The Reconciliation Framework: Presentation & Q&A

(Nov. 22, 2022)

Presented by members of the Response to the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Taskforce (TRC-TF):

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Presentation Overview

- mandate & research methodology
- vision statement & principles
- reconciliation framework
- future directions

Call to Action #70

issued by the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015)

70. We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Association of Archivists to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of archival policies and best practices to:

1. Determine the level of compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the United Nations Joinet-Orentlicher Principles (UNJOP), as related to Aboriginal peoples' inalienable right to know the truth about what happened and why, with regard to human rights violations committed against them in the residential schools.

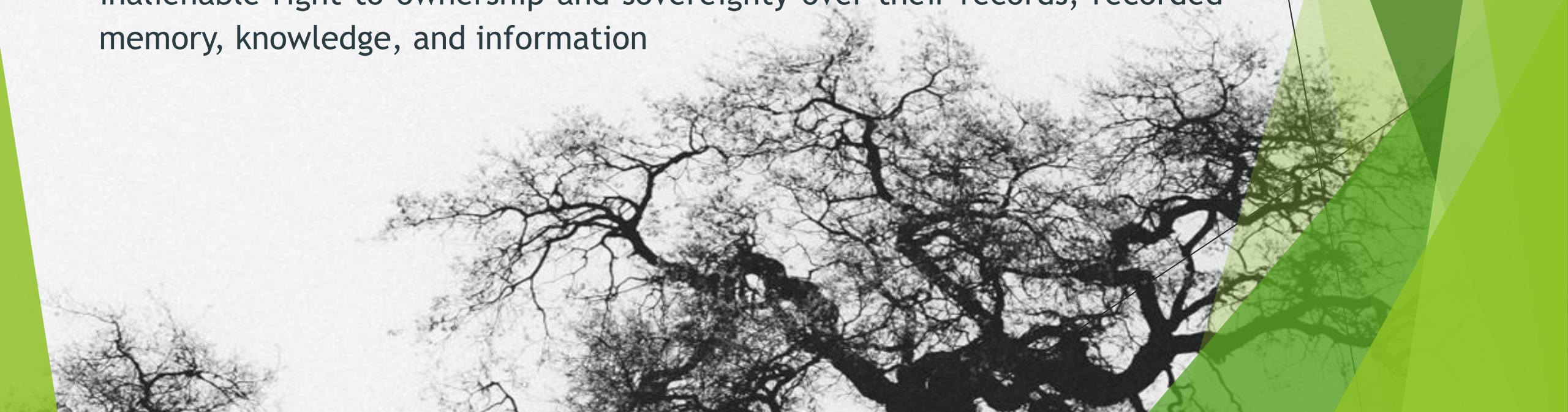
2. Produce a report with recommendations for full implementation of these international mechanisms as a reconciliation framework for Canadian archives

TRC-TF Research Methodology & Deliverables

- **National Survey:** "The Report on the Results from the Survey on Reconciliation Actions and Awareness in Canadian Archives"
- **Expanded Literature Review:** "Literature Review and Author Dialogue Report"
- **Outreach and Engagement:** "Indigenous Outreach Summary Report"

Vision Statement

Guided by truth, reciprocity, and mutual respect, the Canadian archival community supports Indigenous Peoples' sovereignty and self-determination by actively committing to its role and responsibilities in building equitable relationships with Inuit, Métis, and First Nations communities. These relationships will respect and recognize Indigenous Peoples' inherent and inalienable right to ownership and sovereignty over their records, recorded memory, knowledge, and information



Principles 1 & 2

1) All Canadian archivists accept the responsibility of proactive respectful engagement led by Indigenous community priorities.

2) The Canadian archival community acknowledges that this work requires sustained investments in human and financial resources. The equitable sharing of such resources is essential to building capacity in Indigenous and archival communities.

