

A Framework for Indigenous Language Legislation

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1. Introduction

a. First Peoples' Cultural Council

The First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) is a provincial Crown Corporation formed by the government of British Columbia to administer the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Program. FPCC assists B.C. First Nations in their efforts to revitalize their languages, arts and cultures. Since 1990, FPCC has successfully distributed over \$40 million to British Columbia's First Nations peoples for language, arts and culture projects. First Peoples' Cultural Council serves 203 B.C. First Nations, 34 languages and a number of First Nations arts, culture and educational organizations. The legislated mandate of FPCC is to:

- Protect, revitalize and enhance First Nations heritage, language, culture and arts.
- Increase understanding and sharing of knowledge, within both First Nations and non-First Nations communities.
- Heighten appreciation and acceptance of the wealth of cultural diversity among all British Columbians.

b. Framework and Engagement

In December 2016, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced the intention of his government to develop an Indigenous Languages Act. In this report, we outline a framework of essential elements to be included in such an Act. The framework is based on the First Peoples' Cultural Council's nearly three decades of experience working in collaboration with B.C. First Nations communities on language revitalization. In addition, it draws from a national dialogue session on Indigenous languages, which was held June 24-26, 2016 in Victoria, B.C. Hosted by FPCC, the session invited twenty Indigenous language experts from across Canada along with representatives from the Department of Canadian Heritage to discuss approaches to Indigenous language revitalization in Canada. Please refer to Galley et al (2016) for the full report from the session, available in French and English (<http://www.fpcc.ca/about-us/Publications/>).

In addition, FPCC held five community engagement sessions across British Columbia in spring 2017. The engagement sessions had two main goals. First, we wanted to ensure that all those involved in language work, First Nations leadership and other stakeholders are well-informed about the proposed legislation so that all have an opportunity to provide feedback to government. Second, we wanted to present our draft framework to community members and collect responses on this issue. The five sessions were held in Kelowna (May 17), Prince George (May 25), Richmond (May 31), Nanaimo (June 2), and Terrace (June 12). Highlights along with complete notes of all the sessions are provided in *Indigenous Language Legislation Engagement Sessions: Community Report*, available on our website (<http://www.fpcc.ca/language/Legislation/>). We thank and acknowledge everyone who came out to engage at these sessions; we value all of the insights that were shared.¹

¹ We are also grateful to our partners in the five regions who helped us with coordinating these meetings and who contributed in many other ways: Dr. Bill Cohen, Dr. Judy Thompson, Adjunct

2. A Framework for Indigenous Language Legislation

As we look to the development of an Indigenous Languages Act, we must consider the significance of these Indigenous languages that are spoken nowhere else in the world, and the historical and political context that has shaped their current status. The Indigenous languages in Canada are an integral part of Canada's history and unique cultural heritage. Moreover, these languages are vital to the health and wellbeing of Indigenous people in Canada. The proposed legislation is an opportunity for the Government of Canada to redress the harms of the past that have resulted in the current state of language loss, and to create an environment in which the Indigenous languages in Canada thrive alongside majority languages as part of a culturally rich society. Crucially, as we create policy to support these languages, we must be forward-looking. We must shift the emphasis from the "endangered" status of the languages, which does not result in action, and instead focus on ensuring the future of these languages. The legislation must be clear about the outcomes desired for these languages and the strategies needed to reach those outcomes. It must go beyond surface recognition of Indigenous languages and create a real path for change.

Indigenous language legislation must provide for the following six areas:

1. Reclamation, revitalization and maintenance
2. Indigenous language education
3. Recognition
4. Infrastructure and capacity building
5. Guaranteed support
6. Indigenous leadership and control

In the following sections, we summarize each of these areas and provide our recommendations for the legislation.

a. Reclamation, Revitalization and Maintenance

Indigenous language legislation must provide for the reclamation and revitalization of all of the Indigenous languages in Canada, regardless of their current status in terms of numbers of speakers. Legislation must not focus solely on preservation but on revitalization. As it was aptly stated by one of the attendees at our engagement sessions, revitalization keeps fish swimming in the rivers whereas preservation only smokes and cans them. It is of paramount importance that we support the creation of proficient speakers so that Indigenous languages are spoken on a daily basis in their homeland areas. **Immersion** programs are the best way to achieve this vision. A "cradle to grave" education mindset should guide the development of policy resulting from the legislation, from preschool immersion language nests and family-based immersion programs to adult immersion programs (e.g., Mentor-Apprentice programs, immersion classes, language houses), with cohesion between different age groups and levels. Silent speaker programs are needed for people who can understand but

