

# Weaving Miskotahâ

The Métis Nation's Journey to Ending Missing and Murdered Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+





## Dedication

We would like to dedicate this report to the many Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people who have left us too soon under tragic circumstances. We also dedicate this report to your families, your kinship network, your chosen families and friends.

To those who have survived and still struggle with trauma, this is for you. We hope the words contained herein don't remain flat on this paper. We will work tirelessly to change the systems that have served to harm Métis women over generations.

Our vision is of hope and healing. We offer you this prayer from the Grandmothers who guided our work.

### *A Métis Nation Prayer for Guidance*

*Sacred Grandmothers from the north, south, east and west,  
We offer our prayers to you with love and kindness.  
We thank you for our families, our friends, our co-workers and our animal friends,  
And we thank Mother Earth for her daily gifts.*

*Sacred Grandmothers, we ask for your wisdom and your guidance,  
as we work towards providing a violence-free future for our Métis Nation.  
We ask you to bless those with the strength to complete this task  
with love and respect.*

*Let us remain united, so our voices will be heard across this country.*

*The people of our Métis Nation are entitled to live in peace and harmony.*

*We hold in our thoughts and prayers the many women, girls and gender-diverse people  
who now walk with our Sacred Grandmothers in the spirit world.*

*May our Sacred Grandmothers bless their families as they struggle with their loss.*

*There are no words big or strong enough to comfort their broken hearts.*

*There are no actions that will bring back their loved ones.*

*We surround them with love.*

*This is a frightening time for Indigenous peoples.*

*Every time one of our mothers, sisters or daughters dies a violent death,  
the foundation that the Métis Nation Action Plan is being built on becomes bigger.*

*We must stop this violence. We must.*

*Hiy hiy, merci, meegwitch, thank you*

*Grandmother, Kathy Boston*



## Acknowledgements

Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak has led concerted efforts to address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People on behalf and at the request of the Métis Nation and its Governing Members. We sincerely thank the Métis Nation Governing Members, the Métis National Council, and the Métis Women's representative bodies across the Métis Nation Motherland for entrusting us to undertake this critical work. This document, *Weaving Miskotahâ* (pronounced "Mis-KO-ta-ha"), is the result of many dedicated hours from families and survivors, and contributors, from across the Métis Nation Motherland.

Our work began in earnest in the summer of 2020, with the establishment of a Métis Nation Working Group composed of representatives, including technicians, from the Métis Nation Governing Members and the Métis National Council, along with other Métis subject matter experts, Elders and Knowledge Keepers. We thank each Métis Working Group member for your contributions and this very difficult "heart" work.

The Métis Nation Working Group included the following members:

Melanie Omeniho (Chair), President Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak  
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Linda Boudreau, Knowledge Keeper, Alberta  
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Throughout our work in drafting *Weaving Miskotahâ*, and in developing the overarching Métis Nation Action Plan, we offer our thanks to Métis rights lawyer, activist and champion, Jean Teillet, for her sage advice and continuous support for a distinctions-based approach to ending this centuries-long national tragedy. Ms. Teillet was also the representative for Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak on the Federal sub-working group engaged in creating the National Action Plan.

We would like to recognize the ongoing support of Raincoast Ventures. Their professional, skilled team has captured the essence of our Métis Nation Working Group’s weekly meetings, including the guests presenting at our meetings, as well as consolidated the information into one document.

“We would like to thank Métis artist, Margaret Donahue for the artwork featured on the front cover of this report, Métis women’s helping hands. Thank you for helping us to portray the love and support that we have for each other in our Métis families and communities.”

Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the financial contribution of the Government of Canada that has supported us in capturing our unique Métis perspectives on Missing and Murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.



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## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Métis Nation Working Group was guided by principles of Wâhkôtowin (pronounced "Wa-KO-toe-win"), which honours the interconnectedness of all living things. The interwoven threads of a Métis sash, stronger when bound together, inspired the objectives, thematic threads and conclusions contained in *Weaving Miskotahâ*.

"We must stay grounded by Wâhkôtowin principles, and be responsive to Métis women, distinction-based rights, and all key or core partners and relationships."

- Métis Nation Working Group member

### Wâhkôtowin

Wâhkôtowin translates in English to "kinship" or "being related to each other". Wâhkôtowin laws reflect that all of creation is related to all things (i.e., "All our Relations"). These principles embrace the sacred continuum of relationships between all human relatives and everything in creation, including the earth, the plants and the animals. Wâhkôtowin laws therefore govern the interconnected and respectful relationships of "one thing to another", including relations with the Creator and all things on Mother Earth.

Wâhkôtowin is a foundational Métis law or worldview that has traditionally connected Métis women across the Métis Nation Motherland. Its principles have been carried forward and shared by Métis women across generations, and are currently expressed in the work undertaken to address and end violence against Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQA+ people.

Métis people traditionally learned the critical laws of Wâhkôtowin from their mothers, including the importance of maintaining relationships, living out their roles and responsibilities, and fostering good relations within the community. When the laws of Wâhkôtowin are lost or forgotten, a negative space is made for disrespect, disconnection, and the abuse and denigration of children, families and communities, leading to the murder and disappearance of our most vulnerable and most precious.



At meetings of the Métis Nation Working Group, recognition was given to the importance of respecting the laws of Wâhkôtowin when considering objectives to end violence against Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Going forward, the Métis Nation Working Group will continue to apply the laws of Wâhkôtowin in acknowledging our collective responsibility to embrace all families and survivors, to treat each other in a good way, and to honour and respect these relationships and the spirits of the relatives who are no longer with us.

## VISION STATEMENT

The following vision statement was created by Jean Teillet and adopted by the Métis Nation Working Group:

“We are all related to mother earth and to each other. This is the essential value Indigenous people seek to emphasize when we use the phrase ‘All My Relations’. That relationship is sustained by reciprocity, respect and a deep understanding that we share and must care for everyone and everything—every person and animal, our structures and institutions, our land and water, and the very air we breathe. This includes the most vulnerable among us—our children, our Elders, our sick, our needy and our poor. It especially includes our Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.”

Indigenous peoples in Canada are diverse and include distinct First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures. But we share a common belief that change—transformation—is possible. We also share the belief that transformation is now essential. Too many of our women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are dead or missing. Too many are caught up in the justice system. Too many live desperate lives. Too many live their entire lives in fear of violence.

The transformation we envision will not be easy. Such transformation requires an acknowledgement of the past. It requires honour and respect for distinctive First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures, values, philosophies and knowledge systems. It requires the future participation of all—the state, all Canadians and Indigenous peoples. It requires a commitment to resources. It must be understood as an urgent priority. Most of all, it requires an unwavering commitment, a promise, to change.

We envision a transformed Canada where Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people live violence-free lives and enjoy the same standards of safety and security, health and wellness, education and justice enjoyed by all Canadians. We believe this vision is supported by all Canadians. This Métis Nation Action Plan is our plan to transform Canada by ending the violence that continues to threaten First Nations, Inuit and Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Weaving Miskotahâ: Métis Nation Action Plan*

Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak (LFMO), with the support of the Governing Members of the Métis Nation, and the Métis National Council, has led the work representing Métis Nation interests around addressing Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people for the past decade. Throughout the work of the National Inquiry, the LFMO has been present, participating in and advocating for the fair and compassionate treatment of Métis families and survivors. Our advocacy and involvement has highlighted the common theme of Métis families and survivors often not being engaged or culturally safe during the process of the inquiry, and we have been able to advocate for a distinctions-based pathway to prioritize Métis Nation needs and priorities. Through our advocacy for Métis Nation families and survivors, we have engaged in the development of our 62 Métis-specific Calls to Miskotahâ to augment the 231 Calls for Justice produced by the National Inquiry through its process.

From December 2019 to September 2020, the LFMO hosted a series of grassroots and leadership engagement sessions to develop priorities and identify Métis-specific needs and best practices geared toward Métis-specific programs and services, systemic change, and targeted actions to address issues surrounding the tragedy of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Throughout this process, we engaged over 330 Métis citizens, leaders, service providers, youth, elders and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. We will continue to utilize the information gained in these engagements as we move toward implementation planning.

Following our engagement sessions on implementation, the LFMO established a Métis Nation Working Group to move our work forward, focusing on the development of a Métis Nation Action Plan. We garnered representation from each Métis Nation Governing member, the Métis National Council, as well as youth, Elder, 2SLGBTQQIA+ and subject matter experts to create a diverse and representative working group. For over 18 months, the Métis Nation Working Group has met weekly, engaging in collaborative, cooperative and dynamic work to create *Weaving Miskotahâ*.

The Métis Nation Working Group agreed that all recommendations, policies, programs and services established to end missing and murdered Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people must be culturally safe, intersectional, strengths-based and trauma-informed. Additionally, Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak's Métis-specific Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) toolkit should be used to ensure that the unique realities facing Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are incorporated into Métis-specific programming.





## Foundational change

The Métis Nation Working Group is proud to present the bold ideas brought forward by survivors and families of missing and murdered Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, Métis Elders and Knowledge Keepers, leaders, Grandmothers and Grandfathers, service providers, and grassroots family and community members in responding to the 62 Calls for Miskotahâ and the 231 Calls to Justice.

The Métis Nation Working Group and the LFMO believe that our Métis leaders will play a vital role in prioritizing and addressing issues of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People. We need our leadership to work in partnership with us in ensuring that all levels of government address and take seriously the systemic change required to increase the safety and security of Indigenous women, and that Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people receive enhanced and innovative programs, services, and equitable benefits to reduce barriers and increase safety and security. Ongoing advocacy and repeated emphasis on these changes, investments and systemic change will be needed on behalf of our Métis Nation.

Within the context of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, urgent and ongoing action is required to address crisis situations, improve emergency management measures, and protect vulnerable persons from the imminent threat of serious harm or death.

In these instances, urgent steps related to physical safety and human security must necessarily precede other priorities. However, the “other priorities” are centuries-old and will remain as ongoing and outstanding action items, until there is a fundamental shift in the balance of power and equality of treatment between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.

For the Métis Nation, its priorities related to missing and murdered Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are as follows:

- ∞ Protect and ensure the safety and survival of all Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people across the Métis Nation;
- ∞ Uphold the full and meaningful exercise of our inherent rights affirmed in Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, so that through the exercise of our self-determination, we may ensure the equal treatment of all citizens of the Métis Nation regardless of biological sex, gender identity and expression, and sexual orientation; and,
- ∞ Ensure that international human rights conventions and instruments such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, intended to eliminate discrimination against Indigenous Peoples, and Indigenous women and children in particular, are upheld in advocating for the equality of Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people across the Métis Nation Motherland.

Throughout our work, five key themes emerged that are foundational and fundamental in taking urgent action towards ensuring the safety and security of all Métis people.



## 1. Justice/Law Reform

A comprehensive review of the entire criminal justice system is required to identify where Métis citizens' needs are being met and where they are not. Immediate legislative reform is required to reduce the disproportionate incarceration of Métis, and to remove systemic barriers that further harm Métis involved in the criminal justice system.

## 2. System Navigators

Across state and societal systems, structures, institutions and governments, there is a fundamental need for "System Navigators" to support Métis Nation citizens in accessing culturally safe programs and services. System navigators will provide essential advocacy, knowledge translation and holistic support to vulnerable Métis persons. Their role will lead to improved outcomes in program and service areas related to child and family services, health care, housing, education, justice, policing and victim services.

## 3. Creation of an Oversight Body

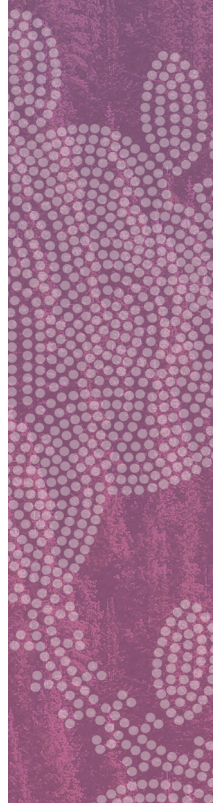
An oversight body must be established and mandated to receive complaints and compel governments to take concrete actions on commitments made to end the tragedy of missing and murdered Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. The Métis Nation must be directly involved in the co-design, co-development and co-implementation of this important oversight body, including the development of distinctions- and outcomes-based indicators of progress, as defined by the Métis Nation, for the Métis Nation.

## 4. Métis Nation Healing and Wellness Resources Foundation

A strategy must be defined for the creation of a Métis Nation Healing and Wellness Resources Foundation. This concept will be responsive to the urgent needs of individuals and communities to begin the journey to healing because of traumatic scenarios. We envision this foundation to be distinctions-based, and independent from Métis Nation governance structures to create safe access points. This fund will provide support to women, families, survivors and those at risk across the Métis Nation Motherland. Wholistic and culturally grounded guidelines and resources will help us to prioritize the urgent needs of our families and most vulnerable Métis Nation citizens.

## 5. Accountability

All components of the Métis Nation Action Plan, including its foundational principles, priority themes and the implementation phase, must include a robust accountability framework. Métis Nation Governing Members, the Métis National Council, Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak, provincial Métis Women's Representative Bodies and all levels of the Canadian government (federal, provincial, territorial and municipal) must work jointly in the creation and validation of the accountability framework and be equally accountable to ensure lasting systemic change. As always, the perspectives of family members and survivors will play an integral role in ensuring ongoing accountability.





## Threads, Themes and Priorities

The Métis Nation Working Group discussed and identified threads, themes and priorities that were recognized as being foundational to *Weaving Miskotahâ*. Together, these themes are critical to a violence-free future and are as inextricably linked as the interwoven threads of a Métis sash. The threads symbolize the connection, strength, resilience and support of Métis women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in the face of ongoing violence and threats to their existence. These threads also emerged throughout the consultation phase of developing our preliminary Métis Nation Implementation Framework.

**THREAD #1 – Gathering and Evaluating Data**

**THREAD #2 – Relationship Building**

**THREAD #3 – Service Planning and Delivery**

**THREAD #4 – Child and Family Services**

**THREAD #5 – Healing and Wellness**

**THREAD #6 – Justice and Policing**

## BACKGROUND

### ***June 3, 2019: “Reclaiming Power and Place” – The National Inquiry’s 231 Calls for Justice***

On June 3, 2019, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls publicly released its final report entitled “Reclaiming Power and Place”.<sup>1</sup> The report comprised 231 Calls for Justice, organized by rights to culture, health, security and justice, and included priorities for confronting the persistent and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations and abuses that are the root cause of Canada’s staggering rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

While some of the Calls for Justice were distinct to First Nations, Inuit and Métis (including 29 Métis-specific Calls for Justice), other Calls for Justice focused on the unique challenges facing specific Indigenous identity groups. For example, specific attention was paid to the unique needs of Two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual and other Indigenous people with unique sexual and gender identities (2SLGBTQQIA+), who experience particular forms of injustice and oppression within the context of missing and murdered Indigenous peoples.

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<sup>1</sup> “Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (Volumes 1a and 1b)” (2019).

Retrieved from: [https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final\\_Report\\_Vol\\_1a.pdf](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1a.pdf), [https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final\\_Report\\_Vol\\_1b.pdf](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1b.pdf), and [https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Executive\\_Summary.pdf](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Executive_Summary.pdf)



## ***June 29, 2019: “Métis Perspectives on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People” – the Métis Nation’s 62 Calls for Miskotahâ***

On June 29, 2019, in response to the National Inquiry’s Final Report, and to supplement the 29 Métis-specific Calls for Justice, Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak released its own “Métis Perspectives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and LGBTQ2S+ People,”<sup>2</sup> which stands as the Métis Nation’s calls for urgent change—the 62 Calls for Miskotahâ.

The 62 Calls for Miskotahâ were developed within the context of the Métis Nation’s overarching objectives to:

1. Effect meaningful, long-term systemic change through the dismantling of barriers; and,
2. Include Métis-specific legislation and policy changes, designed and led by the Métis Nation, to address, strengthen and fully achieve:
  - a. Recognition of section 35 Métis constitutional rights;
  - b. Partnerships based on the duty to consult and accommodate, and the duty of diligent implementation, within an environment of respect, collaboration and co-development;
  - c. Transformative systemic change to end the ongoing violence and oppression against Métis Peoples;
  - d. Long-term healing processes facilitated by those with Métis cultural competence and sensitivity;
  - e. Honouring of Métis traditional and land-based teachings and Knowledge Keepers’ practices; and,
  - f. Development of distinctions-based, Métis Nation–specific policies, programs, services and solutions to address ongoing inequities, issues and concerns.

## ***December 2019 to September 2020: Engagements across the Métis Nation Motherland***

As part of the process leading up to the creation of the National Action Plan on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People, Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak engaged with over 350 people across the Métis Nation Motherland, seeking input on the development of a Métis Nation–specific framework to operationalize and implement the National Inquiry Final Report’s 231 Calls for Justice and the 62 Calls for Miskotahâ.

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<sup>2</sup> “Métis Perspectives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and LGBTQ2S+ People” (2019). Retrieved from: en2.[Metiswomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/LFMO-MMIWG-Report.pdf](https://metiswomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/LFMO-MMIWG-Report.pdf)



## The Government of Canada's Response – A National Action Plan

As outlined in the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice #1.1,<sup>3</sup> and Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak's Calls for Miskotahâ #48, the Government of Canada committed to co-developing a distinctions-based National Action Plan with First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation, as the three rights-bearing Indigenous Peoples of Canada. A distinctions-based National Action Plan is critical to accurately portraying the historical and constitutional evolution of the relationship between the Crown and First Nations, Inuit and Métis, which has contributed to the ongoing Indigenous human rights violations facing Indigenous Peoples across Canada.

With Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) as the lead federal department, guided by the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, the development of the National Action Plan was intended to include all levels of all governments, Indigenous partners, civil society, front-line service providers, the private sector and the research community.

The National Action Plan focuses on the findings and recommendations in the National Inquiry's Final Report and the 62 Calls for Miskotahâ, and examines the root causes of violence against Indigenous peoples and the specific forms of oppression that have contributed to the devaluation of, and targeted violence against, Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. The National Action Plan outlines actions to:

- a. Initiate concrete efforts to immediately ensure the safety and security of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people;
- b. Provide crucial supports and information to families and survivors of missing and murdered Indigenous Peoples; and,
- c. Address the continued race-based, often state-sanctioned, violence against Indigenous Peoples.

To ensure that the distinctions-based, gendered perspectives of First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation were reflected in the National Action Plan, the federal government invited the Assembly of First Nations' Women's Council (AFN's Women's Council), Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak / Women of the Métis Nation and Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada to contribute their own perspectives on a distinctions basis. Other Indigenous groups with specific constituencies and priority areas of focus (e.g., 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, Native Women's Association of Canada, and Urban Indigenous Peoples) were also invited to submit their own unique perspectives on the National Action Plan. The National Action Plan was also designed to include federal, provincial and territorial pathways and action plans.

<sup>3</sup> "Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls" (2018). Volume 1b. pg. 176 Retrieved from: [https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final\\_Report\\_Vol\\_1b.pdf](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1b.pdf)



## Developing a Métis Nation Action Plan

Beginning in August 2020, the Métis Nation Working Group met remotely, on a weekly basis, to consider priorities for inclusion in *Weaving Miskotahâ*, the Métis Nation's priorities for a distinctions-based, Métis-specific National Action Plan.

The Métis Nation Working Group's discussions were guided by the principles of respect, reciprocity, kindness, trust, integrity, humility, gentleness and generosity, both within the Group and with the other working groups. The Métis Nation Working Group's internal deliberations respectfully honoured sacred knowledge, diversity, spirituality, faith, culture, language, truth, justice, equity and advocacy.

The Métis Nation Working Group's Terms of Reference also provided guidance to:

- ∞ Develop a better understanding of the Métis Nation's distinct needs with respect to the ongoing tragedy of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, in order to support the development of the National Action Plan;
- ∞ Liaise and engage with the National Action Plan's Core Working Group, and support the other working groups' activities as they relate to Métis Nation perspectives;
- ∞ Identify key stakeholders in data collection, and access federal, provincial, territorial and Métis governments' research on violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people;
- ∞ Provide recommendations and best practices of justice system reform in order to address the continued colonial interpretation of laws as they apply to Métis people; and,
- ∞ Identify opportunities to address gaps in policies, programs, services and supports for Métis people, to be incorporated into the ongoing development of the Métis Nation Action Plan.



## A DISTINCTIONS-BASED APPROACH

### Who are "The Métis"?

The Métis National Council defines Métis as "a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples, is of historic Métis Nation ancestry, and who is accepted by the Métis Nation." While the National Action Plan would have benefited from incorporating a clear definition of the Métis Nation and rights-bearing Métis, we know who we are and can situate our identity within the historical evolution of our people across the Northwest.



## A Métis Nation–Specific Approach

The Métis Nation Working Group agreed that all recommendations, policies, programs and services established to end the national tragedy of missing and murdered Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people must be distinctions-based, culturally relevant, intersectional, strengths-based and trauma-informed. Additionally, Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak’s Métis-specific approach to gender-based analysis (GBA+)<sup>4</sup> will be relied on to ensure that the unique realities facing Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are incorporated into Métis-specific programming.

### Developing an Oversight Body

As recommended in the National Inquiry’s Final Report, and committed to in the National Action Plan, an independent oversight body will be established and mandated to receive complaints and compel government to take concrete actions on commitments contained in the Final Report and the National Action Plan. The Métis Nation looks forward to being directly involved in the co-design, co-development and co-implementation of this important oversight body, including the development of distinctions- and outcomes-based indicators of progress, as defined by the Métis Nation, for the Métis Nation.

### Threads: Themes and Priorities

The Métis Nation Working Group discussed and identified priorities that have been categorized thematically. Each of these themes was recognized as being foundational to *Weaving Miskotahâ*, and as critical as the interwoven threads of the Métis sash, stronger when bound together, and symbolic of the strength and resilience of Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in the face of continued marginalization, oppression and violence.

In developing the six threads, Métis Nation–specific objectives and outcomes-based indicators of progress have been identified to address the unacceptable rates of violence against Métis women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people

The Métis Nation Working Group considered the unique circumstances and experiences that impact Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and that continue to leave them vulnerable to violence and exploitation. After identifying potential interventions that could break cyclical patterns of violence, the Métis Nation Working Group focused on specific solutions and services that would require dedicated resources and sustained, long-term funding in order to achieve long-lasting, systemic change. These overlapping priorities were developed with a focus on the foundational principles of *Wâhkôtowin* as they relate to the National Action Plan’s themes of culture, health and wellness, safety and security.

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<sup>4</sup> The Métis approach to GBA+ includes six key steps: identify issues, challenge assumptions, gather facts, (co) develop options/recommendations, monitor and evaluate. Some overarching concepts guide these six key steps, including partnership, consultation, co-development, communication and documentation.



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## THREAD #1 – GATHERING AND EVALUATING DATA

Data and statistical information can help to provide evidence of the barriers and circumstances impacting Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. Once this evidentiary base has been established, proposed solutions and interventions, along with their accompanying resource and funding requirements, can be designed, developed and implemented.

A National Métis Research and Data Network is proposed to ensure the culturally appropriate collection, protection, storage and presentation of Métis-specific data.

### **Protocols for Gathering, Storing, Protecting and Accessing Métis-Specific Data**

It is critical to establish culturally safe, strengths-based and trauma-informed protocols and processes for gathering research and data from Métis individuals, groups and organizations. With the Métis Nation Governing Members and the Métis National Council's support and collaboration, it is proposed that a National Métis Research and Data Network, including a virtual data centre, be established to focus on:

- ∞ Designing criteria for gathering, storing and accessing Métis-specific data;
- ∞ Considering and approving any requests to gather information from Métis people; and,
- ∞ Assigning culturally competent data experts to assist in gathering data from Métis people.

As part of the process of creating a National Métis Research and Data Network, agreements must be negotiated between the Métis Nation and federal and provincial governments and affiliated agencies and organizations in order to access data specific to the Métis Nation. It is anticipated that the agreements will contain and respect consensus-based rules and criteria that will be co-developed between the Métis Nation and federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments, agencies and institutions.



## Identifying Existing Métis-Specific Data

Despite ongoing efforts of Métis Nation governments and affiliated organizations, there remains a significant lack of Métis-specific research and data. Some Métis-specific data can be accessed through Statistics Canada and other government agencies; however, the methodology used to gather, analyse and present the data is often unknown, inconsistent or colonial in approach, which can raise questions about the cultural veracity of the data.

Research and data specific to Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people should be sought from:

- ∞ The former Métis Centre at the National Aboriginal Healing Organization (e.g., on maternal health and other priorities);
- ∞ Non-Métis government agencies or organizations, including:
  - Provincial governments, which should assist in tracking and sharing Métis-specific health data; and,
  - Government agencies (e.g., social services, police, etc.), which should be requested to gather data through their interactions with Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Data collection on the violence and trauma experienced by Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, including persons with disabilities, would provide a window on the intersecting identity factors and social determinants (e.g., residential schools, Sixties Scoop, foster care, childhood abuse, involvement in the criminal justice system) that contribute to their lived realities. However, the autonomy and personal preferences of individual Métis should ultimately determine whether this information and data are obtained and shared.



## Gathering Métis-Specific Baseline Data

Gathering baseline and supplemental data would help to:

- ∞ Identify where new supports, programs, services and interventions are required (particularly in rural and remote areas), and develop relevant responses;
- ∞ Measure, through outcomes-based indicators, the success of new supports, programs, services and interventions, and identify necessary adjustments;
- ∞ Support the collection of research, data and evidence of tangible actions that help eliminate violence against Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people;
- ∞ Study the intersecting identity factors and social determinants that contribute to the overcriminalization of Métis women and the ongoing cycle of violence (i.e., foster care, residential schools, childhood abuse, etc.);
- ∞ Take Métis-specific, culturally sensitive, and trauma-informed actions to support mental wellness, and identify social determinants leading to addictions and other harms;
- ∞ Determine and monitor the number of Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people involved with child and family services and child protection agencies;



- ∞ Assess the treatment of Métis people within the criminal justice system compared to other Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations;
- ∞ Examine outcomes related to Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people entering and leaving the criminal justice system; and,
- ∞ Repeal discriminatory and inequitable legislation that is inherently biased against persons living in poverty, experiencing health crises, or facing social and economic marginalization.

