- + Incorporated Indigenous ceremony and prayer
- + Made demands of the city to improve social issues

Improvements

- + band-aid solution to address Edmonton homelessness
- + Lacked input from the homeless community and Indigenous leadership
- + Lack of city approval led to confrontation and the shut down of the camp
- + Sanctioned encampments shouldn't be considered the solution by the municipal government - need housing solutions



Case study: naawi-oodena

- Former Kapyong Barracks site in the City of Winnipeg
- Planned urban reserve through a comprehensive land claims agreement in 2012

Notable features

- + Fully governed by Treaty One First Nations
- + Taxes go to Treaty One, with agreements in place for city waste removal and emergency services to still be provided
- + Site planning includes integration of Indigenous culture, sustainability, and accessibility
- + Includes Indigenous-led services such as an Indigenous campus and cultural services
- + Requires integration of low income housing
- + Heavy community engagement all throughout

Improvements

- + Still under the jurisdiction of the Indian Act
- + Does not mention services for homeless besides low income housing, which is still inaccessible to many
- + Not all Indigenous people in Winnipeg are from Treaty One - limited membership
- + Long and costly process: Had to take Ottawa to court to protest sale and start land claim
- + Share 32% of land with a federal corporation

A new urban land agreement

We propose a new form of practical land-back by mandating a framework for returning urban land to Indigenous people to address urban Indigenous homelessness

This would look like:

- Agreements to develop or repurpose neighbourhoods/ compounds in an urban area, scalable to available space
- Full self-determination of the site by an inter-nation coalition of self-identifying Indigenous people and invested Indigenous-led community organizations, without the requirement of nations being recognized by the Indian Act
- Taxes and economic gain within the neighbourhood bounds would go to the coalition to pay for services. Agreements with the municipality for emergency and waste removal would be standardized
- Heavy community engagement and leadership opportunities throughout the land agreement process, development planning, and implementation
- Prioritization of vulnerable Indigenous community members in planning design and service provision

Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action: 44

44. We call upon the Government of Canada to develop a national action plan, strategies, and other concrete measures to achieve the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

A new urban land agreement

These compounds would include:

- Mandated social housing:
 - multigenerational
 - at least 30% affordable housing
 - Permanent supportive housing
 - Tiny house villages (ex. Muskrat huts)
 - safe free camping/designated supportive encampment area
- Services provision;
 - Indigenous led/informed
 - healthcare services
 - social services
 - education
 - community safety teams and crisis diversion
 - harm-reduction programs
 - Job programs: peer work, job training, community development
- Similar considerations as seen in the framework provided by naawi-oodena for economic development, sustainability, community structure, incorporation of culture



Barriers to Implementation and Further Research

Major Barriers

- Capitalist funding models
- Stakeholders not understanding the historical context of Indigenous land title and colonialism and how that results in today's social problems
- Discrimination and stigma
- Colonial legal landscape
- Requirement of city-wide collaboration and consultation

Research could address

- Legal considerations and policy for implementation
- Effective social housing evaluation and implementation
- Anti-police community safety models
- Considerations for effective governance of the inter-coalition model
- Changes in social indicators such as homelessness with implementation



Resources

- Indigenous History/ Treaty
 - <https://histindigenouspeoples.pressbooks.tru.ca>
 - <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1465827292799/1611938828195>
 - <https://www.edmonton.ca/sites/default/files/public-files/assets/PDF/UrbanReservesStrategy.pdf>
- Urban Aboriginal Homelessness in Canada/ Edmonton
 - <https://www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/population-specific/indigenous-peoples>
 - <https://edmontonsocialplanning.ca/social-well-being/e-built-environment/e6-built-environment/>
 - <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/edmonton-looking-into-pilot-for-small-city-sanctioned-homeless-encampments-1.6495459>
- Camp pekiwewin
 - <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/this-is-about-prayer-inside-edmonton-s-camp-pekiwewin-1.5682391>
 - <https://www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/homeless-shelter-edmonton-camp-pekiwin/>
 - <https://www.tkuchronicle.ca/articles/9vojxu6dyr1texb4v35rcgyqm6fuzi>
- Addiction
 - <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/record-breaking-1758-albertans-died-of-a-drug-poisoning-in-2021>
 - <https://edmontonjournal.com/opinion/columnists/opinion-covid-19-crisis-is-likely-to-blame-for-albertas-rising-overdoses>
- Naawi-oodena
 - <https://secureservercdn.net/72.167.230.230/c7r.1b6.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Kapyong-Barracks-Master-Plan.pdf>
 - <https://treaty1.ca/kapyong/>
- Land Back
 - <https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/four-case-studies-land-back-in-action>
 - <https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/back-2-the-land-2land-2furious>
 - <https://idlenomore.ca/one-house-many-nations/>
 - <https://charterforcompassion.org/problem-solving/tiny-houses-for-the-homeless-an-affordable-solution-catches-on>
 - <https://www.wpr.org/how-land-back-movement-reclaiming-land-stolen-indigenous-people>
- UNIP: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>
- TRC: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf