

Indigenous Languages Recognition, Preservation and Revitalization

A Report on the National Dialogue Session on
Indigenous Languages

June 24-26, 2016

Victoria, British Columbia

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September 30, 2016



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Executive Summary

A national dialogue session on Indigenous languages was held June 24-26, 2016 in Victoria, BC. The session was hosted by the First Peoples' Cultural Council who 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. The dialogue was built around four themes concerning Indigenous language: **(1) language rights, legislation and policy, (2) community-based revitalization, (3) education, and (4) urban strategies.**

The recommendations from the three-day session have been used to produce this report which will be submitted to the Department of Canadian Heritage and to the Assembly of First Nations. It is our hope that this work will advance the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and several Assembly of First Nations resolutions concerning Indigenous language revitalization.

The majority of Indigenous language experts who attended this 3-day dialogue session are Indigenous people with graduate degrees, first language speakers and second language speakers. This *Report on the National Dialogue Session on Indigenous Languages* presents the situational analysis of Indigenous languages in Canada, successes and challenges, findings and recommendations, goals and principles for action, priorities for investment and next steps.

There are approximately 60 Indigenous languages in Canada and 10 separate and distinct language families. Most languages have multiple dialects and often face challenges with multiple writing systems. Only 3 languages account for two-thirds of all mother-tongue language speakers and most languages have relatively few fluent speakers. Most languages are not spoken by children, a key indicator of language survival. Language and cultural identity are intrinsically linked; maintaining both is an urgent and prime concern for Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Indigenous peoples have been drawing attention to the state of Indigenous languages in Canada and the urgent need to preserve our languages for decades. Indigenous languages recognition, preservation and revitalization has yet to be placed on the Government of Canada's legislative and policy agenda such that our languages will be maintained now and into the future. Over the past few years, certain events have given rise to renewed optimism. The newly elected federal government has promised to implement the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** which contains several articles that support the recognition, preservation and revitalization of Indigenous languages of Canada. In addition, the Ministerial mandate letters, signed by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, made the newly formed federal government's commitment to Indigenous peoples clear, and the commitment to the recognition, preservation and revitalization of Indigenous languages being no exception.

The second event which gives rise for renewed optimism is the release of the **Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission** in December 2015. The Truth and Reconciliation's *Calls to Action* relating to language and culture merits specific attention here (Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2015, p. 156-157) :

Calls to Action

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

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.

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.

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

In the absence of federal legislative recognition of Indigenous languages, concerted efforts to maintain and strengthen Indigenous languages have been undertaken by Indigenous peoples in concert with Indigenous language activists, linguists and educators alike. The statistical snapshot which shows that the majority of Indigenous languages have very few speakers who are children does not show the concerted efforts being made to turn the situation of several Indigenous languages around. There is reason for optimism and therefore a need to bolster efforts to ensure the survival of Indigenous languages.

This report, therefore, describes the context for community-based Indigenous language revitalization including preschool, children and youth, adult and Elders initiatives. Of particular note is the fact that several initiatives for any one language group or community are needed across age groups and must also include language documentation, archiving and research in concert with public awareness campaigns for both reserve-based communities as well as those in other urban and rural areas.

The following initiatives are described in this report: Aboriginal Head Start, daycares and preschool initiatives, language nests, first language acquisition in the home, language and culture camps, after-school language programs, adult language classes, adult immersion programs and camps, master/mentor apprentice language learning, language houses, courses for silent speakers, everyday language use and Elders groups.

Creating baseline statistics and language documentation and archiving are also described as part of the interconnected initiatives which can contribute to language recovery and revitalization.

The section regarding Indigenous language education also merits particular attention as it describes both the issues and challenges along with the possibilities and solutions to create conversational fluency among children as well as young people and adults who can become second language speakers. Multiple strategies working together within educational institutions regardless of their location and with community-based initiatives are needed.

Further as almost half of Indigenous people reside away from their home reserves and communities, language recognition, preservation and revitalization initiatives need to be available wherever Indigenous people reside. The sections in this report regarding the urban situation and strategies merit attention.

The experts at the meeting support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, namely the calls for legislation and a languages commissioner. Formal consultation with those who have achieved results in causing conversational fluency must occur for any legislation that is drafted and any commission that is created. This way they can be relevant remedies to the situation of Indigenous languages. Further, financial guarantees are needed in legislation to ensure that individuals and Indigenous peoples have the financial capacity to recover and revitalize Indigenous languages.

Based upon the premise that all Indigenous languages matter regardless of the number of speakers, the Indigenous language revitalization experts agreed to the following goals and principles.

Goals

Our goal is the recognition, recovery and revitalization of all Indigenous languages in Canada. We aim for Indigenous language medium education for all. We must support each language to create, produce and sustain fluent speakers at all ages, within the necessary legislation, policies, funding and resources.

Principles for Action

1. All decisions and actions for Indigenous language development and implementation must be a collaborative process led by Indigenous language experts and Indigenous people of each Indigenous language.
2. 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. To this end, legislation must be enacted immediately according that right to all Indigenous People. The legislation must, thus, include guarantees of adequate funding to prepare curriculum, train fluent speakers to be immersion teachers, train non-fluent teachers to be speakers, and provide for parallel programs (immersion and non-immersion) in communities where not everyone will opt for immersion. Additionally, funding must be made available for immersion proponents to be involved in the development of this legislation as soon as possible.
3. Funding must be permanent, sustainable and encompassing to support Indigenous people in implementing their homeland language goals and objectives. 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.
4. Our teachings are "we belong to the language"; the language does not belong to us, but we must ensure that the appropriate principles of ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP) apply to Indigenous languages.
5. Indigenous languages in Canada encompass a diversity of worldviews, histories, identities, cultures and knowledges that are vital to the identity of Indigenous peoples, and are intrinsic and inherent in each of the these languages.

6. We envisage legislation that will include a national office of an Indigenous Language Commission with regional offices to support each Indigenous homeland language and will provide a statutory guarantee of the funding necessary to support language revitalization initiatives. We need a coordinated and collaborative approach and investment across all ministries, institutions and organizations.

1. Introduction

a. Dialogue Session on Indigenous Languages

A national dialogue session on Indigenous languages was held June 24-26, 2016 in Victoria, BC. The session was hosted by the First Peoples' Cultural Council who 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. The dialogue was built around four themes concerning Indigenous language: (1) language rights, legislation and policy, (2) community-based revitalization, (3) education, and (4) urban strategies. The recommendations from the three-day session have been used to produce this report which will be submitted to the Department of Canadian Heritage and to the Assembly of First Nations. The report may be used as a starting point for further consultations on the development of a new federal approach to addressing the need for recognition, protection and revitalization of Indigenous languages such as legislation and an Indigenous languages commission. It is our hope that this work will advance the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and several Assembly of First Nations resolutions concerning Indigenous language revitalization.

b. 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 \$37 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.

c. Meeting Design

By hosting the meeting, the First Peoples' Cultural Council endeavoured to build a network of Indigenous specialists from across Canada with expertise in one of the four themes: legislation, community revitalization, education and urban language strategies. The meeting was seen as an opportunity to learn from each other about the good work that is going on across Canada and to develop a report that offers ideas and recommendations for investment in Indigenous languages in Canada. The relationships built through this meeting will be valuable connections for collaboration and the resulting network will be available for future consultation on Indigenous languages.

Only a small group of Indigenous experts was invited to participate so as to be able to engage in intensive deliberation. Resource packages were circulated in advance of the session including research and situation analyses on the above-mentioned topics. Participants were also invited to recommend and share papers, reports and articles in advance of the meeting. The participants were divided into four topic groups, led by experts in the respective areas:

1. Language rights, legislation and policy: Valerie Galley
2. Community-based revitalization: Suzanne Gessner
3. Education: Lorna Williams
4. Urban language strategies: Karihwakeron Tim Thompson

Following small group work, ideas were brought back and shared with the entire group for further discussion and debate.

It is important for Indigenous experts to have the opportunity to meet on the topic of Indigenous languages. Indigenous people are the experts in their languages and they are invested in the revitalization of their languages. Languages are meant to be spoken not just studied. Indigenous communities and community-based language leaders need support systems. Bringing the participants of the dialogue session on Indigenous languages together is a small step towards gathering information on the best investments and required measures to revitalize Indigenous languages in Canada.

2. Situational Analysis of Indigenous Languages in Canada

a. Language Context

- Approximately 60 Indigenous languages in Canada¹
- 10 separate and distinct language families
- Most languages have multiple dialects, often with issues with multiple writing systems
- Only 3 languages account for two-thirds of all mother-tongue language speakers
- Most languages have relatively few fluent speakers
- Most languages are not spoken by children, a key indicator of language survival
- Language and cultural identity are intrinsically linked; maintaining both is an urgent and prime concern for Indigenous peoples in Canada

b. Community Context

- 617 First Nation communities and 53 Inuit communities with many Indigenous people living in urban areas
- According to the 2011 National Household Survey (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2013, p. 4) the Indigenous population was 1,400,685 and included:
 - 697,510 people who are Registered Indian
 - 213,900 people who are Non-Status Indian
 - 59,115 Inuit people
 - 418,380 people who identified as Métis
 - 11,780 people who are identified as “Other Aboriginal” (meaning those who reported more than one identity group or those who reported being a Band member with no Aboriginal identity and no Registered Indian status)
- There is very little language or cultural infrastructure in communities
- Very few people have access to quality language learning
- Much of the data collected on the languages is not held by communities or accessible to communities

c. Context: Indigenous Rights, Legislation & Policy in Canada

Indigenous peoples in what is now Canada have been drawing attention to the state of Indigenous languages and the urgent need to preserve our languages for decades. Indigenous languages recognition, preservation and revitalization has yet to be placed on the Government of Canada’s legislative and policy agenda such that our languages will be maintained now and into the future. This section presents, from a policy perspective, the current political and policy climate.

Over the past few years, certain events have given rise to renewed optimism. On October 19, 2015, the Liberal Party of Canada, led by now Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

¹ The number of Indigenous languages in Canada stated in different sources fluctuates because the division between languages and dialects is not always clear or agreed upon. Some sources list up to 95 languages (e.g., Norris Research, 2016, based on Lewis et al, 2016, Moseley et al, 2010, First Peoples’ Cultural Council, 2016, and census data).

was elected by Canadians to lead a majority government. Indigenous peoples voted in unprecedented numbers in that election. The newly elected federal government has promised to implement the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** which contains several articles that support the recovery, revitalization, preservation and education of and in the Indigenous languages of Canada. In addition, the Ministerial mandate letters, signed by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, made the newly formed federal government's commitment to Indigenous peoples clear, and the commitment to the recognition, preservation and revitalization of Indigenous languages being no exception.

The 2015 letter to the newly appointed Minister of Indigenous Affairs states: "No relationship is more important to me and to Canada than the one with Indigenous Peoples. It is time for a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership" (Trudeau, 2015, para. 7).

The letter to the newly appointed Minister of Canadian Heritage states: "Work in collaboration with the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs to provide new funding to promote, preserve and **enhance Indigenous languages** and cultures" (Trudeau, 2015, para. 15).

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

The current status of Indigenous languages in Canada is a direct result of past government policies.² "The loss of Aboriginal languages was not a product of Aboriginal

² Most notably, the *Indian Act* has affected the status of Indigenous languages. See Norris (2009) for further discussion.

indifference to their languages, but the result of systematic efforts by governments to discourage their use... The present state of affairs is bleak testimony to the efficacy of those policies. This reality generates special duties on governments to help undo what they have done,” stated C. Michael MacMillan in the *Practice of Language Rights in Canada* (1998, p. 185).

All three territories (Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut) and one province (Manitoba) have **legislation** in place that either recognizes or protects Indigenous languages. The *Northwest Territories Official Languages Act* recognizes nine Indigenous languages as official languages and gives them equal status within all institutions of the territorial government. In Nunavut the *Official Languages Act* was adopted and adapted from the NWT legislation when Nunavut was created as a separate territory. In 2008 they created their own *Official Languages Act* and also passed the *Inuit Language Protection Act* which is the only Act in Canada with the specific aim of protecting and revitalizing an Indigenous language. The *Yukon Languages Act* recognizes that Indigenous languages are important to the territory and that efforts should be made to “preserve, develop, and enhance” them. In Manitoba *The Aboriginal Languages Recognition Act* formally recognizes the seven Indigenous languages spoken in that province.

Currently **Bill S-212** short-titled the *Aboriginal Languages of Canada Act* is before the Senate, having completed the First Reading in December 2015. The Bill is sponsored by Senator Serge Joyal and sets out a framework for the formal recognition, preservation, and revitalization of Canada’s Indigenous languages. This is the Senator’s third attempt at having this legislation passed; the first attempt in 2009 and the second in June 2015 stalled after First Reading. At present there is no indication whether this third attempt will succeed where the previous two have not, and it is not a foregone conclusion that this Bill will achieve its stated goals and objectives primarily because of the fact that it is a Senate bill which, due to its origin, cannot address the need for secure and adequate funding.

d. Context: Community-Based Indigenous Language Revitalization

Though Indigenous language statistics may give the impression there is little being done for languages, there are concerted efforts nationwide to maintain and strengthen languages in Indigenous communities despite immense challenges. There is, however, a range of diversity among communities. Some communities have a range of language initiatives at many levels while other communities have none; most communities fall somewhere in between. Governments, funders and linguists have had a huge influence on investments in languages. But only communities can lead the work. The rest of the allies must be there to support and fund the language aspirations of the communities. This section highlights the typical language initiatives found at the community level across Canada.

Language Initiatives: Preschool

Aboriginal Head Start Centres, Daycares and Preschools. Facilities for early childhood education are common in communities throughout Canada. Where language programming is offered, it typically consists of 30-60 minutes per day of circle time where children may learn songs, words or phrases in the language. This format provides language and cultural awareness but does not build fluency in a language.

Language Nests. First developed in New Zealand, a Language Nest provides a full immersion environment to preschool children. All activities are conducted in the Indigenous language. The setting may be in a formal daycare setting or in a home-based environment. The Language Nest model has proven success in creating fluent young speakers.

First Language Acquisition in the Home. Some children are learning their language as a first language in the home from parents, grandparents or other caregivers. We have no information on how many children are acquiring Indigenous languages in the home but this is the best way to learn any language. Returning all Indigenous languages to the home through natural transmission is our hope for the future.

Language Initiatives: Children and Youth

We discuss K-12 initiatives under the education theme in the next section. Outside of the formal education system, the most common language initiatives offered to children and youth are **language and culture camps** and **after-school language programs**. While some of these programs use immersion, most do not, so they tend to develop language and cultural awareness rather than fluency.

Language Initiatives: Adults

Adult Language Classes. Adult language classes are offered in some communities or by neighbouring post-secondary institutions. Most adult classes focus on teaching grammar, words and phrases and do not create fluent speakers, though some more recent post-secondary programs aim to develop fluency (e.g., the University of Victoria's Bachelor of Education in Indigenous Language Revitalization).

Adult Immersion Programs and Camps. While these programs are rare (e.g., Kanien'kéha/Mohawk), intensive programs provide the opportunity for adult second-language learners to develop fluency.

Master/Mentor-Apprentice Language Learning. Developed in California, this method of language learning pairs a fluent speaker with a motivated adult learner. The pair engages in one-on-one language immersion through everyday activities for 10-20 hours/week. The method is used in various places across Canada (e.g., 90 teams in British Columbia since 2008) and can help adults attain functional communicative language fluency.

Language House. A language house is an adult language learning program that uses concentrated immersion. Adults live together with a fluent speaker, or advanced speakers live together, and agree to only use the language in the house. A language house can provide the environment to develop fluency.

Courses for Silent Speakers. Silent speakers may have a good understanding of the language but do not speak it, or they were speakers as children. Indigenous Sami people in Norway and Sweden developed a course using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to help silent speakers overcome language blocks and begin speaking again. This course was offered for the first time in British Columbia in spring 2016 with very positive results.

Everyday Language Use. In some communities, fluent speakers use their languages with other fluent speakers and with learners. However, there are many communities where fluent speakers are not using their languages on an everyday basis.

Language Initiatives: Elders

Elders Groups. Typically, communities may organize a weekly Elders' group where Elders have the opportunity to come together. Depending on the community, this can be an opportunity for fluent speakers to speak in their language with each other. For many communities, Elders are the only fluent speakers in the community. As such, they are often very actively involved in any and all language initiatives.

Status, Evaluation & Awareness

Though there are many community-based language initiatives across Canada, most lack rigorous evaluation processes to evaluate their success. Language immersion is the best evidence-based model for first and second language acquisition, but communities have insufficient capacity to offer many language programs, immersion or otherwise.

We lack adequate baseline statistics on Indigenous language use across Canada. The census provides estimates for some languages but there are challenges with census data.³ Some communities and jurisdictions track this information though typically not on a recurrent basis, thus it is not possible to track progress.

Communities vary widely with respect to attitudes and perceptions about languages, language use and revitalization initiatives. However, it is fair to say that negative attitudes (e.g., shame, perceived value of English, etc.), which developed as a result of colonization, still persist. Attitudes concerning dialect differences pose challenges for effective collaboration. In addition, non-Indigenous communities tend to lack knowledge of local Indigenous languages. For examples, general awareness of Indigenous languages through the use of signage and place names in Indigenous languages is virtually non-existent in most communities in Canada, whether on or off reserve.

Documentation, Archiving & Research

While some languages are fairly well documented, most are not. To our knowledge, very few languages have a proficient system for the archiving of, and for the provision of access to, language data. Some languages have some technological tools for documentation and archiving (e.g., online dictionaries, FirstVoices, apps, etc.). The technological tools that do exist meet the needs of some community members though not others. There has been very little funding for technology tools and though the knowledge and capacity exist to provide the tools, the lack of funding has been a huge barrier to a robust response to community needs. For example, these tools tend to be more useful for fluent or semi-fluent speakers rather than beginners. Some communities collaborate with linguists, anthropologists or educators on linguistic research, documentation or curriculum development and some communities have their own researchers to carry out such work. Ownership of data is a concern as not all communities or Elders that are being recorded have access to data collected by outsiders

³ It is an improvement that the census does ask about regular home use of language now (as of 2001), not just language spoken "most often" at home.

after projects are completed and sometimes are asked to pay for materials and dictionaries. High quality documentation, archiving and research is essential to ensure the continuation of all Indigenous languages.

e. Context: Indigenous Language Education

Education Range

1. Early Childhood: 0 – 3 years of age, family and community programs, health and social programs, infant care, language nests
2. Preschool: 4 – 5 years of age, immersion, language nests, preschool preparation
3. K-12: 5 – 18 years of age. Immersion, integration model, parallel models, multi-ethnic/multilingual model
4. Adult education programs, upgrading programs, employment preparation, post-secondary preparation programs
5. Post-secondary institutions, college, across university disciplines but largely focussed on education, linguistics, second language acquisition, social programs
6. Community and land-based language learning programs

Issues, Challenges and Possibilities

1. Management, planning and funding are fragmented across ministries in both federal and provincial governments which are not designed to work in a coordinated fashion. This fragmentation of administration and funding has resulted in lack of a comprehensive approach to supporting Indigenous language revitalization. For example, there is limited funding for language programs in schools, with very limited funding for community activities and for adult learners which has led to isolation of the school programs.
2. Indigenous languages in Canada are categorized as 'other'; only English and French are 'official' which negatively affects instruction of Indigenous languages in every educational institution.
3. Indigenous peoples in Canada are multicultural and multilingual trying to thrive in a country that is committed to universalism and denial of difference.
4. The Indigenous peoples in Canada are mobile and make their homes in both their homelands and away in diverse communities and urban areas. While many maintain a connection to their homelands, government policies have forced a division amongst all the Indigenous peoples in Canada and caused displacement and disconnection.
5. People working on Indigenous language revitalization in institutions must weave and negotiate many contexts, such as the traditional world, the contemporary western oriented world, and the decolonization of colonized historical relations.
6. The institutions in charge of credentials and education do not take into account the needs and requirements of Indigenous language communities to revitalize, preserve, promote, recover, maintain their languages.
7. Funding must be structured so that it is sustained, continuous, and comprehensive for language recovery, revitalization, and maintenance. The piecemeal approach to funding short-term projects can continue, but not as the sole method for supporting Indigenous language development.
8. Language programming must take a multi-levelled approach: language learning for every age and every level of language ability.

9. Unlike teachers of other classroom subjects, Indigenous language teachers rarely have the luxury of being able to order curriculum and materials from catalogues or bookstores, but must develop all their own resources. As one teacher commented, “There’s not a big box of curriculum, everything we’re having to develop on our own, mostly, as we go”. Furthermore, most Indigenous language teachers are not provided with sufficient time to prepare curriculum and resources within their paid work days, and are expected to do this work on their own time.
10. Current and future language teachers need to learn about the process of building curriculum. More specifically, printed materials such as books and visual materials, preferably with accompanying audio CDs or DVDs, were identified by teachers as a need. This also brings up the need for training and technical support in areas such as audio recording and computer technology. Addressing these needs must be part of teacher development and professional development programming.
11. Indigenous school language teachers are working on so many fronts – teaching, curriculum development, language documentation, and so on – that learning more about technology often falls to the bottom of their priority lists. There is a need for more support people to learn about technology to assist language teachers and Elders. Language teachers should not be expected to add extensive technological training to their already busy schedules, but rather, just learn about the aspects of technology that will help them to do their existing work better – for example, using computers to create teaching materials more quickly than hand-drawing them. One community language program regularly brings in technically-savvy younger people to language projects, partnered one-on-one with fluent Elders. While the young people support their Elders by helping them with recording technology, the Elders share their language and cultural expertise with the youth. This excellent model could be well applied in many community language revitalization and documentation programs across the province. With appropriate funding, a similar model could be developed for Indigenous schools, with recent graduates or senior students hired as technical support people for Indigenous language teachers and Elders in the school.
12. Technology can play an important role in supporting language revitalization, but zeal for the latest gadgets can also distract from the real purpose of language revitalization: bringing spoken language back into use in family and community contexts. In two communities, language teachers, Elders and fluent speakers expressed sadness that they were being “replaced by technology”, because their Nation had embraced digital language archiving so enthusiastically. While communities should continue to be encouraged to make use of technological supports for language learning, the provincial organizations which support language revitalization should also pause to consider the reminder these Elders provided: for true revival of a language in all aspects of family and community life, a multi-faceted approach is needed. Technology is only one part of language revitalization.
13. Indigenous language teachers require: (a) teaching expertise in language learning pedagogy, Indigenous pedagogy, certification, and language teaching experience; (b) language fluency (both oral and literacy) and cultural expertise.
14. School administrators in both public and Indigenous schools do not have a background in Indigenous language revitalization so don’t include it in planning, nor do they provide the support that teachers need. They tend to leave it to the language teachers. They also feel it is a community responsibility not a school responsibility, although they have greater access to funds for language.

15. Put into place a provincial position to lead, manage and coordinate Aboriginal language learning and development in the public schools to support districts implementing and developing programs. Resources need to be coordinated between federal and provincial language strategies and programs.
16. Develop and implement a plan to counter the negative view of Aboriginal languages amongst school communities and Indigenous communities, such as the belief that learning an Aboriginal language is primitive, dying, extinct and can impede learning English, and the belief that the Indigenous languages in Canada are not useful and important to employment or living in contemporary world.
17. Each school district identify a leader in the district with the responsibility of the Indigenous language program development and implementation. This will ensure long-range planning and consistent and continuous district leadership. This position will coordinate and collaborate with the Indigenous schools and communities, early childhood programs and parents to make certain the public school is supporting the overall goal for the Indigenous language program.
18. Design and implement an Indigenous language program, guided by the appropriate policy and policy amendments, from Kindergarten to Grade 12 that is accredited and recognized in all requisite institutions, particularly post-secondary institutions, with the goal of recovering, regenerating, revitalizing and maintaining the Indigenous languages of this land. This means that attention should be paid specifically to Indigenous languages and their needs and that Indigenous language programs should not be designed based on second language templates.
19. Dedicated, sustainable and consistent funding for Indigenous language and development programs from development to implementation is required. This should include funds to initiate and develop an Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) K - 12 and provide funding for teacher salaries that take into account preparation time for the teacher as well as teaching and giving advice to the school and district. Funding must be for resource development, curriculum development, lesson planning, and engagement with parents, families and community.
20. Funding is necessary to support: (a) resource development, language documentation, archiving, resource collection and coordination. There are multiple sites housing language resources that need to be identified and coordinated for use in language learning. (b) community use of the language and increase parent language-learning to support their children, and (c) connecting language learning to the land and multiple language domains.
21. Take into account that some districts have more than one Indigenous homeland language in their geographic area and so they require support and necessary resources to carry out their responsibility. Some districts also share a language with a neighbouring district and structures are required to share language resources and teachers to avoid duplication and stress on the community to support two separate programs.
22. Develop a program in post-secondary institutions to increase certified Indigenous language teachers who are fluent in their language, can read and write in their language, are knowledgeable in language instruction that is based on an Indigenous

worldview and suitable for language recovery and revitalization, and are able to create language lessons from resources available to them. Work with certifying and credentialing bodies to ensure that the graduates' certifications are recognized as equal to other teachers in the province.

