



MEDIA RELEASE

New national survey shows that Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth in Canada are engaged in reconciliation, and share optimism despite barriers

Toronto, ON – July 9, 2019. A new national survey reveals how Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth in Canada view the future and reconciliation between their peoples. The first of its kind, the **Canadian Youth Reconciliation Barometer** charts the state of reconciliation among youth in Canada (ages 16 to 29) through their attitudes, aspirations, priorities, and experiences.

The results show that youth in Canada as a whole are aware and engaged when it comes to the history of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations and reconciliation in particular. There is a striking alignment between both populations of youth regarding their aspirations and views, with Indigenous youth more prominently prioritizing education as a key life goal.

The survey was conducted earlier this year by the non-profit Environics Institute for Survey Research, in partnership with Canadian Roots Exchange and the Mastercard Foundation.

The results of this survey should give Canada cautious optimism. “It’s clear that we’re on the right path, but we still have a long way to go,” said Max FineDay, Executive Director of Canadian Roots Exchange. “Young people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are learning about why this relationship is fractured, and are optimistic we can repair it.”

Key findings from the survey include the following:

- Youth in Canada have a considerable amount of connection and interaction with people in the other population, which extends to close friendships: More than eight in 10 Indigenous youth and one-quarter of non-Indigenous youth say they have one or more close friends in the other population. Moreover, interactions with individuals in the other population are more often than not positive in terms of comfort and respect.
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth are largely in agreement on the current state of relations between their peoples, the extent of discrimination experienced by Indigenous Peoples, and the need to address the legacy of colonization, specifically in terms of reducing the socio-economic inequities, incorporating Indigenous perspectives on community, land and culture, and improving non-Indigenous understanding of the history.
- Most youth in Canada have some familiarity with the concept of reconciliation, although this is stronger among Indigenous youth. For both populations, reconciliation is considered to be about rebuilding relationships and trust, apologizing and making amends, and correcting past wrongs. Many in both populations have seen or heard about specific examples of progress toward reconciliation in the form of apologies, government actions, education initiatives, and cultural programs.

- Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth see a number of barriers to reconciliation, notably myths and stereotypes about what Indigenous Peoples receive from Canada, a lack of political leadership to implement real change, and too little understanding among non-Indigenous people. At the same time, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth are generally optimistic about the prospects for meaningful progress toward reconciliation in their lifetimes.
- One-third of Indigenous youth, and one in six non-Indigenous youth report having been involved in some type of reconciliation activity (e.g., cultural activities, education, community events), and about half of the rest express some interest in doing so. Such involvement with reconciliation on a personal level appears to be making a positive impact on how youth in Canada relate to Indigenous issues and reconciliation in particular (e.g., having a more informed and positive perspective).
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth in Canada share the same broad life goals, which include a successful or meaningful career, family and children, financial independence, and living a balanced life. Indigenous youth place a comparatively greater priority on educational goals. Both populations express confidence in achieving at least some of their life goals, but for most the primary obstacles are financial (insufficient income, high debt) and emotional pressures (anxiety, depression, low motivation).

“The similarity of aspirations and optimism shared between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth in Canada presents a remarkable and important opportunity”, notes Jennifer Brennan, Associate Director Mastercard Foundation. “We are aware that current outcomes of both groups are not at all equitable. We must all work together – across sectors – to build the systemic changes needed to meet this optimism.”

“This kind of research provides an important form of evidence to tell us about where we stand on reconciliation today, and how it is evolving over time,” comments Keith Neuman, lead researcher on the project. “Without such evidence we are at the mercy of anecdote and stereotype.”

The survey was conducted online between March 22 and April 29, 2019, with representative samples of 682 Indigenous and 695 non-Indigenous youth (ages 16 to 29), distributed across the 10 provinces and three territories. The sample was stratified to ensure representation by region, community type (urban-rural, on-reserve), age sub-cohort, gender, and Indigenous group (First Nations, Métis, Inuit), based on the most current population statistics (2016 Census). The survey was conducted in English and French.

For more details, including the final report and detailed data tables, visit www.environicsinstitute.org.

The Environics Institute for Survey Research

The Environics Institute for Survey Research conducts original public opinion and social research related to issues of public policy and social change. A central part of the Institute's mission is to survey those not usually heard from, using questions not usually asked. For more information, see www.environicsinstitute.org.

Canadian Roots Exchange

Canadian Roots Exchange (CRE) is a national Indigenous-led organization that has been developing innovative and impactful opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth since 2009. Through local, regional, and national programs that focus on cultural retention, leadership and skill development, and honest conversation, CRE is building a generation of young people passionate about advancing reconciliation. For more information, please visit:

www.canadianroots.ca

Mastercard Foundation

The Mastercard Foundation seeks a world where everyone can learn and prosper. The Foundation's work is guided by its mission to advance learning and promote financial inclusion for people living in poverty. One of the largest foundations in the world, it was created in 2006 by Mastercard International and operates independently under the governance of its own president and Board of Directors. The Foundation is based in Toronto, Canada and has an office in Kigali, Rwanda. The Foundation's work begins with listening and respect. Based on what we learn, we design strategies that align with the aspirations and needs of those with whom we work. The insights of young people and communities shape our work, and their voices and ambitions play a central role in everything we do. For more information please visit: <https://mastercardfdn.org/>

For more information:

Max FineDay

Canadian Roots Exchange

306-291-7287

max@canadianroots.ca

Keith Neuman, Ph.D.

Environics Institute

416-272-6628

Keith.neuman@environics.ca

Jennifer Brennan

Mastercard Foundation

647-202-5342

jbrennan@mastercardfdn.org