Principles 3 & 4

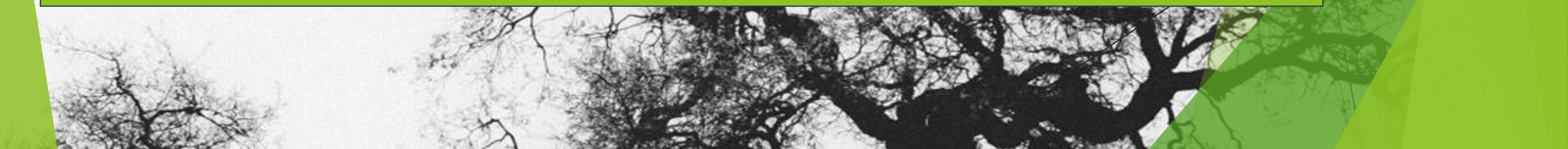
3) The Canadian archival community commits to, and advocates for, shifting institutional priorities to respond to the needs of Indigenous communities.

4) The Canadian archival community supports future generations by working collaboratively with Elders and Youth in the revitalization of Indigenous memory, knowledge, governance and legal systems.

Principles 5 & 6

5) The Canadian archival community acknowledges that Indigenous peoples - First Nations, Inuit, and Métis - are diverse, distinct and sovereign nations; and

6) The Canadian archival community is committed to reconciliation and relationship building guided by the principles of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, and the *United Nations Joinet-Orentlicher Principles*, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action*.



Objective 1: Relationships of Respect, Responsibility, Relevance and Reciprocity

The Canadian archival community shall engage the Four Rs of **responsibility**, **respect**, **relevance** and **reciprocity** in building relationships with Indigenous communities, organizations and heritage institutions.

Respect = Acknowledgement…

- the colonial roots of archival practice
- Indigenous ways of keeping, transmitting, and safeguarding knowledge
- the cultural, spiritual, and historical significance of Indigenous-related materials

Responsibility = Taking Action…

- educating ourselves
- creating space for Indigenous leadership
- reimagining archival theory through Indigenous world views
- building trust through long-term relationships

Relevance = Collaboration…

- following the lead of the community's representatives
- actively listening to what they are telling you
- responding to the needs and priorities they identify

Reciprocity = Mutual Benefit…

- ongoing dialogue and exchange of knowledge and skills
- evaluating initiatives in relation to needs and priorities identified by Indigenous partners

Where to start?

Be patient

Make the effort

LISTEN

Ask questions

Follow the lead

Keep showing up

Adapt to the community's needs

Objective 2: Governance and Management Structures

The Canadian archival community's leaders shall ensure their organizational culture, operations and hiring processes support archives staff in building sustainable community relationships and implementing respectful professional practices.

Embed	• Embed Indigenous partnerships into governance structures, advisory bodies and decision-making processes.
Develop	• Develop culturally appropriate policies and procedures for Indigenous-related archival materials.
Ensure	• Ensure appropriate human resource management.
Advocate	• Advocate for sustainable financial resources.

Objective 3: Professional Practice

The Canadian archival community shall build a body of professional practice that is committed to decolonization and reconciliation.

Archives staff must be equipped with knowledge and skills to foster relationships; contextualize and critically assess archival materials; recognize barriers that exist; and privilege Indigenous methods of creating, transmitting, and preserving knowledge when working with Indigenous-related archival materials.

Objective 3: Professional Practice

Understand and Acknowledge

- Understand and acknowledge colonial roots of archival practice, theory, and policies

Provide

- Provide training and support for trauma-informed archival practice

Engage

- Engage in public education and advocacy

Objective 3: Professional Practice

- Support networking, communication and collaboration
- Support professional engagement by Indigenous professionals

Objective 4: Ownership, Control & Possession of Archival Materials

The Canadian archival community shall recognize and **respect Indigenous Peoples' intellectual sovereignty** over archival materials created by or about them.

