Flawed Filter & Policy Patchwork: Indigenous Children’s Health & Education in Canada

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Figure 1: The Canadian Policymaking Process: Then and Now

1. Strategic Goals
   Eradicate Indigenous Population

2. Policy Process
   Create Policies to Support Strategic Goals (ex. Residential Schools)

   Table 1: The Policy Process Pre-1970s

3. Operational Goals
   "Kill the Indian, Save the Child"

4. Outcomes from Programs
   Destruction of Cultural Identity

2. Policy Process
   Inherently Limited Capacity to Meet New Strategic Goals (ex. Post-Secondary Student Support Program)

   Table 2: Policy Process Post-1970s

3. Operational Goals
   "Improve employment and education outcomes"

4. Outcomes from Programs
   Fail to Meet Strategic Goals Due to Policymaking System Failure (ex. less students being funded each year)

Key Messages:

- **Health Gap** – Indigenous children in Canada suffer a greater burden of health inequities than all other children across the country (ex. higher infant mortality, lower immunization rates, higher rates of diabetes, poorer nutritional status, etc).

- **Social Determinants** – Socio-economic factors, including poverty, lower educational attainment, and poor housing directly affect health outcomes for Indigenous children.

- **Policy** – “Policy makers rarely critique or deconstruct the lexicon and procedures embedded in the policy culture itself...standard policy language and procedures are perceived to encourage economy and efficiency...[but] economy and efficiency can often compromise depth and diversity” (Kenny 2004).

- **Self-determination** – A study examining widely varying suicide rates across 80 First Nations bands in B.C scored each community on 7 measures of “cultural continuity” and found that communities with all seven factors had the lowest rates while those with none had higher rates of suicides. The seven factors included: self-government, involvement in land claims, band control of education, health services, cultural facilities, police and fire services (Chandler & Lalonde 1998).

Sources:
