

AA3.3 Appendix C

APPENDIX C

ANSWERING THE CALLS

City of Toronto and the MMIWG Calls for Justice



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THE CRISIS

THE LONG ROAD BEHIND US AND AHEAD OF US

For decades families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous women and girls have advocated tirelessly for justice. Justice for their mothers, their daughters and sisters who never returned home. As part of this plight for justice, advocates pushed for the creation of a national investigatory body to gather truths and give voice to those women and girls. The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (the Inquiry) was established with a two-year mandate to help tell the collective story of this epidemic, to identify the systemic issues that led to the on-going crisis of Indigenous women and girls as targets of brutal violence and to lay the foundation for a path forward to end the violence.

On June 3, 2019, the Inquiry delivered its final report, *Reclaiming Power and Place*, to the Federal Government. Within the report, the truths of over 2,380 affected family members of missing and murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and survivors of violence are gathered. In addition to those truths, the Commission gathered evidence and heard testimony by Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and various experts. The sum total of all this collective truth is a finding that the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls epidemic, is the result of race based acts of genocide. Genocide that targets Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA, not just on the basis of race but also on the intersectional discrimination grounds of gender and gender identification.

The Inquiry held that targeted genocide was and is perpetuated by colonial structures and institutions, including the Indian Residential

School system, the *Indian Act*, the Sixties Scoop, the Child Welfare system, Education, Health and Justice systems.

The number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls is in the thousands, and it continues to rise. The Inquiry was unable to conclude the specific number of lives lost to date; however, they did conclude that the connecting factor of all the deaths spanning time and circumstance is the colonial violence, racism, sexism and oppression of Indigenous women and girls. Furthermore, the Inquiry held that the violence, racism, sexism and oppression of Indigenous women and girls is embedded into everyday Canadian life and daily interactions within society, institutions, systems and laws that it is normalized. The murdering of Indigenous women and girls is now a Canadian norm.

THE HARD NUMBERS AND FACTS

Indigenous women and girls are more likely to experience direct racism and violence than all other persons in Canada, based on ethnicity and gender. The reality of being an Indigenous female and/or an Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA person in Canada is that your very existence makes you a target for extreme violence and ultimately genocide.

An overview of the hard numbers and facts derived from the work of the Inquiry speak to the danger of living life as an Indigenous woman, girl and/or 2SLGBTQQIA person:

- Indigenous women and girls are 12 times more likely to be missing or murdered than other women and girls in Canada;
- Indigenous women and girls are 16 times more likely to be missing or murdered than Caucasian women;
- Indigenous women are sexually assaulted three times more often than non-Indigenous women;

- Indigenous women and girls are targeted by sex traffickers - Majority of the women and children sex trafficked in Canada are Indigenous persons;
- Majority of Indigenous women who are later sexually exploited or trafficked were sexually abused at an early age, making them easy targets for traffickers who prey on this vulnerability and count on society's turning a blind eye;
- Indigenous women and girls are over-policed, subjected to higher scrutiny and violence by police;
- Indigenous women and girls are under-supported by police - less resources and less efforts are made in criminal investigations of violence against Indigenous women and girls;
- Indigenous women and girls have been continuously subjected to sexist and racist stereotypes - a part of Canada's colonial history;
- Indigenous women and girls are hyper-sexualized at a young age by both society and the media;
- Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples are dehumanized - this denied humanity is both normalized and tolerated.
- Indigenous women and girls are under serviced by victim services - both in terms of geography and in the provision of culturally grounded, trauma informed services;
- Indigenous women and girls now make up nearly 25% of all homicides;
- Indigenous women are over-represented in the criminal justice system - representing only four per cent of the Canadian female population and yet accounting for 40% of those women federally incarcerated. Within a 10-year span, the over-incarceration rates of Indigenous women in custody increased by 90 per cent. The gross over-over-representation continues to rise in both the federal and provincial corrections systems.

- Indigenous women and girls are criminalized as a result of colonization and their resistance to colonial violence, including systemic oppression and marginalization;
- Poverty, food insecurity, mental health issues, addiction and violence are systemic factors that lead to the over-incarceration of Indigenous women and girls. Majority of the convictions are for non-violent offences;
- Indigenous women and girls are denied their fundamental rights in custody and are not afforded equal opportunities for supports and services while incarcerated.
- Almost all Indigenous women in custody have a history of sexual abuse and are subject to invasive strip searches - as many as 30% of those strip searches are not conducted according to policy.
- 90% of incarcerated Indigenous women have experienced domestic physical abuse and 68% have experienced domestic sexual abuse;
- Indigenous women and girls are not properly supported by community reintegration efforts post custody;
- Nearly 50% of all children in the child welfare system in Canada are Indigenous;
- Indigenous women disproportionately live in poverty as single parents;
- Indigenous women have a shorter life expectancy;
- Indigenous women suffer higher rates of heart disease and stroke;
- Indigenous women and girls have higher rates of suicide and self-harm;
- Under the *Indian Act*, First Nations women continue to face discrimination in the transmission of status entitlement to their descendants - limiting the transmission of language, culture and

identity;

- 53% of Indigenous women who experience domestic violence fear for their lives compared to 29% of non-Indigenous women in like circumstances;
- Indigenous women are more likely to be killed by acquaintances than non-Indigenous women and are seven times as likely to be targeted by serial killers;
- Indigenous women and girls are denied their fundamental Indigenous and Human Rights in society;
- Indigenous women and girls are subjected to multi-generational and inter-generational trauma of colonial violence, marginalization and targeted violence through loss of land; forced relocation; loss of language, culture and identity; the Indian Residential School system; 60s Scoop; and child apprehension into the Child Welfare System.