Professor Larry Grant, Gary Manson, and Colleen Austin. In addition, we thank Dr. Ron Ignace for attending and speaking at three out of five sessions, Cynthia Jensen-Fisk for facilitating in Richmond, and FPCC staff Rachel Perkins and Britt Thorburn for additional note-taking.

not speak their language (e.g., residential school survivors and others) in order to empower them to begin speaking. Education of children in the elementary to secondary system cannot be seen as the only place for language education.

For communities where there are speakers already, initiatives are needed to increase domains of use. In addition, the language rights of those living off reserve cannot be overlooked including connecting extended family back to their territory and supporting children in care. And, along with fluency development, it is crucial to have extensive, high quality documentation of fluent speakers, with the infrastructure to support it (e.g., training, equipment, transcription, archiving). Indigenous languages and the traditional knowledge contained within them should be documented and curated by Indigenous peoples and organizations.

Once the languages have been revitalized, continued support is needed to ensure their perpetuity in the long term. Legislation must not only address the immediate and urgent need for revitalization but must also ensure support for the future of these languages. The overarching goal of this legislation should be to move languages from the revitalization stage to the maintenance stage and to ensure that they are never endangered again.

We recommend that Indigenous language legislation recognize the need for reclamation, revitalization and maintenance for all Indigenous languages in Canada.

b. Indigenous Language Education

Currently, much of Indigenous language revitalization falls in the domain of K-12 education, though most schools do not offer enough in either quantity or quality of language education. Millions of dollars have been invested in education but they have not achieved the desired outcomes because of the nature of the investments. The education domain remains inhospitable to Indigenous languages as current policy and funding rarely allows for effective Indigenous models of education such as land-based learning. Indigenous people need more control over the education domain in order to support effective language education. More opportunities are needed for immersion schools and for teacher-training programs that build fluent speakers, and support is needed to build language education infrastructures within Indigenous organizations. Post-secondary language education and teacher-training programs are needed *within* communities, to build infrastructure and capacity at the community level.

Legislation must affirm Indigenous language rights which already exist including the right of Indigenous people to be educated in their own languages. “All Indigenous people must have accessibility and opportunity to learn their Indigenous homeland language regardless of place of residence, and all who choose for their children (from preschool to Grade 12) to be educated in the medium of their mother-tongue must have that option” (Galley et al, 2016, p. 33).

Implementation must necessitate the development of curriculum for all languages, training for fluent speakers to be teachers and for non-fluent teachers to be proficient speakers, and

training for all teachers in immersion practices. Adequate funding is needed to support Indigenous language education at all levels, including early childhood, K-12, and post-secondary, as well as teacher-training programs. Legislation should be supported and complemented by policy and funding at the provincial and territorial level. National and regional institutions with a mandate for education must collaborate to provide coordinated support for Indigenous education. Policy must be created to ensure that Indigenous people can develop and implement culturally-appropriate educational models.

We recommend that Indigenous language legislation affirm Indigenous language rights including the right to language education.

c. Recognition

When the average Canadian hears of the idea of Indigenous language legislation, many think of seeing 60+ languages on cereal boxes. This is *not* an effective means of recognition, and not something for which anyone is advocating. Rather, an effective means of recognition would include **national recognition with local implementation**. Legislation could provide for official status enacted in local domains, such as bilingual signs in traditional territories where a language is spoken. Diversity is not detrimental; diversity offers choices and should be celebrated.

We recommend that Indigenous language legislation acknowledge and recognize the Indigenous languages of Canada as the first languages of this land. Furthermore, we recommend that the Act support the implementation of official language status in local domains, according to the expressed direction of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities of those regions. Federal legislation that is developed regarding language recognition must be supported and complemented by provincial and territorial legislation and policy. Any recognition must respect existing treaty rights, including inherent language rights (Section 35 of the Constitution Act).

