

Report on the Status of

# B.C. First Nations Languages 2010



"...I was beginning to fear that our language was slowly disappearing, especially as each Elder is put into the ground."

Clara Camille, Secwepemctsin Speaker

Tsilhqot'in  
Dakelh (CB<sup>4</sup>)  
Gitsenimx  
Nisga'a  
Hul'q'umi'num  
Nsyilxcən  
Státimcets  
Nedut'en  
Dane-Zaa (C̣̣ b)  
Ṇ̣e?kepṃ̣xc̣̣in  
Halq'eméylem  
Kwakwala  
Secwepemctsin  
Lekwungen  
Wetsuwet'en  
Ṇ̣uuc̣̣aanuʔ  
Həngəminəp̣̣  
Xenaksialakala  
SENCOFEN  
Tāltān  
Malchosen  
Semiahmoo  
T'Sou-ke  
Dene K'e  
Nuxalk  
Xaaydaa Kil  
Smalgyax  
Hailhzaqvla  
Éy7á7juuthem  
Ktunaxa  
Tse'khene  
Danezāgé  
Xaad Kil  
Diiitiid?aatx  
Skwxwú7mesh sníchim  
She shashishalhem  
lingít  
Nicola  
Pantl'ac̣̣  
Wetalh  
Ski:xs  
Oowekyala

The First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council (First Peoples' Council) is a provincial Crown Corporation dedicated to First Nations languages, arts and culture. Since its formation in 1990, the First Peoples' Council has distributed over \$21.5 million to communities to fund arts, language and culture projects.

The Board and Advisory Committee of the First Peoples' Council consist of First Nations community representatives from across B.C.

The First Peoples' Council Mandate, as laid out in the First Peoples' Council Act, is to:

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

The First Peoples' Council monitors the status of B.C. First Nations languages, cultures, and arts, and facilitates and develops strategies that help First Nations communities recover and sustain their heritage. The First Peoples' Council is committed to continuing to provide program coordination and funding for First Nations language and culture preservation and enhancement. The First Peoples' Council is also committed to providing communities with a high level of support and quality resources. Our cultural heritage, and the living expression of our identities, is integral to the health of all members of our First Nations communities, as well as to the well-being of all British Columbians.

*First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council Report  
Development Team*

Hannah Amrhein, M.A.  
Dr. Suzanne Gessner  
Tracey Herbert  
Xway' Waat (Deanna Daniels)  
Megan Lappi  
Doug Hamilton-Evans  
Alex Wadsworth

We sincerely thank the B.C. First Nations language revitalization experts for the expertise and input they provided.

Dr. Lorna Williams  
Mandy Na'zinek Jimmie, M.A.  
Maxine Baptiste, M.A.  
Dr. Ewa Czaykowski-Higgins

We are grateful to the three language communities featured in our case studies that provided us with information on the exceptional language revitalization work they are doing.

Nuučaañuł (Barclay Dialect)  
Halq'emeylem (Upriver Halkomelem)  
Secwepemctsin (Eastern Dialect)

We sincerely thank all of the B.C. First Nations communities who have contributed to this report by completing our Language Needs Assessments and by providing the First Peoples' Council Language Program with up-to-date and accurate data regarding the status of their languages.

We respectfully acknowledge all of the invaluable work being carried out by communities and by individuals to revitalize and maintain First Nations languages in B.C. and around the world.

### **First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council**

1A Boat Ramp Road  
Brentwood Bay, B.C.  
V8M 1N9  
Website: [www.fphlcc.ca](http://www.fphlcc.ca)  
Telephone: (250) 652-5952  
Fax: (250) 652-5953

The First Peoples' Council receives funding from the following funding sources:

First Citizens' Fund through the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation



New Relationship Trust



First Peoples' Cultural Foundation



Department of Canadian Heritage



B.C. Arts Council



Canada Council for the Arts



For more information on our funding please see our most recent Annual Report.

# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	4
<b>Why did we put this report together?</b> .....	6
<b>Why is it important to act now for B.C. First Nations Languages?</b> .....	7
<b>Why are we losing languages in B.C.?</b> .....	9
Causes of Language Loss .....	9
Decline of Fluent Speakers .....	11
<b>Graph 1: Decline of Fluent Speakers of B.C. First Nations Languages since 1890</b> .....	11
<b>Graph 2: Forecasted Decline of Fluent Speakers of B.C. First Nations Languages</b> .....	11
<b>What does “language status” mean?</b> .....	12
Definition of Terms .....	12
<b>Table 1: First Peoples’ Council Framework for Defining and Measuring Language Endangerment</b> .....	13
<b>What is the status of B.C. First Nations languages?</b> .....	16
First Peoples’ Council Data .....	16
<b>Table 2: Snapshot of the Status of B.C. First Nations Languages</b> .....	17
Language Speakers .....	18
<b>Table 3: Number of Speakers by Age Group</b> .....	18
Language Education .....	20
First Nations Language Teacher Education .....	21
Language Resources .....	21
Summary .....	22
<b>Table 4: Measures of Endangerment</b> .....	23
<b>What is being done to revitalize B.C. First Nations languages?</b> .....	24
In the Communities .....	24
First Peoples’ Council Programming .....	25
<b>What are some communities doing to revitalize their languages?</b> .....	27
Case Study: Nuučaañuł (Barclay Dialect) .....	27
Case Study: Sto:lo Halq’emeylem (Upriver Halkomelem) .....	29
Case Study: Secwepemctsin (Eastern Dialect) .....	31
<b>How can we revitalize B.C. First Nations languages?</b> .....	33
Language Revitalization Strategies .....	33
<b>Figure 1: First Peoples’ Council 8 Steps to Language Revitalization</b> .....	33
<b>What’s next for B.C. First Nations languages?</b> .....	37
Future Directions for B.C. ....	37
Future Directions for the First Peoples’ Council ....	39
<b>Table 5: First Peoples’ Council Goals to 2013</b> .....	39
Appendix A—Language Specific Data .....	40
Appendix B—First Peoples’ Council Resources and Capacity building .....	54
Appendix C—Language Needs Assessment .....	57
Appendix D—First Peoples’ Language Map of B.C. ....	62

# Executive Summary

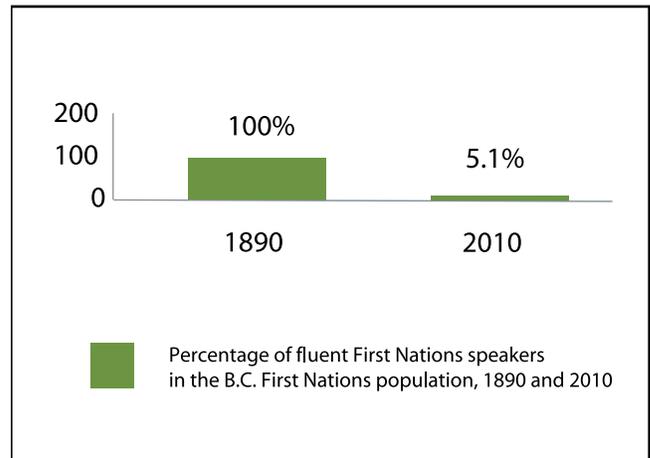
## B.C.'S LANGUAGE CONTEXT

British Columbia has a vast wealth of First Nations languages and culture. B.C. is home to 60% of First Nations languages in Canada with 32 languages and about 59 dialects. This diversity is at risk. However, the extent to which these languages are endangered, the status of these languages with regard to speakers and resources, and the work being done to revitalize them is often unclear due to the sheer number of languages and communities, and a lack of comprehensive research and reporting for all of B.C. This report provides the most up-to-date statistics on the current state of B.C.'s First Nations languages, and offers useful information for First Nations leadership, governments, communities and language stakeholders to use as they move forward in the revitalization of B.C.'s First Nations languages.

## THE LOSS

At the time of colonization, 100% of First Nations people in B.C. were fluent speakers of at least one First Nations language, though multilingualism was the norm. Since the late 1800s, state-sanctioned policies of assimilation have resulted in a dramatic decline in the number of fluent speakers. Today only 5.1% of the B.C. First Nations population are fluent speakers of their language.

**GRAPH 1:**  
**Decline of speakers of B.C. First Nations languages since 1890**



## THE FACTS

Based on three variables for measuring language endangerment (speakers, usage and language resources), all of B.C. First Nations languages are severely endangered or nearly extinct. Some are already sleeping.

### Speakers

- Fluent speakers make up only 5.1% (5,609) of the total population (109,588 in this report) and the vast majority of them are elders.
- Semi-speakers make up only 8.2% (8,948) of the population.

### Usage

- First Nations language learners make up only 11.1% (12,223) of the total population.
- The quantity of First Nations languages taught in public schools, First Nations-operated schools and pre-school programs is too limited to have any great effect.
- In the vast majority of communities, language is rarely if ever used in the home, government, media or community, or for daily communication.
- There is no secure standardized education plan in B.C. to ensure the creation of fluent speakers.

## **Language Resources**

- Only about 31% (53) of communities have recordings of their language available as a community resource. Many of these recordings are old and need to be digitized so they can be used with modern equipment. Also the sound quality is often poor and the recordings are not archived, so it is difficult to use them as a language learning resource.
- Only about 52% (88) communities have any sort of curriculum materials for teaching the languages. Many of these curricula are very limited and have not been developed for many levels of language learners.
- Only about 39% (66) of communities reported having access to a FirstVoices.com archive of their language. However, other communities may use different archiving systems.

A language dies when its last speakers do. If children are no longer learning the language, a language is on the verge of extinction. Among the fluent speakers of B.C.'s First Nations languages, 52% are 65 years and older, while 39% are aged 45 - 64. Less than 2% of fluent speakers are under the age of 25.

## **THE NEED TO ACT**

There is an increasing awareness among B.C. First Nations communities with respect to the critical endangerment of their languages. Many individuals, families, schools and organizations are working tirelessly in their language revitalization efforts. Some examples of these efforts include: pre-school language immersion nests; master-apprentice immersion programs; language and culture immersion camps; school language programs, community and post-secondary language classes; language teacher education and certification; the development of collaborative language plans; and archiving. In spite of the accomplishments, these efforts are not enough.

By preparing this report the First Peoples' Council hopes to build a stronger case for the urgent need to act now. If we as British Columbians want to sustain the complex cultural and knowledge systems embodied in B.C.'s First Nations languages (spirituality, philosophy, human values, oral and musical traditions, scientific and environmental expertise, medical knowledge, cultural practices, social and community relations, artistic skills and traditions), immediate action needs to be taken. Substantial and ongoing resources, both human and financial, are needed to revitalize all of B.C.'s First Nations languages. As the window of opportunity narrows with each fluent speaker that passes away, we urge leadership, governments and communities to work together to form a comprehensive plan to be put into immediate action. This plan must include clear steps towards language revitalization including planning, immersion programming, documentation and expanding existing programming.

## **WHO WE ARE**

The First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council (First Peoples' Council) is a provincial Crown Corporation dedicated to First Nations languages, arts and culture. Since its formation in 1990, the First Peoples' Council has distributed over \$21.5 million to communities to fund arts, language and culture projects. The First Peoples' Council monitors the status of B.C.'s First Nations languages, cultures, and arts, and facilitates and develops strategies that help First Nations communities recover and sustain their heritage. Our cultural heritage, and the living expression of our identities, is integral to the health of all members of our First Nations communities, as well as to the well-being of all British Columbians.

## Why did we put this report together?

*B.C. is home to 60 percent of First Nations languages in Canada with 32 languages and about 59 dialects. This diverse wealth of languages is at risk.*

It has been clear for many years that B.C.'s great diversity of First Nations languages are critically endangered. However, the extent to which these languages are endangered, the status of these languages with regard to speakers and resources, and the work being done to revitalize these languages is often unclear due to the immense diversity of languages and communities, and a lack of comprehensive research and reporting for all of B.C.

An important part of the First Peoples' Council mission is to establish itself as the key source of current and accurate information on the state of First Nations languages in B.C. To this end, the First Peoples' Council has prepared this report with extensive data and information that has been provided by B.C. First Nations communities regarding the status of their languages. This report provides useful up-to-date information for First Nations leadership, governments, communities, and language stakeholders to use as they move forward in the revitalization of B.C.'s First Nations languages.

In this report we clarify what is meant by critically endangered, and provide some concrete measures for different aspects of the status of languages in B.C. We also outline many strategies and successful projects that are being carried out by B.C. First Nations communities. These successful projects

demonstrate the keen desire and motivation among B.C. First Nations communities to revitalize their languages, and they provide ideas and inspiration for communities to learn from one another. This is vital since language revitalization programs are most successful when the communities involved desire and initiate revitalization efforts themselves.<sup>1</sup>

By preparing this report the First Peoples' Council hopes to build a stronger case for the urgent need to act quickly with our revitalization efforts for B.C.'s First Nations languages.

We by no means intend to offend or diminish any language group, First Nation or community with this data by labeling their language as severely endangered, nearly extinct or sleeping. We are reporting the data we have collected to create awareness of the urgency to act.

We strongly encourage all B.C. First Nations to report any inaccuracies and to provide us with missing information. In the interest of further developing our database for use in annually updated reports on the status of all B.C. First Nations languages and communities, we also invite all language groups and/or communities to go to our website and complete an online language needs assessment at [www.fphlcc.ca](http://www.fphlcc.ca).

<sup>1</sup> Ladefoged, P. Another View of Endangered Languages (Language, 68, p 809 - 811, 1992).

## Why is it important to act now for B.C. First Nations languages?

All people have the right to communicate, learn and live their lives in the traditional language of their people. Language revitalization and maintenance is a basic human right—“The loss of a language is part of the oppression and disenfranchisement of indigenous peoples....”<sup>2</sup>

It is important to act now to revitalize and maintain B.C. First Nations languages so that the cultures, identities, health and pride of First Nations communities can also be revived. Each language contains an enormous and unique wealth of information, much of which is impossible to express without using words and grammar that are unique to the language. As each language declines, so does the knowledge and information contained within it.

### WHAT IS LOST WHEN A LANGUAGE IS LOST?

Language loss is part of the loss of whole cultures and knowledge systems. This includes, but is not limited to, history, stories, spirituality, philosophy, human values, oral and musical traditions, scientific and environmental expertise, medical knowledge, cultural practices, rituals, social and community relations, and artistic skills and traditions.

#### **Culture**

The loss of a language means the loss of thousands of years worth of cultural nuances, rituals and practices. It is through language that a culture is transmitted. Each language holds unique ideas, philosophy, points of view, and intricate details of a culture including everything about a way of life such as family and community relations, systems

of politics and power, food and health, art, songs and dance, spirituality and values, history, biology, biodiversity, natural and physical sciences, and interconnectedness with the environment. Every culture has adapted to unique environmental, social and political circumstances, and the language holds an accumulation of the experiences and circumstances of the people.

#### **Identity**

Language is an expression of a peoples' identity. It is one of the most important ways people identify themselves and distinguish themselves from others. People identify who they are, who their relatives are, and where they are from through language. Language is also the vehicle for the transmission of information, stories, history and teachings across generations. Through language people are connected with their history, their ancestors and their land, and as a language declines, so too does the sense of identity of a people.

#### **Health**

The loss of language is directly related to the troubling health issues many First Nations are facing today.<sup>3</sup> Knowledge of one's language is related to physical, mental and spiritual health. It is an expression of ways of life, ways of thinking, and cultural understanding. Language revitalization plays a vital role in community growth, healing, education, development, strong families and reconnection to the past. A healthy language means healthy individuals, healthy communities, and contributing members to society.

<sup>2</sup> Hinton, L. & Hale, K. (Eds.), *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice* (San Diego: Academic Press, 2001), p 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, *First Citizen's Forum: Aboriginal Education: Speaking Our Languages* (Wosk Centre for Dialogue, 2006).

# Why is it important to act now for B.C. First Nations languages?

## Knowledge

Each language encompasses immense cultural, historical, scientific, and ecological knowledge. This knowledge is vital not only for the language communities themselves, but also for the sum of all human knowledge.

With the loss of B.C.'s languages, communities lose vital knowledge of sustainability, biodiversity, survival techniques, food preparation and preservation, and interactions with others, the land and the animals. They lose their methods of survival and the specific and intricate knowledge to continue their traditional ways of life, which is an accumulation of generations of interactions and connecting with the land and nature for survival.

The knowledge contained in each language greatly contributes to all human knowledge. A language may be the key to answering fundamental questions in humanities and in sciences. For example, linguistic theories depend on examples from a great number of languages: Every time a language dies, there is less evidence to understand the patterns, structure and function of human language, cognition and language acquisition and transmission.<sup>4</sup>

Environmental, medical, biological, chemical, and astronomical sciences also have a lot to gain from indigenous languages. For example, at least one B.C. First Nations language has always had two distinct names for a type of salmon that scientists classified as a single species. It was not until the scientists carried out DNA testing that they realized they were two distinct types of salmon, which the First Nations people had known all along. This is just one of many similar examples. As National Geographic points out, “eighty percent of species have been undiscovered by science, but that doesn’t mean they’re unknown to humans, because the people who live in those ecosystems know the species [and how they are interrelated and coexist] intimately and they often have more sophisticated ways of classifying them than science does.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Bernard, R. *Endangered Languages and Publishing* (University of Florida, 2001). <http://www.akha.org/content/language/endangeredlanguagesandpublishing.html> (January 2010); Ken Hale, “On Endangered Languages and the Importance of Linguistic Diversity. In Grenoble”, Lenore and Lindsay J. Whaley (Eds.), *Endangered Languages*, p 192 - 216 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998).

<sup>5</sup> Lovgren, S. “Languages Racing to Extinction in 5 Global “Hotspots.”” (National Geographic News, September 18, 2007), <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2007/09/070918-languages-extinct.html> (January 2010).

*“Our language is our very way of life. Without it we have no tradition, no culture. . . it means everything to us.”*

Daisy Sewid-Smith, Kwak’wala Speaker



## Why are we losing languages in B.C.?

*As we outline in this report, all B.C. First Nations languages are in a state of critical endangerment.*

*How did this happen?*

### CAUSES OF LANGUAGE LOSS

The dramatic loss of fluent speakers began with colonization and the Canadian Government's historic policies to assimilate First Nations people into English-speaking, non-First Nations society.

These policies began with the Royal Proclamation of 1763 which allowed the Crown to take over First Nations land through treaty, and continued with fur trading, gold mining and forestry. In 1857 the Act to Encourage the Gradual Civilization of Indian Tribes in this Province, and to Amend the Laws Relating to Indians (commonly known as the Gradual Civilization Act) was instated. The assimilation policies continued with the British North America Act in 1867 and the Indian Act in 1876 which excluded First Nations people from any decision-making processes. Other oppressive strategies such as anti-potlatch policies, Canada's residential school system, and brutally punishable "English-only policies" followed.<sup>6</sup>

A major cause of First Nations language loss in B.C. is the church-run residential (boarding) schools that began operating in Canada as early as the 1840s. Government-mandated residential schools, run mainly by the Catholic, Anglican and United churches, operated in B.C. from the 1880s to the 1990s. When attendance became compulsory, children could be forcibly removed from their families

by police or Indian agents and taken to live in the schools, often on a year-round basis. The speaking of First Nations languages was strictly banned within the schools, and was enforced by often brutal means of physical and emotional punishment. Because children were removed from the home environment where languages were spoken, and were unable to use their languages in the school setting, many of them lost their languages completely, a loss which was passed on to subsequent generations.

The residential school system (followed by the Indian day school system) along with simultaneous oppressive strategies of assimilation caused a vast and devastating interruption in the intergenerational transmission of First Nations languages as a mother tongue. First Nations people who had been raised at home in their First Nations languages as children were trained, forced and shamed into abandoning their languages at residential schools. Even when they were released from the schools, many could not go back to speaking their languages or pass the languages on to their children because of residual shame and trauma.

The Canadian government's school system (residential schools to present day public schools) did not just interrupt the transmission of B.C. First Nations languages for one generation. Many residential school survivors, their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren still feel the effects of the loss of their traditional First Nations languages.

<sup>6</sup> B.C. Teachers' Federation, First Nations Historical Timeline, <http://bctf.ca/IssuesInEducation.aspx?id=5678> (February 2010).

## Why are we losing languages in B.C.?

Firstly, for the last few generations, most children have not been learning their First Nations language as a mother tongue from their parents or grandparents who are residential school survivors or are affected by residential school traumas. These survivors of residential schools still do not feel safe to speak the language or to pass it on to their children. Secondly, public schools in B.C. do not educate children in their First Nations language, and there is no comprehensive policy to do so.

In addition to government policies, social and industrial forces have historically influenced First Nations people to speak English. For example, around the 1950s many First Nations people began to leave their homes for seasonal jobs, in canneries for example, where they were required to speak English to communicate with employers, co-workers and for day-to-day interactions.<sup>7</sup> Today, to be able to take part in mainstream society, from daily tasks such as going to the post office to buying milk to checking one's email, even elders, who have retained their First Nations language despite the residential school system, are in the habit of speaking English.

Culturally, English society also has come to dominate First Nations communities. For example, housing standards on reserves have separated the traditional three-generation families that used to live under one roof. Consequently, children often live with just their English-speaking parents, and do not spend time with their grandparents who might be their only source of their ancestral language. Media, particularly television, has also replaced interactions with elders and family. Instead of talking with their elder generations, young people spend time being bombarded with television, internet, radio, music, magazines and newspapers in English, and not in their First Nations language.<sup>8</sup>

B.C. First Nations language loss has many deep-rooted historical causes, but this loss continues today due to modern day societal barriers and often underlying marginalization and discrimination.<sup>9</sup> Some causes of continued language loss are:

- The B.C. public education system often fails First Nations children by neglecting to include and honour First Nations languages and cultures in curricula.
- First Nations community members lack opportunities, resources and support to teach, learn, use and maintain their First Nations languages.
- Governments provide inadequate support and infrastructure for First Nations language programs in schools and communities.
- Poverty, abuse and substance abuse issues take precedence over language revitalization.
- Many First Nations people live in urban centres, and are not surrounded by fellow community members who can use their ancestral language.
- Many First Nations languages have not yet created words and phrases for modern ideas and objects, and are therefore not considered useful.
- First Nations people, languages and cultures are largely excluded from government, commerce, industry, arts, higher education and media.
- Many people hold the attitude that speaking only English is somehow better for children to be successful in today's society. The myth exists that bilingual children lag behind their monolingual peers.

The influence of English as the dominant language has increased over the years, and English is now, in most cases the only language used by First Nations people.

<sup>7,8</sup> Ignace, M. Handbook for Aboriginal Language Planning in British Columbia (Vancouver: First Nations Education Steering Committee, 1998).

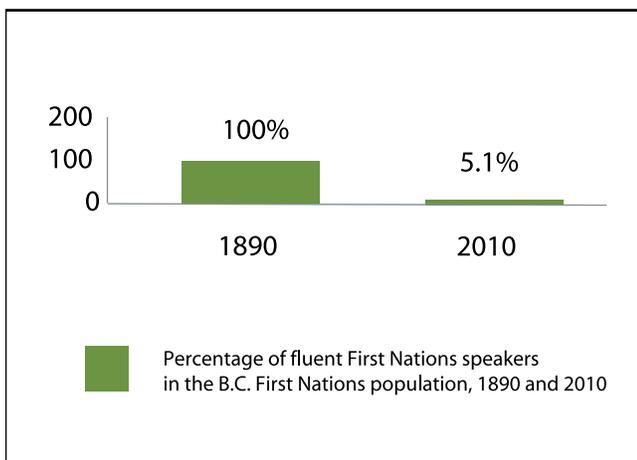
<sup>9</sup> Norris, M., Aboriginal Languages in Canada: Emerging Trends and Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition (Canadian Social Trends, Statistics Canada – Catalogue No. 11-008, 2007).

## DECLINE OF FLUENT SPEAKERS

All First Nations people in B.C. were fluent speakers of at least one First Nations language, although the norm was multilingualism, before the residential school system along with simultaneous oppressive policies to eradicate First Nations languages and cultures were instated (during the 1880s, approximately 120+ years ago<sup>10</sup>). GRAPH 1 illustrates that over the course of these 120 years, the number of fluent speakers of First Nations languages in B.C. has declined from 100% to only 5.1%. This is approximately a 95% decrease, which means that the number of fluent speakers has declined approximately 0.8% per year when averaged over this time period.

We continue to see a downward trend each year as remaining elderly speakers pass away and few to no children are raised as fluent speakers of their First Nations language. Graph 2 (blue line) shows that if the decline continues at this rate, and if nothing more is done to save the languages, most of the fluent speakers will be gone in approximately five to six years (by about 2016).

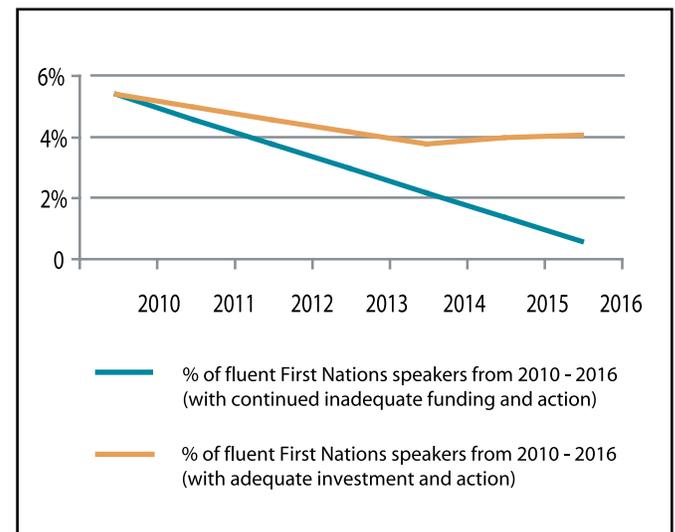
**GRAPH 1:**  
Decline of speakers of B.C. First Nations languages since 1890\*



\* These percentages are based on the FPHLCC data set used in this report.

Graph 2 (gold line) shows our estimate that with adequate investment and action, the number of fluent speakers will still continue to decline slightly, since many elders will pass away. However, the number of fluent speakers would decline less drastically since existing programming would be increased and improved, thus creating fluent speakers. Also, if more language programming focusing on creating fluent speakers is immediately put in place, then by about 2014, these programs could begin to produce fluent speakers. Since gaining fluency takes time, it is imperative that these programs be initiated immediately and receive sustained support. By increasing and improving existing programming as well as creating new effective programming, the number of fluent speakers will increase over time.

**GRAPH 2:**  
Forecasted decline of fluent speakers of B.C. First Nations Languages\*



\* This applies to the majority of B.C. First Nations Languages. There are, however, some languages such as Nisga'a, Tsilhqot'in and Secwepemctsin that have a number of young fluent speakers, and will continue to have fluent speakers beyond 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Assembly of First Nations, Residential Schools: A Chronology, <http://www.afn.ca/article.asp?id=2586> (January 2010).

# What does language status mean?

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

Terms are often used loosely when talking about endangered languages and language revitalization. In this report, we are using definitions that best fit B.C.'s unique situation of language diversity and that best allow us to express our data effectively. In this section we have defined our terms for this report.

### *Language and Dialect*

These terms are often used interchangeably and can create some confusion. In B.C., most languages are made up of two or more different dialects. Dialects may vary in many ways (pronunciation, words, grammar and sounds), but as long as speakers of different dialects can understand each other somewhat, these are considered to be dialects of the same language. Languages in turn can be grouped together into larger groups, or language families. A language family includes languages known (or hypothesized) to have developed from a common parent language. We respect that some communities refer to their language by the dialect name, but for simplicity, we group the statistics by language, rather than by dialect.

### *Language Endangerment*

Many researchers have worked to come up with an adequate definition and scale to measure the endangerment of languages. Variables used to determine language endangerment have included: intergenerational language transmission, number of speakers, percentage of speakers within the total population, decrease in language use, amount of materials for language education and literacy, governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies, and amount and quality of documentation.<sup>11</sup>

Given that B.C. is extremely diverse linguistically, with approximately 32 distinct languages, and that each language has a unique history, geography, population, and economic and political situation, we have found that using only one of the variables above is insufficient for measuring and defining language endangerment. We therefore take into account the ages of speakers, number of speakers and percentage of population that speaks the language; the domains of language use and whether or not those domains are decreasing in size and number; and finally, the level of documentation and number of available language resources.

It is important to note that a language is never stuck at a certain level of endangerment. With work a language can become less endangered. For example, it is possible to reconstruct a sleeping language from remaining documentation and other closely related languages.

Based on several of the previous definitions and scales for measuring language endangerment, First Peoples' Council has created a general framework that is adapted for B.C.'s unique diversity and incorporates three main variables: Speakers, Usage (situations where language is used and amount of language usage), and Language Resources (Table 1).

<sup>11</sup> Fishman, J. *Reversing Language Shift* (Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters, 1991)  
Kinkade, D. *Upper Chehalis Dictionary* (University of Montana Occasional Papers in Linguistics No. 7 1991).  
Krauss, M. *The World's Languages in Crisis*. (Language, 1992, 68(1), p 1 - 42)  
Krauss, M. *Keynote-Mass Language Extinction and Documentation: The Race Against Time*, In Miyaoka, Osahito; Sakiyama, Osamu; Krauss, Michael E., *The Vanishing Languages of the Pacific Rim* (illustrated ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, p 3 - 24).  
Norris, M.J. *Canada's Aboriginal Languages Canadian Social Trends*. (Statistics Canada Winter 1998, Catalogue no. 11-008).  
UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages Document submitted to the International Expert Meeting on UNESCO Programme Safeguarding of Endangered Languages Paris, 10-12 March 2003.  
Harrison, B. *Language Integration: Results of an Intergenerational Analysis*. (Statistical Journal of the United Nations ECE, 1997, 14: p 289-303).

**Table 1: First Peoples' Council Framework for Defining and Measuring Language Endangerment\***

Level of Endangerment		Speakers	Usage	Language Resources
<b>Thriving</b>	<b>Robust</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many speakers of all ages</li> <li>• Children use the language in all situations</li> <li>• Number of speakers increases with increased birth rate and increased population</li> <li>• Language normally learned as mother tongue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intergenerational language transmission</li> <li>• Language naturally used in a large number of domains i.e. home, work, school, community, government, social</li> <li>• Officially recognized as the language of use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media (print, audio and visual), government documents, literature, formal and informal communication in the language</li> <li>• Materials and documents increasingly produced in the language</li> </ul>
	<b>Safe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many speakers of all ages</li> <li>• Number of speakers increases with increased birth rate and increased population.</li> <li>• Language learned at home by a steady number of children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intergenerational language transmission</li> <li>• Language naturally used in a number of domains i.e. home, work, school, community, government, social, but is not the dominant language</li> <li>• Officially recognized as a language of use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some of the following produced in the language: media (print, audio and visual), government documents, literature, formal and informal communication</li> <li>• Some materials and documents produced in the language</li> </ul>
<b>Declining</b>	<b>Unstable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spoken as mother tongue by a small and decreasing number of children</li> <li>• Spoken by a fairly large number of adults and elders</li> <li>• Not spoken between generations as the norm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used in some homes</li> <li>• Use in schools and community is a concerted effort</li> <li>• May be officially recognized, i.e. by local government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation i.e. recordings and written records increasing somewhat</li> <li>• Possible creation of many learning materials and resources</li> </ul>
	<b>Endangered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spoken as a mother tongue only by a small number of the parent-aged generation and up</li> <li>• Spoken somewhat by a small and decreasing number of adults and children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used somewhat in homes</li> <li>• Use in schools and community is a concerted effort</li> <li>• Limited language programming in schools</li> <li>• Used mostly during the learning process, not in natural communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some documentation i.e. recordings and written records</li> <li>• Increasing documentation is possible</li> <li>• Efforts to create more learning materials and resources</li> </ul>
<b>Critically Endangered</b>	<b>Severely Endangered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very rarely/never learned as mother tongue by children</li> <li>• Spoken as mother tongue by grandparent generation and up</li> <li>• Not normally spoken by adults and children except for some who are learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only sometimes used between elderly speakers</li> <li>• Rarely/never used for natural daily communication</li> <li>• Some adults and children learning, but not fluent</li> <li>• Limited language learning programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited documentation i.e. some recordings and written records of variable quality</li> <li>• Some languages have extensive documentation, but few to no speakers</li> </ul>
	<b>Nearly Extinct</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No longer being learned by adults or children as the norm</li> <li>• Only spoken by very few of the grandparent-aged generation</li> <li>• Finite number of elderly speakers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rarely used by elders except for documentation purposes</li> <li>• Some language programming may exist i.e. classes, immersion, documentation etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some documentation (usually limited)</li> <li>• Challenging to check for accuracy or to increase documentation</li> </ul>
<b>Extinct</b>	<b>Sleeping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No living speakers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not used</li> <li>• Some language programming may exist i.e. reconstructing the language from old documentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some documentation (usually limited)</li> <li>• No way to check for accuracy or to increase documentation of mother-tongue speakers</li> </ul>

\* A language can often fall into more than one level of endangerment. For one variable a language may seem to fall into a certain level of endangerment, but for another variable it may fall into a different level of endangerment.

## What does language status mean?

### **Speaker**

The term speaker is often used when describing the status of a language; the number of speakers is used to measure the level of endangerment. Who qualifies as a speaker varies to a considerable degree. For some, to be a speaker requires that the language be one's mother tongue (first language spoken from birth); while for others a speaker is someone who speaks the language at home to some extent (anywhere from rarely to sometimes to always). Still, others define a speaker as someone who has a certain degree of proficiency in the language, while for others still, a speaker is someone who is learning the language- no matter how far they have progressed.<sup>12</sup> Based on self-assessment by communities, we have differentiated three types of speakers, fluent speakers, semi-speakers, and learners and these terms are defined in this section.

### **Fluent Speaker**

A fluent speaker is someone who speaks and understands the language to a degree that they self-identify or are identified by fellow community members as having the ability to converse and understand the language with no use of English. Usually this means that the language is their mother tongue. Of course this allows for great variation, but using a stricter definition- such as: 'to speak or write the language with ease'<sup>13</sup> or 'able to express oneself easily and accurately'<sup>14</sup> would reduce the number of fluent speakers of B.C. First Nations languages to a number even smaller than the critically small number that is reported. Therefore, we loosely use the term fluent speaker.

<sup>12</sup> Adapted from Harrison, B. 1997.

<sup>13</sup> Definition of "fluent," <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/fluent+?o=100074> (January, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Definition of "fluent," <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fluent> (January, 2010).

### **Semi-Speaker**

A semi-speaker is someone who can speak and understand the language to a degree that they self-identify or are identified by fellow community members as a semi-speaker. This also allows for great variability and it is difficult to quantify (except that a semi-speaker has less language ability than a fluent speaker). We consider it an important set of data however, since semi-speakers are often from a younger generation than fluent speakers (who are usually elders), and this is vital for the longevity of a language. Additionally, if the number of semi-speakers is large enough, then this demonstrates greater hope for revitalization of the language. With further revitalization efforts such as language training and promotion, these semi-speakers can become more fluent and will be our most valuable resource after all today's fluent speakers are gone.

### **Language Learner**

A learner is anyone in the process of learning their First Nations language by participating in any type of language learning program. The number of learners is important because it represents optimism for the revitalization of the language. The number of learners demonstrates the level of interest, desire to learn and presence of language in the community. In many cases the learners of a language are children, which is the most encouraging sign for language revitalization. However, it is important to note that the data on learners must be considered with cautious optimism, since, most language learning programs treat First Nations languages as "second or foreign languages" to be learned similar to a subject in school. Unfortunately, language learning programs are often inconsistent, inadequate, and not focused on producing fluent speakers.

### **Usage**

The primary purpose of language is to communicate. Therefore, as mentioned above, it is important to consider how much a language is used when measuring the endangerment of the language. Generally in B.C., First Nations languages are not used as the primary mode of communication or for natural daily communication. Therefore, in this report usage refers mostly to language revitalization efforts, specifically language learning programs in schools, since this is where the majority of the language use takes place. Language revitalization should be focused on increasing the usage of the language by speakers of all ages in all areas of community.

### **Language Resources**

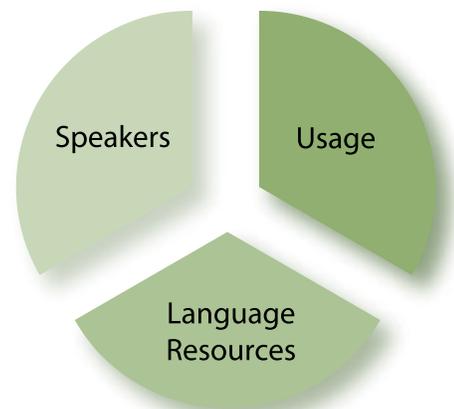
Language Resources refer to any kind of documentation, recordings, curriculum materials, computer-based resources, books, and archives etc. that are available in the language. “Language Resources” is a broad category, but this report focuses on recordings, curriculum materials, and computer-based archiving,<sup>15</sup> since these cover three important areas of resources in language revitalization.

<sup>15</sup> Some language groups may not choose to use computer-based archiving systems such as FirstVoices.com. In this report we have focused on computer-based archiving since it is a common way of archiving and we have data reflecting its use.

*They never taught it to my dad  
or my aunties. The kids used  
to get whippings at school for  
speaking their language. It's good  
we're bringing it back and letting  
our kids know that it should be  
comfortable for them to hear and  
speak their own language.*

Chad Marchand, Nsyilxcən speaker/learner

## **Healthy Language**



# What is the status of B.C. First Nations languages?

## FIRST PEOPLES' COUNCIL DATA

The 2006 - 2010 data set used in this report is derived from our database of Language Needs Assessments (LNA) that are completed by community organizations when they apply for funding through the First Peoples' Council Language Program. The LNAs are filled out online and elicit information regarding that status of the languages, such as the number of speakers, semi-speakers, learners, population totals, community language resources, school programming, Head Start programs, as well as language revitalization challenges and opportunities in the communities.

LNAs are completed by grant applicants and are filled out for each community, not each language, providing us with very detailed data. See Appendix C for a description and sample of the First Peoples' Council Language Needs Assessment.

Since our data comes directly from community members who are working closely with the language, rather than being collected by someone from outside the community, we consider it to be as accurate as possible. It is important to note, however, that the data in this report comes only from First Nations communities on reserves, and not from urban First Nations communities. A future area of research will address data collection from urban First Nations members.

Our data set is an accurate representation of the reality of the status of B.C. First Nations languages. We currently lack information from only 34 of the 204 B.C. First Nations communities, and for two languages.<sup>16</sup> When possible, we have referred to and compared our data with other sources<sup>17 18 19</sup> to check reliability. When necessary, we contacted community members, band offices and community

organizations directly by telephone to fill in gaps in our data. Although we are working towards collecting additional information, the data set we are presenting in this report is the most complete and detailed available, considering the diversity of languages in B.C.,<sup>20</sup> the number of communities, and the magnitude of the task of data collection.

To see our data, visit our website ([www.maps.fphlcc.ca](http://www.maps.fphlcc.ca)) where you can view a map of the languages of B.C. as well as the data associated with each language. See Appendix D for a print version of this map.

### ***Snap Shot of B.C. First Nations Languages: What does it mean for the languages?***

There is no arguing that B.C. First Nations languages are in a state of emergency. Regardless of the scale used to measure the endangerment or the terminology used to describe the level of endangerment, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that overall, B.C. First Nations languages are critically endangered. Each number in Table 2 helps to paint an urgent picture of the critical state of B.C. First Nations languages.

<sup>16</sup> We do not have data for these communities and languages because they have not completed a First Peoples' Council Language Needs Assessment.  
<sup>17</sup> Poser, B. The Status of the Native Languages of British Columbia, 2007, <http://www.ydli.org/B.C.other/B.C.lstat.htm> (January 2010).  
<sup>18</sup> Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, Census 2006, [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca) (January 2010).  
<sup>19</sup> B.C. Stats, Census of Canada custom tabulations, Statistics Canada, British Columbia Statistical Profile of Aboriginal Peoples 2006 Aboriginal Peoples Compared to the non-Aboriginal Population With Emphasis on Labour Market and Post Secondary Issues [http://www.B.C.stats.gov.B.C.ca/data/cen01/abor/B.C.\\_AboriginalProfiles\\_Abo\\_Non-Abo.pdf](http://www.B.C.stats.gov.B.C.ca/data/cen01/abor/B.C._AboriginalProfiles_Abo_Non-Abo.pdf) (January 2010).  
<sup>20</sup> Note that several B.C. First Nations languages are spoken across borders i.e. both in B.C. and in the USA and neighboring provinces. First Peoples' Council is a B.C. agency that funds only B.C. languages, and therefore we do not have data from communities outside of B.C.

**Table 2: Snapshot of the Status of B.C. First Nations Languages**

	Number	Details
First Nations communities	204	170 reporting
Total First Nations population in B.C. <sup>1</sup>	129,240	109,588 reporting
First Nations languages <sup>2</sup>	~32	There are six other sleeping languages. There are six other languages that may have some speakers in B.C., but are not considered "original to B.C."
<b>Language Speakers<sup>3</sup></b>		
Fluent speakers of B.C. First Nations languages	5,609	5.1 % of the B.C. First Nations population
People who speak some of their First Nations language (Semi-Speakers) <sup>4</sup>	8,948	8.2% of the B.C. First Nations population
People learning their B.C. First Nations language (Learners) <sup>4</sup>	12,223	11.1% of the B.C. First Nations population
<b>Language Education (Usage)</b>		
First Nations-operated schools <sup>5</sup>	132	75 reporting
Total number of hours per week spent on First Nations languages in First Nations-operated schools <sup>6</sup>	542	Although this number varies greatly between schools, the average is 5 hours per week, per program
Students attending a First Nations-operated school	4,214	
Head Start programs	58	
Total number of hours per week spent on First Nations languages in Head Start programs	290	Although this number varies greatly between programs, the average is 5 hours per week, per program
Students attending a Head Start program	1,400	
Pre-school Language Nests	8	Funded by FPHLCC
B.C. First Nations languages offered at the post-secondary level in B.C.	20	More are sometimes offered
<b>First Nations Language Teacher Education (languages with teacher certification)<sup>7</sup></b>		
Developmental Standard Term certificate programs	9	28% of B.C. First Nations languages
First Nations Standard certificate programs	7	22% of B.C. First Nations languages
<b>Language Resources<sup>8</sup></b>		
Communities with recordings of their language	53	31% of B.C. First Nations communities <sup>3</sup>
Communities with curriculum materials for their language	88	52% of B.C. First Nations communities <sup>3</sup>
Communities with access to FirstVoices archiving	66	39% of B.C. First Nations communities <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See footnotes 19 and 20.

<sup>2</sup> There are often many dialects within a language. Some dialects are so distinct that the speakers consider them different language.

<sup>3</sup> Note that this data is based on the 170 communities that reported to us. There are approximately 204 First Nations communities in B.C. and we have current data from 83% (170) of them.

<sup>4</sup> Note that the categories semi-speakers and learners may overlap- learners may also be considered semi-speakers and vice versa. Therefore, these numbers should be considered independently and not combined.

<sup>5</sup> Aboriginal Canada Portal, Government of Canada, Band Operated Schools in Canada. <http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/en/ao36545.html> (January 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Note that here we used data from the 75 schools that were reported to us. Therefore, the average number of hours per week (7.2) is for 75 schools.

<sup>7</sup> Note that 4 languages have both of these teacher certification programs.

<sup>8</sup> This data was reported to us and it is important to note that there may be some discrepancies. For example, there may be recordings of which not all community members are aware. Also, not all community members may be aware that they have access to FirstVoices.com in their language (everyone has access since it is a public site). Additionally, given the many dialect differences, some communities may feel that certain materials are not in their language since they are in a different dialect, and therefore may have not have reported those materials.

## What is the status of B.C. First Nations languages?

### LANGUAGE SPEAKERS (FLUENT SPEAKERS, SEMI-SPEAKERS AND LEARNERS)<sup>21</sup>

The number of fluent speakers of First Nations languages sits at only 5.1 % (5,609 of the First Nations population reported to us), which is far below a sustainable population. Considering that this small number of fluent speakers is the total for approximately 32 different living languages<sup>22</sup> and 204 communities, the picture grows even bleaker.

The number of semi-speakers is 8.2% (8,948 of the First Nations population reported to us). This number is also very low considering some of these semi-speakers are still far from fluent, and only some of them are at a proficiency level that is adequate to teach the language to others. In addition, as mentioned above, this small number is the total for about 32 languages and 204 communities.

The number of semi-speakers combined with the number of fluent speakers total 13.3% (14,557) of the First Nations population reported to us). Simply put, this is a small fraction of a healthy and viable speaker population.

The number of people learning a B.C. First Nations language is 11.1% (12,223 of the First Nations population reported to us). Language learning varies widely from community to community. Some learners attend classes at local colleges, some are young people learning in school, some are community members who participate in community language programs, and some take only occasional classes. Although the number of learners seems relatively large, it is important to consider that the quality and amount of programming and resources are often insufficient, and language programming is often inconsistent.

For the most part, language learning usually takes place in classes where the quality of resources and time spent on language learning are inadequate for learners to become fluent or to learn much more than the bare basics of the language. Programs such as community language classes often dwindle due to low numbers of fluent or semi-fluent speaking teachers, inadequate funding and low levels of learner participation. Programming is not constant enough to create significant results.

<sup>21</sup> See "Definition of Terms" section for detailed description of speakers.

<sup>22</sup> Depending on the differentiations between languages and dialects, this number ranges from 32 - 59. For the purpose of this report we are using the approximate number 32 (excluding sleeping languages and languages that are not "B.C. languages"), based on our research findings.

**Table 3: Number of Speakers for all Languages by Age Group**

	Fluent Speakers	Semi-Speakers*	Learners*
65+ years old	1,230 (52.4%)	355 (9.7%)	97 (1.7%)
45 - 64 years old	914 (39%)	1,082 (29.5%)	832 (14.7%)
25 - 44 years old	166 (7.1%)	769 (21%)	690 (12.2%)
0 - 24 years old	36 (1.5%)	1,457 (39.8%)	4,030 (71.3%)
Total	2,346	3,663	5,649
% of total population**	4.6%	7.2%	11%

\* Note that the categories semi-speakers and learners may overlap- learners may also be considered semi-speakers and vice versa. Therefore, these numbers should be considered independently and not combined.

\*\* Note that this % is of the total population of the 83 communities reported in Table 3 which is 51,018.

### **Age of Speakers**

Of the 170 communities that reported to us, 83 communities (with a total population of 51,018) also provided the approximate ages of fluent speakers, semi-speakers and learners of their languages (Table 3). These communities represent 20 different languages, and provide a good sample to demonstrate a general trend.

### **Fluent Speakers**

Table 3 clearly shows that the younger the age group the smaller the number of fluent speakers there are. The most tell tale sign of an endangered language is when children and young people are not among the fluent speakers- the more young speakers the better for a language. Table 3 shows that of 2,346 fluent speakers from these communities, only 1.5% (36) are under 25 years old. This is a grave warning sign that B.C.'s languages are in a critical stage of emergency and action must be taken to create more young speakers. There are few to no children who are being raised as fluent speakers of a First Nations language. The majority of fluent speakers (52% (1,230)) are over the age of 65. This means that action is needed quickly. The second largest group of fluent speakers is in the 45 - 64 year age group with 914 fluent speakers. While this is a somewhat healthier number than for the 25 and under age group, it is not ideal, as most of these speakers are not parents to young children anymore, and many are also approaching elder-hood.

### **Semi-Speakers**

Table 3 shows that 3663 of the people from the communities reported here can speak their language somewhat (semi-speakers). The good news is that about 40% (1,457) of them are under the age of 25; of the remainder, 769 are between 25 - 44, and 1,082 are between 45 - 64 years. This

shows that many people from younger generations do in fact speak some of their languages, and with increased language programming they will be able to increase their fluency and become B.C.'s most valuable language resources. Further, since the largest number of learners is under 25 years, the hope is that when they become parents they will begin to speak to their children at home and in daily life, and produce new fluent speakers.

### **Language Learners**

The number of people learning a First Nations language in Table 3 is 5,649, and of them 71% (4,030) are under the age of 25. This is a positive sign, demonstrating that communities are working in the right direction. This is not to say that the 27% (1,522) of adult language learners are not important, however. Adult language learners are an excellent resource, as often the adults learning a First Nations language are the ones who teach what they have learned and/or assist elder speakers in passing on the language to children. Unfortunately, however, most programs do not emphasize the creation of fluent speakers of the languages, and the resources and time spent on language are inadequate to achieve healthy levels of fluency.<sup>23</sup> There are also concerns within communities that there is an intergenerational gap between those learning the language at school and the elders in the community. Since a relatively low number (690) of parent-aged (25 - 44 years) adults are learning the language, children who are learning the language in school often have no one to talk to at home. Language programs involving children along with their parents are needed in order to bridge this gap.

<sup>23</sup> See "Language Education (Usage)" section for a more detailed description of B.C. First Nations language programming.

## What is the status of B.C. First Nations languages?

### LANGUAGE EDUCATION (USAGE)

Of the 132 First Nations-operated schools in B.C., 75 reported to us (See Table 2). The total number of hours spent on language for these 75 schools (K - 12) is 542 per week. Although there is great variability between schools (some are immersion schools and some do not include language programming at all), in general the number of hours per week spent on language in school is only about one to four. The number of students attending these 75 First Nations operated schools is 4,214. Although there are a number of students learning First Nations languages in public schools, we have not included the numbers, as this is not part of our data set.

There were 58 First Nations Head Start programs<sup>24</sup> on reserve reported to us, and a total of 290 hours per week is spent on First Nations languages. Although there is great variability between programs, this is an average of about five hours per week per program. The number of students attending these 58 First Nations Head Start programs is 1,400.

A total of 5,614 students are attending either a Head Start program or a First Nations-operated school. This accounts for and far exceeds the 3,691 language learners aged 0 - 19 that were reported to us. This means that about 34% (1,923) of students who are attending a Head Start program or a First Nations operated school are not reported as learning their First Nations language. In other words, there are some students at these schools who are not participating in First Nations languages programs and there are some First Nations-operated schools that are not offering First Nations language programs.<sup>25</sup> Also, often the language teachers in

these schools are not fluent and therefore the quality of language programming suffers. It is crucial to focus efforts to increase language programming in First Nations operated schools by providing good quality resources, funding and training. For most children, school is their only source of language. Children must also be strongly encouraged to take part in language learning outside of the schools, as school-based language classes are simply not enough.

Although there may be a handful more Pre-School Language Nests than reported here, the First Peoples' Council funds, supports and provides resources and capacity building to eight Pre-School Language Nests in B.C. with a total of about 155 students. Pre-School Language Nests provide an immersion environment for young children and their parents to learn their language through daily cultural and home-like activities. There are far too few Pre-School Language Nests in B.C. To effectively use Pre-School Language Nests as a language revitalization strategy for creating more fluent speakers from younger generations, at least one Pre-School Language Nest is needed in each community.

Several post-secondary institutions in B.C. offer First Nations language courses and have had success in developing literacy, though they rarely lead to a high level of fluency in the language. Course offerings include the following:

- College of New Caledonia: Dakelh (Carrier)
- Simon Fraser University: Haida, Halq'eméylem, Heiltsuk, Nuxalk, Secwepemctsin, Státimcets and Tsilhqot'in
- University of British Columbia: Cree, Halq'eméylem
- University of the Fraser Valley: Halq'eméylem
- University of Northern British Columbia: Dakelh (Carrier), Gitsenimx̣, Haisla, Nisga'a and S̓malgyax

<sup>24</sup> Head Start programs are federally funded daycares designed to prepare pre-school aged First Nations children for their school years.

<sup>25</sup> However, a small number of non- First Nations operated public schools do offer some First Nations language programs.

- University of Victoria: SENĆOŦEN, and occasionally other languages
- Vancouver Island University: Hul'q'umi'num' En'owkin Centre: Nsyilxcən
- Nicola Valley Institute of Technology: Nsyilxcən, Státimcets, Skwxwú7mesh sníchim, Halq'eméylem, Nl̓e7kepmxcín, Hailhzaqvla.

## FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION

Up until last year,<sup>26</sup> there have been two types of certification for First Nations language teachers. First, the Developmental Standard Term Certificate (DSTC) is a program for certification of language teachers that was developed by the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the B.C. College of Teachers (BCCT). First Nations communities partner with colleges and universities to develop programs that are specific to their languages. Certification requirements include three years of post-secondary course work along with studies in a language indigenous to B.C., First Nations studies or culture, and professional development in teaching. Languages for which this certification is available include Dakelh (Carrier), Gitsenimx̄, Halq'eméylem, Hul'q'umi'num', Kwakwala, Nisga'a, Nsyilxcən (Okanagan), Sm̓algyax, and Nl̓e7kepmxcín.

The second type of certification is a First Nations Language Certificate for those who speak a First Nations language proficiently. This certification is issued by the BCCT upon recommendation from a First Nations Language Authority.<sup>27</sup> Carrier (Dakelh), Gitsenimx̄, Halq'eméylem, Heiltsuk, Hul'q'umi'num', Nuučaanuł and Ktunaxa are among the languages with authorities that are currently recognized for language certification.

<sup>26</sup> A new government initiative, the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement will likely phase out most DSTC programs.

<sup>27</sup> The First Peoples' Council language program funds 8 other Language Authorities, which are separate from those mentioned here.

## LANGUAGE RESOURCES

Table 2 shows that 53 communities reported having at least some recordings of their language available as a community resource. This is only 31% of the 170 communities that reported to us. Given that the majority of remaining fluent speakers are over the age of 65, it is extremely important to document fluent speakers of the languages while there is still time. Efforts must be focused on creating good quality recordings and thorough documentation.

Table 2 also shows that 52% of communities (88 of the 170 that reported to us) have at least some curriculum materials for teaching their language. If only about half of First Nations communities have any curriculum, we cannot expect the languages to be taught well (if at all) in the other 48% of the communities. Curriculum development that is specific to B.C.'s First Nations languages<sup>28</sup> is desperately needed in all B.C. First Nations communities. If First Nations languages are going to truly be learned, spoken and brought back to life, then beginner to advanced curriculum that is at least as well-developed as that of any other language taught in school (i.e. French, Spanish) is urgently needed.

Lastly, the data in Table 2 shows that 39% of communities (66 of the 170 communities that reported to us) reported having access to FirstVoices.com archives of their language. It is true that more funding and capacity is needed to create these online archives of First Nations languages. However, this low number may also be due in part to several factors: some communities may have chosen not to participate in the FirstVoices.com project, some communities may be unaware that an archive exists for their language, and community members may lack

<sup>28</sup> Many B.C. First Nations languages are verb-based, rather than noun-based which the provincial curriculum is based on.

## What is the status of B.C. First Nations languages?

sufficient computer skills, internet access and/or access to computers. In addition to the creating more online language archives and promoting awareness of the value of electronic archiving, communities need capacity building for using new technologies, as well as skills training and increased access to computers.

### SUMMARY OF THE STATUS OF B.C. FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES

#### Speakers

- Fluent speakers make up only 5.1% (5,609) of the total population\* and the vast majority of them are elders.
- Semi-speakers make up only 8.2% (8,948) of the population\* and less than 40% of them are under the age of 24.

#### Usage

- First Nations language learners make up only 11.1% (12,223) of the total population.\*
- Although there is great variability between schools, an average of about seven hours per week is spent on language in First Nations-operated schools and only about five hours in Head Start programs. However, excluding immersion programs, in reality only about one to four hours per week are spent on First Nations language in most schools.
- Not all students attending a First Nations-operated school or Head Start program are learning a First Nations language. About 34% (1,923) of students who are attending a Head Start program or a First Nations-operated school are reported as not learning their First Nations language.

- In the vast majority of communities, language is rarely if ever used in the home, government, media or community, or for daily communication.
- There is no secure standardized education plan in B.C. to ensure the creation of fluent speakers.

#### Language Resources

- Only about 31% (53) communities have recordings of their language available as a community resource. The quality of many of these recordings is poor.
- Only about 52% (88) communities have any sort of curriculum materials for teaching the languages. Of course the schools providing language programming have curricula, and some communities may have curricula but little to no opportunity to use it and/or further develop it. Many of these curricula are very limited and have not been developed for many levels of language learners.
- Only about 39% (66) communities reported to have access to a FirstVoices.com archive of their language.

Based on the First Peoples' Council framework for defining and measuring language endangerment and according to the three main variables in the framework, Speakers, Usage and Language Resources (see Table 1), all of B.C. First Nations languages are critically endangered, if not sleeping already.

*All of B.C. First Nations languages are critically endangered, if not sleeping already.*

\* The Total B.C. First Nations population used in this report is 109,588.

**Table 4: Measures of Endangerment**

B.C. First Nations Language	Measure of Endangerment <sup>1</sup>	Number of Fluent Speakers <sup>1</sup>
Gitsenimx	Endangered/Severely Endangered	1,219
Tsilhqot'in	Severely Endangered	943
Dakelh	Severely Endangered	688
Nisga'a	Severely Endangered	435
Hul'q'umi'num' / Halq'eméylem / həŋqəmiñəm	Severely Endangered	278
Nsyilxcən	Severely Endangered	255
Secwepemctsin	Severely Endangered	249
Státimcets	Severely Endangered	173
Nedut'en	Nearly Extinct	161
Dane-Zaa (Cᵇ ᵇ)	Nearly Extinct	151
N̄eʔkepmxcín	Nearly Extinct	151
Kwaᵏwala	Nearly Extinct	148
Wetsuwet'en	Nearly Extinct	131
Nuučaañuł	Nearly Extinct	115
ᵑenaksialakala / ᵑa''isalakala	Nearly Extinct	80
SENĆOŦEN / Malchosen / Lekwungen / Semiahmoo / T'Sou-ke	Nearly Extinct * 3 dialects of this language group are sleeping	60
Tāłtān	Nearly Extinct	50
Dene K'e	Nearly Extinct	45
Nuxalk	Nearly Extinct	40
ᵑaad Kil / ᵑaaydaa Kil (Haida)	Nearly Extinct	39
Sᵑalgyax	Nearly Extinct	38
Hailhzaqvla	Nearly Extinct	32
Éy7á7juuthem	Nearly Extinct	30
Ktunaxa	Nearly Extinct	26
Tse'khene	Nearly Extinct	25
Danezāgé'	Nearly Extinct	20
Diitiidʔaatx	Nearly Extinct	12
Sᵑwᵑwú7mesh sníchim (Squamish)	Nearly Extinct	10
She shashishalhem (Sechelt)	Nearly Extinct	8
łingít	Nearly Extinct	2
Nicola*	Sleeping	0
Pəntl'áč*	Sleeping	0
Wetalh*	Sleeping	0

\* These languages are sleeping languages.

<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that although a language is labeled as severely endangered or nearly extinct, this does not mean that it is beyond hope. There are many language revitalization strategies that will help stop the decline of the language. A language that is severely endangered urgently needs revitalization efforts, and a language that is nearly extinct needs those efforts even more urgently.

<sup>2</sup> Note that the numbers of fluent speakers listed here were reported to us from the communities and are reported here only as a reference point. These measures of endangerment account for the three variables, Speakers, Usage, and Language Resources. For further explanation, see First Peoples'

# What is being done to revitalize B.C. First Nations languages?

## IN THE COMMUNITIES

Although the status of B.C. First Nations languages as described above may seem bleak, it is important to recognize the considerable work, perseverance and excellence in language revitalization that has been ongoing in B.C. for many years. There is an increasing awareness among B.C. First Nations communities of the critical endangerment of their languages and the urgency to act quickly in their revitalization efforts. B.C. First Nations communities are not sitting idle watching their languages slip away. Many community members are mobilized and motivated, and they are creating a ripple effect in their communities by engaging families, friends and neighbors in their language revitalization efforts. Language champions, individuals, families, schools and organizations are working tirelessly in their language revitalization efforts. Some examples of these great efforts are as follows:<sup>29</sup>

### **Collaboration**

- Communities that share a language are developing Language Authorities to exchange ideas, collaborate, and share resources through conferences and workshops.
- Communities that do not share a language are networking, learning and helping one another overcome common challenges.

### **Planning**

- Languages are developing short- and long-term revitalization plans by assessing their languages and setting goals and priorities.

### **Individuals Using their Language**

- Fluent speakers, semi-speakers and learners are speaking to one another as much as they can in their language on a daily basis.

- Community leadership, staff and community members are greeting each other and incorporating their language into daily operations.

### **Families Speaking the Language**

- Speakers are speaking to their children and grandchildren in the language.
- Some children are learning the language at home and in the community.

### **Creating New Speakers**

- Communities are participating in First Peoples' Council immersion programming such as the Master-Apprentice Program, Language and Culture Immersion Camps and Pre-School Language Nests to create new speakers and to improve the fluency of semi-speakers.

### **Language Champions**

- Individuals are working to develop teaching resources, archives, documentation, and to teach the language to others.
- Community members are advocating for the future of their languages.

### **Mobilization**

- Communities are eager and motivated to carry out language revitalization projects. They apply for funding regularly and have clear priorities and plans for what they need.
- Language revitalization conferences, workshops and trainings are held regularly, and attendance and interest is always overwhelmingly positive.

### **Education and Teacher Training**

- Programs such as the Certificate in Aboriginal Language Revitalization educate and train community members in language revitalization strategies.

<sup>29</sup> This is not a complete list. Many, but not all of these initiatives have been funded by FPHLCC.

- Many speakers and learners are working towards receiving their teachers' certification through language authorities or DSTC programs.
- Several post-secondary institutions offer B.C. First Nations language courses.

### **Archiving**

- Communities are working on recording, documenting and archiving their languages. Some (but not all) communities use FirstVoices.com as a tool.

## **FIRST PEOPLES' COUNCIL PROGRAMMING**

In addition to providing ongoing support and resources to all B.C. First Nations communities,<sup>30</sup> the First Peoples' Council Language Program distributes grants to nearly 100 B.C. First Nations organizations each year. These grants allow communities to carry out the necessary strategies for successful language revitalization.

First Peoples' Council piloted four programs between 2007 and 2010: the Pre-School Language Nest, Language and Culture Immersion Camp, Master-Apprentice and Language Authority and Language Plan Development programs. These exceptionally successful programs are based on the requirements for successful language revitalization, and speak to the needs of BC First Nations communities. They are focused on creating new speakers through language immersion and collaboration through language planning. The Language and Culture Immersion Camp program funded different communities annually, but the Pre-School Language Nests, Master-Apprentice Program teams and the Language Authorities were funded for the full three years. This multi-year funding allowed communities

to develop strong and successful programming and their eagerness to continue past this three-year period demonstrates their commitment and responsibility to revitalizing their languages.

### **Pre-school Language Nests**

In Pre-school Language Nests children under five years old and their parents are immersed in their language, culture and an environment that encourages healthy families and building strong intergenerational ties. Community resource people participate as language and culture experts, and Pre-school Language Nest teachers are either fluent speakers or are in the process of becoming fluent speakers in their languages. Pre-school Language Nests address the need to create more speakers from younger generations. In addition, Pre-school Language Nests create opportunities for young parents to learn the language and bring it back into their homes and daily lives, which is necessary for revitalizing a language.

The First Peoples' Council has funded and provided support, resources and training to eight B.C. Pre-school Language Nests in different communities.

### **Language and Culture Immersion Camps**

Language and Culture Immersion Camps provide opportunities for fluent speakers of First Nations languages to pass on their language and culture to younger generations. Communities carry out these camps using traditional cultural activities including multi-generational gatherings and language immersion. Language and Culture Immersion Camps not only provide opportunities for community members (especially youth) to learn the language through language immersion, but also promote pride and motivation to learn the language and culture.

<sup>30</sup> See Appendix B for a detailed description of First Peoples' Council resources development and capacity-building.

## What is being done to revitalize B.C. First Nations languages?

The First Peoples' Council has funded and provided support and resources to 34 camps from different language families, which have benefitted over 75 communities.

### **Master-Apprentice Program**

The Master-Apprentice Program (MAP) is a one-on-one language immersion program. A “master” (a fluent speaker of a language) is paired with an “apprentice” (learner). The master and apprentice spend 300 hours per year together doing everyday activities using the language at all times. In this program, learners become more fluent which is especially valuable for languages where very few fluent speakers are left.

The First Peoples' Council has funded and provided support, resources and training to 11 different language teams, and 18 apprentices have all become more fluent.

### **Language Authority and Language Plan Development Program (LAP)**

In the LAP, all communities with the same language are asked to come together to collaborate in spite of geographical challenges, dialect, political and community differences. Communities are asked to work as a team to share resources, knowledge, funding, resource people, infrastructure, and expertise to develop a Language Authority and Plan for language revitalization.

The purpose of Language Authority and Language Plan Development is to:

- Govern language related initiatives
- Approve work done on the language
- Develop language-based policies
- Take responsibility for the revitalization and future of the language

- Develop a viable and sustainable plan for community language revitalization
- Plan and implement language revitalization projects
- Certify language teachers

The First Peoples' Council has funded and provided support, resources and training to eight Language Authority and Planning projects from different languages (including all dialects of each language), which have benefitted 114 communities.

### **Other First Peoples' Council Programs**

In addition to these four new programs, the First Peoples' Council offers funding to communities for many different language revitalization strategies. Communities choose the strategy that best fits the needs of their language and community members. The First Peoples' Council-funded strategies are as follows:<sup>31</sup>

- FirstVoices: Language recording, documentation and archiving using FirstVoices.com technology
- Documentation of language
- Researching and providing statistical data
- Development of resource materials
- Language revitalization and planning strategies
- Training and certification
- Communication systems development
- Promotion of traditional approaches to learning and improving community and public understanding and appreciation of First Nations languages.
- Information Sharing: Organizing gatherings of language families to share ideas and develop strategies for language revitalization and developing mechanisms for sharing information, materials and other resources among First Nations language groups.

<sup>31</sup> For a more detailed description of language revitalization strategies see the section “How can we revitalize B.C. First Nations languages?”

## What are some communities doing to revitalize their languages?

We have included three case studies to illustrate in more detail some of the work being done on language revitalization in B.C. These case studies give a face to the statistics and information in this report, and they demonstrate the deep commitment and motivation of B.C. First Nations communities to revitalize their languages. They are by no means the only communities in B.C. doing incredible language revitalization work. We have chosen these case studies because they represent distinct language situations and the diverse language needs in B.C.

### Case Study 1: Nuučaañuł (Barclay Dialect)<sup>1</sup>

**T**he Hupačasath people are comprised of three tribes, the Muh-uulth-aht, Kleh-koot-aht and Cuu-ma-as-aht (Ahahswinis) and occupy their traditional territory on central Vancouver Island.<sup>2</sup> Their population is about 300.

The Barclay dialect of the Nuučaañuł language, which belongs to the Wakashan family, is the Hupačasath traditional First Nations language. Presently there are only about two to three fluent speakers and about 25 Hupačasath members who have been learning and know some of the language.

Fortunately, over the years the Hupačasath First Nation has had an active Language Institute which worked with the few remaining fluent speakers to come together to record, document, and talk in their language. The Hupačasath community also carried out yearly immersion programs such as boat trips for the whole community through their traditional territory, where elders would talk, tell stories, and name and point out the significance of each point, cove, peak and beach in the language. In addition, with funding from First Peoples' Council, the fluent speakers have produced nine books, a calendar and a DVD with six stories in their dialect of Nuučaañuł.

Tragically, three of the last few members of the Hupačasath First Nation able to speak the language fluently passed away in 2009. Since these deaths, and due to tight financial times, the Hupačasath Language Institute has been at a standstill. There are still a few elderly speakers of the language in the Hupačasath community, but there is no money to start up the fluent speakers meetings that happened once or twice weekly, or to organize immersion boat trips, or create more language materials.

The language has gone from severely endangered to nearly extinct. Many Hupačasath community members, including Chief Shaunee Casavant are in a panic to produce more speakers.

Although some Hupačasath members have been learning the language, no one has the skills of the fluent speakers. There is so much cultural knowledge that is tied up in a language. It took a lifetime for these elder speakers to learn and accumulate all that they knew. The language is not only the identity of the people, but also carries thousands of years worth of stories, protocols and teachings.

<sup>1</sup> We have verified and been granted permission to use this information by Hupačasath Chief Shaunee Casavant. (January 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Hupačasath First Nation, Our History. <http://www.hupacasath.ca/our-history>.

## What are some communities doing to revitalize their languages?

*“Really we are an amazing people... We have to stop talking about it and just do it. If we want our kids to do it [speak the language], we also have to do it.”*

Hupačasath Chief Shaunee Casavant on creating more fluent speakers

### Case Study 1: Nuučaanuʔ (Barclay Dialect) continued

Despite severe funding shortages and the terrible loss the Hupačasath community experienced with the deaths of three of their last fluent speakers in 2009, positive attitudes and work towards language revitalization continue.

- Some Hupačasath community members, including Chief Shaunee Casavant, visit the neighboring Huu-ay-aht community to take part in their language classes.
- In the fall of 2009 a Nuučaanuʔ language symposium was held where all Nuučaanuʔ tribes gathered to discuss the revitalization of their language.
- All the Nuučaanuʔ tribes recognize the need to act quickly for language revitalization. Although there are many dialects of the Nuučaanuʔ language, there is a strong sense of encouragement and collaboration between the dialects and tribes.
- Cliff Atleo, president of the Nuučaanuʔ Tribal Council (NTC) has made a point of addressing all the chiefs by the First Nations name, and speaking his dialect as much as possible.

- About half of all the NTC chiefs are fluent, others are learning.

Like all Nuučaanuʔ tribes, the goal of Hupačasath is to be 100% fluent within their territory. This is an ambitious goal, but the Hupačasath Chief, community members and Language Institute staff have a strong desire and motivation to keep their language alive. They know that they need to make the language available and accessible to community members, increase language programming in schools and at home, and promote the language within the community.

To continue working towards their goal, like all other endangered languages in B.C., they need funding, capacity building, resources, and participation from their greatest resources- the few remaining fluent speakers. This must happen quickly, before the very last few fluent elder speakers are gone. Once these elder speakers have passed, it will be too late, there will be no way to go back and learn the language with its great wealth of knowledge.

## Case Study 2: Sto:lo Halq'emeylem (Upriver Halkomelem)<sup>1</sup>

**T**he Sto:lo Nation spans the Fraser Valley and is comprised of 11 member First Nations: Aitchelitz, Leqamel, Matsqui, Popkum, Skawahlook, Skowkale, Shxwha:y, Squiala, Sumas, Tzeachten, Yakwekwioose. The total population of these First Nations is about 2,094.<sup>2</sup>

Halq'emeylem is the traditional language of the territory. It is a member of the Coast Salish language family and it is very close to extinction. There are approximately fewer than five fluent speakers of the language left, all of them elders (in their seventies to nineties), and more speakers are lost each year.<sup>3</sup> Many Sto:lo communities and Sto:lo Nation members are racing against time and working hard to preserve and revitalize their language. Sto:lo Nation members have shown great desire and motivation, but language materials and classes are not able to meet the popular demand.

Within the Sto:lo Nation there are many ongoing language revitalization initiatives.

### Language Authority and Language Plan Development

The Coqualeetza Cultural Education Society (guided by Sto:lo elders and for the benefit of the Sto:lo Nation) is part of the First Peoples' Council three year Language Authority and Language Plan Development and Planning program. This project has carried out community language needs assess-

ments, standardized language learning evaluations, worked towards certifying Halq'emeylem language teachers, and developed short- and long-term language revitalization plans.

### Pre-School Language Nest

Although Seabird Island is an independent band, they run not only an independent school where the Halq'emeylem language and culture are emphasized, but also a Halq'emeylem Pre-School Language Nest funded through First Peoples' Council. This Pre-School Language Nest (like all other First Peoples' Council funded Pre-School Language Nests) is a pre-school modeled after a family home where young children are immersed in their language and culture. Parents are encouraged to participate and volunteers, fluent speakers and elders spend time doing daily activities in the language with the children.

