
Turtle Lodge
Treaty:
“Our Way of
Life”

Indigenous
Education

Contents

Preamble ii

1.0 Treaty Parties 1

2.0 Lifelong Education..... 1

3.0 Indigenous Knowledge..... 2

4.0 Protection of Indigenous Knowledge and Transfer 2

5.0 Jurisdiction and Authority of Indigenous Education 3

6.0 Implementation 4

Preamble

A Treaty on Education is essential to protect the spiritual gifts granted by our Creator. A Creator, who, in the beginning, gave the laws of miyo pimātsiwin to nistameyimākanak¹ through the Law Lodge. For as long as we continue with the Law Lodge our lands will be protected and we will not see wars or strife on Turtle Island. These laws of the clans are enacted every year by families and Nations who are honoring the human and spirit blood and protecting the children, grandchildren, and generations yet unborn. We protect this knowledge; these lands; and all our relations to fulfill our sacred responsibilities, specifically, to ensure that those generations yet unborn will enjoy the gifts of clean air, lands, water, and medicines of our sanctified Mother Earth; for as long as the sun shines, grass grows, waters flow, and for as long as there are Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Institutions of Higher Learning willingly step forward to assist in the stewardship of this knowledge by privileging our ceremonies and protecting the clans against those that misunderstand the beauty and wonder of the spiritual nature of our beings granted by our Creator. The benefits of this knowledge are meant not only for Indigenous Peoples but are to be shared with all our younger brothers and sisters present to fulfill Creator's vision of Turtle Island. A vision of unity, peace, good minds, and harmony as Creator intended. Uniting our Nations to serve this common purpose is the intent of a Treaty on Education.

Glossary of Terms: Nehiyawewin/ Anishinaabemowin / English

miyo-ohpikināwasowin / gwa-taa-gwanaa-ga binoojiiyik / *good child rearing*

miyo pimātsiwin / mino bmaadziwin / *good way of life*

nistameyimākanak / ntamagaabii'aajig/ *First People*

wāhkōhtowin / dawenmaaganak / *kinship*

¹ The limitations of the colonizer's English language should be taken into consideration and this document is to be interpreted from within an Indigenous paradigm.

1.0 Treaty Parties

Article 1.1

The undersigned representative individuals of the Anishnaabe, Siksi kai' tsi tapi (Blackfoot), Nehiyaw (Cree), Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, Nisga'a, and Mi'kmaw Nations agree to this Treaty and gather in ceremony May 6th and 7th, 2013 to make this sacred promise to each other in the presence of our Creator. This Treaty is an expression of our jurisdiction over education as peoples of sovereign Nations. The Parties to this agreement hereby signify commitment and support to one another as we collectively act as stewards of our Indigenous Knowledge for generations to come.

Article 1.2

Indigenous parties who share a common understanding and wish to be added into this Treaty are welcomed at any time so long as they agree to adhere to the terms contained herein. Treaty parties may collectively amend the Treaty from time to time.

2.0 Lifelong Education

Article 2.1

From time immemorial, the learning lodges throughout Turtle Island have been held and owned by the authority of Indigenous women; shared with Indigenous men and the Nation in various capacities. This sacred duty is guided and directed by the inherent responsibility and obligation to carry a sacred law from conception onward throughout the life span: this law is called miyo-ohpikināwasowin. miyo-ohpikināwasowin, means to raise children in a good way. This law guides and directs the education of each child as a clan or relational obligation as understood and applied by each Indigenous Nation within a lived tradition where the child is the center of the Nation. Indigenous jurisdiction and authority of teaching, language, and practice is a lifelong right and obligation. It is the original educational system in a relational-based context and is enduring.

Article 2.2

Indigenous Peoples have never relinquished nor extinguished jurisdiction over our right to educate our children.

3.0 Indigenous Knowledge

Article 3.1

Land based Indigenous Knowledge is inextricably intertwined with the language and culture of Indigenous Peoples. International discourse recognizes five (5) elements to Nationhood: land, governance, language, culture and peoples. Indigenous knowledge is “written” in pictographs, petroglyphs, winter counts, the lands, the stone markings, the burial grounds, birch bark and sand scrolls, wampum belts, ancient wisdom of our people, sacred ocean gardens, rivers, and numerous other sacred sites encompassing the history of Indigenous Peoples.