Despite the devastating statistics and challenges faced by Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA, the data above are also a testament to the intergenerational strength and resiliency of what it means to be Indigenous and female in Canada.

Indigenous women are the life givers and heartbeats of nations. They carry within them the teachings of love, kindness and wisdom. Now is the time that Indigenous women and girls are taking up their bundles to reclaim their power and place. To this end, governments, institutions and citizens can support this redress of human rights violations by building and fostering respectful relationships with Indigenous women and girls that are grounded in truth and honour.

THE PATH FORWARD – RIGHTS BASED APPROACH

The Inquiry's Final Report "Reclaiming Power and Place" examines the historical and on-going violations against Indigenous women and girls from a rights-based approach. The analysis is from both a human rights-based perspective and an Indigenous rights-based perspective viewing the right to culture, the right to health, the right to security and the right to justice. Utilizing the same rights-based approach, the Inquiry then developed groupings for the Calls for Justice along with a principled approach on how to actionize the Calls for Justice.

The guiding principles as laid out by the Inquiry on how to implement the Calls for Justice are as follows:

- Decolonizing approach;
- Inclusion of Family and Survivors;
- Indigenous-led solutions and services;
- Recognizing distinctions;
- Cultural safety; and
- Trauma Informed.

The Inquiry provided 231 Calls for Justice directed at governments, institutions, social services providers, industries and Canadians. For a complete list of the Calls for Justice please see: https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls_for_Justice.pdf

The Calls are grounded in evidence heard and gathered over the course of the Inquiry's two-year mandate. The Inquiry laid out the road ahead of us detailed with a plan on how to move forward together.

CITY OF TORONTO, THE ALLY – SPEAKING WITH COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION:

On January 8, 2020, the City of Toronto met with Indigenous community members, Indigenous service providers, affected families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and survivors of violence, to discuss how to actionize the Inquiry's 231 Calls for Justice.

Indigenous protocol was respected and adhered to; sacred medicines, prayer and song were all an integral part of the process of coming together with good minds and good hearts to talk about how to actionize the Calls for Justice in Toronto. Given the nature of the discussion, health supports were on hand to provide one-on-one counselling and support. Much effort was put into creating a safe space where all peoples were able to talk and share openly. Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre kindly hosted and catered the event.

Prior to the gathering, invited participants received a primer on the work of the National Inquiry, the major findings of the Inquiry, the guiding principles and the Calls for Justice. In order to prepare for a fulsome discussion and to provide input on how the City can work with the Indigenous community to actionize the Calls for Justice, participants were provided in advance of the meeting with a series of questions.

The questions focused on identifying and critiquing existing supports available within the GTA for MMIWG affected families and survivors of violence; identifying proactive changes at an institutional and organizational level needed to implement the Calls for Justice; identifying responsive changes that are required to address the epidemic of MMIWG; and identifying on-going supports for affected family members and survivors of violence to ultimately affect positive change for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

The questions provided to the invited participants in advance of the January 8, 2020 session are as follows:

Identifying existing supports within the GTA:

- What services and supports are currently available in Toronto for affected family members and survivors of violence? And;
- How are such services and supports working? How can we enhance or better provide those services and supports to affected family members and survivors of violence? And;
- How is this work connected to the Calls for Justice?

Identifying Proactive Change needed:

- How do we build a safe and inclusive community where Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirited persons are not targeted for acts of violence? And;
- How are such preventative actions connected to the Calls for Justice?

Identifying Responsive Change needed:

- What services and supports would you expect to access if your family member was missing or murdered? And;
- How are those services and supports connected to the Calls for Justice?

Identifying on-going supports to affect positive change:

- What continued supports and services would you expect to have access to if you were an affected family member or survivor of violence? And;
- How are those continued supports and services connected to the Calls for Justice?

On the day of the gathering, participants answered the first series of questions by way of a large group discussion; after which, the participants dispersed into groups to answer the subsequent questions in small group discussions at six separate tables. In order to maintain a safe and respectful space for sharing, each table had a small stone, or rather a Grandfather, placed on it. Whomever was holding the Grandfather had the floor to speak while the other participants actively listened. The Grandfathers were gathered the day before the meeting from the grounds of City Hall. In order to document the discussion, each table had a note taker who recorded the discussion in detailed notes. The engagement notes were then collected, transcribed and provided for review and analysis by the facilitator.

What follows in the subsequent pages of this report are the results of those discussions with Indigenous community service providers, Indigenous community members, affected MMIWG family members and survivors of violence, culminating in a series of recommendations to the City on how to move forward together to actionize the Calls for Justice.

PART I: Current Services and Supports for MMIWG Affected Family Members and Survivors of Violence

With upward of 50 Indigenous-specific service providers located within the city, Toronto is well-situated to provide culturally grounded, trauma informed supports and services to MMIWG affected families and survivors of violence: “*Toronto is the best city for services*”, said Frances Sanderson, Executive Director of Nishnawbe Homes.

The Indigenous-specific supports and services available provide for the diverse needs of an individual throughout the course of their lifetime. Furthermore, such supports and services are often available specific to gender and identity needs.

Indigenous cultural centres provide programming and services to the entire family from birth through to the elderly: Indigenous-specific housing and shelter services are available at various locations across the city; Child welfare services have long since been established within the GTA; Indigenous holistic health supports for the spiritual, physical, mental and emotional well-being are available at different agencies; and legal advocacy services by and for Indigenous people are available to navigate the family and criminal justice systems along with providing representation in matters involving human rights violations and poverty law issues. In addition to the multitude of Indigenous-specific organizations, there are liaisons in various sectors that work with Indigenous persons to access help and information when it is needed – such as the Aboriginal Peacekeeping Unit (APU) within Toronto Police Services (TPS).

Toronto is also home to a multitude of mainstream health and social services that the Indigenous community members may access. Furthermore, the City is an epicentre for activity where many provincial and national organizations and events are held. The Family Information Liaison Unit (FILU) is one such example of a province-wide service located with offices in Toronto. FILU is a federally funded

program housed in the provincial Ministry of Attorney General's Indigenous Justice Division.

The Ontario FILU team is one of several units located nationally that provide MMIWG affected family members with much needed supports and services that are trauma informed and grounded in culture. The team works with families to find answers about their loved one who have been missing or murdered. Audrey Huntley, a Victims Rights Advocate with Aboriginal Legal Services and No More Silence, shared a story where the FILU team had located a family member who had been missing for over 20 years: "Someone who was reported missing in BC was found recently. She actually has been in a long-term care facility alive in Ontario for 19 years...she was found alive and went missing in 1998. She was originally marked as a Pickton victim."

Through their extensive network, FILU was able to locate the missing woman within a few months and reunite her with her family. Other participants also spoke highly of the kindness and supportive experience they have had with FILU both on a personal level, as an MMIWG affected family member, and as a service provider, who has referred community members to the team: "...**nobody else provided supports when my mother was poisoned, the police did nothing. FILU was there for me and I have directed many families there...**" said Laurie Okimawinew of Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre.

There is much great work being done by and for Indigenous peoples within the City of Toronto striving to enhance the lives of community members and families to build stronger, healthier families and community. Freida Gladue, of Native Child and Family Services of Toronto explained a new initiative underway, "...a Healing Lodge for women who are at risk...we are looking at the bigger picture. **We have a whole centre for the entire family, mother and children and are working to strengthen access to multiple services.**"

Alita Sauve, a colleague of Freida's, elaborated on the work underway,

[it] *"doesn't just focus on substance abuse, it focuses on women and decolonization. A Healing Lodge created to address inter-generational trauma, substance abuse, family supports, normalized life,* going back to school. And working with women on practical things – budgeting, accessing and maintaining housing. Maintaining housing while they are in treatment. Long term treatment thinking about what the individual needs – meeting the individual needs."

In addition, to the aforementioned supports available at Native Child and Family Services of Toronto, Melissa Compton and Daniella Robinson spoke of youth-and anti-human trafficking supports and services: "Native Child also does sex education for young people. They ask youth what they want to learn and build programming around their interests. They check in with youth as well in order to improve services. [The] **Anti-Human Trafficking program provides individual counselling and supports, crisis response/management services and humanized services. They get to know their clients so that they don't have to reshare the stories over and over between different staff and workers.**"

Toronto Native Council Fire Cultural Centre, has long since provided a safe space for all community members, "Acceptance is critical...need young, old and all people so that they can relate," explained Andrea Chrisjohn, Board Designate. Chrisjohn went on to describe how some of the training supports offered at Council Fire help heal people and community: "Peacekeeping training is available at Council Fire to help people get their training security but based in cultural teachings... Fire Keepers training. We need **training to be kind** and to know proper safety that they can bring back to their workers. **Be aware of yourself first. Learn from each other.**"

Council Fire, like other agencies, are working to have all of their staff trained in MMIWG matters including the delivery of trauma informed services. This specific organization also works to support communities

and other front-line service providers who work with and for MMIWG affected families and survivors of violence across the southwestern region of the province.

However, despite the best efforts and great work being done by Indigenous peoples for Indigenous peoples, there is a lot of work that is not being done due to the lack of resources, both human and financial resources are significantly lacking: "***We already have many of the solutions. Almost all of the Calls for Justice require appropriate and adequate funding as these are human rights-based issues. We need...substantive equality,***" said Christa Big Canoe, Legal Director, Aboriginal Legal Services and lead Legal Counsel with the MMIWG National Inquiry.