Program Needs from a Community Perspective

- Long term, sustainable, predictable and dedicated funding
- Clear plan for recruitment and retention of language teachers
- Appropriate facilities for teachers, language nests, and adult immersion programs
- Developed plan around collaboration between language and culture and all other subject matters
- Solving disconnect between school and community in planning and funding
- Professional development for teachers and administrators
- Federal, provincial and community support
- Qualified fluent and literate language teachers
- Curriculum development and learning resources
- Both western and Indigenous classroom management strategies
- Work with special education learners
- Parents need to learn the language as well
- Lack of adult language programs
- Incoming students who are not familiar with the language
- We need to develop a common vision
- Lack of fluent speakers
- Teacher not fluent in language

Culture in Language Learning

- Cultural practices are the most common settings for Indigenous language use in the community. Key words and phrases and spoken language are heard during cultural practices.
- Cultural practices are organized in the school. Opening prayers, celebrations, feasts, potlatches.
- Culture camps and seasonal ceremonies.
- Relationship and community building in laying the groundwork for language learning, particularly in a land-based, cultural setting.
- The worldview is distorted when confined only to an institutional setting in a curriculum designed for exposure only. Because the curriculum is often based on a second language template for learning English or French, the language is understood through those other languages and leads to misinterpretations and misuse of concepts in the language. For example, when students are asking for translations from English, such as English idioms, the language is learned from the English perspective.
- When teaching the language, it is important to consider where the language will be used. Where will students hear the language? Do they have opportunities to use the language with their family or in the community? Where would they learn from speakers and Elders in the community? Curriculum needs to be connected to real-life communicative settings, possibly by teaching in 'themes' such as language used for meal times, canoeing, and ceremonies.

- When designing lessons it is important to think about where language is heard in the community and create language learning topics around these spaces.
- In one community, a land-based learning program was implemented to address the needs of specific students, but the experience has shown how well it works for all learners. Land-based learning benefits all students because their learning is embedded in their language and culture.
- Land-based learning experiences should not be an 'add-on' to the curriculum. Instead, it should be made a practice in the curriculum because it provides opportunities to learn through a strong cultural lens.
- There are aspects of the language that require the belief systems surrounding that language to be built into the lesson in which they are being taught, such as acknowledging the ancestors and the land. This is not accepted in the public school but it is an important part of life.
- Include parents, guardians and families in school age children's language learning.

What Works and Supports Language Education?

- Community programs on language acquisition, using multiple strategies, e.g., parent/infant programs provide motivation and support for parents to learn the language so that infant children hear the Indigenous language first. The participation of parents in a language nest alongside their children and fluent speakers, for example, can be a motivating factor for parents to increase their fluency level.
- Language, culture and community champion fostering and mentoring and guidance. Working together for a common goal. Developing teams to work together on curriculum with speakers, artists and educators.
- Physical evidence of the presence of the language in the community through signs, media, and public speaking activities helps provide a supportive environment.
- Overarching leadership and administration of language that includes all levels of education in schools and community – partnerships, sharing, long-range planning, language promotion, networking across languages and between dialects of a language.
- Programs and services that begin with deep understanding and observation, listening to what is needed in the communities as articulated by people in the field which result in changing or modifying institutional structures to meet the needs and goals of the communities.

f. Context: Indigenous Languages in Urban Areas

The people who speak Indigenous languages in Canada live both on reserves and in urban and rural communities. According to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, in 2014 48% of registered Indians, or 448,163 people out of a total of 936,225, reside off-reserve (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2015). In addition, there are non-status Indians, Metis, and Inuit people residing in urban and rural areas. There are significant Indigenous population centres in towns and cities throughout Canada.⁴

⁴ See Norris & Clatworthy (2011) for an analysis of urbanization and migration patterns of Indigenous populations in Canada.

Living in urban and rural areas among speakers of languages other than Indigenous languages does have consequences. The 2011 Census found that mother tongue speakers of Indigenous languages were more likely to use the language in the home when living in an area with other speakers of the mother tongue, while they were less likely to use the language in the home when living in an area with low proportions of people reporting speaking in their mother tongue (Statistics Canada, 2015). Although there are known challenges in use and acquisition of First Nations languages on reserve, there are additional challenges when families relocate or reside in communities where the First Nations language is not widely used.

Despite jurisdictional disputes between the federal government and the provincial government over spending responsibility for First Nations peoples residing off-reserve, there is a continually growing Indigenous service capacity in towns and cities. For example, there are 118 Friendship Centres located in every province and territory. There are Native women's locals, Aboriginal Head Start programs, daycares, urban housing associations, employment and training organizations, justice circles, and business development groups. Indigenous focused education organizations within public school boards or within colleges and universities are also getting more involved in direct service provision within urban Indigenous communities.

Many of these organizations offer introductory language programs from time to time. These are the types of programs where people of all ages can come to learn basic greetings and terms that one might find in everyday conversation. These are programs designed to create awareness of the language, and promote community. These are different programs than the Native-As-A-Second Language programs offered by many school districts. Community-based language awareness programs are not expensive to run, often rely on short term resources, and are rarely accredited.

One of the unique challenges faced by Indigenous service providers in many towns and cities is determining which languages to support. For instance, in large urban centres, there may be large concentrations of Indigenous peoples from many different language groups. It is often a challenge for service providers to determine where to allocate scarce financial and human resources.

The new federal government has made a stated commitment to improve relationships with Indigenous peoples, primarily by implementing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. (See Appendix B for a summary of the recommendations from these documents with specific reference to Indigenous languages, as well as selected recommendations from the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures, 2005.) The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has called for a federal law to support Indigenous languages, and the creation of an office, an Aboriginal Language Commissioner, to promote Indigenous languages and report on the adequacy of federal funding. Implementing these recommendations would raise several questions with respect to Indigenous languages in urban areas, as follows.

Should a federal law recognizing Indigenous languages be applicable off-reserve or is this the responsibility of the provinces and territories? Our languages are not limited by reserve boundaries and provincial boundaries. Any law recognizing Indigenous languages and mandating funding to protect and revitalize Indigenous languages should be made applicable on and off-reserve.

What are the implications for lack of cross-jurisdictional partnerships, collaboration and responsibilities between federal and provincial governments for those who do not live on their language homelands? For example, Cree speakers are the largest speaker group in British Columbia, especially in urban communities, but the needs of these speakers cannot necessarily be met by the Cree language resources developed in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. There are important roles for provincial and territorial governments and First Nations governments, but federal legislation and funding will provide the foundation upon which to build subsequent partnerships.

What needs to happen to increase the number of speakers of Indigenous languages among people residing in towns and cities? Indigenous peoples off-reserve require equitable opportunities to engage in language revitalization initiatives. The revitalization of Indigenous languages cannot tolerate the imposition of funding barriers created by federal and provincial jurisdictional disputes.

What are the off-reserve dimensions which need to be considered in the implementation of the TRC recommendations? For example, there is often a lack of language learning resources accessible off-reserve. How can these issues be addressed? Is there additional capacity required to support language learning in towns and cities? There are capacity issues both on and off-reserve which more often than not require additional funding, in addition to collaboration between various jurisdictions and service providers.

