

of child-welfare agencies. Research in British Columbia found that 35.5% of youth in care are also involved in the youth justice system, as compared with only 4.4% of youth who are not in care.¹⁵⁹ The Commission believes that there are ways to reduce the growing overrepresentation of Aboriginal youth, but that they will be found primarily outside the justice system. There is an urgent need to support Aboriginal families and alleviate the poverty experienced by many Aboriginal communities. The federal government should take the lead by committing the resources necessary to eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and youth in care and custody. Part of that commitment should include collecting and publishing better data to measure progress.

Call to Action

- 38) We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal youth in custody over the next decade.

Victimization of Aboriginal people

An astonishing number of Aboriginal children were victims of crime in residential schools. By the end of 2014, the Independent Assessment Process had resolved 30,939 sexual or serious physical abuse claims, awarding \$2.69 billion in compensation.¹⁶⁰ Although not every case would have involved a criminal act, the vast majority did, easily allowing anyone to conclude that the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement involved the largest single recognition of criminal victimization in Canadian history. This victimization of children has carried profound and long-lasting effects. Ruby Firth, a former student at Stringer Hall, told the Commission,

All through my, residential school ... I was a victim. They put me in that frame of mind where I was a victim. I was four years old being a victim. Five years old, couldn't stop it. Six years old, couldn't stop it. Seven years old, couldn't stop it. So at some point my brain is going to say, "This is never going to stop!" So that's what I was doing in my adult life too because it didn't stop in my childhood, I was doing that in my adult, "This is never going to stop."¹⁶¹

The justice system continues to fail Aboriginal victims of crime. There are few services available for Aboriginal victims of crime. Victim compensation schemes are often lacking and often fail to recognize the distinct needs of Aboriginal victims of crime.

The statistics are startling. Aboriginal people are 58% more likely to be victimized by crime.¹⁶² Aboriginal women report being victimized by violent crime at a rate almost three times higher than non-Aboriginal women—13% of Aboriginal women reported being