Article 3.2

Indigenous Knowledge(s) are sacred, profound, and a gift connected to the spirit world. Indigenous education is transferred and transmitted through our songs, stories, languages, ceremonies and lands of Indigenous Peoples; these are interconnected and cannot be separated. Indigenous Knowledge is transferred and transmitted through oral tradition passed from generation to generation and is intrinsic to the lands, skies, and waters in which our history is tied and our culture is created.

Article 3.3

Indigenous Knowledge has always, and will always exist: self-determination is the practice and expression of intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual gifts given to the people and thus translated into the education of children. Indigenous Knowledge comprises all knowledge pertaining to a particular Nation and their territory, the nature or use of which has been transmitted from generation to generation. This knowledge includes our way of life. The use and transmission of Indigenous Knowledge is an inherent right from the beginning of time. Indigenous Knowledge continues through the languages, lands, and cultures of Indigenous Peoples which persevere today.

4.0 Protection of Indigenous Knowledge and Transfer

Article 4.1

Our Indigenous Knowledge is based on our spiritual connection to Creator, the relationship to the land we inherit and how we survive within our ecosystems: medicines, plants, animals, land, sky, water, and all of Creation.

Article 4.2

We inherit the right and obligation to be keepers of our culture and stewards of our lands and territories. Children have a right to this inheritance through the transmission and transference

of Indigenous Knowledge, cultural practices, Indigenous languages, and laws. In inheriting this knowledge each generation learns how they are connected to our relations and Creation.

Article 4.3

Knowledge transmission is guided by our way of life through, ceremonies, songs, observations, traditional teachings, and languages. Language is connected to the plants, animals, and the spiritual relations that help sustain our environments. We have an inherent right to our Original instructions and to live upon our lands under Natural Law. The law of wāhkōhtowin directs and guides the transmission of knowledge. The integral source of our traditional knowledge is our wāhkōhtowin relationship to the ecosystems and those with whom we share the lands. In this manner, Indigenous Peoples carry the memory of our history and connection to Creation.

5.0 Jurisdiction and Authority of Indigenous Education

Article 5.1

As sovereign Nations and Peoples we define the scope and content of lifelong Indigenous education. In so doing, we enact our sovereign right to educate our children and peoples. Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) affirms our inherent and sovereign rights to determine education for our Peoples and children.²

Article 5.2

Indigenous Nations have exercised our right to educate our children and people since time immemorial. Education is integral to transferring our identity as Indigenous Peoples and as such is a core foundation of how we preserve and sustain our Nations. The practice of education amongst Indigenous Peoples is a requirement of self-determination and is recognized under International Law.

Article 5.3

Various United Nations articles, covenants, and charters recognize the inherent and customary rights that Nations have to pursue self-determination. This Treaty is an act of exercising our

² UNDRIP: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

Article 14

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.
3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

right to self-determination through protecting education of Indigenous Peoples and Nations that are party to this Treaty. Article 1(2) of the United Nations Charter recognizes this.³

Article 5.4

The parties' rights include collective rights to ownership, protection, and custody of their Indigenous Knowledge and that every such right includes the incidental right to teach such practices, customs, and traditions to ensure their continuity. We assert our right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) on decisions affecting us, our education, and how Indigenous Knowledge is utilized. FPIC is recognized under Articles 18 and 19 of the UNDRIP⁴.

6.0 Implementation

Article 6.1

The core of our identities as Nations and Peoples is generated by the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next through our own education systems. This Treaty is an act of sovereignty to protect our knowledge systems that are grounded in our cultural practices, languages, ceremonies, connection to our lands and to all Creation. We make this Treaty with our brothers and sisters of each Nation in keeping with our laws to protect and preserve for the generations to come. Each generation has the responsibility and obligation to keep our Nations alive and strong.

Article 6.2

The parties agree to meet on an annual basis to strategize and review actions on Treaty implementation.

³ Charter of the United Nations: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter1.shtml>

Article 1(2):

“To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace”.

⁴ Supra Note 1.

Article 18

Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision making institutions.

Article 19

States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.
