



Language, Culture and Indigenous Well-being

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The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) is one of five National Indigenous Representative Organizations (NIO) recognized by the Government of Canada. Founded in 1971 as the Native Council of Canada (NCC), the organization was originally established to represent the interests of Métis and non-status Indians. Reorganized and renamed in 1994, CAP has extended its constituency to include all off-reserve status and non-status Indians, Métis and Southern Inuit Indigenous Peoples, and serves as the national voice for its 10 provincial and territorial affiliate organizations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
FACT SHEET: LANGUAGE	6
PART I	7
PREFACE	7
INTRODUCTION	7
STATISTICS	8
PART II	9
LINGUICIDE: THE CANADIAN CONTEXT	10
LINGUICIDE: THE IMPACT OF HISTORICAL AND INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA	11
TRAUMA AND LEARNING	13
LANGUAGE AND WELL-BEING	14
SHAME AND RE-TRAUMATIZATION	15
OTHER CHALLENGES	16
URBANIZATION	17
VALUE	18
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE FRAMEWORKS	19
FUNDING	20
PART III	20
POLITICAL AND LEGAL CONTEXT	20
POLITICAL ACCORD: CANADA AND THE CONGRESS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES	21
DANIELS DECISION	22
UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES	22
SECTION 23	22
SECTION 35	22
TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION	23
BILL C-91	23
PART IV- MOVING FORWARD	24
APPENDICES	27
APPENDIX A- UNDRIP	27
APPENDIX B- TRC CALLS TO ACTION	28

APPENDIX C- BILL C-91

29

REFERENCES

31

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

35

Language, Culture and Indigenous Well-being Report

Executive Summary

About this Report

This report was completed for the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP). CAP has a vested interest in the wide array of issues that affect its constituency. CAP's recognition as one of the five National Indigenous Organizations positions the agency to take a prominent role in the advocacy of language reclamation and cultural revitalization. The following document represents a contribution to CAP's knowledge and capacity building around the language needs of its partnering Provincial and Territorial Organizations (PTO).

Summary of Issue

Without timely and appropriate action many Indigenous languages will become extinct; this holds true for Canada and many other nations around the world. Both scholarly research and national inquiries, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, reveal concerning facts regarding the state of Indigenous languages in Canada. Of the approximately 1.6 million Indigenous people in Canada only 260,000 of those are able to converse in their mother tongue; of the 60 distinct Indigenous languages, some studies report that only 3 have any chance of survival. Language, in and of itself, is not self-sustaining and without concerted revival efforts, Indigenous Languages *will* be lost.

Key Findings

Indigenous scholar Leanne Simpson (2008) states that "addressing linguistic genocide is key to Indigenous resurgence" (in Meissner, 2018, p.267). Indigenous language loss in Canada is a direct result of colonization, both historical and ongoing, and as such the government of Canada has an obligation to provide redress; it is further argued that true reconciliation will not be achieved without language reclamation (Fontaine, 2017). Many scholars believe that language reclamation will not be achieved in the absence of constitutionally guaranteed rights.

Numerous mental health studies of Indigenous communities over the past two decades have identified trauma as a "critical contributor to an array of personal, family and community behaviors" (Menzies, 2006, p. 41). Learning one's mother tongue has been found to mitigate many of the harms caused by this historical trauma. For Indigenous children, competency in a native language has been found to have a positive impact on "...ethnic identity formation and can positively affect their social and emotional welfare and their relationships with family members" (Forrest, 2018, p.304). Research indicates that these children are generally happier and have improved emotional well-being. There is also some evidence that Indigenous language reclamation may be associated with lower rates of suicide and self-harm among Indigenous youth (Forrest, 2018; Hallett, 2007; Whelan et al., 2016; Bourgeois et al., 2018).

Additionally, Indigenous language loss is directly correlated with a loss of culture; “learning to communicate in ones’ language results in learning the culture; the two go hand in hand” (Fontaine, 2017, p.187). Knowing ones’ culture and speaking ones’ mother tongue has been linked to improved health outcomes amongst Indigenous populations in Canada and around the world.

Finally, language loss is intimately tied to the socio-economic challenges facing Canada’s Indigenous peoples. Phillipson & Skuttnab- Kangas (1992), claim that “linguistic underdevelopment parallels economic and political underdevelopment” (p.2). This is significant as it highlights the importance of language reclamation and revitalization in the economic well-being of Canada’s Indigenous Peoples.