### Master-Apprentice Program

The Master-Apprentice Program (MAP) is a one-on-one language immersion program. A "master" (a fluent speaker of a language) is paired with an "apprentice" or learner. The master and apprentice carry out everyday activities using the language at all times. There are two First Peoples' Council-funded MAP teams for the Halq'emeylem language. One team in particular is working hard under much pressure, since the mother, Siyamiyateliyot (Elizabeth Phillips), of this mother-daughter team is the last remaining speaker in the area. Unfortunately, they do not live close to one another, which is an added challenge. The apprentice daughter, Syisetlha (Vivian Williams), is deeply committed and

<sup>1</sup> We have verified and been granted permission to use this information by Sto:lo Nation community members and by the Sto:lo Shxweli staff and administration (January, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Sto:lo Nation, Sto:lo Nation Bands. <http://www.stolonation.B.C.ca/about-us/stolonation-bands.htm#Skawahlook> (January, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Sto:lo Nation, Shxweli Language Program. <http://www.stolonation.B.C.ca/services-and-programs/shxweli-language-program/shxweli-background.htm> (January, 2010).

## What are some communities doing to revitalize their languages?

*The Halq'eméylem language represents an excellent example of people doing everything they can to not let their language disappear.*

### Case Study 2: Sto:lo Halq'eméylem (Upriver Halkomelem)

recognizes the importance of what she is doing, but struggles to make time, travel to see her mother, and take time away from her own children and personal life to learn the language bit by bit before it is too late. Sometimes Siyamiyateliyot and Syisetlha aren't able to see each other in person and have to chat over the internet. Fortunately, the MAP has proven to be a successful program for increasing the fluency of learners and all the First Peoples' Council-funded teams in B.C. continue to work hard in their race against time.

#### Immersion Classes

The Sto:lo Nation Language Program (Sto:lo Shxweli) is offering an intensive Halq'eméylem immersion program. This is a 50-week, 7-hour/day program. The intensive program is designed to develop highly fluent speakers of Halq'eméylem.

#### FirstVoices

Sto:lo Shxweli language staff have worked extensively to create a prolific language archive using the FirstVoices.com website. They have also created language teaching curricula using the new FirstVoices.com language tutor program.

#### Language Materials and Resources

With funding in part from First Peoples' Council, the Sto:lo Shxweli has begun developing textbooks and learning materials.

#### Developmental Standard Term Certificate

Sto:lo Shxweli offers one of the first DSTC programs in B.C. This program allows First Nations language learners and speakers to receive training and certification under the Ministry of Education, and the opportunity to teach First Nations languages in schools and communities in B.C. There have been eight graduates of the program and though there are no new fluent speakers yet, the instructors who have completed their studies know enough of the language that they can instruct classes and hold conversations with fluent speakers.

The Halq'eméylem language represents an excellent example of people doing everything they can to not let their language disappear. The communities of the Halq'eméylem language have demonstrated great perseverance and collaboration. By working together, sharing resources and planning between communities, they have begun to carry out many language revitalization initiatives. The work is far from finished though. They continue to need funding, time, capacity building and resources.

*The Chief Atahm School is a model of excellence  
in immersion programming and language revitalization.*

### Case Study 3: Secwepemctsin (Eastern Dialect)<sup>1</sup>

**A**dams Lake Indian Band is one of the member bands of the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council and is one of the seventeen bands within the Secwepemc Nation in the interior of B.C. The people are referred to as Cstelnec people of the Adams Lake area. Their traditional territory stretches from the town of Chase to the snow peaks above Tum Tum Lake. Adams Lake Indian Band is sectioned into seven areas, and has over 700 members.<sup>2</sup>

Secwepemctsin is part of the Interior Salish language family and only a small number of speakers whose first language is Secwepemctsin remain. The eastern dialect of Secwepemctsin (language of the Secwepemc) is the traditional language of Adams Lake territory. There are only approximately 22 fluent speakers of the eastern dialect of Secwepemctsin in Adams Lake.<sup>3</sup>

There are, however, many learners of the eastern dialect of Secwepemctsin in Adams Lake since Adams Lake is home to the Chief Atahm School, a Secwepemctsin immersion school. The school has been in existence since 1991 and is one of the few First Nations language immersion schools in B.C. The program was initiated by a group of parents who were concerned about the rapid decline of Secwepemctsin. Chief Atahm School's overall goal is to increase the number of fluent speakers within the community.<sup>4</sup> According to the school's vision, all students are taught about balance in the

natural world as they practice the principles of sustainability.

Chief Atahm School continues to be a parent-operated school where staff, parents and elders work together to offer the best program possible that adheres to the school's vision and philosophy. Currently Chief Atahm School offers Secwepemctsin immersion programming for learners across generations, from infants to adults.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Pre-School Language Nest**

The first Chief Atahm immersion program began in 1987 with a Pre-School Language Nest, modeled after the successful Maori initiative, "Te Kohanga Reo" and the Hawaiian "Aha Punana Leo". The Chief Atahm Pre-School Language Nest is now funded in part by First Peoples' Council and provides a three-day-a-week language immersion environment for very young children (infant to toddler) to learn the language, which addresses the need to create more speakers from younger generations. In addition, the Pre-School Language Nest creates opportunities for young parents to learn the language and bring it back into their homes and daily lives.

<sup>1</sup> We have verified and been granted permission to use this information by Chief Atahm School (January, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, Adams Lake Indian Band (Sexqeltqin). <http://www.shuswapnation.org/bands/member-bands/adamslake.html> (January, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> FirstVoices, About the Cstelnec People. <http://www.FirstVoices.com.com/en/Secwepemctsin> (January, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Adams Lake Indian Band, Education. <http://www.adamslakeband.org/index.php?topic=education> (January, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Chief Atahm School, <http://www.chiefatahm.com/Home.html> (January, 2010).

## Case Study 3: Secwepemctsin (Eastern Dialect) continued

### Nursery/Primary Program

Parents and organizers feared that once their children left the Pre-School Language Nest, their language learning would end. So, once the first Pre-School Language Nest children reached school age, an immersion nursery-to-grade-three program was implemented. The nursery-to-grade-three program offers the full range of core content courses such as math, language arts, science, and social studies all taught in Secwepemctsin. These are complemented by additional language and cultural experiences.

### Semi-immersion Grades Four to Nine

Grades four to nine are conducted with partial programming in the Secwepemc language with the remaining time in English. Today, around 100 children have benefited from being immersed in their ancestral language surrounded by a nurturing circle of elders and teachers.

### Adults

Until recently, Chief Atahm School also offered junior high levels, and continues to offer adult evening and weekend classes.

### Curriculum Resource Department

Chief Atahm School also has a Curriculum Resource Department which has created a number of primary and intermediate level teaching resources such as games cards, flash cards, BINGO sets and DVDs that can be adapted and used to supplement any language program. Chief Atahm School also offers a variety of Secwepemc stories and materials in the Eastern and Western dialect. Chief Atahm School receives many orders from other bands, organizations and language instructors who have few other resource materials.

### Summer Institutes

The annual Chief Atahm School Summer Institute is designed to bring together new and experienced First Nations language teachers. These summer

courses provide an opportunity to share collective dreams of language revitalization by exploring theory and practice. The 2010 sessions will feature a 10-day Total Physical Response (TPR) Course and a seven-day TPR Storytelling Course. Both of these courses are accredited through Thompson Rivers University.

### Annual Conferences

Chief Atahm hosts annual conferences that showcase their innovative methods of teaching language within a cultural context. In May of 2010 they will hold the 10th annual immersion language conference. This year in addition to action-packed workshops on teaching through action, they will offer workshops specific to assessment and program evaluation.

The Chief Atahm School is grounded in the belief that knowledge of the language, traditional practices and beliefs of the Secwepemc will help develop a strong and healthy community. Students will be prepared for today's world and will help to protect the earth for future generations.

The Chief Atahm School is a model of excellence in immersion programming and language revitalization. The founding parents, staff, teachers, and elders worked from the ground up to develop extensive immersion programming. They started with few to no resources and have faced many challenges such as lack of funding, lack of participation and motivation, objection from other community members, and few remaining fluent speakers. They have demonstrated great perseverance in the face of adversity to become an ideal for a great number of First Nations communities in B.C.

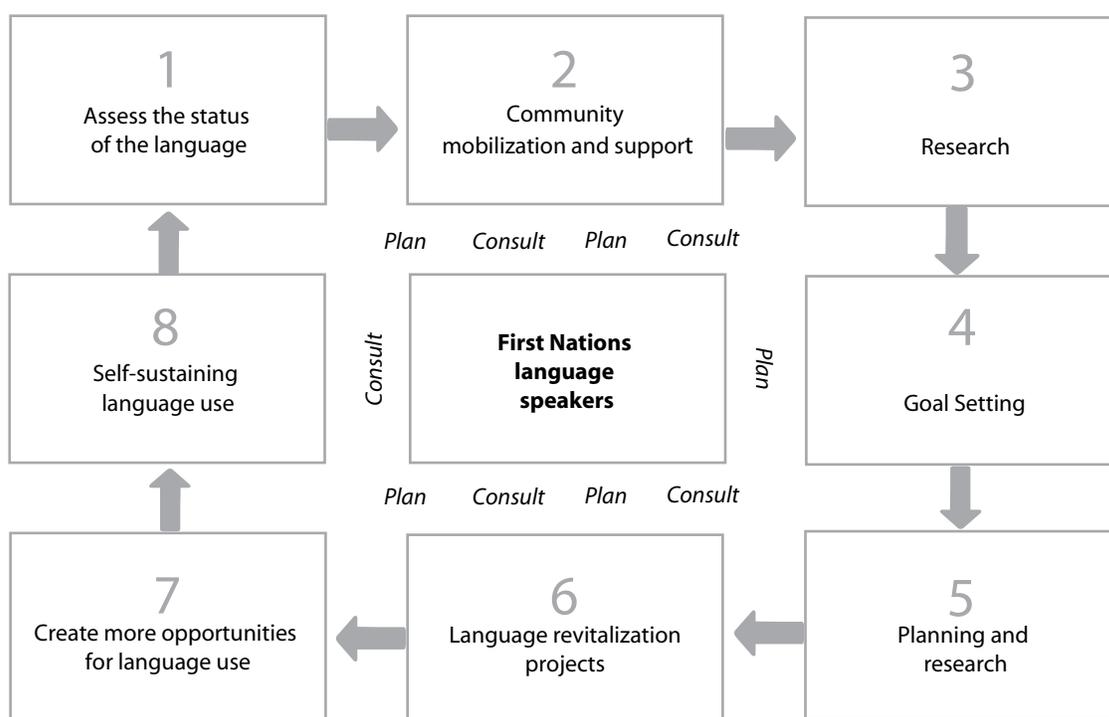
# How can we revitalize B.C. First Nations languages?

## LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES

A living language is one that is thriving, healthy and has many speakers, especially young ones; it is spoken widely by families and communities in government, social and spiritual situations; it is used for real daily communication; and it is used in media, literature and all types of communication. Revitalizing a language means preventing it from being lost, bringing it back to life, and eventually ensuring that it is thriving, healthy and valued.

Based on the work of language revitalization experts<sup>32</sup> as well as successful projects and initiatives in B.C.<sup>33</sup> and around the world,<sup>34</sup> First Peoples' Council has developed an eight-step cycle for B.C. community language revitalization. There are different language revitalization strategies for each of the eight steps, and the strategies that a community uses depend on the status of their language as well as their needs. This is a cycle, so it is important to return to the beginning step to re-assess the status of your language, gather increased community support and mobilization, review programs, revise plans, and carry out research and language projects.

**Figure 1: The First Peoples' Council 8 Steps to Language Revitalization**



<sup>32</sup> Hinton, L. & Hale, K. (Eds.), *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice* (San Diego: Academic Press, 2001).

Hinton, L. *Flutes of Fire*. (Berkeley CA: Heyday Books, 1994, p 243-244).

Fishman, J. *Reversing Language Shift*. (Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters, 1991)

Reyhner, J., Gina Cantoni, Robert N. St. Clair, and Evangeline Parsons Yazzie (Eds.), *Introduction to Revitalizing Indigenous Languages*. (Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona, 1999 p v-xx).

<sup>33</sup> Community language revitalization projects carried out by B.C. First Nations communities, many of them funded by the First Peoples' Council.

<sup>34</sup> Maori, Hawaiian, Catalan, Gaelic, and Hebrew initiatives.

## How can we revitalize B.C. First Nations languages?

As noted in the centre of Figure 1, the First Nations language and its speakers must be central to the revitalization process. Also, planning and consulting should be continuously carried out throughout the entire process. The language revitalization process will only be successful if it is planned in consultation with remaining fluent speakers, community members, stakeholders, and local government. These groups are the flesh and bone of the revitalization process. Without their support and participation, revitalization will not happen since revitalization of the language depends on their using and embracing the language in all aspects of their lives.

### FIRST PEOPLES' COUNCIL STRATEGIES

The First Peoples' Council Language Program provides support and funds strategies that correspond to each of the eight steps required for successful language revitalization, and speak to the needs of B.C. First Nations communities.

#### ***Assess the Status of Your Language***

Before beginning the planning and implementation steps, it is important for communities to be able know how many people speak the language, how often and what resources and level of motivation there is in the community.

FIRST PEOPLES' COUNCIL STRATEGIES:<sup>35</sup>

Researching and providing statistical data. Conducting assessments on the status of First Nations languages use at the community level.

<sup>35</sup> The First Peoples' Council language needs assessment is a good example.

#### ***Community Mobilization and Support***

It is imperative that language revitalization efforts include all levels of community and leadership support. By educating the community, and promoting and celebrating the language, support, participation and encouragement will be gained.

FIRST PEOPLES' COUNCIL STRATEGIES:

Promotion. Improving community and public understanding and appreciation of First Nations languages.

Language Authority and Language Plan Development. Communities with the same language are asked to come together to collaborate in spite of geographical challenges, dialect, political and community differences. Community members work as a team to share resources, knowledge, funding, resource people, infrastructure, and expertise to develop a Language Authority and Language Plan Development.

#### ***Language Revitalization Research***

It is important for communities to be aware of previous work that has been done on language revitalization in B.C. and around the world, as well as in their own language.

FIRST PEOPLES' COUNCIL STRATEGIES:

Information Sharing. Developing mechanisms for sharing information, materials and other resources among First Nations language groups.

## Goal Setting

Based on their needs and priorities (Step 1 and 2), communities must set realistic and reachable long- and short-term goals for the revitalization of their language, and then decide on projects that will help to achieve those goals.

FIRST PEOPLES' COUNCIL STRATEGY:

Language Strategies. Developing short- and long-term strategies and plans for revitalizing and maintaining First Nations Languages.

## Planning and Research

Once communities have set their goals and decided on projects, they should look to other successful models to plan their own language revitalization project.

FIRST PEOPLES' COUNCIL STRATEGY:

Information Sharing. Organizing gatherings of language families to share ideas and develop strategies for language revitalization, retention and maintenance; and/or developing mechanisms for sharing information, materials and other resources among First Nations language groups.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> There are some languages that are spoken across borders i.e. Tlingit in B.C. and Alaska, so language sources, including fluent speakers must also be shared across borders.

## Language Revitalization Projects

Carry out the well planned projects to meet language goals.

FIRST PEOPLES' COUNCIL STRATEGIES:

Immersion Programming. This is the most successful method of creating more speakers and increasing the fluency of semi-speakers of First Nations languages by providing them with opportunities to be immersed in the language through daily and traditional cultural activities.

**Pre-School Language Nest** (immersion pre-school for very young children and parents)

**Master-Apprentice Program** (one-on-one immersion program for learners committed to becoming fluent by intensively working with a fluent speaker)

**Language and Culture Immersion Camps** (Opportunities for fluent speakers of First Nations languages to pass on their language and culture to younger generations through traditional cultural activities)

Training and Certification. Developing programs for training and certifying First Nations language teachers and resource people in the community.

Documentation of Language. Recording, documenting and preserving First Nation languages.

Development of Resource Materials. Developing materials to increase languages use and proficiency.

FirstVoices Development. Language archiving using FirstVoices.com technology.

*Our languages are the cornerstone of who we are as people. Without our languages, our culture cannot survive.*

Assembly of First Nations, Education Secretariat; <http://www.afn.ca/article.asp?i=122>

## How can we revitalize B.C. First Nations languages?

### **Create More Opportunities for Language Use**

Broaden the domains of language use by transforming it from a language that is only used in the language learning environment to a language that is used in all aspects of daily life. This will make the language more useful, meaningful and functional to community members and increase its relevance to them.

#### FIRST PEOPLES' COUNCIL STRATEGY:

Promotion. Promoting traditional approaches to learning in non-classroom settings; and/or improving community and public understanding and appreciation of First Nations languages.

### **Self-Sustaining Language Use**

Aim to revitalize the language to a point where language revitalization initiatives are only a small portion of the language use and most of the language use naturally occurs in daily life and is easy for community members. Revitalize the language to a point where it is functional and is used in everyday occurrences.

#### FIRST PEOPLES' COUNCIL STRATEGIES:

Language Authority and Language Plan Development  
Communities with the same language are asked to come together to collaborate in spite of geographical challenges, dialect, political and community differences. Communities work as a team to share resources, knowledge, funding, resource people, infrastructure, and expertise for Language Authority and Language Plan Development.

Language Strategies. Developing short- and long-term strategies and plans for revitalizing and maintaining First Nations languages.

Communication. Developing systems for facilitating communications in First Nations languages.

Resource Development. Creating resources such as books, media and communication tools for community members to use the language daily.

Promotion. Encouraging and supporting First Nations language use in all areas of the community including sports event, ceremonies, government meetings, community celebrations, as well as around the community in homes, schools, stores and offices.

*To reverse the imminent extinction of B.C.'s First Nations languages, action must happen quickly.*

## What's next for B.C. First Nations languages?

**A**lthough the status of B.C. First Nations languages is critical, it is not too late. Through collaboration, common goals, and immediate action, revitalization of B.C. First Nations languages is possible. It is possible for B.C.'s First Nations languages to once again thrive as functional languages of real communication in communities, at schools, in local governments and in homes. It is also possible to thoroughly document and archive these languages that are in danger of being lost, so that this information can be used by younger generations to rebuild their ancestral languages. Investment and commitment is urgently needed to ensure that B.C. First Nations languages and the knowledge they hold are recognized and not lost. First Nations people need to be empowered to take charge of this important work.

### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR B.C.**

Based on the current state of B.C. First Nations languages, the First Peoples' Council makes the following recommendations for B.C.:<sup>38</sup>

#### **Address Short-Term Emergency Goals**

As B.C. First Nations languages rapidly decline, there is an urgent need to act quickly to record and document languages before it is too late. Also, where very few speakers remain, it is crucial to create new speakers by pairing them with the fluent speakers through immersion programs such as the Master-Apprentice Program.

#### **Promote and Implement Immersion Programming**

The most important strategy in language revitalization is creating new speakers. The most successful way to create speakers and to increase

the fluency of semi-speakers is to provide them with opportunities to be immersed in the language through daily and traditional cultural activities. Successful First Peoples' Council immersion programs include Pre-School Language Nest, Master-Apprentice Program, and Language and Culture Immersion Camps. It is also important to promote the development of First Nations immersion language programs in all schools and pre-schools.

#### **Document and Archive all B.C. First Nations Languages**

It is vital that good quality, recordings, documentation and complete archives are created of all languages. Recordings and documentation serve as invaluable resources for language teaching and learning. In many cases, documentation will be the only enduring language resource as the remaining Elder speakers pass away. FirstVoices.com and the FirstVoices Language Tutor are successful First Peoples' Council programs that allow communities to create recordings, documentation and archives that are used for language teaching and learning. An iPod application that will translate First Nations languages will soon be available.

#### **Include Off-Reserve First Nations**

Work to include off-reserve First Nations communities in language and culture revitalization projects. A large percentage of B.C.'s First Nations population live off-reserve and often miss out on opportunities, funding and initiatives for learning and revitalizing their cultures and languages. The involvement of off-reserve First Nations communities in language and culture revitalization programming must be increased. Programs such as FirstVoices.com and the FirstVoices Language Tutor serve as connectors to reach the off-reserve First Nations members, but are not a replacement for in-person participation.

<sup>38</sup> These recommendations are also in line with recommendations from the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, First Citizen's Forum: Aboriginal Education: Speaking Our Languages (Wosk Centre for Dialogue, 2006).

## What's next for B.C. First Nations languages?

### **Secure Investment**

Leadership, the First Peoples' Council and Government must work together to seek investment and commitment in First Nations language programming from bodies such as school districts.

### **Focus on Children and Youth**

It is important to focus on young children by building strong foundations in their languages and cultures. It is also important to make language revitalization efforts relevant and interesting for youth, since the future of a language rests with its young speakers. Creating a generation of young speakers will begin the cycle towards creating a thriving language, since young people will in turn speak the language to the following generations.

### **Increase Promotion, Motivation and Accessibility**

The value of language needs to be promoted to encourage participation and to instill cultural and linguistic pride. Language programming, resources, and funding need to be made more accessible to all First Nations communities and community members. Language must become a part of daily life for all B.C. First Nations.

### **Promote Collaboration**

Increase collaboration between communities, organizations and First Nations to avoid competing for resources, and to strengthen their capacities.

### **Develop Protective Legislation**

Create legislation and official recognition to protect B.C. First Nations languages and cultures.

### **Use Language in Leadership**

Develop and implement language programming for leadership including local, regional, provincial and national governments. An important step in language revitalization is incorporating First Nations languages into leadership at all levels.

### **Recognize the Direct Correlation Between Language, Culture and Wellness**

Promote awareness and seek recognition of the importance of language and culture to the health, education and economic development of First Nations people and communities.

### **Train Teachers**

Develop and implement teacher training and degree programs at all post-secondary education institutions. These programs must be accessible and inclusive to all prospective B.C. First Nations language teachers.

### **Create and Distribute Resources**

Quality resources are needed for all successful language programming. Resources include well-developed curricula for all levels of language learning, books, media, electronic language learning resources, and good quality documentation and recordings that are accessible and can be used for years to come.

### **Plan Short and Long-Term Goals**

For successful language revitalization, short- and long-term planning is necessary, including policy-making, strategic planning, and collaboration be-

tween communities sharing a language. Forums for developing shared strategies for the future, sharing resources, and networking are important for languages to make the most of limited time and money.

### **Increase and Continue Funding Annually**

The amount of funding for First Nations language revitalization initiatives falls far short of what is needed, and must be increased. All language revitalization projects require funding in many areas, a few of which are listed here:

- Staff and Experts
- Materials and Supplies
- Equipment
- Travel
- Infrastructure
- Administration of programs
- Training and capacity-building

In addition, long-term funding that is guaranteed for multi-year programming is essential for the future success of all B.C. First Nations language programs.

### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR THE FIRST PEOPLES' COUNCIL**

#### ***Continue and Expand all First Peoples' Council Programming and Activities***

The First Peoples' Council has provided funding, resources and capacity building opportunities for successful language revitalization programming for the past 20 years. However, the extent of language programming and the amount of funding fall far short of what is necessary to ensure the successful revitalization of all B.C. First Nations languages. Because of the limited funding, many communities receive no funding at all. The First Peoples' Council seeks to secure increased funding for the expansion of language programming in B.C.

The following goals reflect the specific activities included in the First Peoples' Council business plan. These goals are based on realistic estimates and address the immediate needs of B.C. First Nations languages.

**Table 5 : First Peoples' Council Goals to 2013**

First Peoples' Council Goal	2009-10	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Increase number of Preschool Language Nests	8 programs	20 programs	32 programs	42 programs
Increase the level of fluency in speakers (Master-Apprentice Program)	10 teams	20 teams	40 teams	60 teams
Increase number of Language and Culture Immersion Camps	14 camps	30 camps	45 camps	60 camps
Increase number of First Nations Language Authority and Language Plan Development projects	8 Language Authorities	15 Language Authorities	25 Language Authorities	32 Language Authorities
Fully document B.C. First Nations languages and dialects	15%	25%	60%	100%
Support language curriculum development	in progress	10 languages	20 languages	32 languages
Recruit, train and improve fluency of language teachers; support B.C. First Nations schools to hire teachers	in progress	50 scholarships for language teacher training	100 scholarships for language teacher training	150 scholarships for language teacher training
Track status of B.C. First Nations languages	in progress	Research and establish language data tracking program	Implement data tracking program with community support	Annual tracking and reporting on the status of languages
Resources developed by the First Peoples' Council to support languages	12	14	16	18

## APPENDIX A

### LANGUAGE SPECIFIC DATA

In the following sections we have provided data for individual languages.

#### *Languages*

Language data is grouped according to language family. It is important to clarify that because languages are classified within one family, it does not mean that they are similar. For example, English and German are in the same language family, but are completely different. Each language is completely unique and a speaker of one language does not understand a speaker of another language. Each language must be treated as a unique case, with different needs, sound system and grammar.

In addition, within each language there are often several different dialects. Sometimes dialects are so different that speakers of the different dialects have a hard time understanding one another. Some argue that their dialect is in fact a language of its own. The way we have chosen to classify the languages here is generally accepted by B.C. First Nations, and given the magnitude of the data, we have chosen not to give data for separate dialects.

#### *Numbers*

The numbers of fluent speakers, semi-speakers and learners are given as percentages of the total population of the communities of that language. Communities and populations vary in size greatly from language to language, so percentages allowed us to more easily compare numbers between languages.

However, a percentage for one language can, in reality be quite a different number for another language. For example, both *Éy7á7juuthem* and *Hul'q'umi'num' / Halq'eméylem / hə́nqəmiñəm* have 2% of their population as fluent speakers. For the *Hul'q'umi'num' / Halq'eméylem / hə́nqəmiñəm* language, this is 2% of a total population of 14,732, which means that there are about 295 fluent speakers; on the other hand for the *Éy7á7juuthem* language, this is 2% of a total population of 1698, which means that there are only about 34 fluent speakers.

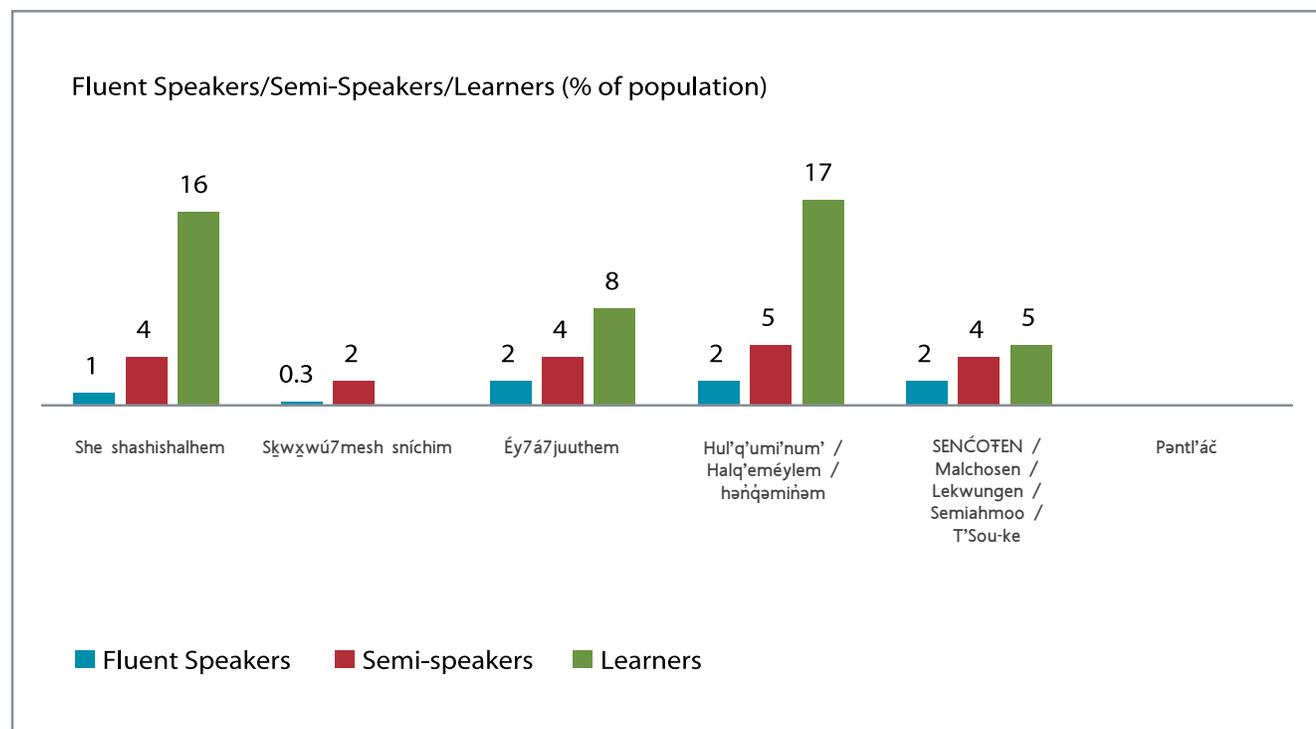
Therefore, we have also included the total populations (of the communities that reported to us).

#### *Measure of Endangerment*

For each language we have also provided a measure of endangerment based on our First Peoples' Council framework (Table 4). Since all B.C. First Nations languages are critically endangered, we have made further distinctions for each language. Within the critically endangered category, a language can be severely endangered, or nearly extinct.

# Coast Salish Languages

**GRAPH 3:**  
**Fluent speakers/Semi-Speakers/Learners of Coast Salish Languages**



**Table 6 : Communities and Populations of Coast Salish Languages**

Language	Total # of B.C. communities	# of communities reported to us	Population reported to us
She shashishalhem (Sechelt)	1	1	1155
Sḵw̓xwú7mesh sníchim (Squamish)	23 in one nation	1 nation	3324 <sup>1</sup>
Éy7á7juuthem	4	3	1698
Hul'q'umi'num' / Halq'eméylem / hə́ŋqəmiŋəm	42	29	14,732
SENĆOŦEN / Malchosen / Lekwungen / Semiahmoo / T'Sou-ke	10	7	2827
Pəntl'áč	-	-	-

<sup>1</sup> Squamish Nation Network, About Us. <http://www.squamish.net/aboutus/modernProfile.htm> (January 2010).

\* This is a sleeping language.

# Coast Salish Languages

**Table 7 : Language Education for Coast Salish Languages**

Language	First Nations-operated schools	Head Start programs	Hrs/wk spent on languages in schools and Head Starts	Language Nests (First Peoples' Council funded)
She shashishalhem (Sechelt)	1	1	22	0
Sḵw̓x̓wú7mesh sníchim (Squamish)	1	No data		
Éy7á7juuthem	1	2	3	0
Hul'q'umi'num' / Halq'eméylem / hə́ŋqəmiŋəm	10	11	4	2
SENĆOŦEN / Malchosen / Lekwungen* / Semiahmoo* / T'Sou-ke*	5	0	2	0
Pəntl'áč*	-		-	-

\* These are sleeping languages.

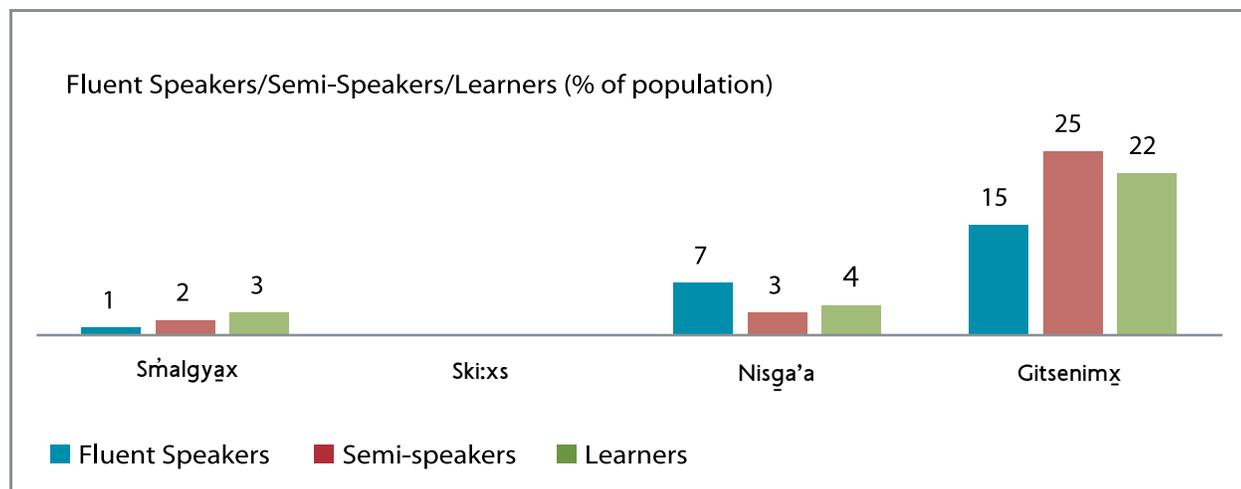
**Table 8 : Language Resources for Coast Salish Languages**

Language	Communities with recordings of the language	Communities with curriculum for teaching the language	Communities with access to FirstVoices archive
She shashishalhem (Sechelt)	0	1	0
Sḵw̓x̓wú7mesh sníchim (Squamish)	no data		
Éy7á7juuthem	1	2	1
Hul'q'umi'num' / Halq'eméylem / hə́ŋqəmiŋəm	4	9	8
SENĆOŦEN / Malchosen / Lekwungen* / Semiahmoo* / T'Sou-ke*	4	4	3
Pəntl'áč*	-	-	-

\* These are sleeping languages.

