

LISTENING SESSIONS

Inclusion + Reconciliation
Summary Report





Reconciliation + Inclusion Listening Sessions Overview

The information gathered from Scouts Canada’s Listening Sessions is part of the broader **Inclusion + Reconciliation Climate Assessment, which follows the Board of Governors’ commitments to Anti-Racism in 2020, and Reconciliation in 2021. The results of our Listening Sessions, together with the 2022 Systemic Inclusion Audit, will help us at Scouts Canada make a plan that is specific to our needs and opportunities for growth.**

Reconciliation is a complex, ongoing journey that is at the heart of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion conversation in Canada.

As an organization, we recognize that Scouts Canada has not consistently delivered on its promise to be a welcoming and inclusive place for all; we have not been an ally, especially the ways we have impacted Indigenous peoples in Canada. We must look at this closely. We can and must do better.

For this reason, our first listening sessions focused on gathering feedback on Scout Canada’s approach to Reconciliation at the start of our inclusion journey.

It is time to demonstrate and live our core values, and that means reflecting and responding to the ways we can improve as an organization. That includes understanding ourselves, how colonial systems have caused harm, and what our role has been. By learning from our past, we can create an informed path forward—it is time we create a place of true acceptance and belonging.

We thank those members who have participated in these Listening sessions and surveys, to help us find out which dimensions of Reconciliation matter most to our membership. Together we will create our path forward so more youth can benefit from Scouting, and a better future together.

Listening Sessions Long-Term Strategy: An Organizational Feedback Structure for Inclusion

One of the original purposes of the Listening Sessions was to pilot a new social support model for our membership to hold safe spaces on topics of Inclusion. This will move from a central information-gathering exercise to a local and regional model. These crucial conversations serve Scouts Canada's Mission to develop well-rounded youth who are better prepared for success in the world, by encouraging respectful dialogue, critical thinking and social awareness.

STAGE 1: Pilot

April 2021–September 2021

Strategy Developed

Facilitated by volunteers & staff
Youth (Venturers and Rovers)

STAGE 2: Uplifting Reconciliation

October 2021–January 2022

Facilitated by volunteers & staff
Regions: East/West/Central
Group Scouters, CK3's & Staff
110 voices heard (incl. w 1000 voices)

STAGE 3: Expansion

Post-Audit–June 2024

Facilitated by Ambassadors
Regions: East/West/Central
Youth, Group Scouters, CK3's & Staff
1000 voices heard in 1000 days

STAGE 4: Group Launch

July 2024

Added to Program via SPICES
'How To' materials developed
Ambassadors facilitate transition to group led

Structure and The Way We Listened

Following our commitment to Reconciliation, we first began with invitations to our First Nations, Métis, and Inuit members to two Listening Sessions.

Next, we opened the process to include our broader membership to gain their current suggestions, needs and/or concerns on Reconciliation as the starting point of our Inclusion journey.

Our Sessions

Engagement Timeline:

Multi-Regional Pilot
(July 2021), September
2021—January 2022

Number of Participants:

133 Total Registered

Our 60-minute unrecorded sessions began with:

- Roundtable introductions with everyone sharing a bit about themselves and what brings them to the session.
- An overview of Scouts Canada’s approach to Inclusion and Reconciliation. At these sessions, the Director of Diversity and Inclusion provided an overview of Scouts Canada’s approach to Inclusion and Reconciliation, including:
 - Listening to our members to gauge where people currently have needs, questions or concerns.
 - Working with a third party, Coeuraj, to undertake a systemic discrimination audit.
 - Welcoming Indigenous Advisors to guide us early in our journey.
- Open dialogue on suggestions, questions, concerns.
- A prioritization exercise on the **10 Most Commonly Used Organizational Action Items on our Reconciliation Journey (appendix I).**

What We Heard

Overall, the desire for increased knowledge is strong. Gathering from our Listening Sessions so far, Scouts Canada is in a state of “needing to learn more”, before we can create meaningful change and develop an action plan to move forward. This includes learning opportunities and historical awareness. Our organization’s audit process will also involve the creation of Inclusion rubrics and determine where the current opportunities for growth are.

60%
OF SESSIONS

Imagery brought up as a concern

42%
OF SESSIONS

Incorporation of Territory Acknowledgements

60%
OF SESSIONS

Participants asked for an understanding of Scouts Canada’s role in Residential Schools

71%
OF SESSIONS

Guidance requested with how to incorporate Culturally-Appropriate Indigenous materials into the program

60%
OF SESSIONS

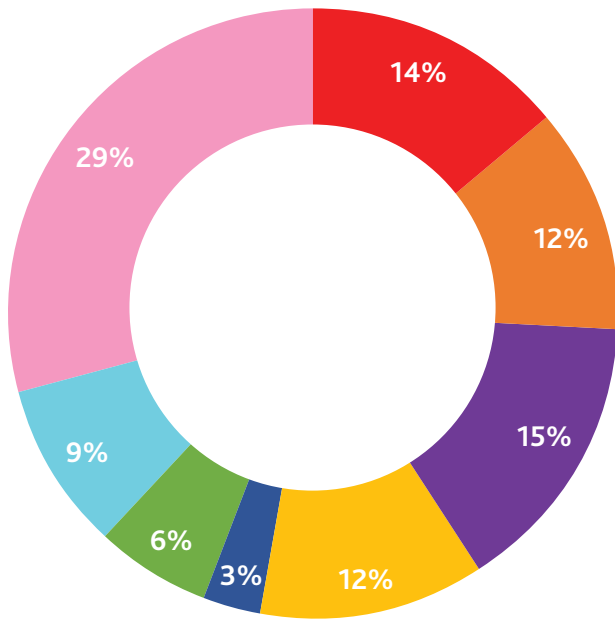
Guidance requested with how to discuss Reconciliation with youth

