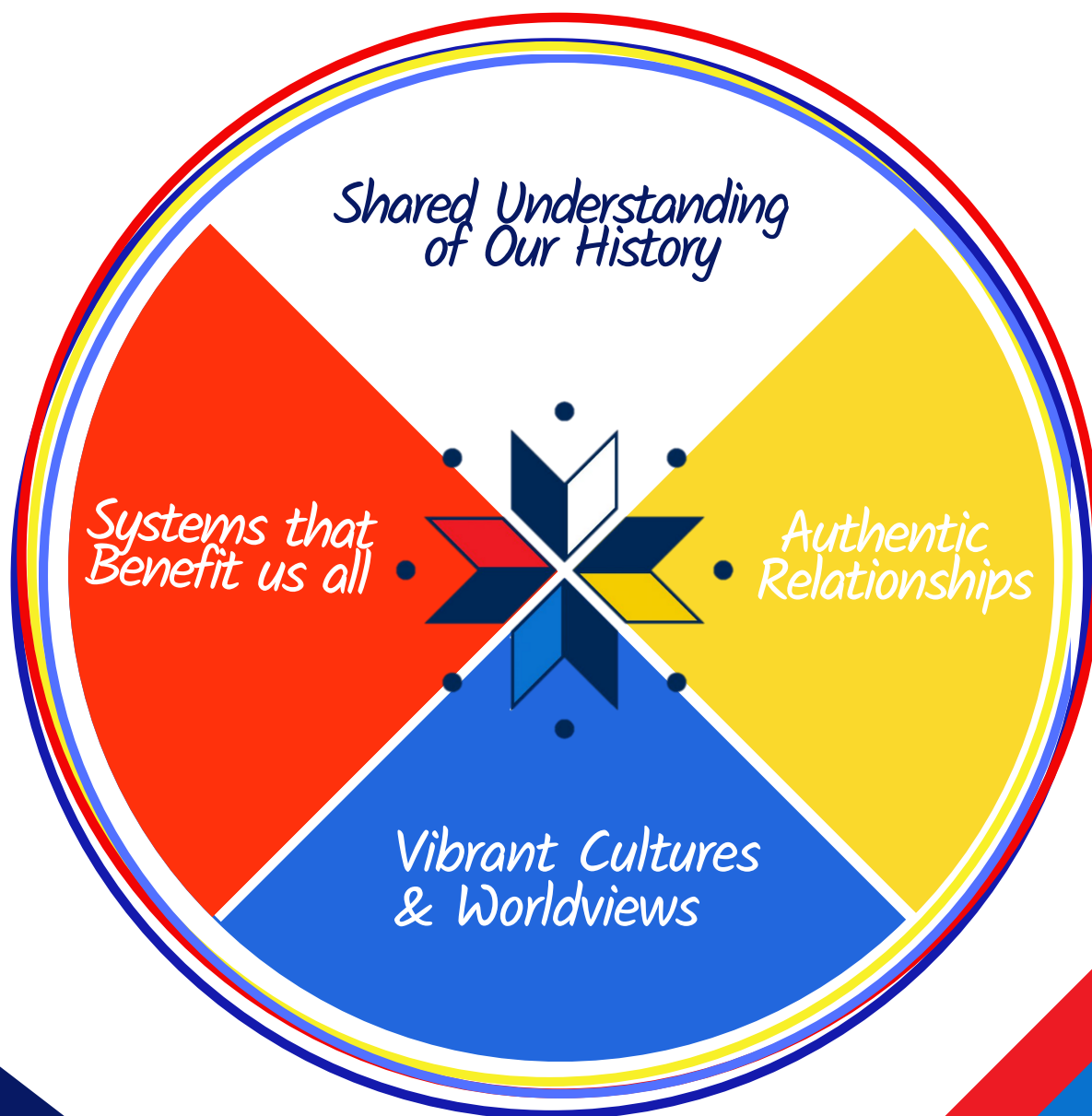


Saskatchewan's Public Opinion on Reconciliation

Results from a 2019 Provincial Survey



Reconciliation



Office of the
Treaty Commissioner



Saskatchewan
Health Authority

Measuring Truth and Reconciliation Through Treaty Implementation

The Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) has been working since 2014 to develop a common Vision for Truth and Reconciliation through Treaty Implementation. In this process, we've asked thousands of Indigenous and non-Indigenous citizens from Saskatchewan about the successful Reconciliation story they'd like to tell in a generation. We believe that, if we can come together on a common vision for success, then we can better work together and determine whether progress is being made.