What are the types of initiatives which can be implemented in cities and towns to educate the general public about Indigenous languages? The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has demonstrated that public education is critical for enabling change.

3. Successes, Challenges, Findings and Recommendations

A three-day meeting does not permit time for a detailed examination of all aspects of concerning Indigenous languages in Canada. However, the working group accomplished much over three days and arrived at consensus on a number of recommendations. Here we provide a summary sample of successes, challenges, findings and recommendations that arose during the four themed discussion groups at the meeting.

a. Indigenous Rights, Legislation & Policy in Canada

Recommendations

Regarding human rights, constitutional obligations, legislation and policy, the key recommendation calls on Canada to implement the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action* (see Section 2c) regarding Indigenous languages on an urgent basis, particularly those regarding state recognition such as an Aboriginal Languages Act and the Languages Commissioner. Legislation is needed for several reasons among which are the following:

1. Long-term, sustained, predictable and equitable funding guarantees are needed for revitalization, recovery, preservation and education initiatives and activities which lead to fluency.
2. The revitalization, recovery, preservation and education of and in **all languages matters** including secondarily surviving languages (i.e., languages which are being revived from documentation and archives, or languages which are spoken primarily by adult second language learners).
3. Establishing the Indigenous languages of what is now Canada as **living languages** stands as the explicitly stated objective of the Indigenous peoples.
4. Flexibility regarding funding is needed.
5. All Indigenous children have a right to mother-tongue-medium education regardless of residence. Despite gains, internationally, in human rights through the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other international human rights instruments as well as constitutional recognition of existing Aboriginal and treaty rights domestically, the education systems in Canada have not made mother-tongue-medium education available to Indigenous children and young people as a matter of their human rights.
6. Jurisdictional impasses exist between the federal and provincial governments and also in relation to the school boards where the provision of education in Indigenous languages is concerned. It is hoped that legislation could address these impasses such that education in Indigenous languages is provided on a widespread basis with the intention of creating fluency among first and second language speakers.

The experts who gathered were not opposed to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, namely the calls for legislation and a languages commissioner. Should legislation and a commission be created, we recommend that a formal consultation process of those who work in and have achieved results in causing fluency is needed. Legislative

recognition in and of itself is not enough; guaranteed and adequate funding for capacity to revitalize Indigenous languages is critical.

Further, we recommend that Section 23 of Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms regarding minority language rights warrants further examination and legal credence with respect to the recognition, preservation and revitalization of Indigenous languages. For example, the right to be educated in one’s Indigenous language should be recognized similarly to the right of Canadians to be educated in either the French or English language.

b. Community-Based Indigenous Language Revitalization

Goals, Challenges and Possibilities

The situation of languages is very diverse across Canada: for some revitalization is needed, for others maintenance is needed. The discussion of the working group on community-based language revitalization was framed around the need to **shift** from language initiatives that develop awareness or basic knowledge of a language to those that develop language fluency. Our goal is to recreate our languages as living languages for the whole community. The working group explored challenges, successes and possibilities at the community level. The four main themes that emerged in the sessions on community-based revitalization concerned **(i) attitudes and community engagement, (ii) language planning, (iii) immersion programming, assessment and evaluation** and **(iv) knowledge sharing**. These are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Challenges and Possibilities

Challenges	Recommendations
<i>Attitudes & Community Engagement</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Lack of confidence to speak by all. –Persistent shame about language. –Negative attitudes towards revitalization efforts. –Lack of community engagement. –Lack of individual commitment to learn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –National communications/education campaign about the importance and value of Indigenous languages. Spread message that the languages are living languages. –Community-based education efforts to combat stigma, shame and negative attitudes. –Bilingual signage and unilingual Indigenous signage to create recognition and increased status of Indigenous languages. –Hold professional development opportunities to develop teachings in a good way. –Language for all: individual funding should be available (e.g., bursaries, stipends) for dedicated individuals to learn their language.
<i>Language Planning</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Lack of goal-specific strategic planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Development of community action plans for each language and community, which can be subsets of a community, on or off-reserve. –Facilitators are needed to assist communities. Community training and development in strategic language planning;

	setting clear goals with performance-based measurable targets. Assessment is easy when goals are clear.
<i>Immersion Programming, Assessment & Evaluation</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Immersion not offered. –Communities often don't know effective programs to meet their current needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Education & training needed for communities to move toward immersion. –Increased fluency development for teachers and potential teachers. –National framework model (a straightforward guide) for communities to assess themselves against the model and then select best options for revitalization. Model would provide a continuum of community action, a prescribed framework with a progress chart.⁵ –Communities need to determine actions for themselves. Need to find a way for everyone to succeed (idea of individualized learning plans into language system).
–Immersion programs not meeting full immersion standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Staff delivering immersion programs need to be trained in second language teaching and learning with a focus on immersion. –Staff and community members also need to understand why they are doing immersion to understand the importance of not slipping into English. –Immersion programs should be isolated from English stream programs. –Programs must be regularly and rigorously evaluated, possibly by an external organization.
–Lack of fluency assessment in immersion programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Develop or adapt assessments such as ACTFL model for adults (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages). –Staff need training in how to effectively assess.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Lack of continuity of immersion programs. –Lack of immersion for adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Immersion programs must reach from preschool to adulthood. –Young parents and adults of child-bearing age are an especially important group to target. (They will speak to their children or future children.) Incentive payments could be offered (like a job training program or education grants. –Community needs to control own education.
–Lack of baseline data on languages and language programming at community level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Baseline data could be collected on a national level, including types of programs offered in each community. –Communities need to be consulted about priorities when it comes to funding.

⁵ The model could build on existing vitality scales such as those proposed by the UNESCO Ad hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages (2003).

<i>Sharing & Collaboration</i>	
<p>Communities lack information on how to implement effective programs and policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Communities need to collaborate with other communities sharing the same language. –Communities want to connect with different language communities to learn and share. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Language Institute: one place where communities can go to obtain information on different types of programming and information on each language (clearinghouse), receive specific types of training and share resources with each other (knowledge mobilization) and may also include an archive of language materials.⁶ –Clearinghouse information should be easily accessible online; possibly also incorporated into existing models such as the Languages Map (Norris Research, 2016). It should be tracked to determine usage numbers and location of users. –Autonyms should be sought and used. –FirstVoices is a collaborative and cost-effective way to collect, share and maintain ownership of language information and data; it also builds capacity in language technology and recording. It could become a national program with further development and increased funding. –Hold regular national and regional conferences or meetings to foster collaboration and sharing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Multiple levels of coordination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Health, social development, training and education departments need to align for language programming. Different levels of government and departments within government need to better coordinate. –Language should be integrated into all programming (e.g., prenatal, nutrition programs, youth programs, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Uncoordinated efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Multiple communities with the same language should work together where possible on an overall strategy instead of each community working in isolation. –It shouldn't be documentation vs. fluency programs; both should be part of the same effort.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Issues with different dialects of the same language collaborating with each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Accept differences but emphasize need to collaborate. –Immersion-based resources using pictures can be easily shared across dialects. –Develop advisory and networking committees with a mandate to share resources (must be funded).

Recommendations Specific to the Aboriginal Languages Initiative (ALI) Program

The Aboriginal Languages Initiative (ALI), through the Department of Canadian Heritage, supports the preservation and revitalization of Indigenous languages through community-based projects and activities. The renewed program must fund activities, programs and initiatives which lead to fluency while also being flexible in its approach. A

⁶ It is important to distinguish that the idea of a Languages Commission (Section 2c) and a Language Institute are two very different things with different purposes. Any new structures which are created should be more overarching than less. For example, a clearinghouse can be housed within an institute.

formal consultation process of those who work in and have achieved results in creating fluency is needed. The working group discussed some specific suggestions that would improve the program from a community perspective. First, a continuous application process would be preferable to once-a-year deadlines, and funding that is not tied to the fiscal year would be beneficial for most programs since language programs do not typically run on a fiscal-year basis. Multi-year funding is important to the success of many language initiatives. The application process is difficult; communities often have to forfeit quality to meet tight deadlines. It would be helpful to decrease the turnaround time from application to implementation. Activity and financial reports should not create an undue burden on language program staff but rather act to support local program activities and desired outcomes. Finally, it would be advantageous to have the opportunity to deliver programs in collaboration with other communities. Currently the model encourages competition over collaboration.