Substantive Equality and the Current Circumstances:

Through the lens of a human rights framework, in this context, substantive equality requires institutions and public bodies to change their laws, policies and procedures in a manner that takes into account the experience of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA persons. Specifically, the experiences of racism, discrimination and denial of unequal distribution of benefit(s) and rights (such as the right to culture, right to health, right to security, right to justice). Therefore, in order to achieve true equality positive accommodations must be made, as Christa Big Canoe explained: "Substantive equality is about the basic needs. We can't give two people the same services and expect the same outcomes. Someone who starts at a deficit may need more support...***we need increased resources, capacity and services in order to get Indigenous people to an equal level.***"

Throughout the discussion, Indigenous community members, both service providers and those who access services, expressed how the current initiatives are inadequate and lack support from governments to provide services and supports that are long-term, sustainable and sufficient to meet the needs of community members. "***Organizations are stretched very thin,*** they all have different and shared clientele,"

remarked Andrea Chrisjohn, Board Designate, Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre.

Frances Sanderson summarized how ad hoc much of the process is "...everyone is running these programs off the corner of their desks."

Government funding is short-term, a fact that is inconsistent with the principles of healing, wellness and reconciliation. "***This is a legal imperative...human rights should not depend on funding,***" said Christa Big Canoe.

In terms of the current relationship with government, community members identified that there is a lack of long-term commitment coupled with insufficient resources and the autonomy to deliver the programs and services in a way that is culturally appropriate.

Furthermore, additional stress on the existing services is placed not only by a high need for such programs but also on demanding reporting requirements that are often times consuming and rigid: "...micromanagement of programs for so little money – we need to find more collaborations and supports between agencies and double up support systems", said Frances Sanderson, Executive Director, Nishnawbe Homes. Monica Forrester from Maggie's echoed France's comments: "***These programs need funding from the city,*** but funding also requires so much paperwork for such a little amount of money and they micromanage what you're doing with the money."

Such reporting mechanisms often require the service provider to dedicate time and resources that could otherwise be spent to support community members in ways that are culturally grounded and trauma informed.

Collectively, Indigenous peoples are struggling to survive the legacy of intergenerational trauma, caused by colonization compounded by direct racism, systemic discrimination and extreme poverty. Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples are particularly

impacted and further marginalized by the constraints of short-term program funding and services.

Under Policing and Toronto Police Perpetuating Harm

The lack of equality and the dire impact it has on community can be seen through the experiences of MMIWG affected family members and survivors of violence interacting with the Toronto police.

The Toronto Police Services' (TPS) Aboriginal Peacekeeping Unit (APU) was established in 1992. At the time of its inception, the APU was comprised of five dedicated police officers. Conservative estimates in the mid 1990's have the Indigenous population accounting for .4% of the city's population.

In subsequent years, the Indigenous population in Toronto has continued to rise significantly, according to the most recent statistics available, Toronto estimates that close to 3% of the City's population are of Indigenous ancestry. Given that Indigenous people are the youngest and fastest growing population nationally, that number will only increase.

Despite the increase in population density and well-documented findings of targeted violence against Indigenous peoples in Canada, the Aboriginal Peacekeeping Unit has had its resources slashed repeatedly. Initially the APU was decreased by 70% leaving only two police officers to do the work of five, and now in 2020, there is only one full-time dedicated police officer.

Members of the Aboriginal Advisory Committee to TPS have long since advocated for a larger contingency of committed officers within the APU; however, the calls for support have went unheard and unanswered, the impact of which is felt by the Indigenous community: [the] ***"APU has been changed, it's a ragged structure with a "white man" process. They need to increase their staff, so there is someone on the other end when you call that can actually intervene before escalation. Biases in humans are the***

biggest problem," said retired TPS Constable and former APU member, Kim Turner.

Emily Hill, legal counsel with Aboriginal Legal Services, spoke from the perspective of an advocate for Indigenous persons: "We don't need more police, they are already being paid and getting tonnes of money. **They need to be accountable and they are not doing their jobs. They need to revise their service, do what you are supposed to do on your budget. Also work and support Indigenous organizations to make connections.** How do we support organizations advocating for their community?" Emily talked about how degrading police interactions have been for her clients: "**I would expect the police would be there to help, but it has been the opposite...my clients are not taken seriously, lots of victim blaming. They seize on substance use or sex industry work as opposed to the crime.**"

Community members expressed frustration with the disparity in police services: "**They need to protect and serve everyone. We are all human beings.**" "**Still issues with police and [us] not being taken seriously.** Police do not understand [and] are not connected with the 2SLGBTQIA. We are still stigmatized."

The issue of police dismissing community members was repeated throughout the discussion. It is important to understand that when a family member attends a police station looking for help, they are at their most vulnerable: "We also **want trained police and emergency services to be taking us seriously and who will believe us** – this comes back to education and cultural sensitivity..." "Today in this engagement, **we had a mother here going through her daughter's death who then had to advocate for herself** (while this was happening) and it's inappropriate. This is due to systemic racism – the lack of care for families to get support and the need to advocate for themselves..."