While Scouts Canada undergoes a diagnostic audit, some key recommendations from the Listening Session participants include:

- Immediacy was expressed for changing colonial imagery and symbols across all areas of Scouting, as this has continuous harm on both Indigenous peoples and other communities of colour.
- There are major areas of contention facing a wide range of perspectives, with little consensus among Listening Session participants (i.e. on the use of the *Jungle Book*). The audit process, which includes identifying the origins of these materials, is crucial for providing more data so that Scouts Canada can take informed and inspired action.
- We appreciate that those who provided input on Inclusion and Reconciliation are not necessarily Subject Matter Experts; however the purpose of the Listening Sessions is to gain insight on where people are following the Board of Governor’s [commitments](#).

For example, there were strong and mixed views on Scouts Canada adapting to reflect Indigenous perspectives, such as: Traditional Indigenous Knowledges, Land Acknowledgements, responding to The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and partnering with Indigenous organizations.

Action Item Priorities



- Valuing Indigenous philosophies by educating membership about indigenous history, culture, and perspectives
- Incorporate the practise of territory acknowledgements
- Direct response to the TRC's Call to Action & the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Scouts Canada's Apology
- Seek partnership with indigenous organizations
- Hire indigenous staff / appoint indigenous board members
- Indigenous awareness training for staff and volunteers (similar to unconscious bias training)
- Consultation with Indigenous peoples and communities prior to moving forward with economic development projects
- Updating language, imagery, and symbolism in program and other materials to be respectful of indigenous communities (eliminate cultural appropriation)

Survey Results

A follow up survey was circulated with a zero-response rate, unfortunately. It was determined that in future sessions, 5 minutes at the end of the session should be taken to walk through a survey response.

Conclusion

As part of Scouts Canada's phased approach, Phase 1 of our Reconciliation and Inclusion journey includes these Listening Sessions as an initial component of our **Climate Assessment**, in conjunction with our Systemic Discrimination Audit. The assessment will provide us with robust data and evidence for building an informed action plan for Inclusion and Reconciliation. We look forward to continuing the conversation and having ongoing sessions moving forward.

After circulating and verifying the Listening Sessions Summary Report with participants, this report will create the benchmark for us to measure any change for the next round of Listening Sessions following the audit.

As was made clear in the Listening Sessions, Scouts Canada aims to make a meaningful commitment to this journey. We choose to be proactive in evaluating our strengths and weaknesses, so we can be better work towards our shared future, together. We look forward to continuing to listen and learn from each other in this journey.

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Testimonials from self-identifying Indigenous members of Scouts Canada:

“Scouts Canada is actually in a great position as an organization to be welcomed [by Indigenous communities and members] because our values [of outdoor education, planet care, community and village oriented] all align with Indigenous cultural norms.”

“Scouting for boys and other aspects of our program are not in touch with what Scouts Canada’s image and brand should be.”

“This is just the start. We need to slow down to make sure we act with authenticity. Top-down is very important, especially how messaging is shared with all of us.”

“Scouts Canada needs to be open about our history, including our role in residential schools, and apologize for their involvement. That apology won’t be seen as genuine if it’s not followed up by real change.”

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Next Steps

- 1. Individuals who are interested in contributing to the audit process, being an ambassador of this work, or who have subject matter expertise on matters of Inclusion are encouraged to sign up [here](#).**
- 2. Join Scouts Canada in taking a step in the right direction. Sign up for a trauma-informed, Reconciliation for youth program training and discussion, facilitated by Kayla Bernard. Send an email to evelisa.genova@scouts.ca.**

Appendix 1: 10 Most Commonly Used Organizational Action Items

AS SCOUTS CANADA STAKEHOLDERS, WE ARE SEEKING YOUR THOUGHTS ON THESE ACTION ITEMS:

Questions

- A. Which of these Action Items (below) will contribute to Scouts Canada's Reconciliation journey in the most effective way and why? Which should be prioritized?**
- B. Are there any items that wouldn't be effective for Scouts Canada?**
- C. Are there any missing action items? If so, what are they?**

Commonly Utilized Action Items

1. Valuing Indigenous philosophies by educating our membership about Indigenous history, culture and perspectives.
2. Incorporate the practise of territory acknowledgements.
3. Celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day.*
4. Respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Call to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) by offering Scouts Canada's official apology.
5. Seek partnerships with Indigenous organizations.
6. Hire Indigenous staff / appoint Indigenous Board of Governor members.
7. Provide opportunities for Indigenous youth.**
8. Indigenous awareness training for staff and volunteers (similar to unconscious bias training).
9. Consultation with Indigenous peoples and communities prior to moving forward with economic development projects.
10. Updating language, imagery and symbolis in programming and other materials to be respectful of Indigenous communities (eliminate cultural appropriation).

*Action item 3—Celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day also not mentioned in the Listening Sessions. Scouts Canada already recognizes this day in the National Calendar

**Action item 7—Opportunities for Indigenous youth didn't come up in the Listening Sessions. As a youth-serving organization, Scouts Canada provides opportunities for all youth.