The working group had some discussion regarding possible new funding models, including one national body (e.g., Aboriginal Healing Foundation-type model), an Aboriginal Language and Culture Centre model (from the recommendation of the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures), a regional model (e.g., First Peoples' Cultural Council), a language family or language-based model or an Indigenous language commission plus Indigenous language agency (e.g., Māori model). There are positive and negative aspects to each of these models; further consultation is recommended.

c. Indigenous Language Education

Framework for costing, approach and responsibility

DIRECTION	APPROACH	RESPONSIBILITY
Policy and legislation	<p>Reviewing all certifications, policies (with respect to legal recognition and statutory funding) to support Indigenous language needs, such language curriculum and language learning policies, Teachers Regulation Board.</p> <p>Identify the policies required to revitalize, recover and maintain languages in all areas of governance and service.</p>	<p>Federal government</p> <p>Provincial and territorial governments</p> <p>Language Commissioner</p> <p>Tribes/First Nations/Homeland language</p> <p>Community</p>
Planning	A homeland language includes all the communities who share a common language, includes multiple dialects of that language. Establish a language authority to work together to rebuild language in all areas of the communities such as community language, school programs, land-based	<p>Homeland language</p> <p>Language family</p> <p>Intercommunity</p> <p>School district</p> <p>School</p> <p>First Nations school</p>

<p>live in their language homelands.</p>	<p>programs for all ages. Represents all communities of a language, makes all the decision for language work, is the centre of decision-making for language revitalization, recovery, maintenance.</p>	<p>Governments Provincial Indigenous organizations Provincial institutions, service organizations Language Commissioner</p>
<p>Funding</p> <p>Funding that is guaranteed in law, long-term, sustainable, predictable, and comprehensive to meet the overall goal to recover, revitalize and maintain all Indigenous languages in Canada.</p>	<p>School districts Schools First Nations schools Community language learning programs Adult language learning programs Off reserve language learning programs Post-secondary: research, teacher education, linguistics Scholarships/Bursaries</p>	<p>Federal government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● INAC ● Canadian Heritage <p>Provincial and territorial governments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Health ● Social Services ● Aboriginal Relations
<p>Documentation, archiving, resources</p> <p>Each language is at differing states of development. Resources are scattered amongst individuals in communities, linguists, anthropologists, lands and resources, treaty offices, political organizations, libraries, universities, museums, government offices, these need to be collected, digitized, organized, and made accessible and protected.</p>	<p>Dictionaries, glossaries, wordlists, print and online Recordings Language archives, clearinghouse Curriculum Teaching materials Technology Language extensions (neologisms) Non-language specific resources</p>	<p>Federal government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Canadian Heritage ● INAC <p>Provincial and territorial governments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education ● Treaty offices ● Health ● Social services ● Advanced Education ● Aboriginal Relations
<p>Language-as-a-subject programming</p> <p>Guides and templates need to be developed to offer classes at all age levels, grades and ages.</p> <p>At this time there is no place for teaching Indigenous languages in universities.</p>	<p>Early childhood, age 0-3 Preschool, age 4-5 K-12, age 6-18 Adults, 18+ Post-secondary Distance learning, courses away from homeland language</p>	<p>Federal government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● INAC <p>Provincial and territorial governments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education ● Advanced Education ● Social Services ● Health

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Relations
<p>Immersion language programming</p> <p>Learn from existing immersion programs, expand them, and make provisions and guides for the establishment of immersion programs in every homeland language.</p>	<p>Early childhood, age 0-3</p> <p>Preschool, age 4-5</p> <p>K-12, age 6-18</p> <p>Adults, 18+</p> <p>Post-secondary</p> <p>Distance learning, courses away from homeland language</p>	<p>Federal government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INAC <p>Provincial and territorial governments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Health • Social services • Advanced Education • Aboriginal Relations
<p>Teacher education, preparation, training and professional development</p> <p>Develop and implement teacher education degrees that take into account the needs of the recovery, revitalization and maintenance of Indigenous languages. Partner with homeland languages to implement.</p>	<p>Teacher Education: Bachelors, Masters and PhD</p> <p>Teacher Certification, Professional degrees</p> <p>In-service and professional development</p> <p>FN language proficiency development and literacy development</p> <p>Materials and curriculum development</p> <p>Linguistics and program training</p> <p>Early Childhood, daycare programs</p>	<p>Federal government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INAC • Canadian Heritage <p>Homeland Language Authority</p> <p>SSHRC</p> <p>Provincial and territorial Governments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Education • Education • Universities, colleges
<p>Supporting domains of language use</p> <p>Build into all language programs opportunities to use the language in every part of the community and homeland language.</p>	<p>Home, family</p> <p>Workplace</p> <p>School</p> <p>Community – ceremonies, gatherings, speakers</p> <p>Social activities</p> <p>Government</p> <p>Land</p> <p>Cultural activities</p>	<p>INAC</p> <p>Canadian Heritage</p> <p>Homeland Language Authority</p> <p>Provincial, territorial and municipal governments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood • Band councils • Early childhood • Health • Social services • Aboriginal relations • Lands and resources
<p>Awareness and promotion</p> <p>Reverse the stigma that Indigenous languages have</p>	<p>Community Mobilization</p> <p>Advocacy</p>	<p>Government of Canada</p> <p>Homeland language authority</p>

that they are of no value and hamper the learning of other languages.	Promotion of language use Visibility	Regional provincial organizations, institutions Provincial and territorial governments Municipalities
Media and communication Make all the languages present in all media.	Radio Television Social media Newspapers Websites Magazines Community communications	INAC Canadian Heritage CBC NFB APTN

d. Indigenous Languages in Urban Areas

First Nations people listed as status Indians on the federal registry reside in almost equal numbers on reserve (52%) and in towns and cities throughout Canada (48%). 448,163 people out of a total of 936,225 reside off-reserve. These are individuals who may already be speakers of First Nations languages, or they could be considered potential speakers of First Nations languages. First Nations languages should have no artificial boundaries.

The working group emphasized that Indigenous languages convey our worldviews, philosophies, and our relationships to the world around us. This helps us in understanding our world and our place in it. A healing process is inherent in the learning of the language and the strengthening of identity.⁷

Successes

In addition to language classes occurring in urban agencies such as Friendship Centres and Native Women’s Centres, and Native-As-A-Second Language programs in public schools, there were other types of noteworthy initiatives. The working group noted that while the initiatives themselves were important, the unintended consequences of the initiatives were almost as important.

A Mentor-Apprentice program requires only two people, a speaker and a person willing to learn, and is not restricted by residence. In the example provided from British Columbia, the apprentice noted that this facilitated the building of a relationship with an elder from the home community who had been living in an urban community for decades. In addition, as friends and colleagues became aware of the initiative, a small circle of language learners formed around the mentor and apprentice. They now meet regularly to learn the language.

⁷ Beyond the strengthening of identity, there are documented positive physical health effects of Indigenous language use; see for example Whalen et al (2016).

A summer teacher training institute in Alberta has operated for more than a decade to train language teachers. Over time, the initiative has grown beyond the Faculty of Education to include the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Native Studies. Corporate partners are also involved. From teacher training, the initiative now includes traditional crafts and an immersion program for children. It has become a safe space for language speakers, where there is mutual support and social reinforcement of the importance of the language. The working group noted other examples of language initiatives which include the learning of traditional skills, ceremonies, and connection to the land. These activities also help build networks, strengthen family and community, and are important components of language learning.

Sometimes the urban community can provide a more supportive environment for learners to engage in the language than in a reserve community. There can be a stronger desire to learn when one is away from the home language community. It can also provide an important connection to culture and identity. It was noted that introductory language courses, such as those offered by urban community organizations, can open up possibilities for individuals who may never have had an opportunity to hear or otherwise learn the language. It can start them on their path to strengthening their identity and begin a healing path. These are potential speakers.