Saskatchewan residents have told us that truth, Reconciliation and the Treaty relationship is about walking together on a journey to create a new, shared future for our children and grandchildren. They've told us that it involves four overlapping and continuous areas of work:

Shared Understanding of Our History

- We will understand and honour the history of this land, including past and present wrongs
- We will have respectful relationships with our ancestors and with the land.
- Individuals, families, communities and nations will be strong and healing

Authentic Relationships

- Strong relationships, partnerships & trust will exist among all people.
- We will have greater skills for communicating and managing conflicts

Systems that Benefit Us All

- We will have quality of life for all and systems will reject racism
- We will have representative leadership and workforce
- Treaty promises and Indigenous sovereignty will be honored

Vibrant Cultures & Worldviews

- Our cultures and languages will be strong; worldviews respected
- Our social experiences will be woven together; we share and learn from each other

To begin measuring the current status of Truth and Reconciliation in Saskatchewan, the OTC and Reconciliation partners commissioned a telephone survey that received over 3,000 responses throughout December 2018 and January 2019. The survey was conducted by the University of Saskatchewan's Social Sciences Research Laboratories. The funding for this survey was provided by the Government of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Health Authority, Reconciliation Regina and Heart of Treaty 6 Reconciliation. The goal of the survey was to create a starting point for measuring Saskatchewan's collective journey towards Truth and Reconciliation through Treaty Implementation.



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Summary of findings - What did the Survey tell us?

In terms of a **shared understanding of our history**, we learned that Saskatchewan residents are more familiar with Residential Schools than with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and its Calls to Action. Of those surveyed, 33% were very familiar with Residential Schools, 24% very familiar with Reconciliation as a concept, but only 11% reported being very familiar with the TRC. This suggests that more focus needs to be put on educating Saskatchewan residents about Residential Schools and Reconciliation, but especially on the TRC and Calls to Action.

With regards to **authentic relationships**, 46% of those surveyed saw the current relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents as negative, whereas 36% saw it positively. Despite this, 64% of respondents agreed that this relationship is improving. Many respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that Reconciliation is important (91%) and that it is possible (87%) in Saskatchewan. However, respondents' reports on Saskatchewan residents' motivation to work toward Reconciliation was lower, as 50% of the group thought that the average Saskatchewan resident had low levels of motivation (not at all or only a slight motivation) to work towards Reconciliation.

To explore **vibrant cultures and world views**, we explored Saskatchewan residents' familiarity with Indigenous cultures and their own ancestral backgrounds. Most responded that they were familiar with both.

When asked whether Saskatchewan's **systems benefit and represent us all**, respondents were split. Approximately **one third of the group agreed** that Saskatchewan's social, political, and economic systems **do** benefit (33%) and represent (35%) us all equally, whereas **over half** somewhat or strongly **disagreed** that Saskatchewan's systems benefit (55%) and represent us all (58%).

Finally, a significant majority of respondents (90%) recognized the existence of racism in their perceptions of the average Saskatchewan citizen. Specifically, on a scale of 1 (not at all racist) to 5 (very racist), 49% of respondents chose a 3 to describe the average Saskatchewan resident. Further, 70% of respondents chose a 3 or higher (16% answered with a 4 and 5% answered with a 5). Only 4% believed that the average Saskatchewan resident was not at all racist.