Implementation must provide for the collection of data for all Indigenous languages in Canada, and development of an agreed-upon list of languages and their status for ongoing assessment and monitoring purposes. This process must be led by Indigenous experts and communities, and must provide investment to communities to build their capacity to carry out this work.

We recommend national recognition of the Indigenous languages of Canada as the first languages of this land with provisions for local implementation of this recognition.

d. Infrastructure and Capacity Building

While the reclamation, revitalization and maintenance of all Indigenous languages (section (a) above) and the right of Indigenous people to be educated in their language (section (b)) are of utmost importance, these cannot be realized without significant infrastructure and

capacity building.² Legislation must make explicit reference to this requirement so that adequate provisions can be made for successful implementation of the legislation. This might include “a national office of an Indigenous Language Commission with regional offices to support each Indigenous homeland language and [...] a coordinated and collaborative approach and investment across all ministries, institutions and organizations” (Galley et al, 2016, p. 33).

Implementation cannot be tied to current faulty infrastructure (such as systems created by the Indian Act); funding must be easily accessible to people doing the work. Top-heavy, multi-level infrastructure should be avoided; rather, capacity building at the community level must be supported. The necessary streamlined and efficient infrastructure will depend on collaboration at all levels. Federal institutions such as the Department of Canadian Heritage and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada must coordinate and collaborate on delivery of funds. Similarly, the federal government must partner with the provinces and territories to coordinate both funding and policy initiatives.

Indigenous communities across Canada are at very different places with respect to their languages. Implementation of the legislation must provide for evidence-based language planning to support all communities at their diverse levels. Indigenous post-secondary institutions (such as the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association in British Columbia and other such associations and institutes) could have a significant role to play in providing skills-based training so that speakers and learners don't have to leave their communities to seek education. In particular, young people should be targeted to be trained to lead community-based revitalization activities.

We recommend that Indigenous language legislation regulate the establishment of infrastructure (e.g. a commissioner and regional organizations) to support capacity-building and successful implementation of the legislation's key objectives.

e. Guaranteed Support

Above all else, the legislation must establish the fiduciary responsibility of the government to support the Indigenous languages of Canada. Legislation must include a guarantee of the funding necessary to successfully implement and maintain language revitalization initiatives, and this funding must be protected from shifting political priorities. “Funding must be based on the cost of what is needed to implement initiatives to recover, restore and maintain the vitality of Indigenous languages wherever Indigenous people reside” (Galley et al, 2016, p. 33). It is essential that the funding amounts not be decided by formula, or according to what is currently provided for the French language, but that they be based on actual need according to the current language status and the outcomes desired. A detailed study will need to be undertaken to determine necessary costs based on diverse circumstances across the country.

² We draw attention to the numerous challenges encountered through implementation of Nunavut's *Inuit Language Protection Act*; see Gessner et al (in press) for some discussion.

We recommend that legislation mandate guaranteed, permanent and sustainable funding for Indigenous language reclamation, revitalization and maintenance.

f. Indigenous Leadership and Control

It is imperative that the legislation acknowledge and facilitate Indigenous leadership and control of Indigenous language revitalization. The principles of ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP) must be respected through this process, and it must be led and implemented by Indigenous people. Indigenous people need to be able to design their own systems and be autonomous in taking decisions with respect to policy implementation and delivery. The legislation needs to unequivocally state that languages belong to their respective nations, not to the government nor the wider Canadian public. Above all, Indigenous communities should drive the funding needs and opportunities. The legislation developed must recognize the expertise of Indigenous language speakers and knowledge holders, and must return agency for the revitalization of these languages to the hands of Indigenous people.

We recommend that legislation declare Indigenous leadership and control of Indigenous language initiatives.

3. Summary

As we outline in the above framework, there are six key areas which must be encompassed within the proposed Indigenous language legislation. These areas along with our recommendations for each are as follows:

1. Reclamation, revitalization and maintenance

We recommend that Indigenous language legislation recognize the need for reclamation, revitalization and maintenance for all Indigenous languages in Canada.

2. Indigenous language education

We recommend that Indigenous language legislation affirm Indigenous language rights including the right to language education.