### **Objectives – Gathering and Evaluating Data**

- 1.1 Establish a National Métis Research and Data Network with a dedicated mandate to collect, protect, analyse and present Métis-specific data and research;
- 1.2 Access existing data on Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people from trusted sources; and,
- 1.3 Establish Métis-specific, baseline data in all policy areas to support the development of responsive services that can meet the needs of all citizens of the Métis Nation.

### **Measurable Indicators of Progress**

- ∞ Partnerships are established with Métis Nation and other Métis and Indigenous organizations and agencies to create mutually agreed-upon criteria for gathering Métis-specific data;
- ∞ Métis-specific data are relied upon to tailor services and supports for Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, their families and communities, and required services are identified, developed, delivered and regularly monitored;
- ∞ Outcomes-based indicators are established and validated by on-the-ground service providers and recipients to confirm grassroots access to and benefit from Métis-specific services; and,
- ∞ Monitoring and evaluation of data confirm increased use of Métis-specific services and a reduction in violence, suicides and suicide attempts of Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.



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## THREAD #2 – RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

In keeping with the principles of *Wâhkôtowin*, the Métis Nation Working Group consistently recognized the power of relationships to create positive change, end violence, and nurture and sustain all things.

Forming and fostering responsive and accountable relationships and partnerships with Métis Nation and other Métis organizations and Indigenous governments is essential. Established and trusting relationships can be mutually beneficial when assistance, support or guidance is required by any of the engaged parties.

### Creating Relationship Protocols

Relationship protocols must be developed in plain language to assist in initiating relationships with Métis Nation governments, organizations and members. Métis-specific guidance must be provided on cultural protocols, and definitions of Métis and the Métis Nation must be developed or approved by a Métis Nation designate.

### Forming and Fostering Relationships

- ∞ It is important to form and foster responsive and accountable relationships and partnerships with Métis Nation governments and other Métis organizations and Indigenous governments. In accordance with the principle of “Nothing About Us, without Us”, any committees or group that is established to help influence decisions affecting the Métis Nation must include Métis Nation representation and be consistent with the Canada-Métis Nation nation-to-nation, government-to-government relationship, as set out in the 2017 Canada-Métis Nation Accord.
- ∞ Relationships with the Métis Nation should be pursued that are mutually beneficial and provide parties with required supports or guidance when needed. These productive relationships can:



- Offer encouragement and support during times of crisis (e.g., with search efforts for missing persons), during public health emergencies, or with management of natural or human-induced disasters;
  - Facilitate Métis Nation–specific tailoring of existing services and established service delivery structures (i.e., child and family services, emergency shelters, victim services) as an intermediary consideration in advance of the Métis Nation exercising its inherent right to self-determination and self-government, including jurisdiction with respect to its own citizens;
  - Improve interactions with law enforcement and justice bodies, prioritize societal and state protection of and assistance to vulnerable Métis persons, and result in improved outcomes on the ground (i.e., shorter police response times to violence against Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and increased dedication and resources for missing Métis persons).
- ∞ As a continued focus, it is essential to foster relationships with other national and regional Indigenous women’s organizations as well as national civil society organizations to address continued issues around missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and gender-based violence.

### **Objectives – Relationship Building**

- 2.1 Develop plain language partnership-building toolkits to assist in initiating relationships with Métis Nation governments, other Métis organizations and Indigenous governments, groups, organizations and agencies;
- 2.2 Strengthen relationships and understandings with law enforcement and correctional services (i.e., RCMP, provincial police, federal and provincial correctional services) to improve outcomes when Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are reported harmed or missing; and,
- 2.3 Foster ongoing relationships with national and regional Indigenous women’s organizations to support information and wise practice sharing.

### **Measurable Indicators of Progress**

- ∞ Toolkits are helping to form and foster relationships between Métis Nation governing bodies and state and societal structures, which in turn provide supports or improve access to services to end violence against Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.
- ∞ There is a reduction in the disappearance and murder of Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, as improved relationships with law enforcement and correctional service bodies gradually increase trust in reporting incidents of violence.
- ∞ Information and data shared and gathered at Métis Nation engagement sessions, including with the Métis Nation Governing Members and the Métis National Council, identify specific services and supports required to eliminate violence against Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.



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## THREAD #3 – SERVICE DESIGN AND DELIVERY

Métis women, children and 2SLGBTQQA+ people require access to services and programs that tangibly reduce and ultimately eliminate acts of violence and exploitation against them. Strengths-based, trauma-informed programs focussed on risk and harm reduction, healing, cultural activities and crisis care are needed to support urban and rural Métis and their families across the Métis Nation.

Programs and services developed to support Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQA+ people will be developed and evaluated using a Métis-specific, gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) approach to ensure cultural competence and safety. Existing services available through the National Inquiry's Family Information Liaison Units (FILUs) and other related programs could potentially be expanded to meet the needs of all Métis Nation members, in addition to serving Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQA+ people impacted by missing and murdered loved ones.

### Program Approaches

Prevention and early intervention programs should be developed to empower and increase the safety of Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQA+ people, by raising awareness of the intersecting identity factors (e.g., Indigeneity; age; biological sex; sexual orientation, gender identity and expression; and health, disabilities and disease) along with the social determinants (e.g., foster care; residential schools; Sixties Scoop; health care, justice and correctional discrimination) that increase their vulnerability to violence and exploitation.

Métis-specific, culturally safe and gender-lensed programming must be developed to provide age-appropriate safety information across the Métis Nation (e.g., through youth-focussed programs on healthy relationships, social skills, safe dating, consensual intimacy, toxic masculinity, gender-based violence, etc.).

To protect Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQA+ people from further marginalization, Métis-specific programs and services should be developed and delivered by experienced and culturally



competent workers. Programs and services must be delivered in a strengths-based, trauma-informed way, and can be evaluated using Métis-specific GBA+ intersectional indicators. Within the Métis Nation, region-specific programs should ensure information is provided to grassroots service providers in order to improve current service delivery mechanisms. It is anticipated that community-based education and locally-driven support would help remove the stigma and fear associated with reporting violence.

### **Strengths-based, Trauma-informed Practices**

Intergenerational trauma can be experienced and exhibited in physical and psychological forms. However, a strengths-based approach to trauma highlights and reinforces long-standing Métis practices of survival, resilience and perseverance in the face of state, societal and institutional oppression. Accordingly, all Métis Nation programs and services established to support Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people should be established from a strengths-based, trauma-informed perspective. Culturally trained, experienced staff can help avoid retraumatizing families and survivors, and focus efforts based on resilience and recovery for victims and survivors.

### **Services for Métis Families**

In addition to services to support Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ victims and survivors, wrap-around services are required to meet the healing needs of all family members. Trauma, experienced either directly or vicariously, can impact how victims interact with their families and societal and state structures. Victims can become perpetrators and the cycle of violence continues. Ensuring all family members have access to services and supports can interrupt and break the cycle of intergenerational violence and support family healing and wellness.

### **Métis Nation Healing and Wellness Resources Foundation**

A strategy must be defined for the creation of a Métis Nation Healing and Wellness Resources Foundation. Building on the historic success of the National Aboriginal Healing Foundation, a distinctions-based healing and wellness foundation must be created that is responsive to the unique needs of Métis Nation. An arms-length healing and wellness foundation can provide support to women, families, survivors and those at risk across the Métis Nation Motherland. We urgently need a responsive healing and wellness-focused source of support that can assist individuals and families with accessing supports required to navigate issues of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Wholistic and culturally grounded guidelines and resources will help us to prioritize the urgent needs of our families and most vulnerable Métis Nation citizens.





## **Métis Healing and Wellness Centres**

A strategy must be defined for the creation of Métis Healing and Wellness Centres. A full suite of services and support must be offered that is responsive to the unique needs of Métis Nation communities. Given the current lack of locally available services for many community members across the Métis Nation Motherland, these Healing and Wellness Centres should include wrap-around supports for physical and mental health, addictions, trauma healing, and the promotion of wellness and cultural knowledge exchange.

## **Métis Cultural Centres**

Métis Cultural Centres should be accessible to Métis Nation communities to provide space and opportunity for all Métis persons and their families to participate in culture-based programming. Métis Cultural Centres can provide the necessary safe space to re-teach Métis traditional ways of knowing, knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer, including the history of the Métis Nation.

Access to speakers of Métis traditional languages is an integral part of our culture and heritage. Cultural sharing and furthering understandings of Métis identity could include teaching traditional Métis laws, principles and values; engaging in Métis traditional and contemporary cultural practices; emphasizing the importance of sustenance activities; speaking our diverse dialects of Michif, Cree, Saulteaux and other languages spoken by Métis Nation citizens; and participating in song, dance, beadwork, sash-making and playing the Métis fiddle, all of which reinforce cultural identity and representation.

## **Cultural Safety Training**

Cultural safety training—developed, designed and delivered by the Métis Nation—should be mandatory for all service providers. The training should also be sector-specific (i.e., particular to education, health, justice, or child and family service providers), incorporate Métis ways of knowing, being and doing, and be adaptable to regional realities and familial circumstances. In addition, cultural training should include standards of conduct and engagement with Métis people in need of services, particularly those in crisis and in urgent need of support services, to avoid perpetuating colonial biases and practices that contribute to the cycle of intergenerational trauma experienced by many citizens across the Métis Nation.