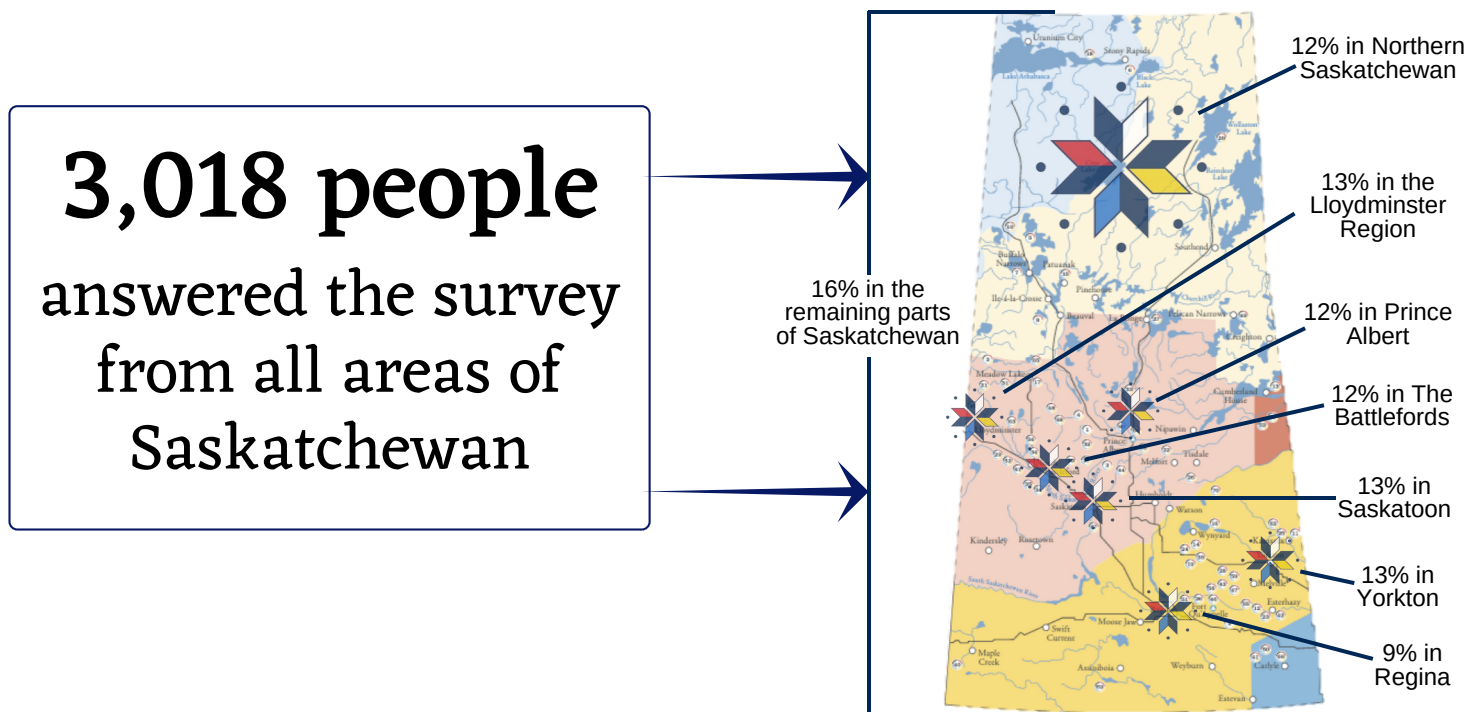
Taken all together, we see an acknowledgement among the majority of respondents that problems exist in our province, including the presence of racism, inequities in our systems, and the reported negative relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. We also interpret a need for greater education on the TRC's Calls to Action and strategies to combat a perceived low level of motivation to work towards Reconciliation. However, we also interpret a certain level of agreement that relationships are improving and a strong agreement that Reconciliation is both important and that it is possible. This survey helped us interpret that Saskatchewan residents hold some sense of hope in our collective journey towards Reconciliation. However, this hope appears to be tempered by a recognition of the problems we face in Saskatchewan and the work remaining to be done for a better future for us all.

Background:

The purpose of this survey was to **explore Saskatchewan's current attitudes, motivations, and thoughts** informing our journey together towards Reconciliation. From December 2018 to January 2019, Over 3,000 people in different areas of the province answered 15 questions that were created to determine the current views related to the **Vision for Truth and Reconciliation through Treaty Implementation**.

Below is the breakdown of the location of all survey respondents. The OTC sought to create a provincial sample while also collecting data in the regions where it could be used to support **Reconciliation Committees**.

A more detailed technical report has been created and can be accessed on the **OTC website**.



A Snapshot of Who Answered the Survey:

- The majority of people were **55 years of age or older** (65%).
- The majority of people identified as **non-Indigenous** (82%). A further 11% identified as **First Nations** and 7% identified as **Métis**. Of non-Indigenous respondents, 8% identified as a visible minority. These numbers closely represent Saskatchewan demographics (based on the 2016 Census).
- Most of the people who responded were either **retired** and not working (36%) or **working for pay** (part or full time, 34%).
- The majority of the group either had a **bachelor's degree** (24%), **completed secondary or high school** (23%), or **completed technical or community college** (20%).

We recognize that some demographics are over represented in this sample. To address this, any demographic differences presented in this report were weighted before they were tested.

