WHAT IS IT?
The National Indian Education Association partnered with KAIROS Canada to become certified facilitators of the Kairos Blanket Healing Exercise (KBE). NIEA participated in the Facilitator Training so that we would be able to provide and implement the blanket healing exercise in our own local communities, both Native and non-Native.

The KAIROS Blanket Exercise program is a unique, participatory history lesson — developed in collaboration with Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers and educators — that fosters truth, understanding, respect and reconciliation among Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

“There was tremendous value to doing this training with NIEA, the other participants at the training added a lot of perspective and richness to the discussion.”

“Very enlightening perspective that traces indigenous history.”
THE EXPERIENCE
During this workshop, participants walk on blankets representing the land and into the role of Native peoples of Indian Country by reading scrolls and carrying cards which ultimately determine their outcome as they literally ‘walk’ through situations that include pre-contact, treaty-making, colonization and resistance.

Participants are guided through the experience by trained facilitators (who read the script and assume the roles of European explorers and settlers) and Indigenous Elders or knowledge keepers. The Exercise concludes with a debriefing, conducted as a `talking circle,’ during which participants discuss the learning experience, process their feelings, ask questions, share insights, deepen their understanding, and create actionable next steps for their work.

HISTORY
Created in 1997, the KAIROS Blanket Exercise explores the major themes and findings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). A precursor to KAIROS, the Aboriginal Rights Coalition (ARC) brought to the table Elders, participatory, popular education experts and members of the Assembly of First Nations Education Department. The concern was that RCAP would be shelved and forgotten. From this group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, the Blanket Exercise was created. ARC and then KAIROS have guided its ongoing development for two decades. Versions for different regions of Canada now exist as well as adaptations for Australia, Guatemala and the United States.

Components
- Prayer
- Cleansing
- Land Acknowledgement
- Role introduction, including Elder or traditional knowledge keeper (if applicable)
- Blanket Healing Exercise
- Talking Circle
- Physical and emotional healing supports (provided by the host organization/community)

What NIEA needs from you:
- One-month advance notice to book travel and accommodations
- Specific dates and times
- At least 3 hours to conduct the full exercise
- Accurate counts of all attendees
- Host organization will provide food, water, and Kleenex
- Participation in a post-exercise survey/evaluation

Contact: Kurrinn Abrams, NIEA Education Specialist, kabrams@niea.org, 202-847-0034

“The experience was a great one, the people involved were knowledgeable and easy to communicate with. I would like some follow up as to when the next event will be hosted, as to inform my team to attend.”