Objective 4: Ownership, Control & Possession of Archival Materials

- Understand and apply the First Nations Principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (otherwise known as OCAP®)
- Revisit acquisition
- Repatriation

Objective 4: Ownership, Control & Possession of Archival Materials

- Indigenous understanding of possession and disposition
- Collaboration is key

Objective 5: Access

Canada's archival communities must respect and defend First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples' **right to know** about and **control access** to archival materials created by or about them.

Inform Indigenous governments and communities about the existence of relevant archival materials and their right to access them

- Identify all archival materials created by or about Indigenous governments, communities, or individuals.
- Collaborate with other archives and heritage institutions to develop online databases that identify the locations of Indigenous-related archival materials.

Collaboratively develop culturally appropriate access protocols and tools

- Involve members of those represented in the archives' collections
- Ensure that culturally appropriate access requirements and protocols are identified
- Meet the physical access needs of Indigenous researchers and community members
- Provide access materials in a medium appropriate to their needs and infrastructure

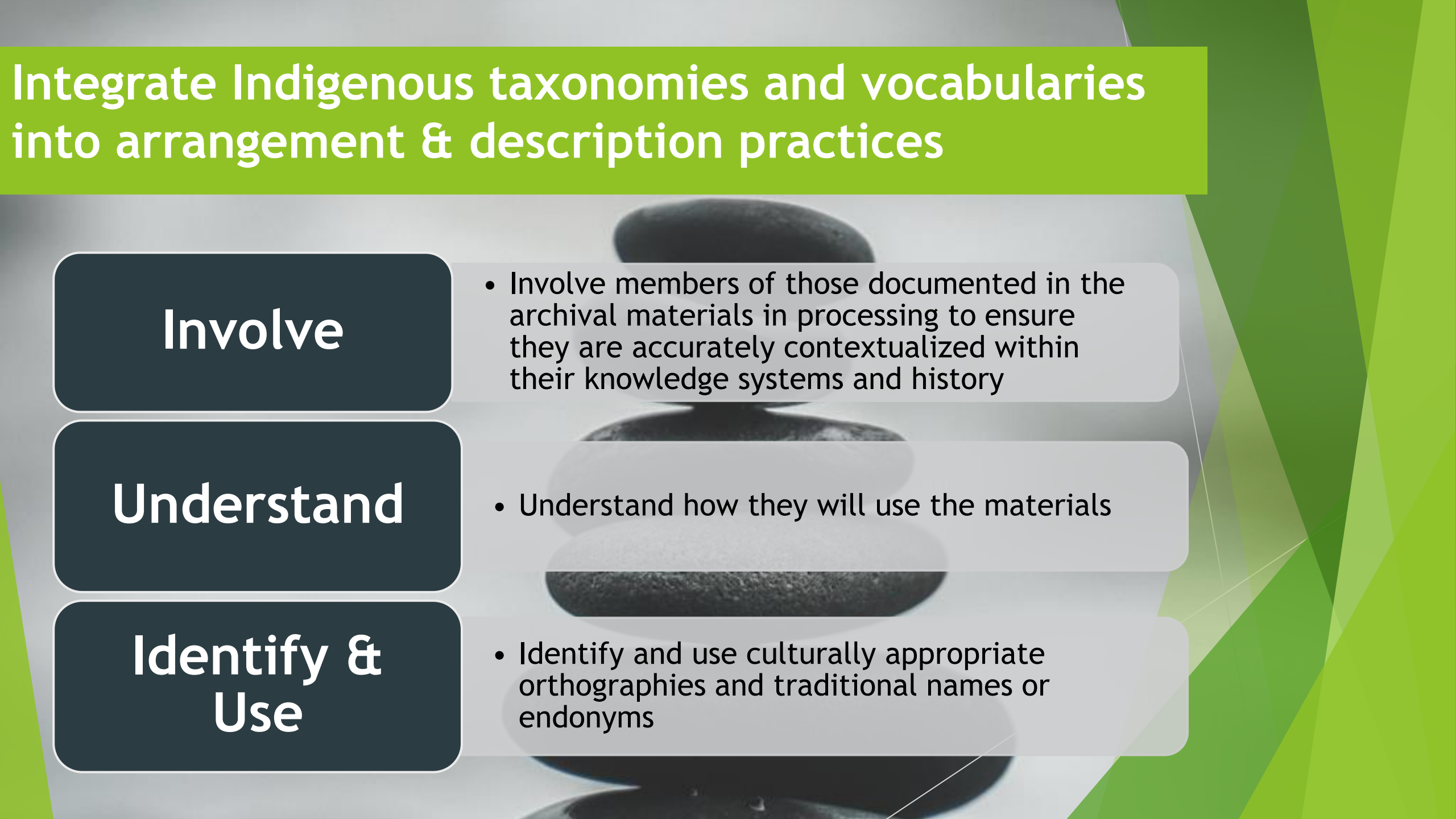
Address financial, technological, and other barriers to accessing archival materials