Federal government departments have been actively supporting the implementation of cultural safety training, which to date has generally been First Nations-specific. Providing Métis-specific cultural safety training will help ensure federal cultural competence and sensitivity to the distinctions among the rights-bearing Indigenous Peoples of Canada, particularly in relation to treatment of Métis in the justice and correctional systems.





## Access to Crisis Services

As noted above, for those Métis persons in crisis and in urgent need of immediate service (e.g., to secure safe housing; to address food insecurity; to obtain a restraining order; or to obtain immediate physical protection), the crisis itself must be the first priority, not administrative, bureaucratic, or jurisdictional challenges. During a crisis, the most vulnerable are typically the most impacted, which makes addressing barriers to accessing crisis services a pressing priority.

### Improving Access to Services: Métis System Navigators

A network of Métis System Navigators should be dedicated across service sectors (e.g., health, education, child and family services, justice and legal services) to guide and assist Métis Nation citizens in accessing information on a broad range of services, including:

- ∞ Emergency housing for vulnerable Métis in need (e.g., after release from jail for minor offences; after extended stays in psychiatric facilities; after experiencing domestic violence; or after experiencing trauma or disaster);
- ∞ Culturally-specific services for Métis with visible and non-visible disabilities;
- ∞ Regional- and community-specific services tailored to the unique circumstances of Métis individuals, families and communities, where they are located; and,
- ∞ Referrals and connection to mental health courts and other supportive justice system services if eligible and available.

Most Canadians could benefit from additional guidance and information about the relevant services and supports available to them, but Métis Nation citizens often require culturally informed guidance to fully avail themselves of existing supports. Medical, statistical and government officials are, with rare exception, overwhelmingly ignorant of the distinctions among the rights-bearing Indigenous Peoples of Canada. Even now, most government bodies and state structures (e.g., educational facilities, hospitals, correctional facilities, non-Indigenous community service centres) do not know to ask whether a person seeking services or supports is First Nation, Inuit or Métis.

A lack of distinctions-based data about service seekers and recipients effectively guarantees that “Indigenous supports” delivered by non-Indigenous entities will see limited traction, progress or improvement in outcomes. This cultural ignorance and arrogance is how the cycle of marginalization and discrimination continues across generations, with many Métis individuals to this day still reluctant to self-identity as Métis.





## Services for Métis People who Identify as 2SLGBTQIA+

Indigenous individuals who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+ have reported challenges seeking services and are often misdirected to services designed specifically for women. These challenges are compounded when seeking distinctions-based services for Métis who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+. Specific service areas in need of tailoring include crisis intervention models and supportive housing pathways, which to be truly effective must be designed to address the unique needs and challenges of Métis people who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+. Consulting and engaging the voices of 2SLGBTQIA+ people is essential to mitigating risks and enhancing responsive services.

### Building on Success: Expanding Existing Services

Through the work of the National Inquiry, some programs and services have been established that have proven to be highly effective, and have been validated by on-the-ground service providers and users. These “service success stories” should be expanded upon and tailored to address the distinct needs of First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation. Examples of effective services whose success could be amplified through distinctions-based approaches include:

- ∞ Family Information Liaison Units (FILUs)<sup>5</sup> offered through the federal Department of Justice, which seek to provide a “one-stop information service” for families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls;
- ∞ British Columbia’s Be More Than a Bystander<sup>6</sup> program, co-partnered by the BC Lions (Football) Club and Ending Violence Association of BC, which teaches people how to intervene in challenging or crisis situations without putting themselves at risk;
- ∞ Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada<sup>7</sup>, a well-known national organization that could assist in delivering culturally competent and safe youth mentoring programs to First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation communities; and,
- ∞ Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak’s She is Indigenous<sup>8</sup> campaign, already supported by national and regional Indigenous women’s organizations, which could apply a distinctions-based approach to raising awareness about the strengths and diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis women, and employing measures to end violence against all Indigenous women in Canada.

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<sup>5</sup> “Family Information Liaison Units”. Retrieved from: <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/fund-fina/cj-jp/fund-fond/mmiw-fada/info.html>

<sup>6</sup> “Be More Than a Bystander”. Retrieved from: <https://endingviolence.org/prevention-programs/be-more-than-a-bystander/>

<sup>7</sup> “Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Canada”. Retrieved from: <https://bigbrothersbigsisters.ca>

<sup>8</sup> “She is Indigenous”. Retrieved from: <https://sheisindigenous.ca/about-the-campaign/>



## Urban and Rural Access to Services

The Métis Nation exists where our Métis citizens reside across the motherland, inclusive of urban, rural and remote communities. The vulnerability of Métis people is the same or similar regardless of residency; however, access to required supports and services is significantly diminished the further one resides from an urban centre. Collective focus and advocacy are required to ensure equity and access to a suite of supports throughout the Motherland. Utilization of technology and innovative best practices should be considered to ensure that rural and remote Métis citizens receive services and programs that meet their needs.

### Objectives – Service Design and Delivery

- 3.1 Establish a Métis Nation Healing and Wellness Resources Foundation focused on urgent supports for Métis communities, families, survivors and Métis individuals at risk;
- 3.2 Develop a network of Métis System Navigators to respond to requests for information about Métis-specific services, particularly in the areas of healthcare, housing, child and family services, legal services and interactions with the justice system;
- 3.3 Invest in distinctions-based Métis-specific Family Information Liaison Units (FILUs) to be resourced by the provinces to each Métis Nation Governing Member to ensure tailored supports to accommodate the distinct needs of Métis families;
- 3.4 Invest in Métis health and wellness best practice models that can be shared and evaluated to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the Métis Nation;
- 3.5 Create space, place and voice for Métis people who identify as 2SLGBTQQIA+ to articulate their need for specific services and interventions that support gender- and sexually-diverse Métis people impacted by the ongoing tragedy of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people; and
- 3.6 In all proposed or expanded Métis Nation services, ensure that a Métis-specific GBA+ approach is used to effectively design and deliver services that can be equally accessed by Métis women, as Métis women, and that will also support equality of outcomes for all members of the Métis Nation.

### Measurable Indicators of Progress

- ∞ Funding is provided to establish a Métis Nation Healing Foundation, which operates at an arm's length from the Métis Nation Governing Members and Métis National Council, whose mandate is to provide supports to Métis families and survivors who are vulnerable due to issues of MMIWG.





- ∞ Métis System Navigators are reporting increased requests for information on Métis-specific services and programs.
- ∞ Métis families are accessing Métis-specific services offered through the FILUs.
- ∞ Culturally grounded and safe Métis health and wellness services are more greatly available throughout the Métis Motherland, providing mental health, addictions, trauma and other interventions from a wholistic perspective.

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## THREAD #4 – CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

Considering the documented impacts on Métis families involved in the child welfare system, critical and urgent measures are required to improve services related to prevention, intervention, kinship care and foster care. Métis youth also require culturally-specific services before and after they “age out” of the child welfare system.

### Recognizing the Impacts on Métis Children in Care

In 2020, the British Columbia Ministry of Children and Families released a study identifying impacts on Métis children, youth and families involved with child and youth protection services in the province between 2015 and 2017.<sup>9</sup> The results on injury and death of Métis children and youth in care were nothing less than devastating.

### Protecting Métis Nation Children by Supporting Métis Nation Families

Immediate supports, including legal supports, are needed for Métis Nation families struggling with poverty, food insecurity, housing and related financial challenges to help them retain custody of their children. There are correlative effects of involvement in the child welfare system and subsequent addictions, involvement in the justice system, and vulnerability to victimization. Métis Nation children in care need access to culturally appropriate support programs and safe and stable living environments. Whenever possible, children should be placed in the care of a relative (kinship care) or community member. As with all Indigenous children, when Métis Nation children lack familial connections and kinship, they lose their cultural connection to their ancestors, Elders and Grandmothers, and can feel lost and become vulnerable to violence and exploitation.

<sup>9</sup> “Invisible Children: A Descriptive Analysis of Injury and Death Reports for Métis Children and Youth in British Columbia, 2015 to 2017” (July 2020). Retrieved from: [https://rcybc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/RCY\\_Métis-InvisibleChildren\\_July2020\\_FL-NAL.pdf](https://rcybc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/RCY_Métis-InvisibleChildren_July2020_FL-NAL.pdf)



It is critical to identify Métis Nation children in the care of Child and Family Services to ensure that connections to cultural and familial supports are not severed. When Métis youth age out of the child welfare system, they often lose access to essential cultural supports and kinship networks.