3. Recognition

We recommend national recognition of the Indigenous languages of Canada as the first languages of this land with provisions for local implementation of this recognition.

4. Infrastructure and capacity building

We recommend that Indigenous language legislation regulate the establishment of infrastructure to support capacity-building and successful implementation of the legislation's key objectives.

5. Guaranteed support

We recommend that legislation mandate guaranteed, permanent and sustainable funding for Indigenous language reclamation, revitalization and maintenance.

6. Indigenous leadership and control

We recommend that legislation declare Indigenous leadership and control of Indigenous language initiatives.

These areas are, of course, interconnected. We strongly urge those who are involved with drafting and implementing the legislation to look closely at existing legislation in Canada (especially in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories) and consider the challenges and recommendations that have emerged since implementation. See Gessner, Herbert & Parker (In press) for a review of Indigenous language policy in Canada.

In addition, we are certain that the recommendations of the *Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures* (2005) and the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada* (2015) will be carefully considered in the development of the legislation. Please see the appendix for our response to the recommendations of these seminal reports.

In sum, attendees at our legislation engagement sessions were supportive of our framework for Indigenous language legislation, and there was much consensus across the five sessions held in diverse areas of the province. Community members emphasized that immersion works and is needed at all levels. Support, sharing, collaboration, and capacity-building are crucial. We heard loud and clear that “language is our right” and it is “time for action to put reconciliation into practice”. Strong Indigenous language legislation will play an important role in Canada’s implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. **Our languages are living languages.** We look forward to the transformative changes that legislation will bring to them.

Appendix: Response to Recommendations on Language from the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures (2005) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015)

There have been two notable reports in Canada which have made several recommendations for Indigenous languages: the *Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures* (2005) and the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada* (2015). We commend and support the significant work undertaken by the task force and the TRC commission. However, the task force report is now over a decade old and the TRC report did not have language as its exclusive focus. Because we expect that these reports will be closely considered in the development of Indigenous language legislation, we would like to offer comments on the recommendations put forward in these two important reports based on our experience with the current context of Indigenous languages in Canada.

1. The Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures (2005, p. ix-xi)

1. The Link between Languages and the Land

That First Nation, Inuit and Métis governments and the federal, provincial and territorial governments enter into government-to-government agreements or accords on natural resources, environmental sustainability and traditional knowledge. The agreements or accords should recognize the importance for First Nation, Inuit and Métis people of maintaining a close connection to the land in their traditional territories, particularly wilderness areas, heritage and spiritual or sacred sites, and should provide for their meaningful participation in stewardship, management, co-management or co-jurisdiction arrangements.

FPCC: We agree with this recommendation.

2. Protection of Traditional Knowledge

That Canada take a more comprehensive approach on the protection, use and benefits arising from traditional knowledge under the international Convention on Biological Diversity and that greater recognition be accorded to First Nation, Inuit and Métis people, particularly the Elders, in the collaborative planning process under the Convention.

FPCC: We agree with this recommendation. Our languages contain Indigenous Traditional Knowledge (ITK) that is currently not protected and this knowledge must be curated by Indigenous peoples. The legislation could make provisions for access to all existing documented language materials; these should be freely available to communities for revitalization purposes.

3. Legislative Recognition, Protection and Promotion

That Canada enact legislation that recognizes, protects and promotes First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages as the First Languages of Canada. This legislation, to be developed in partnership with First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples, must recognize the constitutional status of our languages; affirm their place as one of the foundations of First Nation, Inuit and

Métis nationhood; provide financial resources for their preservation, revitalization, promotion and protection; and establish the position of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Language Commissioner.

FPCC: This recommendation is fine with the addition of *maintenance*: “*provide financial resources for their preservation (**documentation**), revitalization, promotion, protection and **maintenance***”. Once our languages have been restored to everyday use in communities, ongoing financial resources must be provided in order to ensure their maintenance.

Language data must be documented and curated by Indigenous peoples and not copyrighted in resources developed by linguists. Unfortunately, the academic culture encourages this and communities and Indigenous speakers often find that after a language project is complete they are expected to pay for the language documents they have developed with linguists.

