

KROC INSTITUTE
FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE STUDIES

The Journey towards Reparations & Reconciliation

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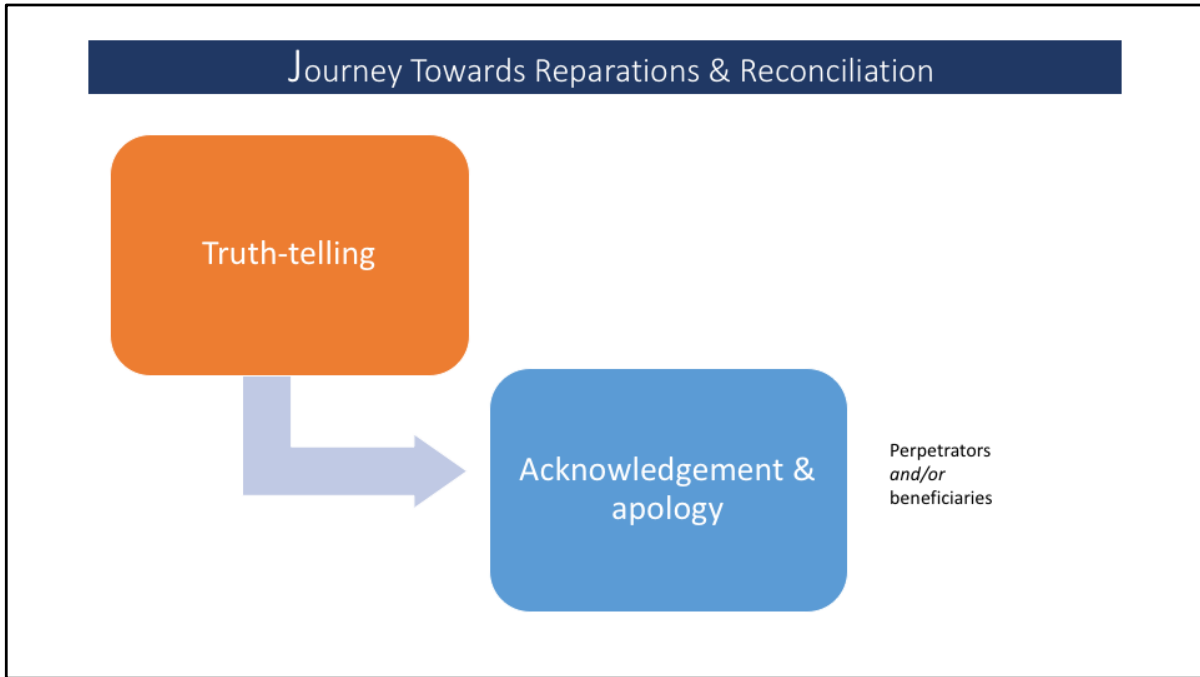
KEOUGH SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Journey Towards Reparations & Reconciliation

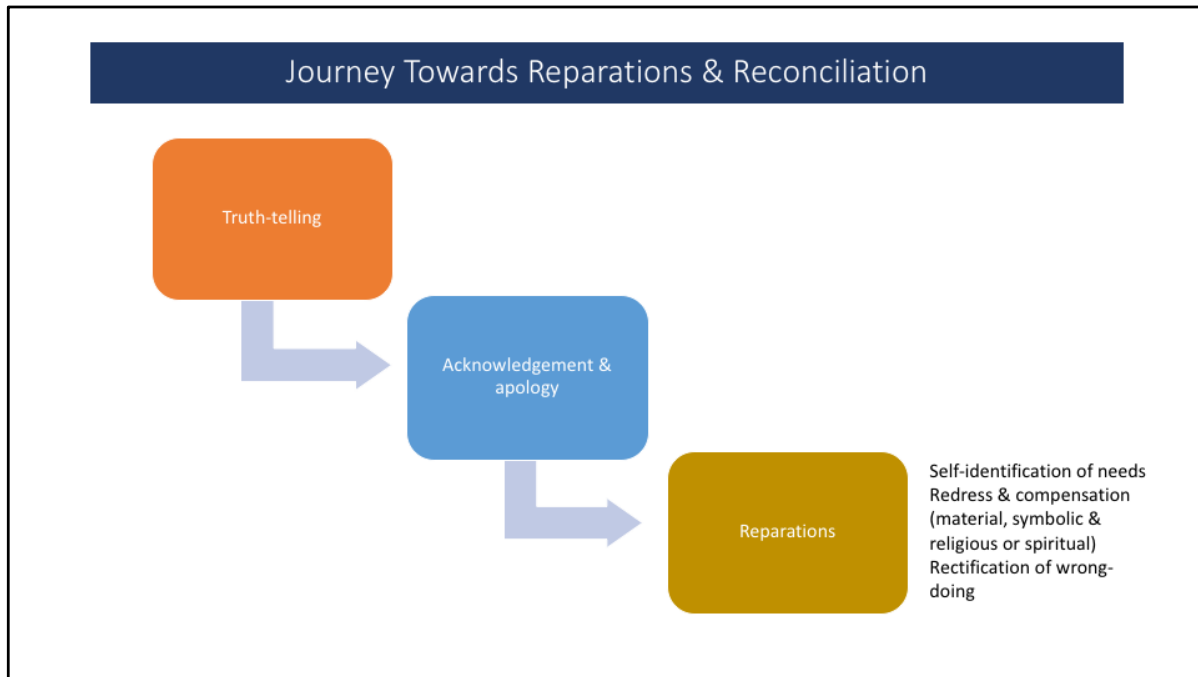
Truth-telling
(Historical research, incl. oral
history)

What harm was done?
To whom?
By whom?
With whose support?
Who has *benefited* from the harm?
What are the *current* effects?

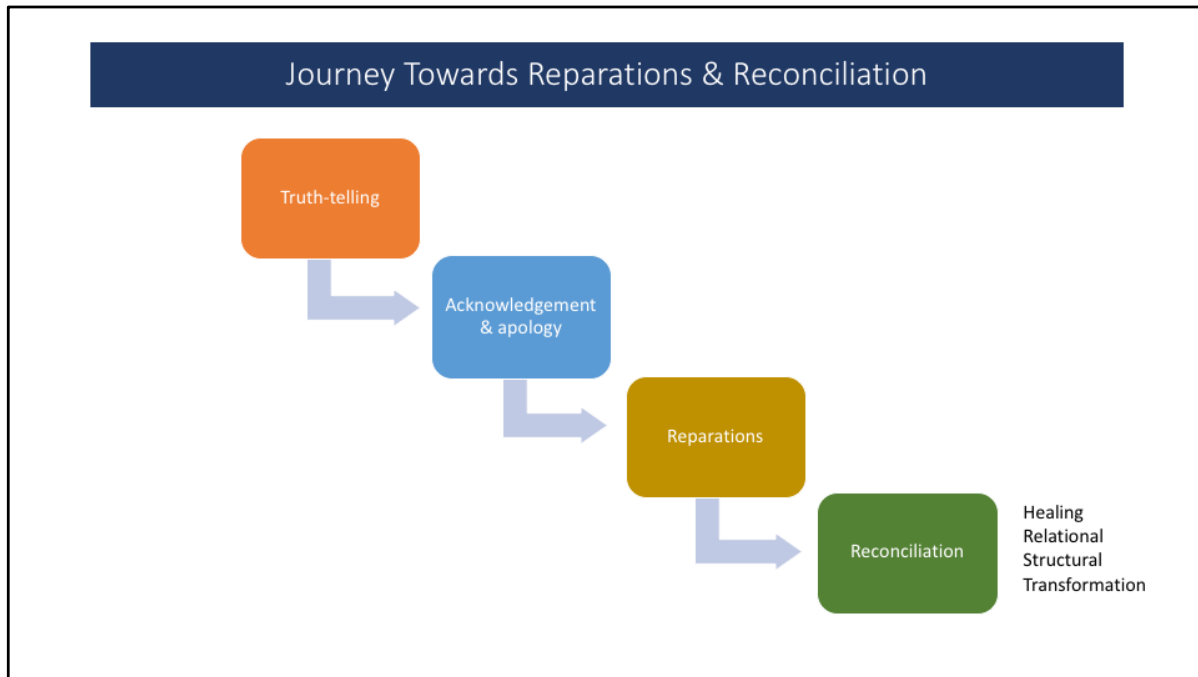
Four steps on journey. First step is truth-telling that addresses these questions. The last two questions recognize that historical harm can have long-lasting, inter-generational advantages and disadvantages for different groups.



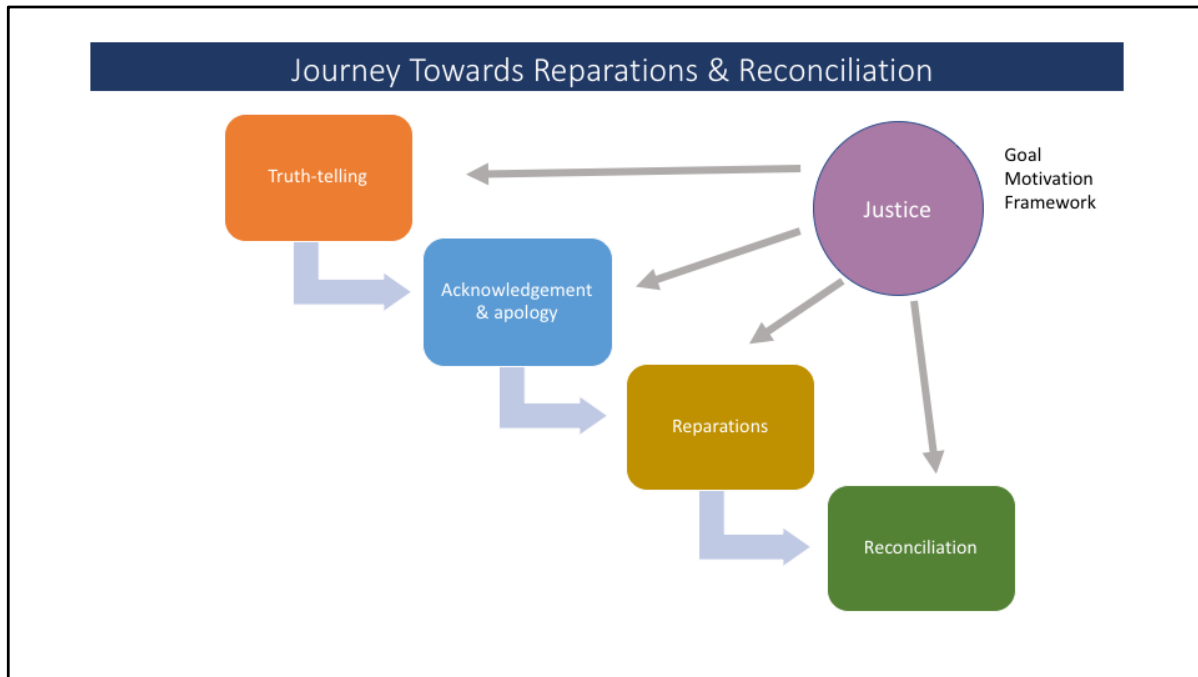
Second step entails acknowledgement and apology for harm. This can be done by the perpetrators but in cases of historical injustice, the burden falls on descendants and/or beneficiaries. Beneficiaries have a responsibility to acknowledge harm even if they themselves were not perpetrators.