- Support the removal of barriers to access of archival materials
- Support the expansion and improvement of Internet connectivity
- Collaborate with Indigenous governments and communities to develop improved access to archival materials
- Identify ways to eliminate or lower costs for reproductions

Objective 6: Arrangement and Description

Canada's archival communities must **integrate First Nations, Inuit, and Métis perspectives, knowledge, languages, histories, place names, and taxonomies** into the arrangement and description of First Nations-, Inuit-, and Métis-related archival materials and collections.

Integrate Indigenous taxonomies and vocabularies into arrangement & description practices



Involve

- Involve members of those documented in the archival materials in processing to ensure they are accurately contextualized within their knowledge systems and history

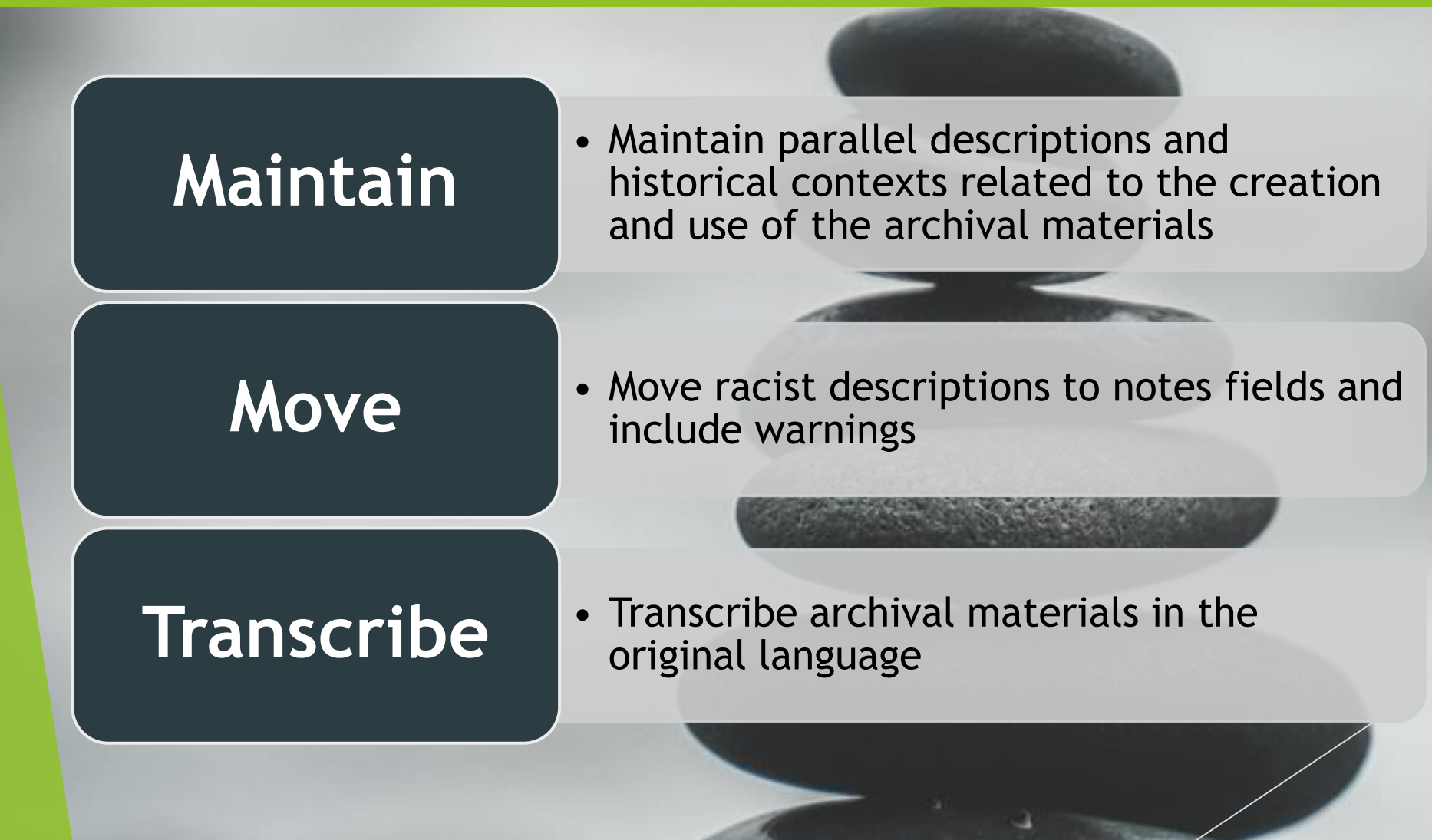
Understand

- Understand how they will use the materials

Identify & Use

- Identify and use culturally appropriate orthographies and traditional names or endonyms

Integrate Indigenous taxonomies and vocabularies into arrangement & description practices



Maintain

- Maintain parallel descriptions and historical contexts related to the creation and use of the archival materials

Move

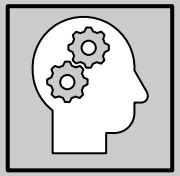
- Move racist descriptions to notes fields and include warnings

Transcribe

- Transcribe archival materials in the original language

Advocate for improved technology that supports enriched arrangement & description practices

Develop or upgrade archival databases to ensure that they have the capacity to represent multiple or parallel perspectives, descriptions, access points, and languages



