

First Nations – also known as Natives and Native Canadians – are an Aboriginal group in Canada and one of the country's original inhabitants. In 2011, more than 1.3 million people identified themselves as First Nations (nearly 4% of Canada's population).

Communities: There are currently 634 registered First Nations communities in Canada. Throughout these communities, more than 50 distinct and different languages are spoken.

Religion and beliefs: One of the First Nations' most common teachings is that people should live in balance and harmony with the natural world.

Treaty 7 (1877): A historic and controversial agreement between the Canadian government and the First Nation peoples. First Nations consider that their lands were stolen from them and that the government has failed to fulfill its treaty obligations so far.

File 11 p. 114 • A portrait of Nadya Kwandibens

Nadya Kwandibens is Anishinaabe¹ (Ojibwe²) from the Animakee Wa Zhing #37 First Nation in northwestern Ontario. She is a self-taught portrait and events photographer and has travelled extensively across Canada for over 10 years.

Vision Statement³

“We, as Indigenous people, are often portrayed in history books as Nations once great; in museums as Nations frozen stoic; in the media as Nations forever troubled. These images can be despairing; however, my goal seeks to steer⁴ the positive course. If our history is a shadow, let this moment serve as light.

We are musicians, lawyers, doctors, mothers and sons. We are activists, scholars, dreamers, fathers and daughters. Let us claim ourselves now and see that we are, and will always be great, thriving⁵, balanced civilizations capable of carrying ourselves into that bright new day.”

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1. /əˌnɪʃəˈnæbeɪ/ 2. /əʊˈdʒɪbweɪ/ 3. declaration 4. to direct
5. prosperous