



Why this Guide?

I was once told that Indigenous Peoples are like Humpty Dumpty: They got pushed off the wall and are now in little pieces at the bottom of the wall and if only they would pick themselves up by their bootstraps and put their pieces together, then everything would be fine.

Yet, no-one seems to question the psychos who built the wall and pushed Humpty Dumpty over it. Humpty Dumpty didn't want to go up the wall, and yet, they pushed him, blamed him for it and couldn't put him back together again: that's Canadian Society...

Our gaze is... in the wrong place because we are asking the wrong questions.

Instead of asking, "What's wrong with these people?" we should ask, "What's wrong with this broader system that built a wall and flung Humpty Dumpty over it?" —Deborah McGregor¹



As we prepared this dialogue guide, we were often asked, "Why are you doing this?" Most of those posing the question understood the need for a resource like this, but they wondered why we, the Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice, would undertake this project.

Many, quite rightfully, noted that while the Forum has experience in areas related to social and ecological justice, ethics, and theology, we were far from being experts on the complex question of how to move towards more just relationships with Indigenous Peoples.

In many ways, those concerns are valid. We certainly do not claim to be authorities on this question. Yet, as Settlers and Newcomers living on this land—as people who have benefited from the legacy of colonization and the land taken from Indigenous Peoples—we feel a moral obligation to do what we can to help live up to our responsibilities as treaty peoples and address the legacy of injustices.

As Deborah McGregor rightfully notes, Canada does not have an "Indigenous problem". Canada has a colonization problem. Those of us who have benefited from colonization—particularly those of us who are Settlers, whose ancestors have lived here for some time—have a responsibility to address the system

that has enriched us by stealing the land and lives of Indigenous Peoples.

We believe the first step in this process is to *listen* deeply to what Indigenous Peoples are saying to us, to open ourselves to be transformed by their words, and to act based on what they are telling us to address injustices, heal relationships, and bring about a post-colonial Canada.

As Lee Maracle reminds us (see session 9), non-Indigenous people—and particularly Settlers—need to give up the "knower's chair." This requires a commitment to ongoing transformation of what each of us claims to know—a process marked by both learning and *unlearning*.

To this end, we have worked with KAIROS, an advisory group, and an editorial group—including both Indigenous and non-Indigenous members—to gather some of the many voices that need to be heard and to design a process to facilitate the transformation of minds, hearts, relationships, and actions.

We recognize that this attempt will in many ways fall short. Yet we hope that it may contribute to the changes needed to create a society where Indigenous persons, cultures, knowledge, and nations are treated with respect and where the principle of free, prior, and informed consent becomes embodied in actions.