Develop the means for researchers to challenge arrangement structures and descriptive elements

Collaborate to link descriptions of related materials held in various institutions

Encourage discourse & the development of new or revised professional standards

Revise RAD: the Rules for Archival Description

Reassess the foundations of archival arrangement theory and practice

Look to others for work that has already been done and is being done

Objective 7:
Education

Canadian archival education programs shall **integrate Indigenous research theory, history, methodologies and pedagogical practices** into current and future curricula.

Recruit

- Indigenous archivists, recordkeepers, heritage professionals
- Varied perspectives

Curricula

- Distinct worldviews, cultural practices
- Technical considerations
- Relevant to realities, priorities
- Professional competencies
- GLAM

Support

- Address enrollment barriers
- Ensure flexibility

Outreach

Engage	• Engage Indigenous students
Collaborate	• Collaborate to create opportunities
Develop	• Develop partnerships

Delivery

- Alternative learning options and platforms
- Partnerships
- Equitable access

Where to Now?

Reconciliation Framework:

- Critical engagement & customization of strategies required
- Evergreen guide to be revisited/revamped to reflect changing relationships

Association of Canadian Archivists' Indigenous Matters Working Group:

- Re-conceptualization of "Aboriginal Archives Guide" (2007)

Contact:

Steering Committee on Canada's Archives,
Response to the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Taskforce *(aka TRC-TF)*

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