What is the role of the commissioner? Jurisdictions that have language commissioners now simply deal with complaints, usually related to service in a particular language. The commissioner role tends not to include language promotion, though that seems to be needed. The commissioner role would be more applicable in the maintenance stage. There is a lack of clarity and agreement around the role of a commissioner; this will need to be considered.

There is also a concern that once a language has official status there is a constant need for the translation of government documents and this pulls our Indigenous language experts away from language revitalization and teaching.

4. Equitable Resources for Language Support

That Canada provide funding for First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages which is, at a minimum, at the same level as that provided for the French and English languages.

FPCC: Canada must provide equitable resources based on **need and the capacity of the individual community**. It is not practical to compare the status of our Indigenous languages with that of French and English. French and English only require support for maintenance, whereas all of our Indigenous languages need to move from the revitalization stage to maintenance. Resources must be based on a community development model and not a formula driven model. A language revitalization initiative will cost more than what is required for French and English because of the current status of Indigenous languages.

5. Language Support from All Federal Departments

That funding for First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages not be limited to that provided by the Departments of Canadian Heritage, and Indian Affairs and Northern Development. All government departments, and particularly the Departments of Justice, Health, and Human Resources and Skills Development, need to adopt policies and provide funding sufficient to allow for delivery of services and programs which promote First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages, in the same manner as for the French and English languages.

FPCC: Coordination and assigned roles and responsibilities are required. We recommend an intergovernmental committee on languages that has all relevant ministries represented. Strategies should be complementary, not duplicated. The Ministries of Environment and

Climate Change, Health, and Justice could also benefit from involvement in Indigenous language initiatives. In addition, coordination with provincial ministries such as education, health and vital statistics agencies is needed.

6. Restitution and Reconciliation

That Canada implement as soon as possible the recommendation of the Assembly of First Nations to pay a lump-sum award by way of compensation to any person who attended an Indian Residential School. Alternatively, Canada and the churches establish a restitution fund to pay a lump-sum award to any person who attended an Indian Residential School, as compensation for emotional and psychological trauma brought on by loss of connection to family and community and to language and culture.

FPCC: The compensation paid to eligible residential school survivors did not include the provision of language healing programs. There is an urgent need for programs that support residential school survivors who want to break through the trauma of language loss; **silent speaker programs** are effective and highly recommended.

7. A National Language Strategy

That a National Language Strategy be developed through community-based planning by First Nation, Inuit and Métis language communities, as well as by their regional and national representative organizations, with coordination and technical support to be provided by the proposed national language organization.

FPCC: Each language requires a language plan that will be sufficiently funded. A language revitalization plan must include effective measures for tracking progress and require the sharing of data and resources amongst communities. A national body could provide some oversight and direction but action and delivery should be undertaken at a regional level, at a language/nation level and at a community level. On this point, it should be noted that British Columbia is unique with over 60% of the Indigenous languages in Canada and where geography is a huge issue. We have had some success with revitalization initiatives in B.C. with a minimal amount of money compared to the diversity and state of languages. This unique context must be given special consideration.

8. Baseline Language Survey

That as the first component of a national long-term strategy, the national language organization coordinate a baseline survey of language conditions. The baseline survey will be conducted by First Nation, Inuit and Métis people as part of community-based language planning and needs assessments. Further, we recommend that funding for this work be provided separately from current commitments.

FPCC: This is an important recommendation that is long overdue. It is impossible to measure progress without baseline statistics. An agreed-upon list of the Indigenous languages (including Indigenous sign languages) in Canada does not even exist. The survey needs to happen at the nation/community level, and communities need to be funded to be trained to do this work. The data can then be collected and compiled in regional reports for ongoing tracking over time.

British Columbia has developed a language needs assessment tool to collect language data.

In partnership with our grantees and communities FPCC collects the language data and publishes status reports (<http://www.fpcc.ca/language/status-report/>). FPCC remains committed to working with our partners in community to create assessment and evaluation tools to track our progress in the revitalization of B.C. languages.

9. Funding of Critically Endangered Languages

That Canada provide funding, in addition to what will be available under the current commitment, for those First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities whose languages are critically endangered, in order that they may undertake additional work to preserve their languages.