Lack of Access to Land for Ceremonial Healing

Indigenous peoples have been robbed of their lands, language and culture. A significant part of healing is to have a safe space where ceremony can take place: ***“Access to culture and ceremony is integral. It’s the responsibility of educational institutions, municipalities, provinces and the feds to give it back to us!”***

Every week, Elder Wanda Whitebird holds ceremony in Allan Gardens, a park situated across from Native Women’s Centre, Anishnawbe Health and Mizwee Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training Centre. The park has been a gathering place for Indigenous peoples for many years. Public discussions were even held with Toronto City Council and community members during the time of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s work to rename the park in honour of Indigenous peoples, as an act of reconciliation on the part of the City and reclamation of space by Indigenous peoples; however, the initiative never moved forward as there was a lack of support to rename the park by local residents.

In spite of this, the park does hold space for a traditional medicinal garden and housed *Red Embers*, a temporary art exhibit, dedicated to bringing awareness and honouring missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Neechie Circle is held every Thursday from 11am – 1pm. A land-based healing ceremony led by Elder Whitebird bringing together community to drum, sing, pray and hold sacred space together. Such healing has been continuously hindered by Toronto City staff: “there is a racist manager with Parks and Recreation who told me that since we started the Circles, the drinking has increased in the park!” According to Elder Whitebird, the same city employee orchestrated the removal of park benches that were used by people participating in the ceremony, telling her that ***“if you guys are good, we will bring back the benches one at a time.”*** The lack of seating has impacted the participants’ ability to attend, says Elder Whitebird: “people can’t

stand that long. They have mobility issues and some struggle with substance issues." The Neechie Circle has an inclusive approach to healing as all are welcome to attend: "***our culture is not a recovery program,***" says Elder Whitebird. Despite the hostility participants and organizers face from Toronto City staff, Neechie Circles occur weekly.

Lack of Safe Spaces for Active Users

As Elder Whitebird said, "our culture is not a recovery program." Throughout the gathering, there was much discussion about how to support and work with individuals where they are at: "There's a lot of abstinence-based programs. We need to figure out how to support individuals who use substances...Indigenous women and girls on the street may be using substances and they experience a huge amount of violence. How do we provide safe spaces, safe houses? We need to support and love them where they are at. People are vulnerable at that time when using."

Lack of Safe Supportive Housing

Frances Sanderson spoke of the gap in support services to keep community members housed: "One shortfall we have is support for people to keep them housed. We have housing organizations but just because you put someone in a house doesn't mean they'll stay. They don't pay their rent, something triggers them, etc...What we really need is an organization that is there for keeping people housed – to keep them off the street, keep them going to school, to work etc. This is what we need because all of the housing organizations are maxed out and can't provide these ongoing supports."

A community member shared the experience of a family member who was in need of supportive transitional housing: "My cousin just left CAMH (The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health) for the month-long treatment program and after the month she couldn't get back into the sober living lodge because it was full..."

Toronto is currently facing a crisis in terms of homelessness and related fatalities due to the ever-increasing number of peoples who are without safe, affordable housing. Many Indigenous community members are relegated to the streets, struggling to survive and cope with colonial imposed trauma. Without proper supports, the current circumstance is only going to worsen as Indigenous peoples are more susceptible to becoming homeless as many are struggling with poverty, health issues, stressful life events and family breakdown.

Working as a Collective for the Betterment of Community:

Community members said they were hearing of all the supports and services available across the city for the first time. Some participants began discussing how such supports could align and work together: "Many organizations have great resources but a lack of coordination. TASSC (Toronto Aboriginal Social Services Council) could support this coordination much more. The City of Toronto has so much access, they have the ability to post information in public spaces. The IAO (Indigenous Affairs Office) can be a partner to handle this", said Theo Nazacy of Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre.

PART II - BUILDING AND MAINTAINING RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Working Together to Build a Safe and Inclusive Toronto for Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQA Peoples:

In response to the question of how the City of Toronto and the Indigenous community can affect positive change and build a safe and inclusive Toronto specific to the MMIWG Calls to Justice, the community identified key areas of alliance, support and change: 1) Long-term, sustainable, adequate funding for community organizations; 2) Anti-racist education/training that focuses on the experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQA persons; 3) Creating safe spaces for Indigenous peoples to reclaim language, culture and identity; and 4) Making space for meaningful Indigenous participation at leadership tables.

Long-term, Sustainable, Adequate Funding:

Indigenous community service providers discussed the challenges they face in providing proper supports and services to MMIWG affected family members and survivors of violence when they contend daily with funding uncertainty and regimented reporting requirements.

In terms of how the City of Toronto can help alleviate the funding stressors, much was said: "We need to remind them that these are human rights-based resources so the City needs to enable the service providers in the community to provide these services. Almost every Call for Justice requires appropriate and adequate funding." - Christa Big Canoe, Aboriginal Legal Services.

The current circumstance of every service provider across the board is stretched beyond their limits, which puts not only the service providers at risk of mental and physical burn out, but it also further endangers an already marginalized sector of society: "***We need resources for those workers!*** At Native Women's Resources Centre of Toronto, we

have two workers who work 5 days per week but we need more resources for the work. ***We also need freedom and money to manage the program in our own way,***” said Pamela Hart, Executive Director at Native Women’s Resources Centre of Toronto. Hart further added: “There’s one fund in Social Development, Finance and Administration at the City of Toronto that works well with TASSC and trusts the agencies to be able to handle the dollars. They are humble, open and honest. They are giving the people the right to work for the community and respect that we are best informed to make those decisions.”

