



RECONCILIATION PLAN FRAMEWORK

BACKGROUND

The BC Federation of Labour is an organization with a long and proud history of fighting for workers rights. The BC Federation is also an organization that was built by settlers in a colonial system, it has a history of oppression of Indigenous communities and racism.

Indigenous workers are the fastest growing demographic of workers in BC, and Reconciliation needs to be a focus of the federation to ensure its relevance moving forward as the voice for working people in the province.

The work of the BCFED with respect to Equity and Human Rights is four-fold:

1. Work of the BCFED to internally grow through policy change and practice to respond to the ever-evolving standard of Indigenous rights frameworks.
2. Work of the BCFED with its affiliates.
3. Work of the BCFED and community stakeholders and partners outside of labour.
4. Work of the BCFED, the general public and all levels of government.

In 2008, the officers of the BC Federation of Labour signed the **Protocol on Cooperation and Communication** with the First Nations Leadership Council, which is made up of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, the First Nations Summit and the BC Assembly of First Nations. The protocol is designed to solidify the intent of Labour and First Nations leaders in the province to connect on issues of importance to both parties, and to engage in dialogue on issues of concern, and collaborate on issues of shared priority.

Since 2013, the BC Federation of Labour has done work on Indigenous rights and reconciliation in consultation with Indigenous Workers representatives of the BCFED, and the Indigenous Workers caucus. Programming created has included work with Indigenous teachers and leaders such as Chief Joe Alphonse, Kathryn Teneese, Rhiannon Bennett, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, Cindy Blackstock, Cheryl Casimer and many more.



Each of our regional conferences has included an educational component for delegates with the nations on whose territory we have gathered, including the Ktunaxa Nation, Nisga'a Nation, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, Songhees First Nation and Lax Kw'alaams.

The BCFED has also participated in the Coalition on Missing and Murdered Women and Girls, and has partnered with the First Nations Leadership Council on projects such as support for the federal private members bill C-262 and BC's bill 41.

In 2018, at the BC Federation of Labour convention, the protocol was re-signed, and updated to include the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission 94 Calls to Action.

Also at the 2018 convention the Indigenous Workers caucus recommended two reps from the caucus be elected to executive council in an effort to detokenize the nature of the equity representative position, and to provide support to both reps in decision making and carrying the load of representation.

Good work has been done, but it is time to delve deeper into the process of living up to our commitment to be inclusive of Indigenous workers and their communities.

The purpose of this document is to set an intention for work on Reconciliation and Indigenous Relations.

This document has been created in collaboration with the Indigenous Workers Representatives of the BC Federation of Labour, and has been informed by the work of the Indigenous Workers Caucus and their recommendations over the past number of years.



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Steps in the plan include but are not limited to:

1. Bring the Federation into alignment with the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action, The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Final Report and Calls for Justice , the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and The Red Women Rising Report.

Conduct an internal audit on all BCFED policies and procedures with a Reconciliation lens applied and in consultation with Indigenous Workers Representatives. An internal audit is an extensive process by which all policies of the Federation, all procedures, and all work processes are examined thoroughly.

An internal audit is an extensive process, and will require significant resources. The audit will include a fulsome review of how the Federation's processes, policies and constitution lives up to each of the TRC 94 calls to action, the components of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice, and the Red Women Rising Report recommendations.

Policies that need to be changed will be recommended by the Indigenous Workers caucus and reps, and will go to the Human Rights Standing committee with a recommendation from the caucus. Recommendations will go to the Officers, Executive Council and the Constitution and Structure committee as necessary for formal adoption at future conventions.



Re-create the Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Working Group and task the group with:

1. Reporting on the work of affiliates with respect to:
 - a. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
 - b. The TRC 94 Calls to Action
 - c. Red Women Rising Recommendations
 - d. National Inquiry into MMIWG Calls for Justice
2. Creating an inventory of education initiatives being used and or developed by the Human Rights Standing Committee, affiliates and community partners.

2. Develop a program of Indigenous Cultural Competency inside the Federation and across our affiliates,

There is a lack of training and education with respect to Indigenous Rights and Reconciliation among all staff of the Federation. To ensure the success of this plan and other work, the Federation needs to provide training and education to ready the workplace for changes that will come out of this plan.

Affiliate leaders and two directors at the BCFED have participated in reconciliation circles put on by Bright New Day, an initiative of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Federation should host its own circle, or series of circles with all staff, leadership, and management of the BCFED.

Other circles could include committees and union members in general. Other suggestions for trainers include Michelle Nahanee.

3. Build on the work affiliates have done on reconciliation and compile best practices to share;

This work can be done at the Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation working group of the BCFED, and should also be a reporting item at officers and executive council meetings.