A Shared Understanding of our History - Results

The first part of the Vision for Truth and Reconciliation formed by Saskatchewan residents is the need for a **shared understanding of our local, provincial, and national history**. According to Saskatchewan citizens, this means that:

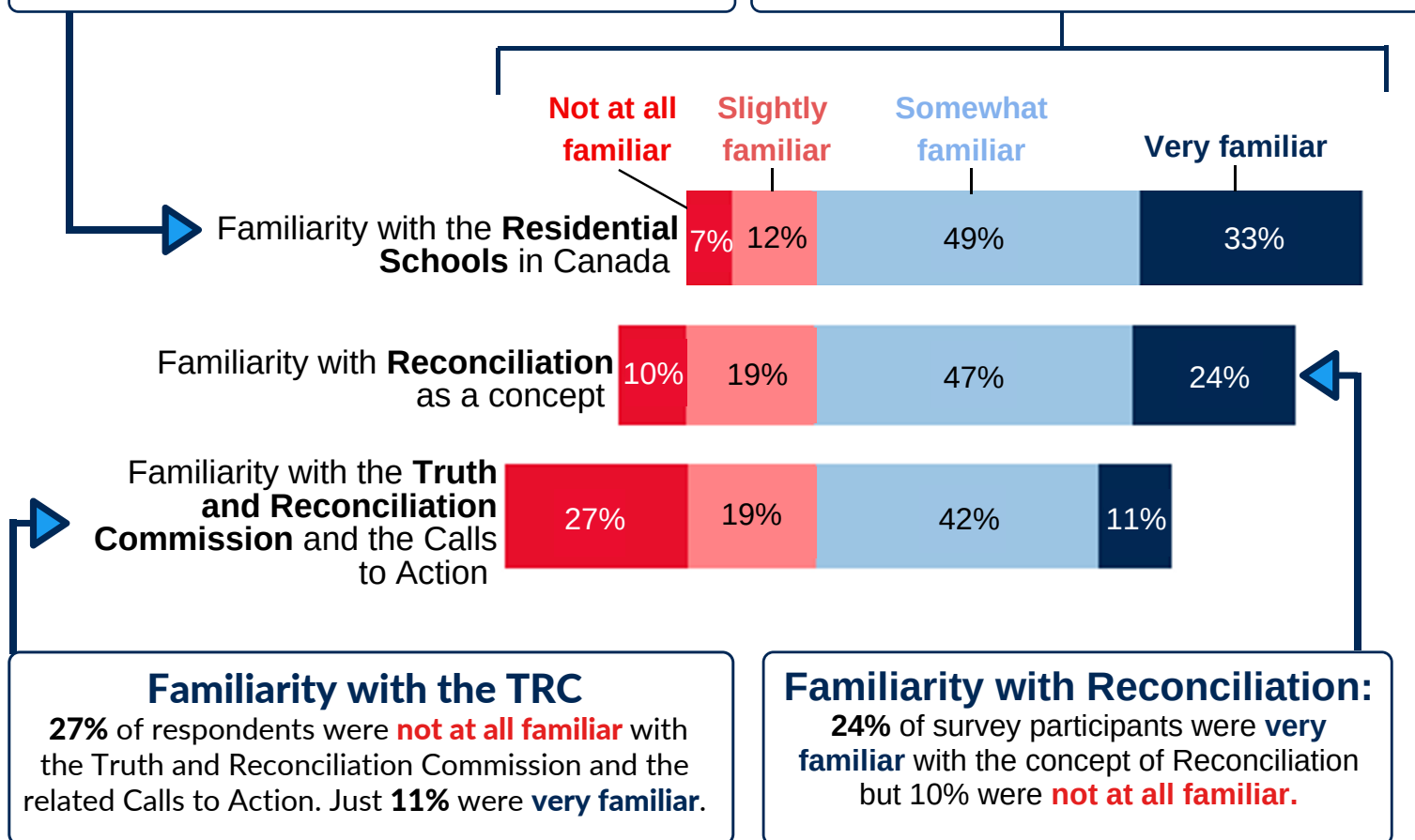
- We will understand and honour the history of this land, including past and present wrongs
- We will have respectful relationships with our ancestors and with the land
- Individuals, families, communities and nations will be strong and healing

To explore this, we asked respondents about their familiarity with Residential Schools, Reconciliation, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Familiarity with Residential Schools:

33% of people who responded to the survey said they were **very familiar** with Residential Schools in Canada.

Overall, the population of Saskatchewan appears to be **most familiar** with **Residential Schools**, but **least familiar** with the **TRC** and **Calls to Action**.



Demographic differences:

- On average, First Nations and Métis participants were more familiar with the TRC, Reconciliation, and Residential Schools compared to non-Indigenous participants.
- Younger participants (18-34) were most familiar with Residential Schools but were least familiar with the TRC and Reconciliation as a concept.
- Generally, the older the respondent was, the more familiar they were with the concept of Reconciliation.



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Authentic Relationships - Results

The second part of the Vision for Truth and Reconciliation is the importance of **authentic relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents of Saskatchewan**. According to Saskatchewan citizens, this means that:

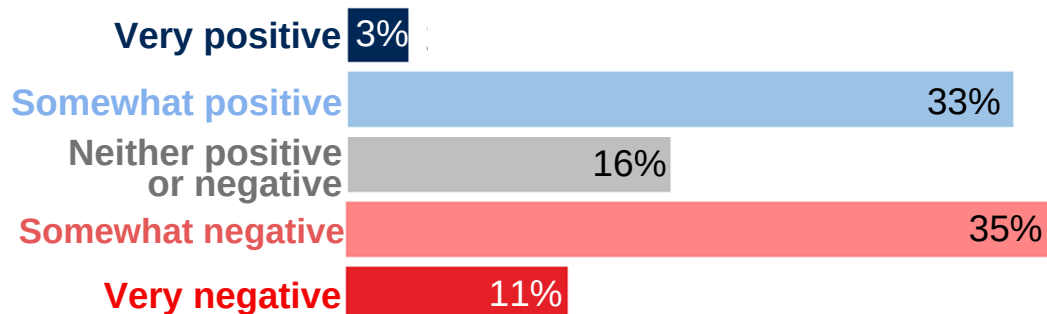
- Strong relationships, partnerships & trust will exist among all people
- We will have a greater skills for communicating and managing conflicts

To explore this, we asked individuals for their opinions on the current relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and whether this relationship is improving.

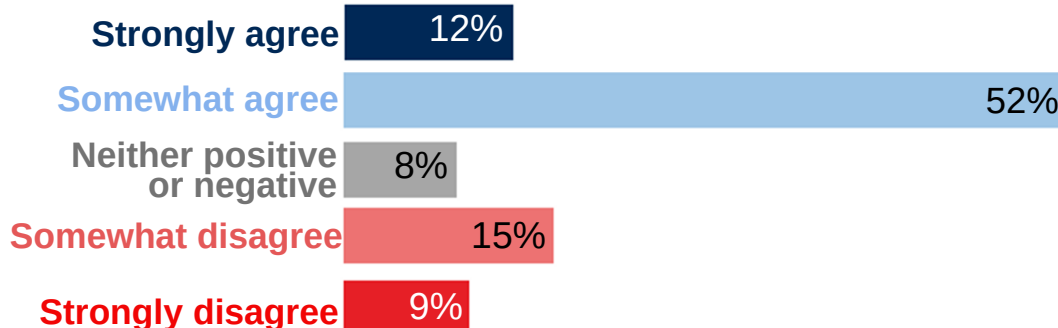
Relationships in Saskatchewan:

Just under half of respondents (**46%**) thought that the current relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples was either **somewhat (35%)** or **very negative (11%)**. 36% thought that the relationship was either **somewhat (33%)** or **very positive (3%)**. Additionally, **64%** of respondents **somewhat** or **strongly agreed** that relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Saskatchewan are improving.

The Current Relationship in Saskatchewan



Are Relationships Improving in Saskatchewan?

