

and resiliency of First Nations people and communities provides hope for healing and reconciliation over the next seven generations.<sup>118</sup>

In 2012, a digital storytelling project was undertaken by Aboriginal women at the Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence: "Nitâpwewininân: Ongoing Effects of Residential Schools on Aboriginal Women—Towards Inter-Generational Reconciliation." Using ceremony and protocols throughout the project, the first workshop began with a pipe ceremony, followed by a Sharing Circle in which participants talked about their lives and the group discussed their individual and collective needs for support. They later moved on to making videos of their individual stories, which were screened in March 2012 at the University of Winnipeg.<sup>119</sup> One of the participants, Lorena Fontaine, said,

Reconciliation is about stories and our ability to tell stories. I think the intellectual part of ourselves wants to start looking for words to define reconciliation. And then there is the heart knowledge that comes from our life experiences. It's challenging to connect the two and relate it to reconciliation.... Without even thinking of the term reconciliation, I'm reminded about the power of story.... [People who watched the videos] said that when they saw the faces of Aboriginal women and heard their voices in the videos they understood assimilation in a different way. They felt the impact of assimilation.... It's far more powerful to have Aboriginal peoples talk about the impact of assimilation and hope for reconciliation than having words written down in a report.<sup>120</sup>

Research is vital to reconciliation. It provides insights and practical examples of why and how educating Canadians about the diverse concepts, principles, and practices of reconciliation contributes to healing and transformative social change.

The benefits of research extend beyond addressing the legacy of residential schools. Research on the reconciliation process can inform how Canadian society can mitigate intercultural conflicts, strengthen civic trust, and build social capacity and practical skills for long-term reconciliation. First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples have an especially strong contribution to make to this work.

Research partnerships between universities and communities or organizations are fruitful collaborations and can provide the necessary structure to document, analyze, and report research findings on reconciliation to a broader audience.

## Call to Action

- 65) We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation.