

# First Nations History simulation for Newcomers

**Learning Objective:** To assist newcomers to visualize and empathize with the colonial journey of Indigenous (First Nations) peoples of Canada.

**Background:** The project was funded by the Winnipeg Foundation through the Emerging Leaders Fellowship. The fellow, Naomi Gichungu, implemented the project in collaboration with the Immigrant Refugee Community Organisation of Manitoba (IRCOM). The resource has been piloted with adult newcomers in the Newcomer Literacy Initiative Program at IRCOM. The simulation was co-authored by an Indigenous educator, Dana Connolly, and an elder Gladys Marinko provided mentorship to both Dana and the fellow.

**Recommended time:** 2 hours

**Target Group:** Newcomers to Canada, CLB 3 and up

**Skills:** Participants will gain the following skills; working in a group, decision making and negotiation.

**Keywords:** Indigenous, First Nations, colonization, Winnipeg, simulation, newcomers

**Materials:** Location cards, Option cards, Choice cards, pictures and discussion questions.

## **Description:**

The session begins with learning the foundations about treaties and the various groups of Indigenous peoples of Canada. This conversation gives participants a chance to ask questions and expand their knowledge of the treaties. The participants then take part in the simulation 'game' which allows them to travel through the arrival of the Europeans to the migration of Indigenous peoples to cities. To start, participants are divided in to family units of 4-9 people and they take up roles as parents, grandparents, uncles aunts, children, babies

etc. They arrive at each station as a family to receive a 'location' card which tells them about the event during that period. They then receive a choice card which gives them options. These options are based on choices Indigenous people had to make during colonization. When they have made a choice by discussing with other family members, they come back and pick an option card which has consequences for the choice they have made. These consequences involve paying something to the colonizer in the form of health, food and money or returning tools given. Participants explore, through this exercise, concepts such as fur trade, residential schools, displacement, the Indian Act, reserves, the banning of ceremonies, and other important aspects of the history of colonization.

The simulation also aims to help participants identify and address stereotypes and make the connections between colonization and experiences such as homelessness and alcoholism. An Indigenous elder explains how ceremonies are becoming an important part of Indigenous peoples' efforts to reclaim their identity. The last section of the simulation addresses the movement into larger cities and rural areas. Participants empathise with these experiences of finding employment, living in high crime areas and poverty as they have faced similar challenges settling into a new country.

**Human Resources:** An elder shall be present to offer prayers, support discussions and facilitate the debrief. The simulation will also require 2 volunteers, preferably language volunteers, at each location and a floating staff member to provide guidance and support as needed.

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