# Tsimshianic Languages

**GRAPH 4:**  
**Fluent Speakers/Semi-Speakers/Learners of Tsimshianic Languages**



**Table 9 : Communities and Populations of Tsimshianic Languages**

Language	Total # of B.C. communities	# of communities reported to us	Population reported to us
S̓n̓algy̓ax	6	3	5,295
Ski:x̓s	No data		
Nisga'a	4	4	6,624
Gitsenim̓x̓	6	6	8,365

**Table 10 : Language Education for Tsimshianic Languages**

Language	First Nations-operated schools	Head Start programs	Hrs/wk spent on languages in schools and Head Starts	Language Nests (First Peoples' Council funded)
S̓n̓algy̓ax	1	1	5	0
Ski:x̓s	No data			
Nisga'a	3	2	4	0
Gitsenim̓x̓	6	3	7	0

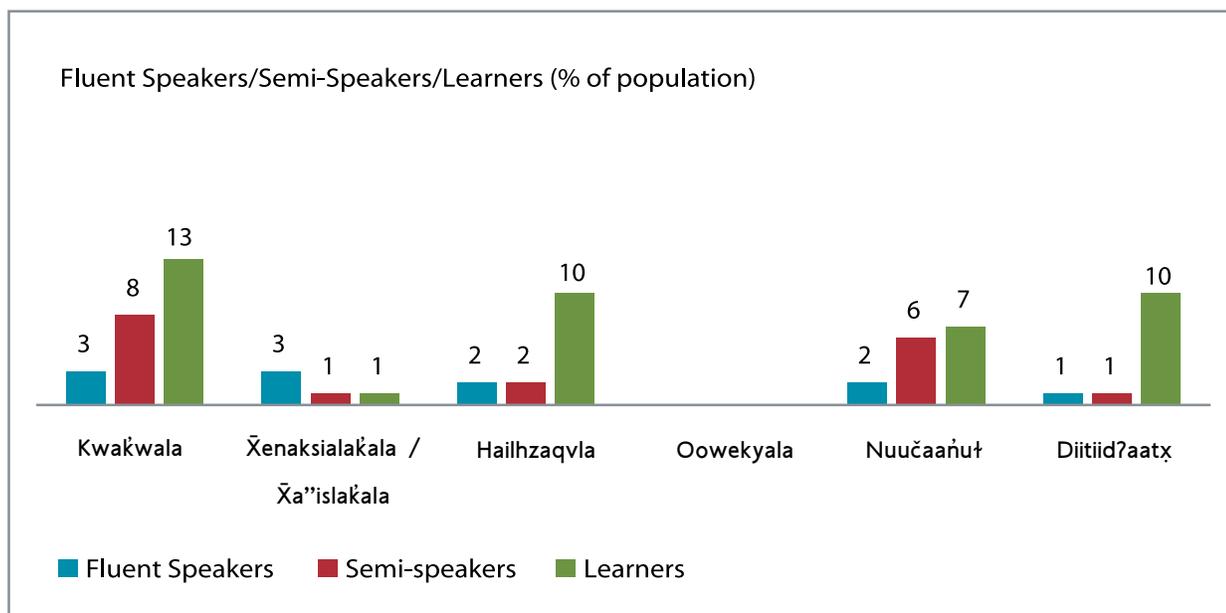
# Tsimshianic Languages

**Table 11 : Language Resources for Tmshianic Languages**

Language	Communities with recordings of the language	Communities with curriculum for teaching the language	Communities with access to FirstVoices archive
S̓malgyax	0	1	0
Ski:xs	No data		
Nisga'a	0	4	1
Citsenimx̓	2	4	2

# Wakashan Languages

**GRAPH 5:  
Fluent Speakers/Semi-Speakers/Learners of Wakashan Languages**



**Table 12 : Communities and Populations of Wakashan Languages**

Language	Total # of B.C. communities	# of communities reported to us	Population reported to us
Kwaḱwala	15	8	4,616
ᖶenaksialaḱala / ᖶaʼislaḱala	2	2	3,086
Hailhzaqvla	1	1	2,195
Oowekyala	No data		
Nuuḱaaḱuḱ	13	10	6,401
Diitidʼaatḱ	2	2	943

**Table 13 : Language Education for Wakashan Languages**

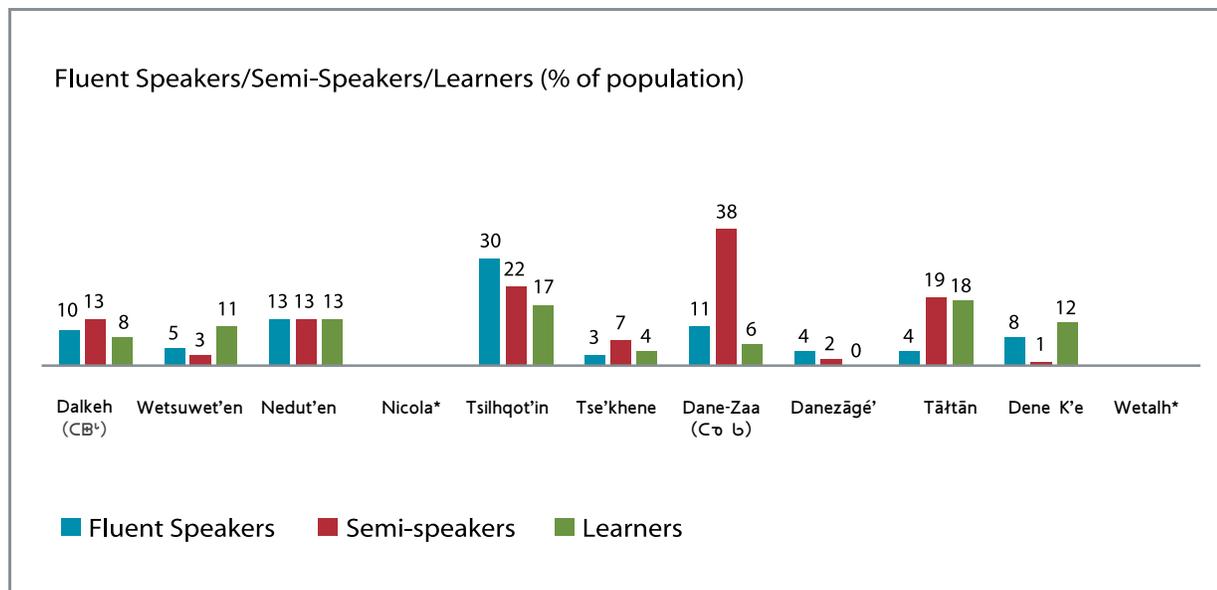
Language	First Nations-operated schools	Head Start programs	Hrs/wk spent on languages in schools and Head Starts	Language Nests (First Peoples' Council funded)
Kwaḱwala	4	2	1.5	1
ᖶenaksialaḱala / ᖶaʼislaḱala	2	1	6	0
Hailhzaqvla	1	1	2.5	1
Oowekyala	No data			
Nuuḱaaḱuḱ	4	4	4	0
Diitidʼaatḱ	1	0	1	0

**Table 14 : Language Resources for Wakashan Languages**

Language	Communities with recordings of the language	Communities with curriculum for teaching the language	Communities with access to FirstVoices archive
Kwaḱwala	4	7	4
ᖶenaksialaḱala / ᖶaʼislaḱala	0	2	0
Hailhzaqvla	0	1	0
Oowekyala	No data		
Nuuḱaaḱuḱ	2	6	7
Diitidʼaatḱ	1	0	1

# Dene Languages

**GRAPH 6:**  
**Fluent Speakers/Semi-Speakers/Learners of Dene Languages**



**Table 15 : Communities and Populations of Dene Languages**

Language	Total # of B.C. communities	# of communities reported to us	Population reported to us
Dakelh (CB')	14	11	7,177
Wetsuwet'en	6	5	2,448
Nedut'en	3	3	1,247
Nicola*	-	-	-
Tsilhqot'in	7	6	3,178
Tse'khene	3	2	882
Dane-Zaa (Cᑦᑲ)	6	5	1,399
Danezāgé'	3	2	478
Tāhtān	2	2	1,377
Dene K'e	1	1	597
Wetalh*	-	-	-

\* These are sleeping languages.

**Table 16 : Language Education for Dene Languages**

Language	First Nations-operated schools	Head Start programs	Hrs/wk spent on languages in schools and Head Starts	Language Nests (First Peoples' Council funded)
Dakelh (Cᑲᑲ)	5	7	5	0
Wetsuwet'en	1	2	4	0
Nedut'en	1	0	0	0
Nicola*	-	-	-	-
Tsilhqot'in	4	1	15	1
Tse'khene	1	0	12	0
Dane-Zaa (Cᑲ ᑲ)	3	1	13	0
Danezāgé'	0	1	0	0
Tāhtān	0	0	0	0
Dene K'e	1	1	6	0
Wetalh*	-	-	-	-

\* These are sleeping languages.

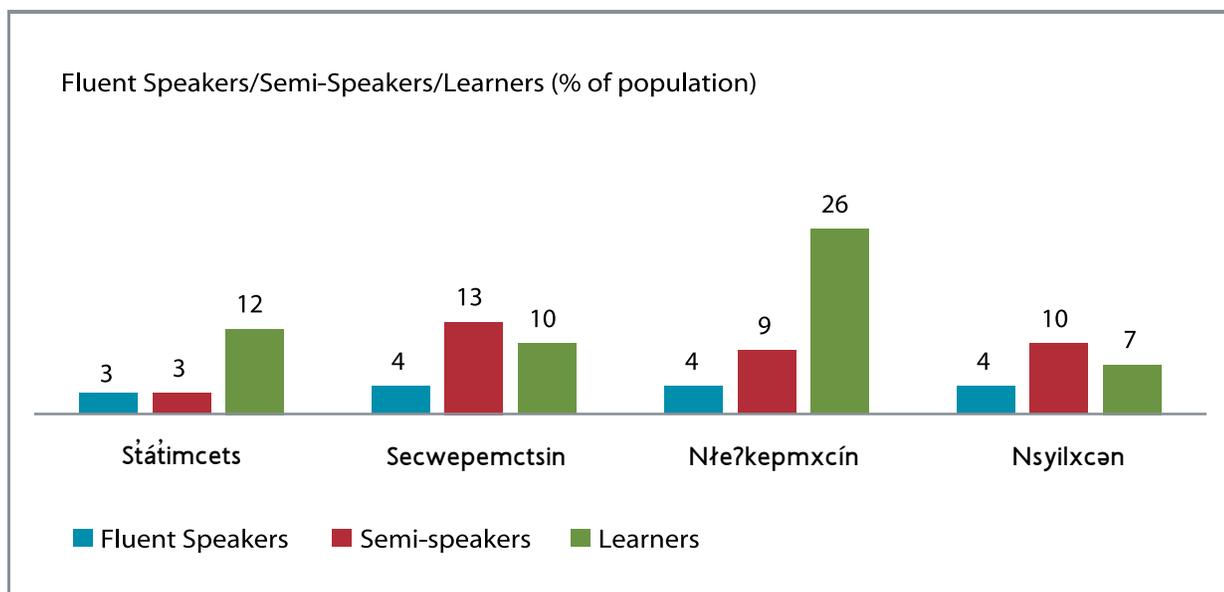
**Table 17 : Language Resources for Dene Languages**

Language	Communities with recordings of the language	Communities with curriculum for teaching the language	Communities with access to FirstVoices archive
Dakelh (Cᑲᑲ)	5	6	7
Wetsuwet'en	1	1	1
Nedut'en	0	1	0
Nicola*	-	-	-
Tsilhqot'in	0	1	1
Tse'khene	2	1	1
Dane-Zaa (Cᑲ ᑲ)	2	2	0
Danezāgé'	0	1	0
Tāhtān	0	0	0
Dene K'e	0	1	0
Wetalh*	-	-	-

\* These are sleeping languages.

# Interior Salish Languages

**GRAPH 7:**  
**Fluent Speakers/Semi-Speakers/Learners of Interior Salish Languages**



**Table 18 : Communities and Populations of Interior Salish Languages**

Language	Total # of B.C. communities	# of communities reported to us	Population reported to us
Státimcets	11	11	6,133
Secwepemctsin	16	15	5,603
N̓eʔkepmxcín	16	16	4,102
Nsyilxcən	6	6	7115

**Table 19 : Language Education for Interior Salish Languages**

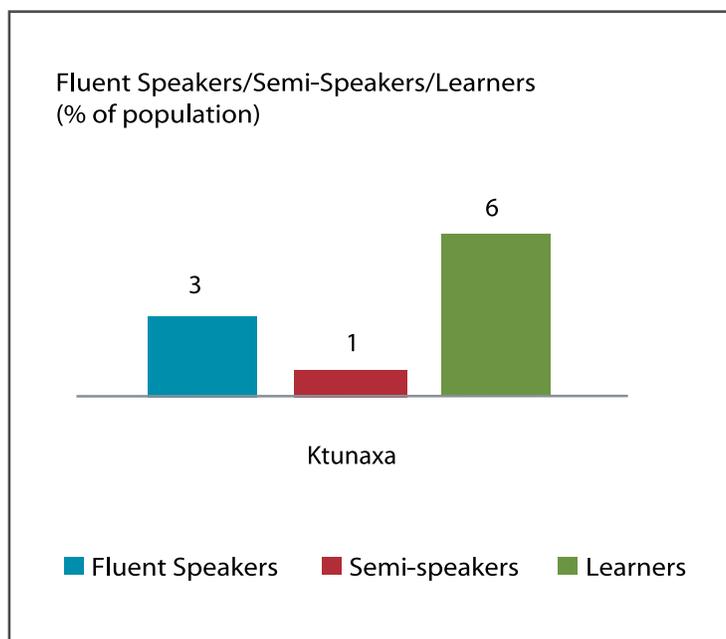
Language	First Nations-operated schools	Head Start programs	Hrs/wk spent on languages in schools and Head Starts	Language Nests (First Peoples' Council funded)
Státimcets	2	1	21	1
Secwepemctsin	6	5	6	1
Nt̓eʔkepmxcín	2	3	5	1
Nsyilxcən	6	4	9	1

**Table 20 : Language Resources for Interior Salish Languages**

Language	Communities with recordings of the language	Communities with curriculum for teaching the language	Communities with access to FirstVoices archive
Státimcets	4	11	2
Secwepemctsin	6	6	6
Nt̓eʔkepmxcín	3	4	7
Nsyilxcən	1	0	6

# Ktunaxa Language

**GRAPH 8:**  
**Fluent Speakers/Semi-Speakers/Learners of the Ktunaxa Language**



**Table 21 : Communities and Populations of Ktunaxa Language**

Language	Total # of B.C. communities	# of communities reported to us	Population reported to us
Ktunaxa	4	4	989

**Table 22 : Language Education for Ktunaxa Language**

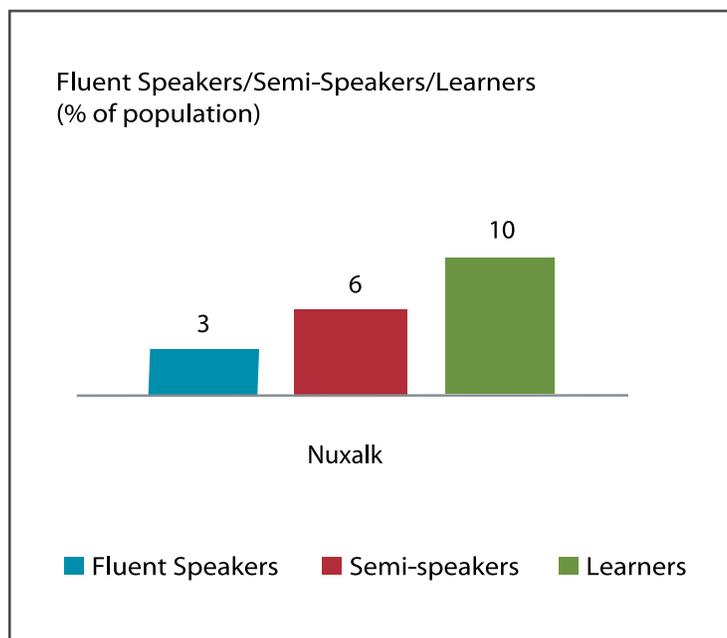
Language	First Nations-operated schools	Head Start programs	Hrs/wk spent on languages in schools and Head Starts	Language Nests (First Peoples' Council funded)
Ktunaxa	2	1	2	0

**Table 23 : Language Resources for Ktunaxa Language**

Language	Communities with recordings of the language	Communities with curriculum for teaching the language	Communities with access to FirstVoices archive
Ktunaxa	4	4	4

# Nuxalk Language

**GRAPH 9:**  
**Fluent Speakers/Semi-Speakers/Learners of Nuxalk Languages**



**Table 24 : Communities and Populations of the Nuxalk Language**

Language	Total # of B.C. communities	# of communities reported to us	Population reported to us
Nuxalk	1	1	1,400

**Table 25 : Language Education for the Nuxalk Language**

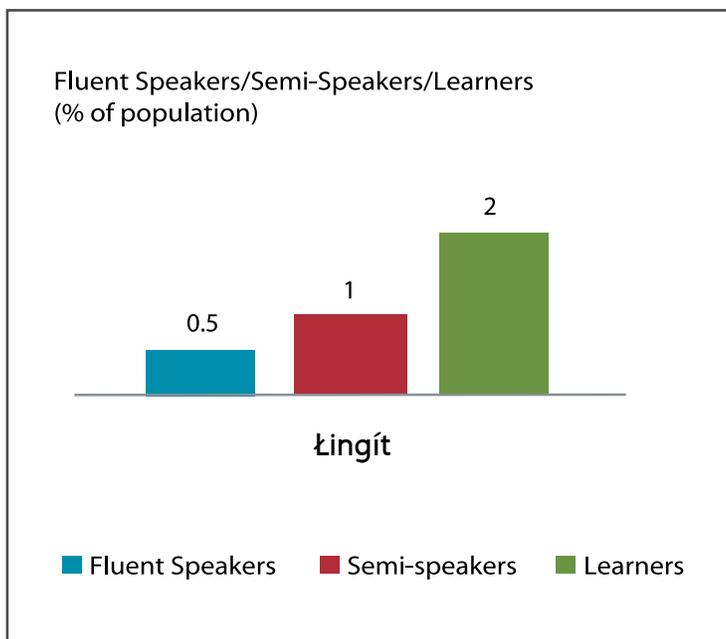
Language	First Nations-operated schools	Head Start programs	Hrs/wk spent on languages in schools and Head Starts	Language Nests (First Peoples' Council funded)
Nuxalk	1	0	3	0

**Table 26 : Language Resources for the Nuxalk Language**

Language	Communities with recordings of the language	Communities with curriculum for teaching the language	Communities with access to FirstVoices archive
Nuxalk	0	0	0

# Łingít Language

**GRAPH 10:**  
**Fluent Speakers/Semi-Speakers/Learners of the Łingít Language**



**Table 27: Communities and Populations of Łingít Language**

Language	Total # of B.C. communities	# of communities reported to us	Population reported to us
Łingít	1	1	410

**Table 28: Language Education for Łingít Language**

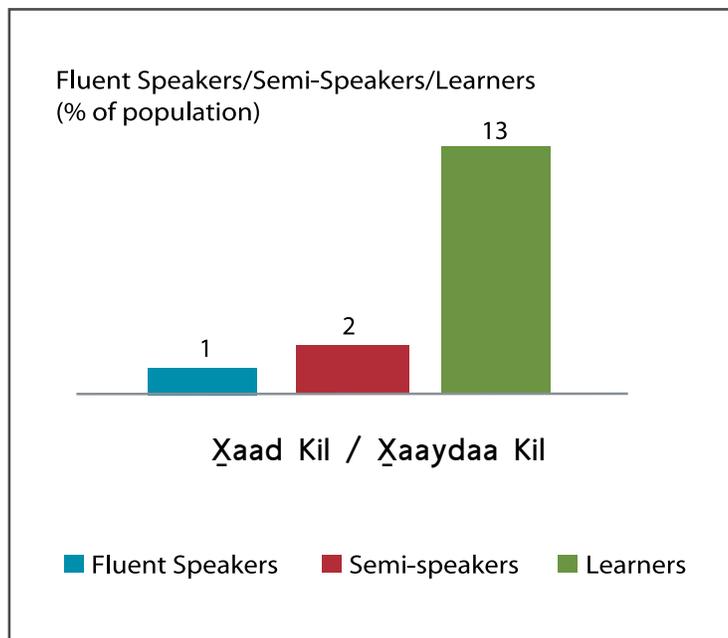
Language	First Nations-operated schools	Head Start programs	Hrs/wk spent on languages in schools and Head Starts	Language Nests (First Peoples' Council funded)
Łingít	0	1	10	0

**Table 29: Language Resources for Łingít Language**

Language	Communities with recordings of the language	Communities with curriculum for teaching the language	Communities with access to FirstVoices archive
Łingít	0	1	0

# Xaad Kil Languages

**GRAPH 11:**  
**Fluent Speakers/Semi-Speakers/Learners of Xaad Kil Languages**



**Table 30 : Communities and Populations of Xaad Kil / Xaaydaa Kil (Haida) Language**

Language	Total # of B.C. communities	# of communities reported to us	Population reported to us
<u>Xaad Kil / Xaaydaa Kil (Haida)</u>	2	2	3,986

**Table 31 : Language Education for Xaad Kil / Xaaydaa Kil (Haida) Language**

Language	First Nations-operated schools	Head Start programs	Hrs/wk spent on languages in schools and Head Starts	Language Nests (First Peoples' Council funded)
<u>Xaad Kil / Xaaydaa Kil (Haida)</u>	3	2	9	0

**Table 32 : Language Resources for Xaad Kil / Xaaydaa Kil (Haida) Language**

Language	Communities with recordings of the language	Communities with curriculum for teaching the language	Communities with access to FirstVoices archive
<u>Xaad Kil / Xaaydaa Kil (Haida)</u>	2	2	2

## APPENDIX B

### FIRST PEOPLES' COUNCIL RESOURCES AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

The First Peoples' Council language program thoroughly evaluates all the projects from each program and reviews recommendations made by communities on an ongoing basis. This evaluation and review process allows the First Peoples' Council Language Program to identify gaps and needs in the programs, and to develop resources and provide support accordingly. The First Peoples' Council Language Program works independently and also collaborates with B.C. First Nations language revitalization experts to develop resources and to provide training and support for community projects.

## Resources

### **8 Steps to Language Revitalization** *(with accompanying tools)*

This poster outlines an eight-step cycle to community language revitalization. Each step is accompanied by a tool(s) with details, worksheets and samples. (created by the First Peoples' Council Language Program)

### **Indigenous Language Institute:** **Awakening Our Languages Handbook series**

These handbooks contain comprehensive "how-to" information on language revitalization. (purchased from the Indigenous Language Institute)

### **Language and Culture Immersion Programs Handbook**

This resource contains ideas for immersion activities, tips for immersions and immersion methods. (created by the First Peoples' Council Language Program)

### **Wordless Picture Books**

These children's story books contain no words and can be used by speakers of any language to tell stories in their language. (purchased)

### **Granny and Grampa Connections Box and DVD**

This kit contains anatomically correct culturally appropriate dolls and cultural learning tools. The DVD highlights the importance of early childhood education and care. (created in conjunction with the First Peoples' Council, Success By 6 and Province of B.C.)

### **Culture Camps for Language Learning:** **An Immersion Handbook**

This is a complete manual for planning and implementing a Language and Culture Immersion Camp. (created by the First Peoples' Council Language Program)

### **Master-Apprentice Manual** **and Resource Package**

This manual is a complete guide to participating in the First Peoples' Council Master-Apprentice Program. (created by the First Peoples' Council Language Program)

### **Visual Model (concept) of Language Authority and Language Plan Development**

This visual representation provides an overview of the scope and responsibilities of a Language Authority and Language Plan Development. (created by the First Peoples' Council Language Program)

### **3-Phase Plan to Language Authority and Language Plan Development**

This resource provides a framework for the first 3 years (phases) of Language Authority and Language Plan Development work. (created by the First Peoples' Council Language Program)

### **Language Authority and Language Plan Development “Best Practices”**

This is a compilation of best practices taken from final reports submitted to the First Peoples’ Council by the communities. (created by the First Peoples’ Council Language Program)

### **Pre-School Language Nest Kits**

These useful kits contain materials and resources for Pre-School Language Nests such as: culturally appropriate language learning toys, Pre-School Language Nest operating manual, TPR 1 and TPR 2 books, flashcards, picture games, and story boards (the First Peoples’ Council contracted Chief Atahm School Curriculum Resource Department).

### **Pre-School Language Nest Operating Manual**

This summary is based on Chief Atahm’s manual and was created for communities looking at starting a Pre-School Language Nest (the First Peoples’ Council contracted Chief Atahm School Curriculum Resource Department).

## *Capacity-building*

### **First Peoples’ Council Website and Language Toolkit**

Our website provides updated information regarding proposal calls for funding, employment postings, language related news items and announcements, publications, samples of previously funded projects in B.C., links to useful and related sites, as well as a language toolkit. The language toolkit includes a glossary of linguistic terms, resources, tools, and FAQs for carrying out language revitalization and research work.

### **FirstVoices Website**

This innovative and dynamic website is a group of web-based tools and services designed to support language archiving, language teaching & culture revitalization. Communities can record, document and archive their languages using this site. Administrators, teachers, and community members can also use the tools this site provides to share, teach and learn the languages.

### **First Peoples’ Language Map of British Columbia**

This online map uses the data from the First Peoples’ Council database of Language Needs Assessments to provide up-to-date information on each of B.C.’s First Nations languages and language content. This ongoing project also identifies First Nations and Community Language Champions.

### **Pre-School Language Nest Training**

Each year the First Peoples’ Council organizes a training event that addresses needs and gaps in the program. The First Peoples’ Council collaborates with Pre-School Language Nest experts from within B.C. and from around the world to offer practical and useful workshops and seminars. Pre-School Language Nest practitioners build their capacity by learning about language immersion methods and activities for young children as well as participating in hands-on training.

### **Master-Apprentice Program Training**

All the Master-Apprentice teams come together once a year for three days of training to meet each other, and to share their challenges and successes. First Peoples’ Council has engaged the support of experts to provide resources and mentorship, and to share their expertise with hands-on training activities that replicate daily activities at home or in the community.

### ***Language Authority and Language Plan Development Networking and Capacity-Building Conference***

The First Peoples' Council Language Program developed four major resource tools especially for the Language Authority and Language Plan Development program: Visual Model (concept) of Language Authority and Language Plan Development, 3-Phase Plan to Language Authority and Language Plan Development, "Best Practices" compilation, and the 8 Steps to Community Language Revitalization model. These new resources were presented at the conference.

The First Peoples' Council Language Program also enlisted the expertise of B.C. First Nations language revitalization experts to attend the conference and distribute resource tools, facilitate hands-on workshops and provide opportunities for participants to share and network.

### ***FirstVoices.com Training***

The FirstVoices.com staff provides training to community administrators to ensure that everyone has the knowledge to use the FirstVoices website and understands what is required to archive their language online. These administrators can then apply for funding to continuously update and add to the archives of their languages. FirstVoices.com staff also provides administrators, teachers and website users with ongoing technical support, as well as updates and training for any technology upgrades to the FirstVoices website.

### ***Ongoing Support***

The First Peoples' Council Language Program continuously provides one-on-one support to communities with proposal writing, reporting, and program implementation. The First Peoples' Council also widely distributes resources to communities as needed.

### ***Presentations and Workshops***

The First Peoples' Council shares resources and expertise and regularly attends regional, provincial, national and international conferences and meetings related to First Nations language, culture, arts, wellness and education.

## APPENDIX C

### LANGUAGE NEEDS ASSESSMENTS (LNA)

Assessing the status of a language within a community is an important step in language revitalization planning and goal-setting. By completing LNAs, communities assess the status of their language by identifying resources, resource people, support and projects in their communities and by identifying gaps in these areas. Based on these gaps, com-

munities can decide on their priorities and set goals accordingly. In addition, LNAs help build a strong case for grant proposals. Proposals are reviewed by a committee of B.C. First Nations language experts, and information contained in the LNAs is taken into account when deciding where funding will be of best use.

SAMPLE: First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council Language Needs Assessment

#### 1) Language Information

Language Family:	Language Dialect:
------------------	-------------------

#### 2) Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges to implement language and cultural projects:
Opportunities for implementing language and cultural projects:

#### 3) Community Population

Date of your community's most recent population poll:	
Month:	Year:
Population on reserve:	Population off-reserve:
Total population:	Information source:

SAMPLE: First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council Language Needs Assessment

3) Community population continued

Additional population information:
------------------------------------

4) Community language fluency\* information: Number of Speakers

\*"Fluent" is defined as the ability to converse and understand the language with no use of English

	# that speak and understand fluently	# that understand and/or speak some	# that do not speak or understand the language	# of people learning the language
Total #				
Age 0 - 4				
Age 5 - 14				
Age 15 - 19				
Age 20 - 24				
Age 25 - 44				
Age 45 - 54				
Age 55 - 64				
Age 65 - 74				
Age 75 - 84				
Age 85 +				

5) How many certified language teachers are in the community? \_\_\_\_\_

6) Do you have a First Nations-operated school? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No / If "yes," complete the following:

	School 1	School 2	School 3
Total #			
Age 0 - 4			
Age 5 - 14			
Age 15 - 19			
Age 20 - 24			
Age 25 - 44			
Age 45 - 54			
Age 55 - 64			
Age 65 - 74			
Age 75 - 84			
Age 85 +			
Hrs per week spent on languages			

7) Immersion Class: Do you have immersion classes with more than 20 hours per week taught? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No If “yes,” complete the following:

Immersion Program	
Name	
Location	
Total # of participants	
<b>Age Range:</b>	<b>Number of students in age group:</b>
Students aged 0 - 4	
Students aged 5 - 14	
Students aged 15 - 19	
Students aged 20 - 24	
Students aged 25 - 44	
Students aged 45 - 54	
Students aged 55 - 64	
Students aged 65 - 74	
Students aged 75 - 84	
Students aged 85 and over	
Average hours per day	
Average days per week	
Average weeks per year	

8) Do you have a Head Start program? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No If “yes,” complete the following:

Head Start Program	
Name:	
Location:	
Total number of participants:	
# of hours per week spent on language instruction:	
How is the program connected to other language programming in the community?	

9) Curriculum and Resource Assessment: Resources

	Yes	No
Language recordings/oral history archived (multimedia)		
Finalized writing system		
Curriculum materials developed		

10) Curriculum and Resource Assessment: Multi-media

	Yes	No
Access to a cultural or language centre		
Access to the internet		
Access to FirstVoices Archive		

11) Community-developed Language and Cultural Resources

Resource Title	Target Group (children, youth, adults, all etc.)	How is the resource used (i.e. in school, Head Start, adult language classes, etc?)

*“Language is at the core of our identity as people, members of a family and nations; it provides the underpinnings of our relationship to culture, the land, spirituality, and the intellectual life of a nation.”*

# First Peoples' Language Map *of* British Columbia



The intent of this map is to provide an evolving depiction of British Columbia's indigenous languages from the First Nation perspective. The language boundaries shown on the map are not an authoritative depiction of First Nations' territories or boundaries.

The language names listed on the map use each language's unique spelling system, and were gathered from language revitalization projects funded by the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council, and from the FirstVoices online language archive. The British Columbia languages shown on this map are indigenous to our province.

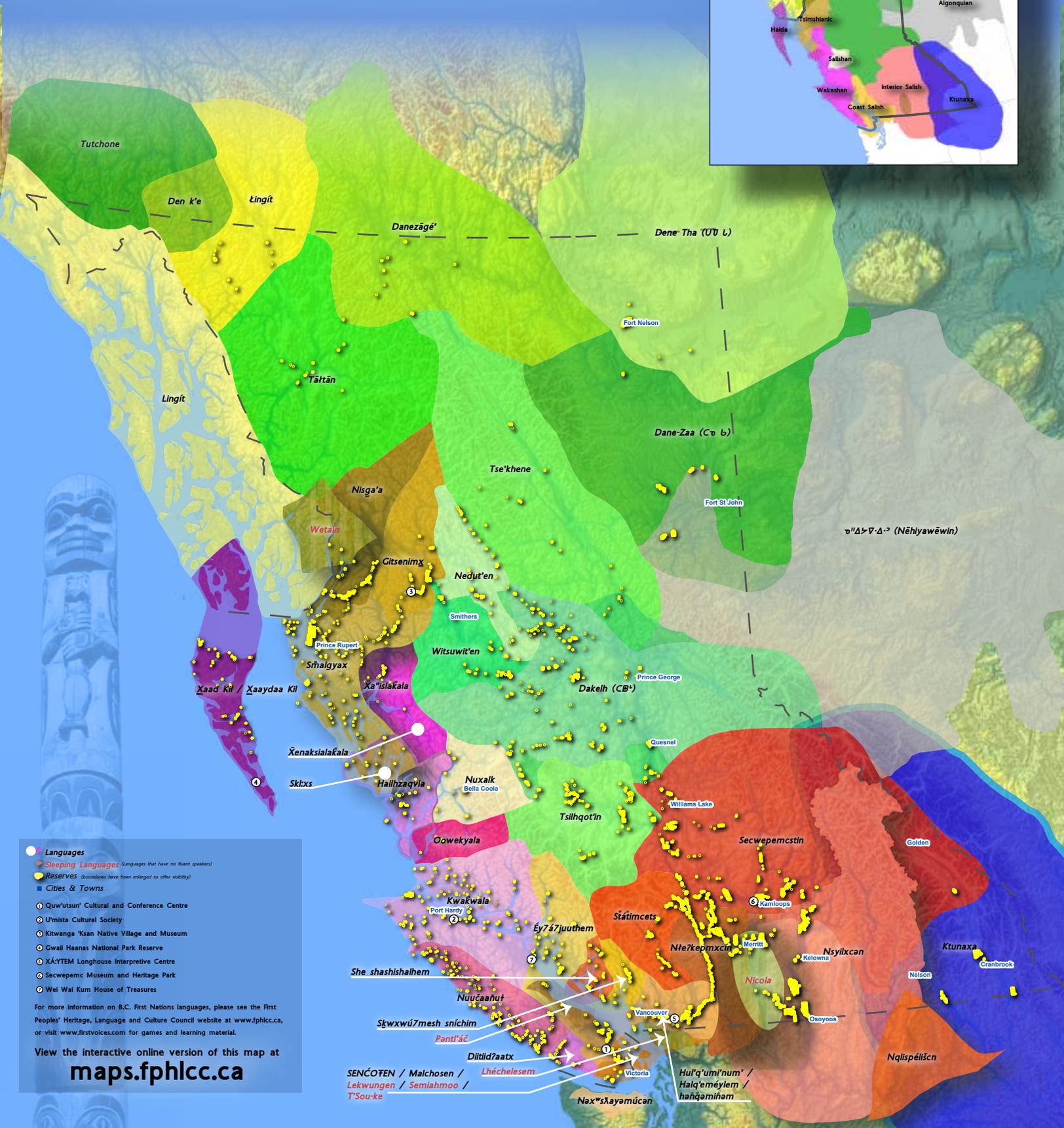
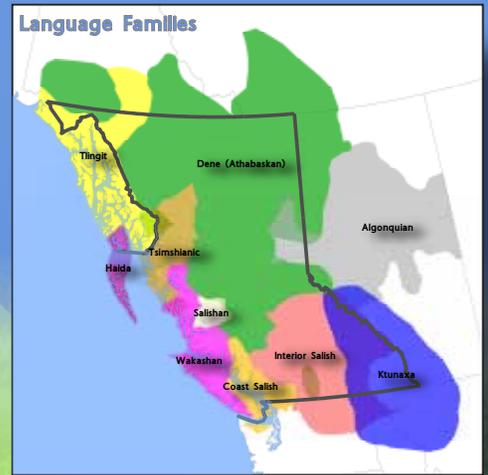
Related languages have been represented on the map with corresponding shades of the same colour. To depict that there are no strict boundaries between neighboring languages, the colours blend into one another. Through our research we found that languages within a language family have similar structures and basic vocabulary; however, speakers from two different languages of the same language family may not be able to understand each others' speech. Neighboring languages may be closely connected through marriage ties, shared stories, beliefs, customs, and traditions.

This project was initiated by the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council in 2005 with funding from the B.C. Ministry of Education. The language map started with contemporary language group boundaries provided by the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. Adjustments were made to the language group boundaries based on Indian reserve locations and the best available knowledge of languages spoken by First Nations affiliated with reserve lands. Additional historical information on territories of sleeping languages was prepared for the *Handbook of North American Indians* (1996, revised 1999) under the supervision of Dr. Ives Goddard and is reproduced with permission of the Smithsonian Institution.

This map is provided by the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council of British Columbia. All information contained herein is provided "as is" without any warranty of any kind, whether express or implied. All implied warranties, including, without limitation, fitness of use for a particular purpose, and non-infringement, are hereby expressly disclaimed. Under no circumstances will the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council of British Columbia be liable to any person or entity for any direct, indirect, special, incidental, consequential, or other damages based on any use of this map.



# First Peoples' Language Map of British Columbia



● Languages  
● *Sleeping Language* (Languages that have no fluent speakers)  
● Reserves (boundaries have been enlarged to offer visibility)  
■ Cities & Towns

- ① Quw'utsun' Cultural and Conference Centre
- ② U'mista Cultural Society
- ③ Kitwanga 'Ksan Native Village and Museum
- ④ Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve
- ⑤ XÁ:YTEM Longhouse Interpretive Centre
- ⑥ Secwepemc Museum and Heritage Park
- ⑦ Wei Wai Kum House of Treasures

For more information on B.C. First Nations languages, please see the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council website at [www.fphlcc.ca](http://www.fphlcc.ca), or visit [www.firstvoices.com](http://www.firstvoices.com) for games and learning material.

View the interactive online version of this map at [maps.fphlcc.ca](http://maps.fphlcc.ca)

SENĆOṬEN / Malchosen / Lhéchelesem  
 Lekwungen / Semiahmoo / T'Sou-ke  
 Diitlid7aatx  
 Pantl'áç  
 Nuuçaañut  
 She shashishalhem  
 Nax'xlayémúcan  
 Hu'q'um'num' / Halq'emýlem / hañqamiñəm



**First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council**

1A Boat Ramp Road

Brentwood Bay, B.C.

V8M 1N9

Website: [www.fphlcc.ca](http://www.fphlcc.ca)

Telephone: (250) 652-5952

Fax: (250) 652-5953

Email: [info@fphlcc.ca](mailto:info@fphlcc.ca)