

In recognition of the unique cultures of the Inuit, and of their experiences and the impacts of residential schools on them, the Commission also established an Inuit Sub-Commission. Seven regional liaison officers were hired with advice from the IRSSC and were assigned responsibility to work in the following regions: Québec and Atlantic Canada, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, and Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

Meeting from coast to coast

During the six years of its operation, the Commission held events in all parts of the country. The largest and most visible of these were the National Events held in Winnipeg, Inuvik, Halifax, Saskatoon, Montreal, Vancouver, and Edmonton between June 2010 and March 2014. The Commission estimates there were as many as 155,000 visits to the seven National Events; over 9,000 residential school Survivors registered to attend them (while many others attended but did not register).¹ To augment its statement-gathering activities and to help build public interest and participation in its National Events, the TRC organized Regional Events in Victoria and Whitehorse. It also held 238 days of local hearings in seventy-seven communities across the country.

The Commission also sponsored “town halls” on reconciliation at its Victoria Regional Event in April 2012 and at subsequent National Events as a means to draw a greater number of visitors into conversation with the TRC about healing and reconciliation. Members of the general public were invited to come forward at the town halls to share information about what they are already doing to support reconciliation and to describe their ideas about what more needs to be done.

Statement gathering

Until the Commission was established, the voices of those who were most directly affected by the residential school experience, particularly the former students, had largely been missing from the historical record. The Commission made a commitment to offer everyone involved with the residential school system the opportunity to speak about their experience. The Commission received over 6,750 statements from Survivors of residential schools, members of their families, and other individuals who wished to share their knowledge of the residential school system and its legacy.

Statements were gathered at public Sharing Panels and Sharing Circles at National, Regional, and Community Events and at Commission hearings. They were also collected through private conversations with statement gatherers. The Commission also gathered statements in correctional institutions in Kenora, Ontario, and Yellowknife, Northwest