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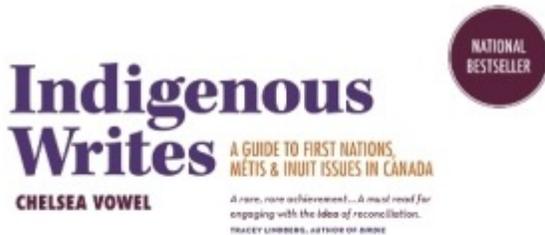
Reconciliation Reading Club: Indigenous Writes

News

LWF

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As an environmental organization working in Indigenous territories, and as treaty people, LWF recognizes our obligation to actively practise reconciliation. To us, this work must include amplifying Indigenous voices, respecting Indigenous knowledge and affirming Indigenous rights.

In January 2021, LWF and the [Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective](#) (LWIC) collaboratively created a reconciliation reading club. Our goal is to equip LWF and LWIC staff with knowledge, terminology and perspectives that will help us integrate actions of reconciliation and antiracism within our professional work and in our personal lives.

The topics, ideas and truths we encounter may be difficult and provoke uncomfortable feelings. Having honest conversations about the impacts of colonialism and racism are not easy, but they are incredibly important.

As we read new books, we will be sharing our reflections on our website, as well as in our newsletters and through e-updates. We invite you to join us on this learning journey.

Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Issues in Canada by Chelsea Vowel

Note: The below reflection first appeared on p. 5 of [LWF's Fall & Winter 2021 newsletter](#).

Discussions about Canada's dark colonial history can no longer be ignored. The truth must be acknowledged.

Education is the first step towards reconciliation. The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, says that "education is what got us into this mess and education is key to getting us out of it."

In January, LWF and the Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective (LWIC) collaboratively envisioned and created a "reconciliation reading club." Our goal is to equip LWF and LWIC staff with knowledge, terminology and perspectives that will help us integrate actions of reconciliation within our work and in our personal lives. The reading club is a safe space where Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff can share thoughts, explore emotions, and engage in open and honest discussions.

Our first assigned reading was *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Issues in Canada* by Chelsea Vowel. Although forceful and sarcastic in her writing, I thought Vowel provided a good historical overview of the concepts, policies and legislation that continue to have lasting impacts on the experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada today: from The Indian Act and the concept of *terra nullius*, to residential schools and the Sixties Scoop, to pervasive myths about Indigenous peoples.

After reading this book, it is evident that as a whole, our education systems have failed to properly educate Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples alike about Canada's colonial past. As Vowel puts it: "This country is woefully ignorant on a grand scale, and we will never succeed in building relationships until we address that ignorance. I can't stress this enough: without education, there can be no justice, and until there is justice, there will be no peace."

For me, *Indigenous Writes* reinforces the importance of education, critical thinking and reflection. We cannot begin to see the world differently without being exposed to different perspectives, nor without challenging our own personal beliefs, prejudices and past education.

Our reading club is meant to be the beginning of a journey rather than a destination. Reconciliation requires internal work, continuous learning, dedication, meaningful dialogue and, most importantly, active participation. Reconciliation requires concrete action towards societal change.

As we continue to read new books, we will be sharing our reflections on our website, through e-updates and in future issues of this newsletter. It's my hope that each of us will feel a sense of responsibility to actively engage in reconciliation, both within our work at LWF and in our personal lives.

I encourage you to join us on this journey.

By: Émilie Ferguson, LWF Program Coordinator, Education

Staff reflections on other books can be found on our [Reconciliation Reading Club web page](#).

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