There is an openness to develop, build and foster respectful relationships with the City of Toronto: “We all want to collaborate but we need the resources of the City to offer support to the agencies to be able to do this,” said Pamela Hart, Executive Director of Native Women’s Resource Centre.

An integral part of healthy relationships is personal interaction and communication. Having the resources to bring people together is significant: “Support the families first and foremost. There’s no support to bring people together such as money for travel, accommodations, said Rob Lackie, Community Member. Constable Monica Rutledge, Toronto Police Services’ APU elaborated on Rob’s point: “A fund that people could [use to] take time off work, accommodations to go to court, any number of needs that arise...” Constable Rutledge, underscored the fact that the Indigenous community is vast and diverse, with people travelling from many different locations and making Toronto their home. As such, MMIWG affected families and survivors’ supports may not reside within the GTA: ***Being able to access community members that are able to offer their specific supports, may need to come from different communities.***”

The majority of the Calls for Justice are directed at governments, various levels of governments, some of which are within the exclusive

domain of federal or provincial governments, that said, there is opportunity for Toronto, to act in the spirit of reconciliation and take up the role of a true ally and advocate for the full implementation of the Calls to Justice.

Anti-Racist Education/Training that Focuses on the Experiences of Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQOIA Persons

The finding of genocide by the National Inquiry was significant in that it was the first time a national body recognized that the collective impact of Canadian policies, laws and actions to eradicate Indigenous peoples is tantamount to genocide.

The intersectional discrimination against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQOIA persons has permeated every institution and establishment so much so that the violence and denial of fundamental human rights is normalized. There is much work to be done to combat such apathy.

"Toronto Police Services (TPS) needs to implement Indigenous Cultural Training properly, also scale it up. Currently it's only a one-hour training. For TPS, education is needed for the entire police force from the top down so that they learn the history. It's all multi-layered and intersecting. OPP has a five-day training out on the land – this is something TPS should do. At TPS we need the higher ups to buy in," said Constable Rutledge.

Pamela Hart of Native Women's Resource Centre Toronto, a community organization dedicated entirely to supporting and advancing the rights of Indigenous women, spoke to the need for education and active participation in governance: "Monica and I sit at a table that pushes other people to figure out how the City can create a more inclusive city. It's about education and inclusivity and people identifying that they have a role in this... ***the City could enhance training roles and responsibilities in order to further understand their role. Does this mean they give more***

resources and services? Is it policy support? Yes – both probably.

Having seen the need for more police services first hand, Pamela advanced the position that more resources are needed in the Aboriginal Police Keeping Unit to better serve the community.

Freida Gladue of Native Child and Family Services, drew on her past experiences out of province, to stress the importance of educating and information sharing: “Is there a city-wide resource guide for Indigenous services and organizations? We did this in Edmonton to offer information to new people. The City of Edmonton funded the guide and then had it available at different agencies.” In terms of training Freida raised the issue that it is imperative to have on-going training as ***“it’s about building relationships.”***

The anti-racism education through the lens of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA persons must be mandatory for all public service employees, and for those in emergency, justice and health services there also needs to be requisite training on how to deliver services in a culturally appropriate and trauma informed manner. Patti Chrisjohn, of Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre, talked about the difference in services between First Nations people moving to the City compared to the treatment of persons relocating from different countries and the need for equality in service and equality in treatment. Specifically, the systemic racism that Indigenous people are subjected to when seeking help from first responders: ***“Systemic racism is automatic – they’re taught this way – ““what have you been drinking?”“...this is no longer acceptable.”***

In order to create a safe and inclusive Toronto for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA persons, there has to be education and policies in place that give direction to employees and service providers on what to do when they see targeted violence happening, including on the public transit system: ***“I am the mom of a transgender child. I always have to be a shield and protector of my child. I am***

always worried because she is in these oppressive systems. My child was grabbed on the crotch on the TTC! Nobody was there or stood up to protect her! What do you do for your child when they experience violence on a daily basis? How are we to educate the world? My child felt it was safer to go home and cry and call mom when nobody stood up. What kind of world do we live in?"

Akin to transportation services, the transient nature of hotel and hospitality services are ripe with opportunity for predators to victimize vulnerable persons such as Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA persons. Such industries should be required to participate in mandatory anti-racism training from the perspective of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA persons. Given the major size of Toronto as an epicentre for entertainment and hospitality, opportunity to create safer spaces are ample.

Outside of the normal education and training practices, the City of Toronto has at its disposal a great deal of means to educate and spread awareness about the epidemic that is MMIWG: "Why aren't we using municipal spaces to advertise MMIWG? There could be a City roster so that the word gets out - bulletins – not only to report to the police but also to the city," said Christa Big Canoe.