### **Equal Service Access for all Métis Nation Children and Youth in Care**

Given that Jordan's Principle is not currently applicable to Métis Nation children living off-reserve, we must seek to expand Jordan's Principle to all Métis Nation children. For the majority of Métis Nation children and youth living off reserve and in urban areas, provincial governments are responsible for providing equitable access to comparable services and programs in order to achieve substantive equality. A network of Métis System Navigators should be dedicated to providing guidance to Métis citizens seeking services specific to children and youth in care. As part of the broader negotiation of equal access to health care for all Indigenous Peoples, Métis Nation children and youth need access to comparable health benefits and services such as those provided to First Nations and Inuit children through Indigenous Services Canada's Non-Insured Health Benefits Program.

Bill C-9210, passed in 2019 as "An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families", is federal Indigenous child and family services legislation co-developed with Indigenous Peoples on a distinctions basis. The Act recognizes Indigenous self-government and sets out a framework for Métis Nation, First Nations and Inuit governments to apply their own laws and assume jurisdiction over the provision of child and family services for their children and youth. This legislative reform is expected to help reduce the number of children in care by supporting families and communities on a distinctions basis to continue to care for their children and youth, and ensure the survival and cultural continuity of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Although not all Métis Nation governments have asserted their jurisdiction, this legislation holds significant potential to address the negative impacts related to the disproportionate number of Métis Nation children apprehended in existing child welfare systems. Sufficient, sustainable and permanent long-term funding must be provided to support First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation authorities in assuming the delivery of child and family services for their own nations and communities.

### **Teaching Traditional Family Knowledge**

Métis women are inherently the Knowledge Keepers, the holders of traditions and the powerful matriarchs of families. We pass down knowledge on how to care for children and keep them safe, with a particular role in intergenerational transfer of traditional knowledge. We have been disproportionately impacted by community dislocation, residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, forced or coerced sterilization, violent victimization and gender-based violence. These impacts have undermined

<sup>10</sup> Bill C-92: An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families (2019).  
Retrieved from: <https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/bill/C-92/first-reading>



and threatened our identity as Métis, our ability to parent, and our traditional roles as keepers of Métis culture and language. We need to reclaim and resiliently embrace these roles in order to keep our Métis Nation strong.

When Métis children are taken from their families, urgent efforts are required to keep them safe with family or in their community to maintain their cultural and familial connections. Currently, in many Indigenous communities, unrelated caregivers from outside the community are paid to provide care for children, while immediate family members are not. Distinctions-based kinship care, with adequate resourcing and compensation, must therefore be a priority.

### **Objectives – Child and Family Services**

- 4.1 Develop Métis Nation–led supports for Métis Nation families, including counselling, parenting and related services;
- 4.2 Provide adequate resourcing and compensation for Métis Nation relatives and community members to provide kinship care to Métis children and youth;
- 4.3 Expand the application of Jordan’s Principle to secure funding and access to child and family services for Métis Nation children and youth in order to address existing service discrepancies and achieve substantive equality;
- 4.4 Include Métis-specific GBA+ approaches and evaluation methods when considering prevention, intervention, kinship care, foster care and other child and family services for Métis Nation children and youth; and,
- 4.5 Address existing gaps in child and family services and policies to ensure that Métis Nation youth who are aging out of care receive the supports required.

### **Measurable Indicators of Progress**

- ∞ An increase in Métis Nation self-determination in Child and Family Services;
- ∞ An increased capacity for Governing Members to support and provide services to Métis Nation youth, children and families;
- ∞ An increased number of Métis Nation families are seeking and accessing counselling, parenting and other supports;
- ∞ An increase in access to a full suite of health benefits to improve health outcomes;
- ∞ Fewer Métis Nation children are being apprehended into state-sanctioned care, and Métis kinship care is prioritized and respected;
- ∞ There is a reduction in rates of violence, substance abuse and suicides among Métis Nation youth and children;
- ∞ Métis Nation youth aging out of care are accessing services and opportunities available to them in the areas of health care, housing, employment and education; and,
- ∞ Traditional knowledge and practices are held, shared and transmitted across generations of Métis Nation families across the Métis Nation Motherland.



# Weaving Miskotahâ

The Métis Nation's Journey to Ending Missing and Murdered Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+

## **THREAD #5 – HEALING AND WELLNESS**

Entire Indigenous communities suffer when someone is murdered or goes missing. Trauma can be passed down to the next generation. Métis-specific effects of trauma need to be considered to better understand where and how trauma originates. Métis Nation Healing and Wellness Centres should be established, where a range of healing and wellness services, provided by knowledgeable, culturally trained caregivers, can be delivered to Métis Nation victims, survivors and their families.

### **Establish a Métis Nation Healing Foundation**

A strategy must be defined for the creation of a Métis Healing Foundation. Building on the historic success of the National Aboriginal Healing Foundation, a distinctions-based healing foundation must be created that is responsive to the unique needs of Métis Nation families, survivors and communities. An arms-length healing foundation can provide support to women, families, survivors and those at risk across the Métis Nation Motherland. We urgently need a responsive, healing-focused source of support that can assist individuals and families to access the supports required to navigate issues of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Wholistic and culturally grounded guidelines and resources will help us to prioritize the urgent needs of our families and most vulnerable Métis Nation citizens.

### **Establish Métis Nation Healing and Wellness Centres**

Métis Nation Healing and Wellness Centres should be established, where access to a range of health, wellness and healing services can be provided, including trauma healing programs. Culturally appropriate family and community programming can bring together Métis people from across the Métis Nation Motherland to share, learn about and reinforce Métis culture and identity. The proposed centres will require knowledgeable, culturally sensitive and trauma-trained caregivers and support staff to avoid re-traumatization of Métis Nation families and survivors.





## **Métis Health Care System Navigators**

Designated Métis Health Care System Navigators will assist Métis people, their families and Métis kinship networks in navigating the health care system, ensuring respectful, culturally safe treatment and required services.

### **Jordan's Principle**

All levels of government must fully implement Jordan's Principle across jurisdictions and distinctions by expanding eligibility criteria to include all Indigenous children, whether they are located on or off reserve. Jordan's Principle currently only applies to First Nations and Inuit children. It is imperative that this policy and legislation be expanded to protect Métis children regardless of where they reside. We cannot allow Métis children to be at risk because of federal and provincial government jurisdictional disputes or ambiguities.

### **Victim Healing and Recovery Supports**

Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people who are victims of violence require supports and resources for their recovery, including counselling, healing and advocacy services. These supports must be extended to the entire kinship network of the victim, and in fatal cases, should include assistance with a victim's funeral arrangements. Traumatized Métis families require a range of culturally appropriate supports, including counselling, traditional and land-based healing, and related healing activities. During court proceedings, and on a request basis, Métis Nation Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and others should be invited to provide support. The creation of a Métis Nation Healing and Wellness Resources Foundation will support victim healing and recovery through provision of assistance at families' times of greatest need and vulnerability.

### **Equitable Access to Health Services**

Federal and provincial governments must address the distinct health needs of Métis Nation citizens to ensure there is equality of treatment and equitable access to services related to Métis health and healing. These services include, but are not limited to, disability services, treatment and healing for trauma, mental health services, and addictions and recovery programs. Métis-specific health and healing services must also be made available to Métis survivors and their families suffering from intergenerational trauma.

### **Métis Health Benefits**

A Métis Nation Health Benefits program would help to ensure that Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people have access to a range of health benefits currently not covered by provincially funded health care systems. Benefits for citizens of the Métis Nation, comparable to those provided through the federally funded First Nations and Inuit Health Branch's Non-Insured Health Benefits Program, would help





defray Métis families' costs related to prescription drugs, dental services, vision care, medical supplies and equipment, and ambulance services.

### **Objectives – Health and Wellness**

- 5.1 Establish Métis Nation Healing and Wellness Centres to provide a range of services to support the health and wellness of Métis victims and their families;
- 5.2 Provide Métis Nation youth and children, irrespective of where they are located, with services by all levels of government and comparable to those available through Jordan's Principle;
- 5.3 Provide victim recovery and healing supports for Métis victims of violence and their families, including financial assistance with funeral arrangements and ongoing counselling, on a request basis;
- 5.4 Provide equal access for citizens of the Métis Nation to publicly-funded services that support mental wellness and healing from addictions, traumas, disabilities, etc.; and,
- 5.5 Develop and fund a Métis Nation Health Benefits program, comparable to the federal First Nations and Inuit Health Branch's Non-Insured Health Benefits Program, to help defray medical costs not covered by provincially funded health care systems.

### **Measurable Indicators of Progress**

- ∞ Establishment of an arm's-length Métis Nation Healing and Wellness Resources Foundation to provide victim healing and recovery supports to families and survivors at their time of greatest need and vulnerability. The foundation will fill gaps for the provision of assistance in practical and compassionate ways for our families and survivors.
- ∞ Provision of health, wellness and healing supports through Métis Nation Healing and Wellness Centres, which are resulting in reduced rates of disease and disability, substance abuse and addiction, child abuse, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and suicide and suicidal ideation, particularly among Métis Nation children and youth, and a reduction in incarceration and recidivism.
- ∞ Increased awareness of mental health courts as alternative justice interventions for those Métis at risk of incarceration who may be suffering with mental health issues, including trauma, addictions and poverty.
- ∞ Métis victims and their families are accessing Métis-specific healing services;
- ∞ A Métis Nation Health Benefits Program designed and delivered by the Métis Nation is helping defray costs associated with dental, vision, prescription and other services accessed by Métis people; and,
- ∞ Equitable access to comparable services under Jordan's Principle is provided to Métis children and youth, whether they are on or off reserve.

