

ART & RECONCILIATION

Project Profiles

CONFLICT

CULTURE

COMMUNITY



Nindibaajimomin

Canada

Digital Storytelling



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Nindibaajimomin is an inter-generational digital storytelling project on the legacy of residential schools in Canada¹. Taking place between 2010-2014 in Winnipeg it consisted of four digital storytelling projects with 32 residential school survivors and the children of residential school survivors. Organised by the Oral History Centre and the Department for Indigenous Studies at the University of Winnipeg, the project involved 4 rounds of 5 days of workshops in which participants were guided through ‘an intense and deeply emotional process of remembering family histories and experiences, storytelling, and the creation of a personal digital story, using digital media software’².

A total of 24 digital stories were made available publically online and at event screenings. The project team also produced five guides which make up a digital storytelling toolkit for practitioners which is available online³.

Nindibaajimomin was funded by The Aboriginal Healing Foundation, an Aboriginal-managed organisation that supported healing initiatives which address the legacy of physical and sexual abuse suffered in Canada’s Indian Residential School System. It was financed by the Canadian government as part of Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan.

The project is illustrative of arts based intervention that brought together distinct stakeholders and agendas – government, aboriginal leaders and participants and academic researchers and practitioners – and sought to engage both privately and publicly with the legacy of the residential schools on the children and grandchildren of survivors. An emphasis was placed on creating a creative, private and supportive process and space for the digital storytelling participants to explore their history and the affect of the abuse their parents and grandparents suffered in residential school system on their lives. Those participants were then able to chose whether they wanted to share those stories publically.

Art and Reconciliation: Nindibaajimomin

The project aimed to help survivors in ‘telling the truth of their experiences and being heard’ while also working to engage Canadians in a healing process ‘by encouraging them to walk with us on the path of reconciliation’⁴. The participant testimonies attest to the therapeutic and healing impact of the digital storytelling process. One described how it made her feel less alone as the ‘process of listening to and sharing each other’s painful, touching and emotional life experiences ultimately created deep personal connections’⁵.



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Life is about stories... we have learned that a story can change a life. They help us remember and as we have seen from the research on intergenerational experiences, they help us to heal from wounds we often do not even know we have.

Nindibaajimomin Final Project report (2014:58)⁶

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References

(1) For a brief history of residential schools in Canada

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/a-history-of-residential-schools-in-canada-1.702280>

(2) Quote from The Oral History Centre website

<http://www.oralhistorycentre.ca/projects/nindibaajimomin-intergenerational-digital-storytelling-legacy-residential-schools>

(3) Available here

<http://nindibaajimomin.com/the-toolkit/>

(4) Quote taken from project website

<http://nindibaajimomin.com/the-project/>

(5) See Marlyn Bennett's testimony

<http://nindibaajimomin.com/stories/marlyn-bennett/>

Also: Robinson, D., Martin, K., 2016. *Arts of Engagement: Taking Action In and Beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Llewellyn, K., Freund, A., Reilly, N. 2015 *The Canadian Oral History Reader*. McGill-Queens University Press.

Available at: http://thenhier.ca/sites/default/files/CanadianOralHistoryReader_Excerpt.pdf

(6) 2014 Nindibaajinomin: Children on Survivors: The Intergenerational Experiences of the Children of Residential