Community members also brought forward the concept of creating an Indigenous-specific "Toronto 311" type of service, where people could access information and communicate about MMIWG matters through the platform: "Native organizations could link to other organizations in the east end, west or core area to ensure that community members are accessing safe spaces," said Chantal Maru, MMIWG Project Navigator at Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre. Information sharing and providing opportunity to educate and bring awareness about MMIWG matters is an important part of relationship building between the City and the Indigenous community.

In addition to the Final Report of the MMIWG National Inquiry, *Reclaiming Power and Place*, there are a number of resources available to help educate people, including the video, “Not Just Another Case” which Audrey Huntley of No More Silence and Aboriginal Legal Services, worked diligently to produce; however, when such learning tools are access, it must be delivered by Indigenous people with substantive knowledge of MMIWG matters and lived experience to ensure that the training/education is delivered in a culturally appropriate manner and a safe environment with proper supports available.

Creating Safe Spaces for Indigenous Peoples to Reclaim Language, Culture and Identity

A common trait amongst Indigenous peoples globally is the significant connection to land. Through colonization this connection has been usurped but never extinguished. Land is an integral part of Indigenous identity and culture: ***“How do we teach settlers to value our lives and treat us like human beings? How do people understand our connection to land and our need for that to be healthy? If they don’t understand, things won’t change.”***

The City of Toronto, like its provincial and federal counterparts, have many public parks within their city limits. Parks that could provide Indigenous persons meaningful access to a safe space where ceremony could take place: “There are a number of outdoor ceremonial spaces that communities want to use.” Freida Gladue stated: “The City could support a place for community members to practice ceremony.” While recognizing some momentum has occurred, Freida, like others, advanced the position that much more permanent and accessible space needs to be created: “It’s great that health organizations are doing this, putting up Indigenous spaces and Sweat Lodges at Native Child, Evergreen, etc. but we need to go further. It can’t be ad hoc either. ***There should be proper facilities where***

gathering can be inclusive and large enough for large organizations to gather."

Building on the concept of a larger permanent space dedicated for Indigenous peoples' ceremonies and gatherings, Darlene King of Native Child and Family Services stated: "***Why is it that every time a grassroots organization tries to create Indigenous cultural spaces around the city the city staff knock it down?*** There should be more education around UNDRIP for City staff to know it's a universal declaration!" Furthermore, Darlene explained the significance of when a city makes space a priority – the impact it has to build fundamental relationships with Indigenous peoples: "***There were 10,000 Elders at the second Elders Conference at Winnipeg. Use of the City's Convention Centre made us feel valued. The City should give us access to spaces for the Indigenous Community to use.***"

Making space for meaningful Indigenous participation at leadership tables

Many of the participants sit at various Indigenous advisory tables across the city; however, influential they are, they are limited in terms of real decision-making power on issues that could potentially create a safer community and save the lives of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA persons. "Indigenous people need to be in leadership positions...." "***We need to be more vocal and visible as women. We need to be more visible in terms of our traditional gender rights and responsibilities. Ways we can infiltrate in more senior roles.*** Community needs to support us in those roles, in that infiltration. Push women's voices forward...***it is our right to be safe. It is not a request. Not a recommendation. It is how it should be.***"

RESPONSIVE CHANGE IS NEEDED

Participants were asked to discuss what services and supports they expect to occur when a loved one is missing or murdered. The difference between what they would expect and the reality of what happens highlights significant gaps in critical services and supports for MMIWG affected families and survivors of violence.

Community members talked about the need for “wrap around” service and supports that care for the entire family: “Think proactively and holistically about women and families. Not just the individual, the entire family so they can get supports they deem necessary for themselves.”

Frances Sanderson of Nishnawbe Homes talked about the need for service delivery on a 24/7 basis: “We need a dedicated organization that can develop trust within the community and be unbiased. A 24/7 service...”

Kim Turner, retired TPS Constable and member of the APU talked about the need for a cross/sector collaborative approach to providing a continuum of care for affected family members and survivors of violence: “...**realizing that we don't have to have all the answers. It's better to know each other and our organizations and what they can provide.**”

TPS Constable Monica Rutledge spoke to the need for more information sharing: “**Information sharing needs to be changed so that individuals, agencies and governments can more fluidly reach out to each other.** A database could be useful.”

As previously stated by Theo Nazacy of Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre, a number of the Indigenous community service providers have great resources; however, they are lacking supports to coordinate those resources in a manner that can better serve affected family members and survivors of violence. Therein lies an opportunity for the City to help with the facilitation of concerted efforts.

HEALING IS CONTINUOUS – SO SHOULD THE SUPPORT BE

Collectively Indigenous peoples have been subjected to intergenerational and direct trauma for centuries. A great deal of healing is needed: ***“There is no timeline to healing families, survivors, everyone needs as much time to heal as possible.”***

The discussion centred on healing supports for both the individual and the family unit. Participants discussed how a continuum of care is circular rather than linear and the collective must rally around the individual and the family to support healing: “...service providers are too focused on beginning, start and end. Life is a circle we always need to revisit and build capacity in community members...” said Melissa Compton of Native Child and Family Services of Toronto.