# Weaving Miskotahâ

The Métis Nation's Journey to Ending Missing and Murdered Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+

## THREAD #6 – JUSTICE AND POLICING

Métis-specific services are required to reduce the disproportionately high rates of incarceration of Métis women, men, youth and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Within the justice system, Métis people consistently experience anti-Métis racism. A Métis Nation Justice Strategy must be created and fully resourced to focus on Métis-specific justice matters. Métis Nation Justice Centres should serve as a hub for interconnected Métis-specific justice programs and services. A network of Métis Justice System Navigators should also be assigned to support Métis people interacting with the criminal justice system, and guide them to the supports they and their families require. Culturally-specific alternatives to mainstream justice processes, such as restorative justice, community sentencing and supervision, and healing lodges, could also help lower rates of Métis victimization, crime, incarceration and recidivism.

### **Métis Nation Policing**

The First Nations Policing Program (FNPP) is a contribution program that provides funding to support the provision of policing services in First Nations and Inuit communities across Canada, and they are cost-shared with provinces and territories. The FNPP is an \$800 million First Nations and Inuit program that has been in operation since 1991, with Métis communities being ineligible to access the program.

After the original FNPP, the policy had not been reviewed since 1996, and the current framework does not reflect the shift in the Métis Nation landscape. As the Métis Nation further defines policing priorities, other mechanisms, like the Permanent Bilateral Mechanism (PBM), would be used to ensure that the priority is implemented through programs, policies or legislation. The Métis Nation must be engaged in conversations around community policing to ensure it reflects the uniqueness of Métis communities.

### **Indigenous Women-Only Police Stations**

Women-only police stations are in extensive use in Latin American countries and throughout Africa, dealing exclusively with crimes of abuse and sexual assault. Use of these women-centered



police stations have in some instances reduced homicides against women by as much as 17%<sup>11</sup>. These models may be an effective means to address gender-based violence in Canada, particularly violence against Indigenous women.

### **Métis Nation Justice Centres**

Métis Nation Justice Centres should be created in partnership with provincial governments, and potentially as extensions of existing provincial justice systems. The centres could:

- ∞ Provide a variety of supports for Métis victims, offenders and their families, including legal aid supports;
- ∞ Facilitate Métis-specific, restorative justice alternatives to incarcerating offenders, including community involvement in sentencing and supervision and rehabilitation of offenders through community sentencing plans and offender supervision; and,
- ∞ Act as a hub for implementing a Métis Nation Justice Strategy, based on Métis-specific principles and values, and focused on justice matters related to Métis children and families.

### **Alternatives to Mainstream Justice Processes**

Culturally-specific alternatives to mainstream justice processes could lower the rates of victimization, crime, incarceration and recidivism among Métis people across the Métis Motherland. Some Métis do not understand western judicial processes, which are generally focused more on punishment and deterrence than reparation and restoration. Alternatives to the mainstream justice system must be more responsive and sensitive to the needs and culture of the Métis Nation. Existing models of alternative court systems could be adapted for Métis-specific purposes, as in the following examples:

- ∞ Mental Health Courts exist throughout Canada as alternatives to the mainstream justice system to compassionately provide alternative programs to those impacted by trauma, addictions, mental health challenges, houselessness and poverty. System navigators could assist Métis people experiencing these barriers to pursue alternative solutions and treatment in Mental Health Courts. These courts exist in Edmonton, Toronto and other Canadian communities.
- ∞ The Cree Court,<sup>12</sup> which is a unique initiative of the Saskatchewan Provincial Court, conducts hearings on criminal matters at least partially in Cree.

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<sup>11</sup> Are women's police stations a solution to gender-based violence in Canada? Retrieved from <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2020/05/19/are-womens-police-stations-a-solution-to-domestic-violence-in-canada.html>

<sup>12</sup> The Cree Court initiative of the Saskatchewan Provincial Courts.  
Retrieved from: <https://sasklawcourts.ca/index.php/home/provincial-court/cree-court-pc>



- ∞ British Columbia's Indigenous Justice Programs and Services<sup>13</sup> support Indigenous people interacting with the criminal justice system through services and supports at all stages of the justice process (i.e., victim support, support for court appearances, assistance in re-establishing offenders in communities post-release, etc.).
- ∞ Métis Elders and Grandmothers, such as Elder Tom McCallum, who has been involved in advocacy efforts pertaining to the federal justice system and has been providing traditional teachings to inmates, youth, men's healing circles, and through cross-cultural workshops. He has long encouraged young people to participate in sweat lodges at the Pacific Institution in Abbotsford, BC.

Dedicated funding is required for Métis Nation Governing Members to initiate Métis-specific community justice centres, and/or to continue to expand existing pilot projects, such as the Métis Nation British Columbia's restorative justice practices for youth.

### **Supports for Métis People Involved in the Criminal Justice System**

A network of Métis Nation Justice System Navigators should be dedicated to assisting Métis people involved in the criminal justice system. Navigators should be tasked with:

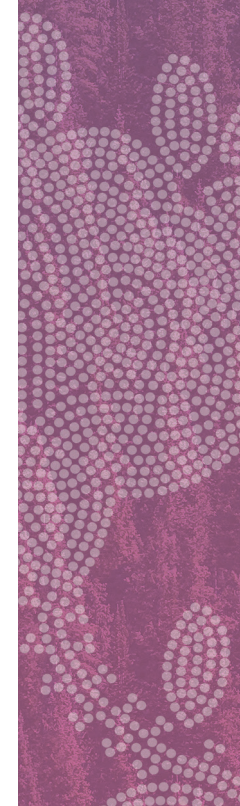
- ∞ Offering guidance through the justice process, and ensuring access to Elders, legal counsel and relevant trauma-informed and culturally-safe supports;
- ∞ Ensuring access to Mental Health Courts when eligible for Métis people impacted by trauma, addictions, mental health challenges and other barriers; and,
- ∞ Providing critical information to families to counter myths and misinformation, such as the need to wait 24 hours to report that someone is missing, or that police do not need to immediately file a missing person's report. These are examples of persistent misinformation that acts as a barrier to positive outcomes for Métis people in the criminal justice system.

Métis-specific victim services are required for Métis people and their families. Although some First Nations-specific programs exist for victims and their families, they are not culturally appropriate or available to Métis people. This reality is not always appreciated by non-Indigenous governmental bodies. Moreover, pan-Indigenous approaches have tended to overlook the Métis Nation.

Culturally appropriate services for Métis youth are also required, particularly as they age out of the child welfare system. Age-appropriate and culturally safe services, designed to address childhood traumas and support wellness, could be instrumental in redirecting Métis youth towards a healthier life path, with ongoing cultural and kinship connections to the Métis Nation.

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<sup>13</sup> The Indigenous Justice Programs and Services, of the Province of BC.  
Retrieved from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/bcs-criminal-justice-system/understanding-criminal-justice/indigenous-justice/programs-services>





After years of systemic and systematic oppression, Métis people lack trust in systems that are intended to protect them. Métis Nation Justice System Navigators could provide critical and timely information on key decisions facing Métis offenders, such as the implications of entering a guilty plea to receive a reduced sentence for offences.

With dedicated, long-term and sustainable funding, the Métis Nation, through the Governing Members of the Métis National Council, could provide services and supports to Métis Nation citizens interacting with the criminal justice system. Already, the Métis Nation of Alberta has established a \$100,000 fund to assist Métis women with court costs and other supports.

Incarcerated Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people require cultural care and healing to reduce rates of recidivism. They require access to Métis-specific programs, cultural items, and books to promote health and wellness, address substance misuse and addiction, and treat trauma. Many Métis women enter the criminal justice system for minor offences, but their situation is compounded by a lack of access to supports. In the current criminal justice system, offenders who have been involved in criminal activities or have addiction issues may be deemed by correctional authorities to be ineligible for the supports and services they require.

### **Métis Gladue Reports**

Gladue Reports were established to advance restorative justice in sentencing practices through an enhanced understanding of the circumstances and experiences of Indigenous people, and to recommend measures to move towards more just outcomes for Indigenous people within the criminal justice system. The Final Report's Calls for Justice #5.15, and Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak's Calls for Miskotahâ #42 and #43, call for Indigenous (including Métis) women to have access to Gladue Reports and sentencing alternatives, preferably served in their own communities.

Métis-specific Gladue Reports must acknowledge Métis-specific impacts of colonization and intergenerational and other traumas (i.e., community dislocation, residential schools, Sixties Scoop, forced or coerced sterilization, apprehension by child welfare systems, etc.), and should recognize that Métis Nation children placed in care were deprived of their Métis history and cultural and kinship connections to their identity and culture.