FPCC: We don't agree with the wording of this recommendation. In the years that have lapsed since this report, it is fair to say that **all** Indigenous languages in Canada are at a critical state of endangerment. Mother tongue transmission is not the norm for any language. Since all languages are endangered, it is not helpful to prioritize one over another. Every language is sacred and tied to the land. We need to debunk these kinds of messages, and in general, move away from using contentious terms like "endangered, dying, dead, extinct". It is often said that only three Indigenous languages are viable and therefore only those three should be the focus of investment; this is incorrect and cannot be supported.

British Columbia is at a disadvantage when funding formulas are used because we have a higher number of communities with smaller population. Funding need to be based on proven revitalization models not formulas.

10. Funding of Immersion Programs

That Canada provide additional funding for First Nation, Inuit and Métis language immersion programs, at a level equivalent to that provided for the French and English languages through the Minority-Language Education component of the Development of Official-Language Communities Program.

FPCC: We fully support immersion as an effective, evidence-based strategy for language revitalization. Every child should have the right to and access to Indigenous language medium education. Indigenous language education rights could be based on the wording of Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which guarantees French and English minority language educational rights. Again, provision of immersion education must be based on the need in communities, not just a formula. (See recommendation 4.)

11. Funding of Immersion Programs for Youth

That Canada make available bursaries to enable First Nation, Inuit and Métis youth to attend five-week immersion courses in their languages and cultures in the same manner as is provided to French and English youth in the Second-Language Learning component of the Enhancement of Official Languages Program.

FPCC: This recommendation could work as part of the urban strategy to take people home to learn their languages. It should be up to the tribal areas and regions to determine the kind of immersion program depending on seasonal traditions and diverse types of land-based learning across the country.

Youth are the next generation of language carriers and we need to create more opportunities for them to engage with their languages and cultures.

Immersion programs are needed at all ages. They are especially effective for young parents who can then speak to their children.

12. Equitable Funding for First Nation Schools

That funding of First Nation schools by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development be provided at the same level and standard as that provided to Ministries of Education through Master Tuition Agreements.

FPCC: We agree with this recommendation, but again recommend that funding be tied to the amount that schools need, rather than simply equal levels of funding. The goals of the investment need to be clear on how they contribute to the creation of new speakers and the revitalization of the languages. A model can be developed with an estimate of costs.

13. Language Education in Correctional Institutions

That the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and the Commissioner of Corrections use their powers under the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to provide federal funding for language programming and strengthen cultural programming to federally incarcerated First Nation, Inuit, and Métis persons.

FPCC: We agree with this recommendation. This is a good example of places where resources such as *FirstVoices.com* can be used for online language learning. Language healing programs should also be made available to any incarcerated individuals.

14. Training Opportunities for Post-secondary Students

That Canada, and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada establish, as part of their Action Plan on Aboriginal education, a program to encourage First Nation, Inuit and Métis university students entering the teaching profession, particularly in language education, to become proficient in their languages by entering into master–apprentice programs or undertaking other cultural education in their communities. Specifically, that summer bursaries or employment programs be made available in the same manner as is provided for French and English youth language training programs.

FPCC: We agree with this recommendation. Recruitment and training of the next generation of language teachers is crucial. In parallel, job opportunities must be created in communities for those who are trained.

There is an urgent need for Indigenous people with master's and doctorate degrees to be employed by the universities so they can deliver language revitalization and teaching programs.

15. Language Teacher Training

That First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada conduct a review of progress made on First Nation, Inuit and Métis teacher and language teacher training initiatives relevant to recruitment and retention. Further, as part of

this review, that the role of First Nation, Inuit and Métis post-secondary institutions in delivering language teacher training be reviewed, particularly with respect to immersion language teacher training.

FPCC: We agree with this recommendation. There are several key issues: people need to have access to teacher training in their communities. Teacher trainees must be paid to attend adult immersion to develop their fluency. Programs must be effective in providing skills specific to second language pedagogy. Language teachers must receive equitable pay. Indigenous knowledge and expertise must be acknowledged. The educational environment must be addressed as it can be hostile towards Indigenous language teaching and learning in places where Indigenous people are not in control.

16. First Nation, Inuit and Métis Post-secondary Institutions

That the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development provide additional resources to First Nation, Inuit and Métis post- secondary and existing institutions to enable them to establish language teacher training programs and, more specifically, immersion language teacher training programs.