Challenges

The working group identified that one of the biggest challenges facing Indigenous individuals in urban environments is the act of surviving. The ongoing struggle to meet material needs is made even more difficult by the daily struggle against colonialism.

Jurisdictional disputes between the federal and provincial government are never helpful when the needs of First Nations people off-reserve are at stake. In addition, disputes over scarce resources occur between First Nations governments, their organizations, and urban organizations which can often limit the ability of urban organizations to deliver services. If resources are provided both on and off-reserve, conflict is minimized. Communication in First Nations languages is a unifying force which can potentially overcome some of the political and structural barriers which have been imposed on First Nations people.

There is no particular funding pot to enable Indigenous language acquisition and maintenance in urban settings. Funding for language programs is scarce, but should it become available it should enable reconnection to the land and to traditional skills. Ideally new initiatives should be results oriented, geared towards attaining community and individual language goals.

It is important for the language homelands to ensure accessibility to the off-reserve population. For example, by making learning resources available, or by hosting summer learning programs when it is possible for some of the off-reserve population to attend.

Language teachers can be in short supply both on and off-reserve. It is a challenge which must be addressed through language teacher programs.

Physical space to hold language classes can be a challenge in urban centres. Politics can be an issue in accessing space, and costs can be prohibitive. Some allies in reconciliation may be helpful in addressing this issue.

The diversity of Indigenous languages is a gift, but it can also be a challenge when there are scarce resources to determine which languages to offer in urban centres. Some

agencies are challenged by trying not to be seen as endorsing one language over another. Other challenges include addressing the needs of language groups who are some distance from their homeland.

Technology creates more opportunities for language learning. For example, the Facetime application on an I-pad, or Skype, are useful for connecting with mentors. Facebook is used by various language groups to coordinate activities, and for online deliberation over words and phrases. Language applications for portable devices are evolving in complexity and are becoming a useful means of learning introductory words and phrases. YouTube is a valuable tool for live action and animated videos in Indigenous languages. Movies and cartoons have been dubbed into Indigenous languages, and language immersion schools are filming their own plays/movies. It is important to remember that a telephone can enable a conversation in the language.

Accessibility is a key principle for First Nations people off reserve and language revitalization. There is a need to access to language learning resources, language teachers, and language learning programs.

Urban Language Strategies: What do we need to support, develop, and build?

This section reports on the session where we imagined possible Indigenous language initiatives and supports in urban/off-reserve areas if barriers were removed. For example, it was suggested that each public school setting in towns and cities could offer Indigenous language immersion. Friendship centres could offer adult immersion programs and language nests where appropriate. Mentor-apprenticeship programs could be offered widely. It is important to show respect for the historic Indigenous languages of each locale, even if other Indigenous languages may now have more speakers in that region.

Language learning and teaching resources would be available to those who need it through regional/language family-based clearinghouses. These entities could be linked electronically to a national clearinghouse and could promote Indigenous languages and enable access to learning materials and programs. Some First Nations Cultural Centres serve this purpose at the moment for some languages. The need for language clearinghouses should be distinguished from repositories which house cultural information, until such time First Nations determine the conditions of access.

There is a need for more language teacher training initiatives. Additionally, there is a need for improved language teacher training initiatives which are geared towards creating new speakers of the language.

Youth energy is a driving force for language revitalization. It needs to be encouraged. For example, some youth independently started a language house where they meet and engage in language learning activities. It is important to nurture language communities, wherever there are Indigenous people.

Language communities require the opportunity to develop language plans. These should be funded and they should be supported to attain their desired outcomes. Building capacity is critical. Support for language activators/navigators, people with experience in community development and who can help initiative language plans, could help address the capacity needs.

The working group identified incentives for language acquisition programs. For example, students who want to take language immersion programs are often faced with the dilemma of losing their place in the queue for post-secondary funding. One option is to

change the guidelines for the Post-Secondary Student Support Program to ensure the students who participate in language immersion not only receive funding, but are also rewarded for continuing their post-secondary studies. Conditions for tenure in a university can prioritize Indigenous language acquisition, and language programs can be built into academic programs at universities. Workplaces can make Indigenous language acquisition a key component of career advancement.

There are significant data challenges on and off-reserve with respect to Indigenous languages. Some communities may not be aware of the true state of their language, of the number of people who may hold particular dialects or ceremonial language for example. It is important for homeland languages to collect data to ensure they understand the true state of their languages.

Another capacity need is to have a handbook for leadership to provide evidence-based knowledge to inform leaders about the state of Indigenous languages, the existing policy, program, and legislative opportunities and impediments, and the funding challenges. The handbook can include recommendations on changes that are required to ensure Indigenous languages receive necessary recognition and support. It should provide speaking notes and reference academic resources.

In addition, the working group felt that an academic project is required which sets out the theoretical foundations for why Indigenous languages need to be revitalized.

While it is important to be aware of the wide variety of initiatives across Canada geared towards language revitalization, it is also important to keep in mind that one size does not fit all. For example, the creation of capacity in one region or one language family to support language may not be appropriate for another region or language family.

It is critical to promote Indigenous languages. Signs such as billboards in public places are encouraging. Interpretive markers, and issuing names for places in Indigenous languages and street signs are other ways of promoting Indigenous languages, while also reclaiming our spaces. The idea of reclaiming space in urban centres is important. Indigenous people need community environments where it is safe to practice and showcase our cultures and identities. Another way to do this is through art.

It is important to connect with Indigenous people caught up in the justice system and in the social services system. They require opportunities to learn their language, and some may be resources to be able to assist others in learning language.

Ultimately, learners need financial support to be able to take the time to acquire their language.

Going Further into Urban Strategies for Language Revitalization

The working group identified the need for a broad level language coordinating authority which could provide an access point for learners and service providers to gain access to Indigenous languages. Language learners could access programs to suit their needs, service providers could access interpreters and translators, and workplaces could access resources to enable language transmission. One window access to Indigenous languages could help better coordinate service provision and ensure access to a range of programs.

Language activators for each language community will facilitate the building of relationships and the development of language plans. This is essential capacity to build upon.

There should be no political or jurisdictional barriers to First Nations language communities off-reserve engaging in language revitalization. Jordan's Principle is a model for ensuring urban access to language initiatives. Reserves should not be threatened by language initiatives off-reserve. Parties engaging in language programming should have a respectful approach with regard to those of the same language family engaging in language revitalization activities.

There are numerous ways language revitalization can be incorporated into other learning activities. For example, there are nutrition education programs for parents in some schools which utilize Indigenous languages. Food security programs that provide access to traditional foods could incorporate Indigenous languages. Learning ceremonial speeches is critical for carrying out Indigenous rituals, and is often a starting point for gaining language fluency.

Fluency needs to be a primary objective for any new initiative. There is a connection between fluency and worldview which is essential to our identity as peoples. Language learning activities can incorporate the stories of our peoples, our histories, place names, and rituals. These stories, rituals, and place names allow us to understand and, where necessary, reconstruct, who we are as original people.

Indigenous languages currently have a lesser status in law than English and French. As a consequence, in public schools our languages can only be treated as second languages. This does not support fluency. Immersion programs are key to ensuring the recovery of our languages.

A national law which recognizes Indigenous languages and the right to be educated in Indigenous languages would overcome many of the legal and policy barriers which are now in place. An Indigenous language commissioner provides the potential to ensure that a national law is implemented in a meaningful way that achieves its intended results.

4. Goals and Principles for Action

Goals and principles for action were put forward by the education working group and were revised and agreed upon by all participants in the dialogue session.

a. Goals

Our goal is the recognition, recovery and revitalization of all Indigenous languages in Canada. We aim for Indigenous language medium education for all. We must support each language to create, produce and sustain fluent speakers at all ages, within the necessary legislation, policies, funding and resources.

b. Principles for Action

1. All decisions and actions for Indigenous language development and implementation must be a collaborative process led by Indigenous language experts and Indigenous people of each Indigenous language.
2. 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. To this end, legislation must be enacted immediately according that right to all Indigenous People. The legislation must, thus, include guarantees of adequate funding to prepare curriculum, train fluent speakers to be immersion teachers, train non-fluent teachers to be speakers, and provide for parallel programs (immersion and non-immersion) in communities where not everyone will opt for immersion. Additionally, funding must be made available for immersion proponents to be involved in the development of this legislation as soon as possible.
3. Funding must be permanent, sustainable and encompassing to support Indigenous people in implementing their homeland language goals and objectives. 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.
4. Our teachings are “we belong to the language”; the language does not belong to us, but we must ensure that the appropriate principles of ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP) apply to Indigenous languages.
5. Indigenous languages in Canada encompass a diversity of worldviews, histories, identities, cultures and knowledges that are vital to the identity of Indigenous peoples, and are intrinsic and inherent in each of these languages.
6. We envisage legislation that will include a national office of an Indigenous Language Commission with regional offices to support each Indigenous homeland language and will provide a statutory guarantee of the funding necessary to support language revitalization initiatives. We need a coordinated and collaborative approach and investment across all ministries, institutions and organizations.

