

## Statistics About First Nations People Living in Canada

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### The Challenge

- 150,000 Indigenous children, over a period of 100+ years, were a part of the Indian Residential School system. Many of these children and families experienced abuse as a result of the government's assimilation program (Legacy of Hope Foundation 2012).
- Seven generations have been impacted, leaving systemic issues that overwhelm the First Nations and Aboriginal communities all over Canada (Royal Commission on Aboriginal People 1996).
- 1 in 4 aboriginal children live in poverty (Public Service Alliance of Canada 2008).
- 23% live in houses that need "major" repair, as opposed to 7% of the rest of the population. On reserves 26% of people live in homes that are overcrowded (Statistics Canada 2009).
- More than 100 First Nation communities boil water, meaning they have no or little access to clean drinking water for drinking and sanitation (Public Service Alliance of Canada 2008).
- First Nations suffer from third world diseases such as tuberculosis 8 to 10 times the rate of the Canadian population (Public Service Alliance of Canada 2008).
- Over ½ of the First Nations populations living on reserve are not employed (Statistics Canada 2009).
- 1 in 8 aboriginal children is disabled, double the rate of Canada (Public Service Alliance of Canada 2008).
- 43% of First Nations children lack basic dental care (Public Service Alliance of Canada 2008).
- First Nations youth suicide rate is 5 to 8 times the Canadian rate, and in many Inuit communities is it over 30%. Inuit youth suicide rates are among the highest in the world, reaching 11 times the national average (Health Canada 2006).

**The Hope**

- There is incredible resilience among First Nations. They have survived a deliberate process of cultural genocide (Aboriginal Healing Foundation 2003).
- Increase in First Nations people who are completing post secondary education (university or college) and completing trade school, gaining employment (Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs 2006).
- Increase in First Nations entrepreneurs, businesses and First Nations led not-for-profit organizations (Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business 2011).
- Indigenous languages and traditional teachings are being preserved, recorded and taught in schools to children and adults, which is amazing considering that many of the languages have been endangered and some lost entirely through colonization/ residential schools (Statistics Canada 2004)
- Aboriginal self-determination and decolonization: there is a growing movement of First Nation communities who are feeling empowered to step toward self-governance models which are increasingly independent from the Federal Government (Indian Affairs). Self-Government allows First Nations to take leadership in the areas of natural resources, housing, child welfare, employing/ education, justice, etc. Many see self-government as an essential part of the healing journey (Royal Commission on Aboriginal People 1996).
- Today there are 32 communities with self-government agreements, and 393 communities in various stages of negotiation to become self-governed (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development in Canada 2012)
- Reclamation/ restoration of First Nations culture and traditions: culture becoming accepted practices within important mainstream systems. Ie: Restorative Justice, Education, Social Work, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Health/ wellness (Wadden 2008).

**A Few More Stats...**

**<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2010/06/01/f-aboriginal-population.html>**

- Statistics Canada's 2006 census found that the number of people identifying themselves as aboriginal topped the million mark for the first time — adding up to 1,172,790 First Nations, Métis and Inuit, or 3.8 per cent of the total population.
- Internationally, Canada's aboriginal population is second only to New Zealand's, where the Maori account for 15 per cent of that country's total population.
- The study, released on Jan. 15, 2008, also found that Canada's aboriginal population is becoming increasingly urban and is younger than the non-aboriginal population.
- From 1996 to 2006, the aboriginal population has grown by 45 per cent. That is nearly six times faster than the non-aboriginal population.
- 73.7 per cent of all Aboriginal Peoples live off-reserve in Canada.
- 72.1 per cent of all non-reserve Aboriginal Peoples live in urban areas.
- Ontario has the largest concentration of Aboriginal Peoples at 242,495, or two per cent of the province's population.
- Almost half, or 46 per cent of the aboriginal population, is aged 24 or under, compared with 31 per cent of the non-aboriginal population.