Going forward, the Métis Nation will seek to develop, implement and deliver a fully resourced, Métis-specific, gender-based training program for Métis Gladue Report writers that takes into account the intersecting identity factors and social determinants that have contributed to the incarceration of male and female Métis Nation offenders.



## Reporting Violent Crimes

Some victims of crime are unwilling to report acts of violence. They may feel ashamed or blame themselves for the violence that occurred. They may also fear for their personal safety or the safety of their families, while others may fear retribution for speaking up about vicarious or witnessed violence.

The establishment of a suite of trusted, Métis-specific victim supports and services (i.e., victim services, health care navigators, second stage housing, etc.) should encourage Métis people to report acts of violence that they experience or witness. For some Métis, the process of reporting a violent crime, and having to tell and retell their experience to a multitude of authorities, can make them feel revictimized and retraumatized. If the Métis Nation could provide education on violence and services at the community level, it could help alleviate fears of reporting and encourage people to speak up and effect change.

Families of missing or murdered Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in particular need access to their family members' files from the police or coroner, which is a function that the Family Information Liaison Units (FILUs) could provide with sufficient funding and resources.

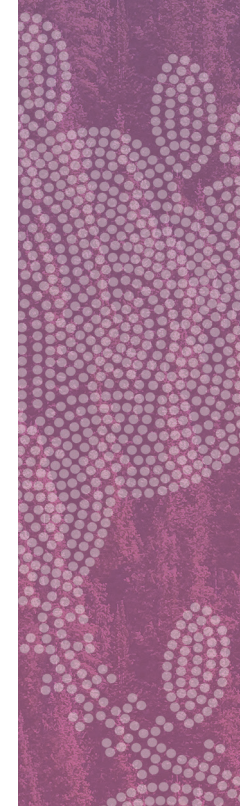
## Detaining Victims to Compel them to Testify

Crown Counsel can appeal to judges to detain innocent victims of crime for up to 30 days to compel them to provide testimony related to a crime. Requiring victims to testify can be retraumatizing and can increase rates of violence, self-harm and suicide. Legislative reform is required immediately to stop state-sanctioned treatment of victims as criminals, including incarcerating them alongside perpetrators.

## Legislative Changes to Support the Métis Nation

A comprehensive review of the entire criminal justice system is required to identify where Métis Nation citizens' needs are being met and where they are not. Immediate legislative reform is required to reduce the disproportionate incarceration of Métis Nation citizens, and to remove systemic barriers that further harm Métis involved in the criminal justice system. Such reform must include the co-development of distinctions-based Indigenous criminal legislation.

Métis Nation communities should also be involved in the sentencing and supervision of offenders in order to eliminate the re-traumatization and re-victimization of victims, and to protect victims from being detained and compelled to testify. Distinctions-based legislation applicable to Indigenous people could take precedence over the general provisions of the Criminal Code. All restorative justice processes to be established should prioritize the Indigenous rights contained in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and be applicable to all Indigenous persons across Canada.





## Objectives – Justice

- 6.1 Establish Métis Nation Justice Centres with access to culturally safe and trauma-informed services to Métis people involved in the criminal justice system;
- 6.2 Expand First Nations Policing Program (FNPP) currently applicable to First Nations and Inuit communities to ensure that the unique needs of Métis Nation communities are reflected in policing approaches;
- 6.3 Design and pilot a distinctions-based Indigenous Women’s police unit to reduce the incidence and prevalence of gender-based violence;
- 6.4 Create guidelines for Métis-specific Gladue principles for the writing of Gladue Reports that reflect Métis male and female realities, and that are prepared by trained Métis Gladue Report Writers. Dedicated resources, funding and capacity will be required to enable this to occur;
- 6.5 Expand FILUs across the Métis Nation Motherland to ensure culturally relevant support is provided to Métis families and survivors;
- 6.6 Provide Métis Nation Justice Service Navigators to respond to requests for information on Métis-specific justice services and programs;
- 6.7 Create accessible Métis-specific legal and support services for Métis women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and their families, during interactions with the criminal justice system;
- 6.8 Design and deliver life-altering services for Métis Nation youth showing criminogenic behaviours placing them at risk of entering the criminal justice system by addressing childhood traumas, redirecting and supporting them to healthier, safer life paths; and,
- 6.9 Undertake a review of existing laws and policies related to criminal justice, public safety and victims’ services to apply a Métis Nation lens and Métis-specific GBA+ approach to proposed legislative reforms.

## Measurable Indicators of Progress

- ∞ Increased rates of access to legal services exist among Métis people interacting with the criminal justice system;
- ∞ A Métis Nation Justice Strategy is created to design and implement Métis-specific justice infrastructure and programs that respond to the needs of Métis Nation citizens;
- ∞ The Métis Nation is involved with conversations around the expansion of First Nations policing programs and Métis Nation policing is introduced throughout the Métis Nation Motherland;
- ∞ A distinctions-based Indigenous women’s police unit is piloted and evaluated;
- ∞ Increased awareness and alternative use of Mental Health Courts for Métis impacted by trauma, addictions, mental health challenges and related barriers;
- ∞ Increased capacity for Métis Nation Governing Members to design, implement and administer Métis Nation–led justice infrastructure and programs;





- ∞ Distinctions-based Indigenous criminal legislation is co-developed with the Métis Nation and adopted by Parliament;
- ∞ Crown Counsel and judges are no longer authorized to detain innocent victims of crime in order to compel them to provide testimony related to a crime;
- ∞ Métis Nation families are strengthened with culturally safe and trauma-informed services during crises, resulting in reduced rates of child abuse, domestic and intimate partner violence, self-harm and suicide; and,
- ∞ Rates of conviction, incarceration and recidivism of Métis Nation offenders decline.

## Final Comments

The Métis Nation Working Group recognizes that a coordinated effort and genuine collaboration by all participants were required to develop *Weaving Miskotahâ* to address systemic inequalities that contribute to the disproportionately high rates of Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people that go missing, have been found murdered, or continue to experience gender-based violence and exploitation. The LFMO will continue to work collectively and collaboratively with other Indigenous governments and organizations representing Indigenous women to create meaningful outcomes and systemic change for Métis and other Indigenous women in Canada.

A strategy must be defined for the creation of a Métis Healing and Wellness Resources Foundation. Building on the historic success of the National Healing Foundation, a distinctions-based healing foundation must be created that is responsive to the unique needs of Métis Nation families, survivors and communities. An arms-length healing foundation can provide support to women, families, survivors and those at risk across the Métis Nation Motherland. We urgently need a responsive healing-focused source of support that can assist individuals and families to access supports required to navigate issues of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Wholistic and culturally grounded guidelines and resources will help us to prioritize the urgent needs of our families and most vulnerable Métis Nation citizens.

In keeping with the foundational principles of Wâhkôtowin, and through the inclusion of Métis culture and traditional language in this report, the threads presented in *Weaving Miskotahâ* will, with appropriate funding and wrap-around supports, substantially improve life outcomes for Métis women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and their families across the Métis Nation Motherland.

We must pull together as one Nation to weave Miskotahâ. The Métis Nation Governing Members and the Métis National Council, together with Métis Nation Women's provincial representative bodies, remain committed to guiding, consulting with and supporting Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak as the National Métis Women's Organization. We affirm their role in effecting permanent change to the centuries-long status quo of colonial aggression and oppression against Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.





It will take collaborative, committed efforts across the Métis Nation to bring the threads contained in this report to fruition. These efforts must be matched by a full commitment to distinctions-based approaches and investments from all levels of government to bring about lasting systemic change and remediate the effects of colonization that still impact the Métis Nation today.

The Métis Nation Working Group upholds that the integrated threads of *Weaving Miskotahâ* be advanced through nation-to-nation, government-to-government relationship agreements, and supports the work of the Métis Nation-Canada Permanent Bilateral Mechanism process. This alignment will be crucial to the next steps of implementation, negotiation of resources and policy development to end the tragedy of missing and murdered Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and to address the continued violence against vulnerable Métis persons across the Métis Nation Motherland.

As we move forward, the Métis Nation will, as always, hold our survivors and families at the centre of this important work.

### **As We Go Forward**

*My Creator,*

*Thank you for this beautiful day and all it has to offer in its moments,  
in its seasons and in all of its relationships—Wakotawin.*

*Thank you for the many teachings, knowledge and wisdom of all of those  
who have gone before us and all of our Ancestors.*

*May each one of us, our families and communities, draw on these teachings,  
knowledge and wisdom in all we do and in all we are becoming.*

*May we continue to overcome our greatest obstacle—ourselves—  
so that we can be of maximum benefit with love, humility, truth,  
peacefulness, courage, strength, light, calmness and vision.*

*All My Relations♥*

*Waseskin (Grandmother Rainbow Woman).*

*Jacqueline Marie Maurice ♥♥*