FPCC: We agree with this recommendation. In British Columbia, the University of Victoria's BEd degree in Indigenous language education is one promising model, along with the fluent speaker degree currently under development at the B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education. There is an important role for Indigenous institutions such as the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) in British Columbia and similar institutions across the country.

A targeted fund can be established for First Nation, Inuit and Métis post-secondary institutions so they don't have to compete with universities and colleges for operational and program funding. This can be established by INAC.

17. A National Language Organization

That a permanent body of First Nation, Inuit and Métis representatives (Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Council or "LCC") be established.

FPCC: Based on the legislation consultation sessions we held around the province in spring of 2017, B.C. communities are not keen on a national organization. We would rather support regional organizations which may have a better understanding of the local context. If a national organization is formed, we recommend that it be based in B.C. because more than 60% of the Indigenous languages in Canada (34 distinct languages) are based here. The feedback has been that Ottawa is too far away to understand our unique issues. Historically, we haven't had a lot of success with national institutions. We are also concerned about qualified people being taken away from communities to work at a national organization. Building national infrastructure will take a significant amount of time. A national organization with a large infrastructure may not effectively deliver what we need for language.

18. Establishment of the LCC

That current Task Force members be named as Interim Council members and have the responsibility of establishing the LCC. The Interim Council members will act for a period of one year and carry out the following duties:

- *finalize the governance structure of the LCC;*
- *develop a three-year strategic plan;*
- *establish operations by preparing operating budgets, identifying staffing requirements and recruiting staff;*
- *negotiate transfer of Aboriginal language funds from Canadian Heritage;*
- *develop terms of reference and oversee a planning study for a language clearing house;*
- *plan and carry out the necessary research for implementation of a baseline survey and community-based language planning;*
- *seek nominations for the LCC; and*
- *shortlist candidates and provide list to national First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations for final selection.*

FPCC: For the establishment of an LCC and oversight institution, we recommend:

- a) regional institutions (rather than one national institution), or a national body with a very small structure and regional clearinghouses
- b) a merit-based advisory committee with representation from every language
- c) a small board to provide oversight of the organization. The board would include subcommittees around specific areas of operation. Board members would be selected through an open application process.

These regional bodies could also serve as a link between the provincial and federal governments.

19. Provision of Services to French-Language Speakers

That funding be provided under the Official Languages Support programs to enable the LCC to provide a full range of services to French language speaking First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

FPCC: We agree with this recommendation.

20. Use of Short-Term Funding

That the existing commitment of \$160 million be provided on an urgent basis to First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities for language preservation and revitalization efforts over a five-year period, rather than the proposed 10-year timeframe, taking into consideration the critical state of languages and the needs identified by the communities.

FPCC: This recommendation is no longer fitting. Funding needs to be based on the true cost to revitalize language in every community.

21. Establishing a Language Endowment Fund

That Canada provide funding to establish an endowment fund to finance community-based language programs in perpetuity.

FPCC: This model may not be viable. The amount of the endowment would have to be very large (approximately 10-15 billion) in order for the annual interest to adequately fund what is required for Canada.

22. Administration of Short-Term Funding

That the majority of funds committed by Canada be decentralized to allow existing First Nation, Inuit and Métis language decision-making structures to continue with their work. The current national allocation of funding under the Aboriginal Languages Initiative, that is, 75 percent to First Nation languages, 15 percent to Inuit languages and 10 percent to Métis languages, should be maintained until a long-term national language strategy is developed and implemented within the next five years.

FPCC: The funding model should be based on the number of languages, with care to reach agreement on the number of languages vs. dialects. As well, the model must reflect the planning and cost analysis done by Indigenous groups to revitalize and maintain their languages.

23. Allocation of Interim Funding to First Nation Languages

That regional funding allocations for First Nation languages take into account varying populations and languages. Funding formulas should be developed which provides for base funding at the current level, with additional funding adjustments made for regions having large populations and many language communities.

FPCC: We do not agree with this recommendation. As mentioned above, funding must be based on need. In order to determine need, the collection of data is extremely important. (See recommendation 8.)