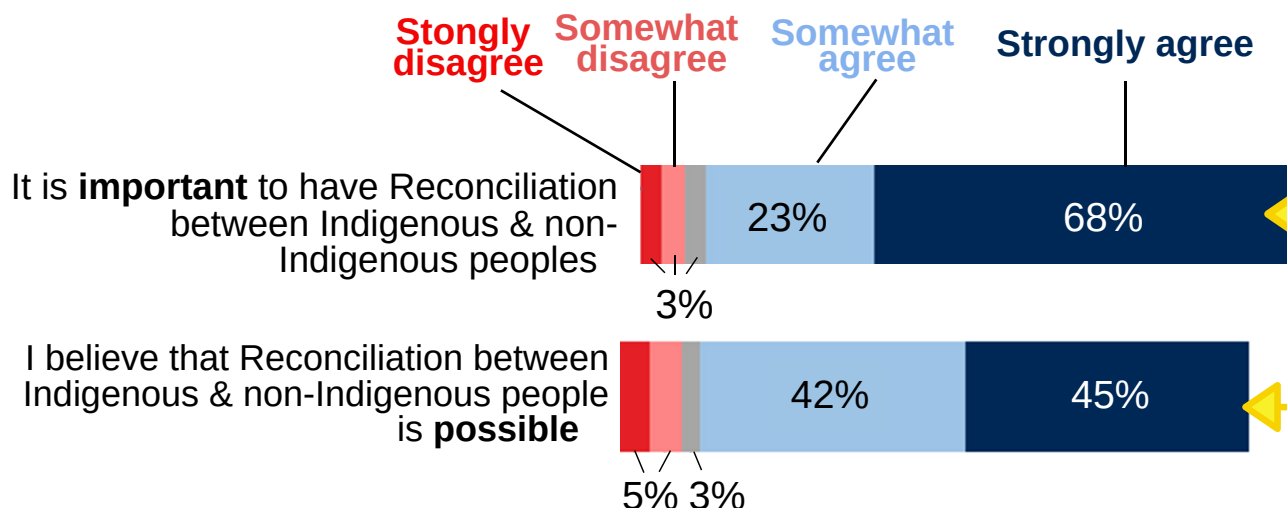


Authentic Relationships - Results Continued

To further explore **authentic relationships**, we also asked respondents about their opinion on the importance and possibility of Reconciliation in Saskatchewan and their perspective on how motivated the average Saskatchewan resident is to work towards Reconciliation.

Importance & Possibility of Reconciliation:

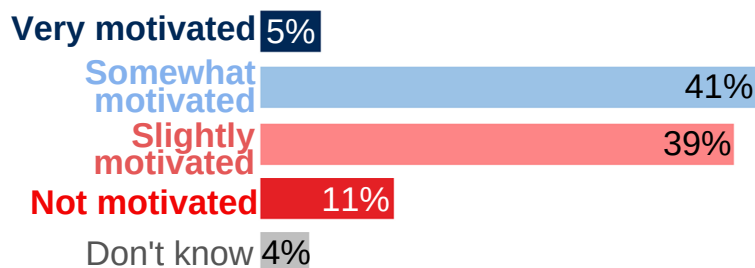
91% of respondents either **somewhat** or **strongly** agreed that Reconciliation is **important** and 87% **somewhat** or **strongly** agreed that Reconciliation is **possible** in Saskatchewan.



Motivation for Reconciliation:

Half (50%) of respondents believed that Saskatchewan residents are either **not motivated** or **only slightly motivated** to work towards Reconciliation.

How motivated are Saskatchewan Residents to work towards Reconciliation?



Demographic differences:

- First Nations participants were the most likely to agree that Reconciliation is important but less likely to agree that relationships are improving.
- Métis participants were most likely to think Saskatchewan residents are motivated to work towards Reconciliation.



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Vibrant Cultures and World Views- Results

The third part of the Vision for Truth and Reconciliation is that Saskatchewan will have **vibrant cultures and world views**. According to Saskatchewan citizens, this means that:

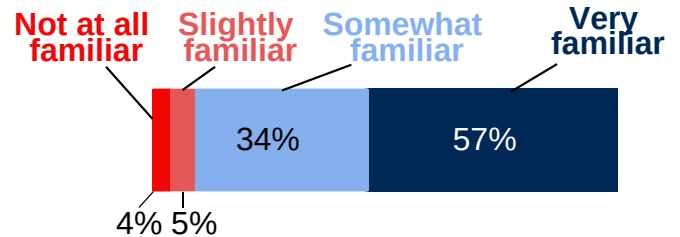
- Our cultures and languages will be strong; worldviews respected
- Our social experiences will be woven together; we share and learn from each other

To explore this, participants were asked to rate their familiarity with their own cultural background and with Indigenous cultures. They were also asked about their engagement with Reconciliation through awareness & attendance of events in their own communities.

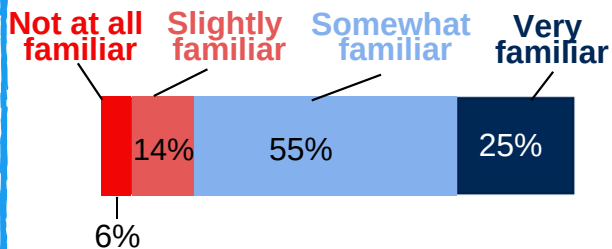
Knowledge of own cultural background:

Overall, people rated themselves as either **somewhat** (34%) or **very familiar** (57%) with their own cultural background.

Familiarity with their own cultural backgrounds



Familiarity with Indigenous cultures



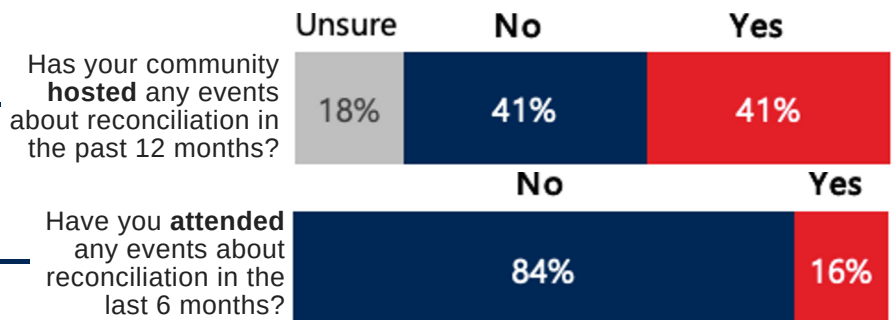
Familiarity with Indigenous cultures:

Respondents rated themselves as either **somewhat** (55%) or **very familiar** (25%) with Indigenous cultures.

Reconciliation Events:

Many people **did not know** or were unsure if their communities had hosted a Reconciliation event (59%).

A large number (84%) of respondents reported that **they had not attended** any Reconciliation events in the past 6 months.



Demographic differences:



- The youngest participants (18-34) were least likely to be familiar with Indigenous cultures and with their own cultural background.
- Middle aged participants (35- 54) were the most likely to be familiar with Indigenous cultures.
- Participants with a masters degree were more likely to be familiar with Indigenous cultures and with their own cultural backgrounds compared to almost all other education groups.



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Systems that Benefit Us All- Results

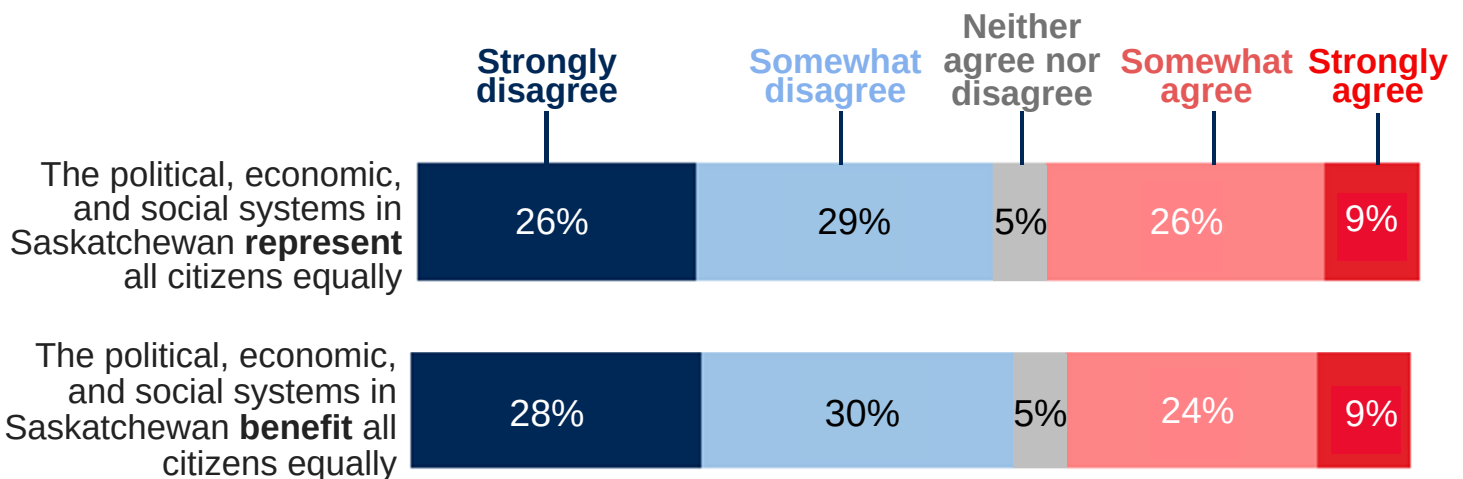
The fourth part of the Vision for Truth and Reconciliation is that **Saskatchewan will have political, economic, and social systems that represent and benefit all citizens equally**. According to Saskatchewan citizens, this means that:

- We will have a quality of life for all and systems will reject racism
- We will have representative leadership and workforce
- Treaty promises and Indigenous sovereignty will be honoured

To measure this, we asked respondents about their opinion on whether Saskatchewan's political, economic, and social systems represent and benefit everyone equally.

Do Systems Represent & Benefit Us All?

Just over half of respondents **somewhat** or **strongly disagreed** that Saskatchewan's political, economic, and social systems **represent** (55%) and **benefit** us all equally (58%). However, **one third of the group** had **opposite opinions** as 35% **somewhat** or **strongly agreed** that our systems represent and benefit (33%) everyone equally.



Demographic differences:

- First Nations participants were more likely to think systems did not represent all citizens equally when compared to non-Indigenous participants.
- The older the participant was, the more likely they believed that systems are not representing and benefiting us all.



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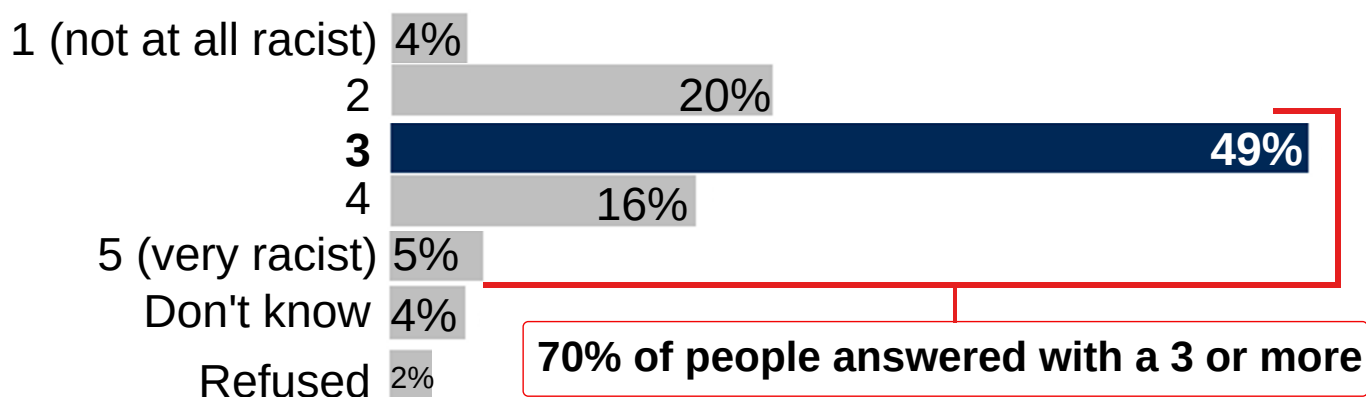
Systems that Benefit Us All- Results Continued

As another measure of **systems that benefit us all**, we asked respondents to tell us how racist they believe that the average Saskatchewan resident is on a scale from 1 (not at all racist) to 5 (very racist).

Racism in Saskatchewan

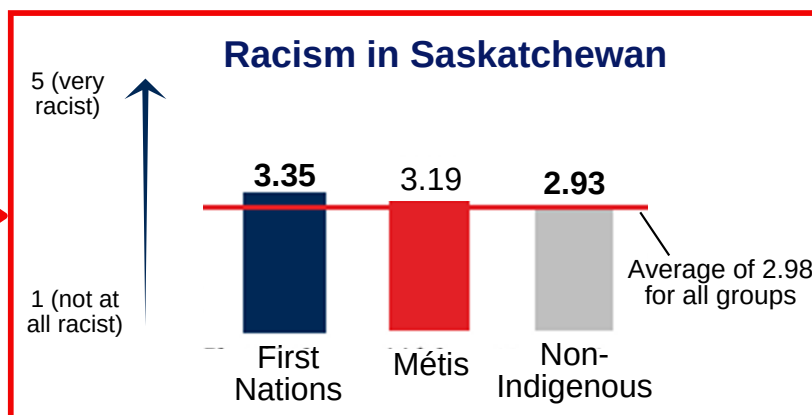
When asked how racist the average Saskatchewan resident is, the vast majority (**90%**) of respondents responded that there is at least **some level of racism** in Saskatchewan (answering a 2 or more). Of those people, **70% answered with a three or higher**.

How Racist is the Average Saskatchewan Resident?



Demographic differences:

- First Nations and Métis participants were more likely to consider the average Saskatchewan resident as racist compared to non-Indigenous participants.
 - First Nations respondents answered with an average of 3.35 out of 5 while non-Indigenous participants answered with an average of 2.93 out of 5. Métis respondents answered with an average 3.19 out of 5.



The Office of the Treaty Commissioner notes that this survey is only a snapshot of current issues and attitudes around Truth and Reconciliation in Saskatchewan.

We recognize that there are many years of history and events that have occurred to affect the Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationship. We encourage you to look deeper into the many areas we have highlighted (and the many that we have not) to gain a deeper understanding of today's Reconciliation landscape.

We hope the data presented here can be used to begin conversations, and to provide part of a foundation from which to continue measuring the growth and journey of Reconciliation in the Treaty territories of Saskatchewan.

The OTC would like to thank and acknowledge the work of the University of Saskatchewan's Social Science Research Laboratories for collecting this survey data. A special thank you to the Government of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Health Authority, Reconciliation Regina, and Heart of Treaty 6 Reconciliation for funding this work.

Full demographic breakdowns of the data for each question can be found in the technical report at www.otc.ca.