Based on the reports made at the Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Working group, the Indigenous Workers reps of the BCFED will work with the equity and human rights Implement reporting on progress at every Executive Council, after committee reports and Equity rep reports.

Recommendations for further action should be made by the Indigenous Workers Caucus and then recommended formally by the Human Rights Committee.



4. Deepen the relationship with Indigenous partner organizations including a program for regular meetings and consultation; and

Conduct quarterly check-ins with the organizations in the FNLC on areas to collaborate, and to continue to build relationships between BCFED Leadership and FNLC Leadership, and between the FNLC staff and all BCFED staff.

As per the Protocol on Cooperation and Communication, quarterly check ins provide the federation and its community partners an opportunity to connect on issues of mutual concern, possible conflict, and general issues of importance to both parties.

Meetings should take place in winter, spring, summer, and fall, and should be for the purpose of updating each other on priorities for each organization and for the groups to work on together. The BCFED can also use these opportunities to report on the status of the internal audit of the Federation and its alignment with recommendations in the reports mentioned above.

5. Identify meaningful measures the labour movement can take to be more inclusive of Indigenous workers.

The BCFED should continue to take its lead on meaningful measures to be taken to include Indigenous Workers from the Indigenous Workers caucus. The caucus is the most reliable source of information the Federation has as to how Indigenous workers feel about their inclusion in our movement. Steps need to be taken to ensure that the caucus is supported to meet, and that workers are able to participate in the caucus. The Federation should action the recommendations of the caucus through the Human Rights Committee, Officers and Executive Council or internally where possible.

Continue to work with the Coalition on MMIWG as mandated by convention.

As needed, or as requested by our community partners, or as recommended by the Human Rights Standing Committee, engage in public education initiatives, and union education initiatives to respond to current issues or events.

The planning of a gathering of 3 days for Indigenous workers across the province to be together in person to receive training, network and strategize for the furthering of Indigenous rights in the labour movement and in the general public.



Planning for the gathering should begin in March and culminate in a gathering in September. The gathering should be designed by Indigenous workers with the help of staff and programming should be delivered by Indigenous workers, and as requested, staff, and guests.

Regular liaising with the Canadian Labour Congress on issues of Reconciliation and Indigenous Rights Including the Indigenous Rights Working Group of the CLC.

Regular liaising with international Indigenous Rights groups and movements.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Federation should work with the Indigenous workers caucus and the Human Rights Standing committee to develop a system for evaluating progress on the reconciliation plan.

The Federation must regularly observe how it is evolving its practices with respect to the plan.

This includes:

- A) Working together with the caucus, reps, staff and leadership to clearly identify the expected and intended outcomes of the reconciliation plan, and to adapt them as necessary.
- B) Seeking evaluation from Indigenous partners based on the principles and actions laid out in the plan;
- C) Identifying challenges and opportunities for relationship building and reconciliation in the implementation of the plan and adapting its processes accordingly;
- D) Documenting successes and challenges in implementation as an organizational and also as individuals (leadership, staff and committee) to grow individual and organizational practices. *(adapted from the Canadian Institute of Planners Draft Policy Statement on Planning Practice and Reconciliation) <https://www.cip-icu.ca/Files/Policies/policy-indigenous-planning-draft-eng.aspx>*

Possible strategies include a “Community Barometer” or bi-annual survey, as is used in Australia

<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Auspolls-Evaluating-the-effectiveness-of-Reconciliation-Action-Plans-Overall-analysis.pdf>



WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

The Indigenous Workers representatives of the BCFED feel included, heard and seen by the BCFED, its staff, and its leadership. They are well aware of Indigenous related policies and initiatives of the BCFED and feel proud to take ownership in their role in the creation of policies and initiatives. They are active participants in the Indigenous relations and Reconciliation working group.

The BCFED has a large group of regular participants, including elders and young workers in caucus meetings who are engaged, who feel heard and seen by the BCFED, and who have the confidence and skills to effectively lobby, participate in policy creation and facilitate educational sessions.

The BCFED has a close relationship with the First Nations Leadership Council and BCFED leadership and staff feel confident in their interactions with these community partners.

The BCFED has a robust relationship with the Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and is naturally in tune with policies and messaging coming out of that group.

The BCFED and its affiliates have endorsed the Red Women Rising Report and the National Inquiry into MMIWG Report, and are actively actioning their recommendations as well as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and TRC 94 Calls to Action and are reporting regularly on their progress toward implementation.

BCFED officers feel engaged and included in initiatives of the BCFED, and are proud to take ownership of the work being done. Executive Officers are able to handle push back from their own members on reconciliation plan items, and educate them or request the BCFED's assistance in providing the education necessary to bring their members along.

In solidarity,

KASSSANDRA CORDERO

Director, Equity and Human Rights