24. National Projects Fund

That ten percent (10%) of the annual budget allocation from the \$160-million commitment be set aside to establish a National Projects Fund to be administered by the LCC, in partnership with the national First Nation, Inuit and Métis political organizations.

FPCC: A national conference could be used to develop policy and manage national relationships. However, such an initiative should have a very conservative budget because the bulk of the funding is needed at the community level.

25. Innovative Projects Fund

That Canada provide funding to the LCC for the creation of an Innovative Projects Fund that will support innovative projects, research and the use of new technology in language education and revitalization efforts. The Innovative Projects Fund is to be established with funding separate from the \$160-million dollar commitment and should reflect participation and support by all federal government ministries.

FPCC: We agree with this recommendation. A fund can be established to create a national committee on languages technology with the goal of sharing established and new technology resources. This fund will have to be carefully managed so that it is not exploited by developers in the business of language technology.

2. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015)

Calls to Action on Education (p. 320-321)

10) We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples. The new legislation would include a commitment to sufficient funding and would incorporate the following principles:

- i. Providing sufficient funding to close identified educational achievement gaps within one generation.*
- ii. Improving education attainment levels and success rates.*
- iii. Developing culturally appropriate curricula.*
- iv. Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses.*
- v. Enabling parental and community responsibility, control, and accountability, similar to what parents enjoy in public school systems.*
- vi. Enabling parents to fully participate in the education of their children.*
- vii. Respecting and honouring Treaty relationships.*

FPCC: With respect to point (iv.), the provision of language education must be guaranteed at all levels, including:

- a) immersion language nests and parent programs
- b) immersion schools
- c) adult immersion
- d) lifelong learning, including programs for Elders and silent speakers
- e) traditional education opportunities outside of the domain of educational institutions.

Part of the failure of creating new speakers is due to the focus on the educational domain where our languages are not really welcome. We need to make investments where we are learning our language outside these domains (e.g., Master/Mentor-Apprentice language learning programs and other land-based immersion language learning opportunities).

Calls to Action on Language and Culture (p. 321-322)

13) We call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights.

FPCC: We agree with this recommendation.

14) We call upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates the following principles:

- i. Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them.*
- ii. Aboriginal language rights are reinforced by the Treaties.*
- iii. The federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal-language revitalization and preservation.*
- iv. The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.*
- v. Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal*

languages.

FPCC: We agree with this recommendation. Here are some additional points:

- i. There is not just urgency to preserve (document), but to revitalize and maintain languages.
- ii. We are unsure about the intent of this recommendation, and there are areas of Canada, particularly in British Columbia, which are not covered by treaties.
- iii. Funding should be based on need and the cost of sufficient revitalization, documentation, maintenance and education.
- iv. Include “**led** and managed” by Indigenous peoples.
- v. This is very important. The issue here concerns languages vs. dialects. There is a lack of agreement on the number of languages and currently no way of accurately tracking the number of speakers. There are problems with census data. (See also task force recommendation 8 above.)

15) We call upon the federal government to appoint, in consultation with Aboriginal groups, an Aboriginal Languages Commissioner. The commissioner should help promote Aboriginal languages and report on the adequacy of federal funding of Aboriginal-languages initiatives.

FPCC: See comments on task force recommendation 3 above.

16) We call upon post-secondary institutions to create university and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages.

FPCC: We agree with this recommendation. However, the real need is training for community-based language revitalization in language planning, documentation, revitalization immersion strategies, and teacher training. Universities are not necessarily the best place for those sorts of skills training. University programs are generally not designed to create fluency. Colleges and skills training may be models to examine. People want to learn language at home and not everyone wants a degree. Training offered in communities is key, and could be carried out by existing community-based institutions such as the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) or similar organizations.

17) We call upon all levels of government to enable residential school Survivors and their families to reclaim names changed by the residential school system by waiving administrative costs for a period of five years for the name-change process and the revision of official identity documents, such as birth certificates, passports, driver’s licenses, health cards, status cards, and social insurance numbers.

FPCC: We agree with this recommendation. In addition, most provincial vital statistics departments won’t permit the use of Indigenous orthographies. Given the technologies that exist, there’s no reason why this shouldn’t be possible.

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