5. Priorities for Investment

Immediate action and investment is needed. Numerous commissions and reports with recommendations for Indigenous languages have been completed. Action on these recommendations must begin at once. The current status of Indigenous languages in Canada demands urgent action. However, in spite of the precarious status of our languages, we have witnessed a number of success stories where things can be turned around in a period of less than ten years. With adequate funding, community, school board and university support, one community has gone from fewer than ten fluent speakers to a community with a preschool to Grade 3 immersion school and a vibrant language environment where families are using the language at home. Much can be accomplished with adequate funding, appropriate methodologies and community engagement.

Here we summarize the key recommendations arising from the current context and findings from Sections 2 and 3 above.

a. Investment: Indigenous Rights, Legislation & Policy in Canada

Recommendations

- Implementation of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action* (see Section 2c) regarding Indigenous languages, particularly those regarding state recognition such as an Indigenous Languages Act and the Languages Commissioner.
- Examination of Section 23 of Canada's Constitution regarding minority language rights as a model with respect to the recognition, recovery, revitalization, preservation and education of and in Indigenous languages.

b. Investment: Community-Based Indigenous Language Revitalization

Creation of Speakers

- Immediate investment in grants and training for communities for the creation of new fluent speakers using evidence-based immersion methodologies for all age groups (preschool language nests, immersion for children, adult immersion courses, master/mentor-apprentice immersion opportunities, immersion language houses) in addition to programs which heal Silent Speakers so they can begin speaking again.
- Creation of a National Framework Model to guide communities.
- Implementation of rigorous assessment and evaluation of all programs.

Documentation

- Thorough and adequate documentation of each language in Canada.
- Invitation to holders of language data and resources to return it to communities.

Awareness and Attitudes

- Short and long term initiatives to increase status and awareness of Indigenous languages.

Collaboration and Sharing

- Creation of a Language Institute to encompass a variety of functions such as knowledge mobilization and resource sharing; consultation on design of such an institute is required.

c. Investment: Indigenous Language Education

Recommendations

Investment is required to meet the goal of education for all Indigenous people in the medium of their homeland language. This is an exceedingly comprehensive area with interdependent areas requiring investment (see Section 3c above) including:

- Policy and legislation
- Planning
- Documentation, archiving and resources
- Language as a subject programming
- Immersion language programming
- Teacher education, preparation, training and professional development
- Supporting domains of language use
- Awareness and promotion
- Media and communication
- Research

d. Investment: Indigenous Languages in Urban Areas

Recommendations

Access and opportunity for all Indigenous people to learn their Indigenous homeland language regardless of place of residence. Some key ways in which this can be achieved include:

- Each public school setting in towns and cities could offer Indigenous language immersion.
- Friendship centres or other Indigenous entities could offer adult immersion programs and language nests where appropriate.
- Mentor-apprenticeship programs could be offered widely.
- Language learning and teaching resources could be available to those who need it through regional/language family-based clearinghouses.
- Funding could also be made available on an individual level through bursaries and/or incentives.

6. Next Steps

There are so many approaches and layers to language revitalisation; some are effective and some are outdated. Indigenous languages in Canada are critically endangered and urgent action is required but a priority must be to invest in programs that result in fluency. This is why we need to turn to our experts and seek their advice on where the best investments can be made. We need to avoid the mistakes of the past: adopting western methods for teaching our languages, documenting languages in a way that doesn't make them accessible to learn, training teachers to only be literate in the languages rather than fluent, and investing in a single demographic such as early childhood instead of the whole community.

It is imperative that we continuously evaluate the program outcomes to ensure financial resources are achieving program goals and objectives. Our actions need to be focused and we must support initiatives that get results. Above all, this work must be tied to the community. We need to bring everyone, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, up to speed regarding what happened in the past, what the current situation is, and where we need to go to reach the outcomes we want for the future. This work cannot only be done by educators and Elders; this has to be done collaboratively with all members of the community and all levels of government. We hope that this report will be a useful starting point for language advocates, community leadership and government. We invite the conversation to continue so that we may reach our goal of the recovery, revitalization and maintenance of all Indigenous languages in Canada.

Appendix A: List of Participants

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Topic Leaders

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Appendix B: Resources

Selected Recommendations on Indigenous Languages from Three Landmark Documents

Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2015	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007	Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures June 2005
<p>13) We call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights.</p>	<p>Article 13</p> <p>1. Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.</p> <p>2. States shall take effective measures to ensure this right is protected and also to ensure that indigenous peoples can understand and be understood in political, legal and administrative proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means.</p>	<p>Language Status Legislative Recognition, Protection and Promotion</p> <p>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. (Recommendation 3)</p>
<p>14) We call upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates the following principles:</p> <p>i. Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them.</p> <p>ii. Aboriginal language rights are reinforced by the Treaties.</p> <p>iii. The federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal-language revitalization and preservation.</p> <p>iv. The preservation, revitalization, and</p>	<p>Article 16</p> <p>1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish their own media in their own languages and to have access to all forms of non- indigenous media without discrimination.</p> <p>2. States shall take effective measures to ensure that State-owned media duly reflect indigenous cultural diversity. States, without prejudice to ensuring full freedom of expression, should encourage privately owned media to adequately reflect indigenous cultural diversity.</p>	<p>Language Equity Equitable Resources for Language Support</p> <p>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. (Recommendation 4)</p>

<p>strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.</p> <p>v. Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal languages.</p>		
<p>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.</p>		<p>Language Support from All Federal Departments</p> <p>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. (Recommendation 5)</p>
<p>16) We call upon post-secondary institutions to create university and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages.</p>		<p>Funding of Immersion Programs</p> <p>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. (Recommendation 10)</p>
<p>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.</p>		<p>Language Education Language Teacher Training</p> <p>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 postsecondary institutions in delivering language teacher training be reviewed, particularly with respect to immersion language teacher training. (Recommendation 15)</p>
		<p>Funding of Immersion Programs for Youth</p> <p>That Canada make available bursaries to enable First Nation, Inuit and Métis youth to</p>

		<p>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. (Recommendation 11)</p>
		<p>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 Innovations Project 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. (Recommendation 25)</p>

Links to Resources

Truth & Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action regarding Indigenous languages
(Call numbers 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 61, 84)

http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
(Articles 11, 13, 14, 15, 16)

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

United Nations Report of the international expert group meeting on indigenous languages
(2008) <http://www.un.org/en/events/iyl/pdf/N0821356.pdf>

United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Study on the role of languages and culture in the promotion and protection of the rights and identity of indigenous Peoples (2012)

http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IPeoples/EMRIP/Session5/A-HRC-EMRIP-2012-3_en.pdf

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Report on the fifteenth session
(9-20 May 2016)

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/2016/15th-session/Report_of_the_Permanent_Forum_15th_Session_unedited.pdf

Ministerial Mandate Letters from the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau to Ministers
Minister of Canadian Heritage Mandate Letter:

<http://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-canadian-heritage-mandate-letter>

Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Mandate Letter:

<http://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-indigenous-and-northern-affairs-mandate-letter>

Assembly of First Nations Resolution on Revitalization of Indigenous Languages (2015)
(Resolution no. 06/2015)

<http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/resolutions/aga-2015-resolutions.pdf>

Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Report (2005)

<http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education2/towardanewbeginning.pdf>

Aboriginal Languages Legislation Bill S-212

http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/hoc/Bills/421/Private/S-212/S-212_1/S-212_1.PDF

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