Building and fostering respectful relationships with community members is integral to creating a safe space for healing and growth: ***“For vulnerable individuals we need to really know them. We need to do home visits, know their birthday. Individuals need consistency in their supports. It’s not just a job. We need to make sure that individuals receiving supports are not phased out or aged out,”*** said Andrea Chrisjohn of Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre.

Given the gross overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in the child welfare system, the issue of “aging out” of eligibility for continued services and supports places them at a heightened risk for sexual exploitation and other forms of violence. Some expressed concern that this risk is further compounded by the closing of the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.

Indigenous peoples have an in-depth understanding of trauma and what is needed to help the individual, the family and the community work towards healing and reconciling the past with the present: “Indigenous peoples are superior at dealing with trauma. We have significant tools. We need a coordinated effort to house all those

tools. The City of Toronto could be that toolbox,” said Freida Gladue of Native Child and Family Services of Toronto.

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PART III - RECONCILIATION – ACTIONIZING THE CALLS FOR JUSTICE

The City of Toronto has been a leader in terms of developing respectful relationships with the Indigenous community and working to have meaningful participation in matters that impact Indigenous peoples.

The next step in that relationship would be to give life to the Calls for Justice, to take action and be a committed ally to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

In terms of next steps, the National Inquiry provided the guiding principles for how to implement the Calls for Justice, as stated previously:

- Decolonizing approach;
- Inclusion of Family and Survivors;
- Indigenous-led solutions and services;
- Recognizing distinctions;
- Cultural safety; and
- Trauma Informed.

Implementation will require a long-term commitment coupled with real meaningful action to make changes that will lead to substantive equality for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA persons. Based on the engagement session with Indigenous community members, service providers, MMIWG affected families and survivors of violence, a path was identified on how to take action now.

To actionize the Calls to Justice, the City of Toronto shall:

Long-term, adequate funding of services and supports

- Provide long-term, sustainable, adequate funding to Indigenous community organizations to provide culturally appropriate, trauma informed services and supports for MMIWG affected family members, Indigenous survivors of violence, Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA persons;

- Such funding ought to be provided to the Indigenous community service providers in a manner that provides for the service provider to exercise their autonomy and determine how best to serve their community members in a culturally appropriate, trauma informed manner;
- The City will work with Indigenous community organizations to ensure that funding reporting requirements are not too rigid or burdensome and will provide assistance when necessary to ensure funding is not jeopardized;
- Advocate to other levels of government to also provide long-term sustainable, adequate, non-restrictive funding to Indigenous community organizations to provide culturally appropriate, trauma informed services and supports for MMIWG affected family members, Indigenous survivors of violence, Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA persons;
- The City will develop a fund for on-going supports which MMIWG affected family members and Indigenous survivors of violence, may access to assist with healing. The fund will also allow for the provision of supports as relate to expenses associated with participating in the criminal justice process;
- The City will provide funding for the creation and on-going operation of safe, supportive housing for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA persons;
- Immediately allocate increased services and supports to the Aboriginal Peacekeeping Unit of Toronto Police Services by tenfold to reflect the increase in population and to properly respond to the diverse needs of the Indigenous community.
- Increase the resources of the Indigenous Affairs Office to provide Indigenous community organizations with support to effectively coordinate resources in a manner that can better serve affected family members and survivors of violence.
- Immediately establish a cross/sector "Continuum of Care" Committee to meet monthly to coordinate a collaborative approach to matters impacting Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA persons, affected family members and survivors of violence. Participation will be at minimum a director level

representative, someone with decision making authority. There will be equal parts representation from both the Indigenous community service providers and the Toronto emergency and social service providers.

Anti-racism Education and Training

- Require all City of Toronto staff to participate in anti-racism training specific to the experiences of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA persons;
- Immediately require all front-line service providers and first responders (Police, Ambulance, Social Services, Child Welfare services) to participate and complete mandatory anti-racism training specific to the experiences of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA persons and training on how to deliver culturally appropriate, trauma informed services for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA persons;
- Provide that such trainings (anti-racism training specific to the experiences of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA persons and culturally appropriate Trauma Informed training) must be delivered by Indigenous persons with substantive knowledge of MMIWG matters and lived experience to ensure that the training/education is delivered in a culturally appropriate manner, a safe environment with proper supports available.

Safe access to lands and space for ceremony

- Create permanent, non-restrictive access to parks for Indigenous peoples and community organizations to hold ceremonies as a means of reclamation of language, culture and identity;
- Provide for regular and on-going use of public buildings to hold events and gatherings which promote the reclamation of Indigenous languages, culture and identity;
- Create opportunities for the use of public space to educate/inform the public on issues of MMIWG.

Real, meaningful participation in decision making processes

- Create meaningful opportunities for real participation of Indigenous peoples, and Indigenous community service providers, to join in decision making processes which impact the Indigenous community;
- Establish a committee comprised of Indigenous persons with extensive knowledge of MMIWG matters and lived experience to provide guidance and oversight of the Calls to Justice implementation process.
- Create more opportunities to hire Indigenous persons at senior levels of government administration.
- In one year from the adoption of a motion to actionize the Calls for Justice, and thereafter annually, release a public report on the progress of the Calls to Justice implementation.