



My name is Colleen Hele-Cardinal; I am the co-founder of the [Sixties Scoop Network](#) and the creator and visionary for the ground-breaking GIS mapping project by survivors for survivors, [In Our Own Words: Mapping the Stories of 60s Scoop Survivors Diaspora](#). This project aims to illustrate the geographical displacements of Sixties Scoop survivors across the continent and world due to colonial child welfare policies; and to facilitate a platform for survivors to tell their stories and find their families and communities.

#### *History of the 60's Scoop*

The 60s Scoop is still a relatively unheard-of phenomenon for mainstream audiences that took place primarily in the late 1950s to early 1980s behind the closed doors of child welfare agencies and non-Native homes. Over 22,500 First Nations and Inuit children and thousands of Metis children were apprehended, solicited and trafficked across provinces, borders and overseas by social workers, churches, and adoption agencies. This was hailed as a benevolent practice by provincial and federal governments. Thousands of Indigenous children grew up in non-Indigenous households losing their vital connection to their language, ceremonies, kinships, identity and connection to their traditional land.

Many 60s Scoop survivors have experienced childhood trauma, sexual and physical abuses in their adoptive/foster care households and, later in life, addictions and homelessness. Survivors are vastly over-represented in prison populations, with 65.5 per cent having gone through the child welfare system. Many of them know first-hand the systemic racism and violence ingrained in government policies, policing and on-going child removals.

The ongoing violence that has resulted in thousands of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Two Spirit and Girls (MMWITGS) is intimately tied to our displacement from our communities. Colonial child welfare displacements have made us increasingly vulnerable to colonial gender violence, and many of us have had our loved ones murdered or disappeared.

#### *The Sixties Scoop Network*

The Network started as a grassroots collective of 60s Scoop survivors based in Ottawa. We have held four national gatherings in Ottawa bringing hundreds of 60s Scoop survivors from all over North America and overseas. We have served as advisors in the project created by Legacy of Hope called [Bi-Giwen: Coming Home – Truth-Telling from the Sixties Scoop](#). Currently, we host monthly sweat lodges, annual gatherings in Ottawa, advise Dr. Raven Sinclair's Pe-kīwēwin Project, and are part of many other community-building, policy and research initiatives.

The concept for the project began with the simple idea of using an online GIS mapping platform to visualize the displacements through an interactive map to show Canadians and the world what the 60s Scoop looks like for survivors who have been displaced from their traditional homelands and territories.

With collaboration from Dr. Raven Sinclair's Pe-kīwēwin Project, we are excited to announce the launch of this innovative and first of its kind of GIS interactive mapping program as a tool for 60s Scoop survivors to:

1. Visualize the displacements of 60s Scoop survivors across Canada, the US and overseas by province and territory.
2. Provide a collective platform to share our stories, videos and photos.
3. Provide search functions and a database for survivors and their families still looking for extended families.

### *In our Own Words: Mapping the Stories of 60s Scoop Survivors Diaspora*

The scope of this project is international and our goal is to make the map go viral and receive as much user traffic as possible for it to become a visual tool to represent our truths. This project aims to identify resources for 60s scoop survivors to find support and help in repatriating, cultural reclamation, counselling and locating other 60s scoop survivors' groups across Canada. It is our hope to include resource information that can be accessible to survivors through our platform as survivors' stories become available.

This project will also enable researchers and communities to produce statistical data on the 60s Scoop and identify which geographical areas Indigenous children were taken from and where these children ended up. We are going to use a colour code for each province as a point of origin, then identify where survivors were subsequently fostered or adopted. For example, Indigenous children taken from BC would be identified using red, Alberta, green, Saskatchewan yellow, Manitoba orange etc. Visually, it will be striking to see where all the survivors were taken across Canada, the US and overseas.

Survivors will be able to directly input their own information into the online mapping system and have the option to share as little or as much information about themselves as they want, as well as short videos, pictures and a short narrative about themselves. If survivors choose to locate family members, they have the option of uploading a picture, file, short video or details on the person whom they are looking for and/or who may be looking for them. Participants will have the option of removing any of their identifying visual data from the platform at any time. The Sixties Scoop Network will have access to the platform's data.

The second stage of the map requires funds to travel and disseminate the project through facilitated hands-on teaching workshops in urban cities across Canada, the USA and select cities overseas where we know adoptees were taken and still may live. Our goal is to launch that later 2021.

If you have any questions or would like to request how you can learn more please contact me at [sixtiesscoopmap@gmail.com](mailto:sixtiesscoopmap@gmail.com) or call (613) 407 7057.

Sincerely,

Hiy Hiy, Thank you.

Colleen Hele-Cardinal

\*Diaspora ' does not simply refer to geographical dispersal but also to the vexed questions of identity, memory and home which such displacement produces" (Ashcroft et al 1989, 218).