

NFSC Statement on the Impact of Indian Residential Schools on 2SLGBTQQIA+ People and Exclusion during the Pope's Visit to Canada



NATIONAL FAMILY AND SURVIVORS CIRCLE
Nothing About Us, Without Us

JULY 26, 2022

WINNIPEG – The National Family and Survivors Circle (NFSC) is calling for greater inclusion of Two Spirit voices following Pope Francis' speech at the former Ermineskin Indian Residential School in Maskwacis, Alberta yesterday.

Pope Francis issued an apology for the role of members of the Catholic Church in projects of cultural destruction and forced assimilation, resulting in the Indian Residential School system and the oppression of Indigenous peoples, calling it a "disastrous error" and "deplorable evil".

"While we acknowledge the significance of a Papal apology delivered on the lands of Indigenous peoples, the Two Spirit community has repeatedly been excluded by high level organizations," said Albert McLeod, Two Spirit leader and a member of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Sub Working Group who wrote the 2SLGBTQQIA+ national action plan in response to MMIWG final report.

"Unfortunately, we feel that there has been a lack of acknowledgement of the harms inflicted through the Indian Residential School system and the ongoing legacy of patriarchy, misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia affecting Two Spirit Indigenous peoples in our communities," said NFSC Chair, Hilda Anderson-Pyrz.

Testimonies shared during the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls highlighted that Indian Residential School attendance and the resulting intergenerational trauma was a key contributor to the crisis of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Additionally, the inherited homophobia and transphobia in churches and residential schools has resulted in the continuing silencing, shaming, and alienation of Two Spirit people.

"The absence of an intersectional lens has meant the exclusion of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community members from important events such as the Papal visit, national inquiries, and commissions. It is critical that Two Spirit individuals and voices are part of these moments, as the imposition of Western gender norms through colonialism, including residential schools, has had unique and significant impacts on Two Spirit people," said McLeod.

The National Inquiry's 231 Calls for Justice included several calls directed at all governments and institutions on the equitable inclusion of 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and perspectives and tasked all governments and service providers to fund and support 2SLGBTQQIA+ awareness and programs.

NFSC has advocated for a distinctions-based approach to addressing Indigenous issues which looks at all the unique and distinct histories, realities, needs, and aspirations of Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, families, and survivors of gender-based violence.

The 2SLGBTQQIA+ Sub Working Group's MMIWG 2SLGBTQQIA+ National Action Plan report called for an apology from the seven Canadian churches and groups that ran Indian Residential and Days Schools for the erasure of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ identity and further racism, homophobia, and transphobia promulgated

in these schools and in First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities. Governments and those who inflicted harms through the Indian residential school (IRS) system must be held accountable, including for the traumatic legacies that IRS survivors and their families and communities continue to endure.

The NFSC advocates for meaningful inclusion, visibility, and voice of 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals and community in the path forward. There must be opportunities for healing, wellness, reclaiming of Indigenous identities, and safe spaces for 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

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We understand that this subject matter is difficult for many people in our community. If you require immediate support, please contact the national, independent toll free 24/7 support line at 1-844-413-6649 to speak to a counsellor. The service is available in English, French, Cree, Anishnaabemowin (Ojibway), and Inuktitut.

About the NFSC: The NFSC comprises First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women from diverse backgrounds who use their lived expertise to advocate for centring the voices of families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, survivors of gender-based violence, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and made significant contributions to the 2021 National Action Plan. To learn more, visit: familysurvivorscircle.ca

For more information and to book interviews, please contact: media@emdashagency.ca