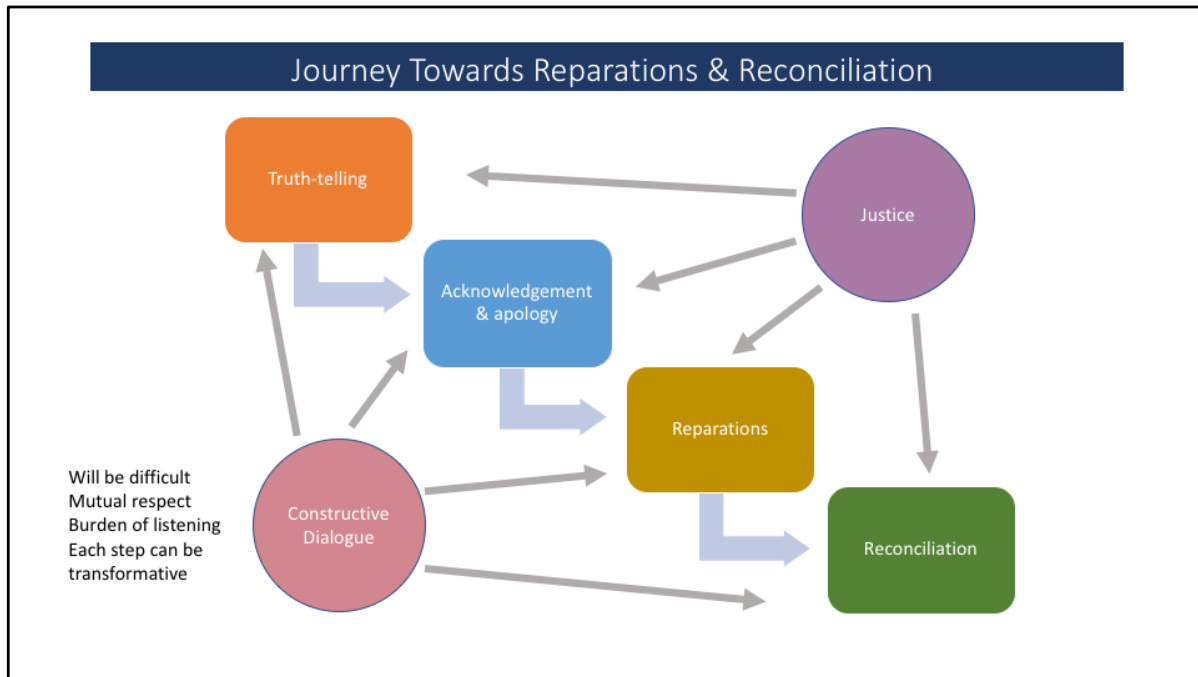
Third step entails reparations. Different types of reparation are possible and should be identified, in the 1st instance, by the harmed communities. Where the harm is not only historical but also embedded in *contemporary* social systems and structures, then the wrongdoing is continuous, and rectification consequently requires systematic or institutional reform.



Fourth step is process of healing and relationship-building. Reconciliation is achieved when the parties and stakeholders believe they are reconciled. Reconciliation is not only relational but also structural (i.e. transforming systems and institutions in order to prevent *perpetuation* of harm). What does this mean in practice? A comprehensive answer is contextual. I want to offer to two general answers, the first normative and the second procedural.



Normatively, reconciliation has to be informed by justice. Justice is the goal, and the ethical framework for each step. It is also the motivation for the journey. If we don't care about justice, and don't care about addressing historical injustice, then we won't even begin the journey.



Procedural answer is 'constructive dialogue' between the relevant parties and stakeholders. Each step in the journey is likely to be difficult but can be managed through mutual respect and good faith. However the journey ends, each step can be transformative if motivated by justice.