Moving Forward

A multi-pronged approach, that addresses individual and systemic factors, is needed to address Indigenous language loss. On a micro level this means attending to the needs of particular individuals, understanding the impact of historical trauma and accounting for the uniqueness of communities. On a the systemic level there is a need to challenge language hierarchies that perpetuate the de-valuing of Indigenous languages; to challenge Western constructs of learning and success, and to highlight the very real positive health aspects associated with speaking ones mother tongue. Kirmayer et al., (2014) illustrates the complexity of this task: “what works best for political influence toward restorative justice may be a powerful, coherent, and consistent narrative that ignores the vagaries of individual experience (and) that which aims toward the therapeutic cannot necessarily achieve justice, and that which achieves justice may not be therapeutic” (p. 313).

Fact Sheet: Language

- Of the “60 distinct Indigenous languages” in Canada, “...only 3 have any chance of survival: Cree, Ojibway and Inuktitut” (TRC, 2015, p.772).
- Of the approximately 1.6 million Indigenous people in Canada, only 260,000 of those are able “to conduct a conversation in an Indigenous Language” (Bagnell, 2018, p.19).
- Language itself is not self-sustaining; without a concerted effort to reclaim and revitalize, Indigenous languages will be lost. It is not a matter of “if” but “when” (Nettle & Romaine, 2000, p.5).
- Only 1.9% of persons identifying as non-status First Nations reported being able to converse in an Indigenous language compared with 27.3% of status First Nations (Census, 2016).
- Only 1.4% of First Nations living off-reserve are able to speak an Aboriginal language compared to 44.9% of those living on reserve (Census, 2016).
- 11% of off-reserve First Nations children with registered Indian Status were able to speak their Indigenous language while only 3% of off-reserve non-status First Nations children were able to converse in their mother tongue (Aboriginal Children’s Survey, 2016).
- A 2017 study found that only 17% of off-reserve (First Nations) children aged 6-14 are able to speak” an Indigenous language. Initial findings in this area suggest that urbanization is a threat to Indigenous languages (Guèvremont & Kohen, 2019).
- Métis and non-status FN have lower involvement in Indigenous community organizations compared to registered FN and Inuit (23% and 26% vs 45% and 60% respectively) (Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2017).
- Métis and non-status FN have lower rates of “agreeing” they “feel good about their aboriginal identity (Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2017).
- In 1996, it was reported that 26% of the Indigenous population learned their ancestral language in their home environment (Statistics Canada, 2008). In 2011, only 14% of the Indigenous population reported learning their language at home (Statistics Canada, 2011).
- In 2005, Canada proposed allocating \$160 million over 10 years for Indigenous language initiatives while allocating \$751.3 million for 8 provinces for French language over 5 years (Davis, 2017).
- In Nunavut, French speakers receive \$3902 per capita for language programs and services whereas Inuit received \$44 per capita for language programs and services (Davis, 2017).

Part I

Preface

Although the use of Aboriginal languages was not completely banned at all times and in all places, it is clear that it was seen as a sign of progress if a principal could report that Aboriginal languages were not spoken in the school, or, even better, that children had forgotten how to speak them. Students often were punished for speaking their native language. The school language policies created painful divisions within families, making it difficult, if not impossible, for children to communicate with their parents, grandparents, and other family members. They also struck at Aboriginal societies' ability to transmit their cultural beliefs and practices—both intimately connected to language—from one generation to the next (TRC, 2015, Vol 1, p.615).

The above excerpt from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) provides insight into how colonization and residential schools have resulted in the loss of Indigenous Languages in Canada. As indicated in TRC's findings, language represents more than the spoken word but rather is a significant component in identity formation and cultural transmission; addressing the loss of Indigenous languages is critical to achieving true reconciliation.

Introduction

CAP has a vested interest in the wide array of issues that affect its constituency. CAP's recognition as one of the five National Indigenous Organizations positions the agency to take a prominent role in the advocacy of language reclamation and cultural revitalization. The following document represents a contribution to CAP's knowledge and capacity building around the language needs of its partnering Provincial and Territorial Organizations (PTO).

There are significant findings that support the view that without timely and appropriate action many Indigenous languages in Canada will become extinct. Bourgeois, de la Sablonniere, & Taylor (2018) note that of the "60 distinct Indigenous languages, ...only 3 have any chance of survival: Cree, Ojibway and Inuktitut" (p.772). Of the approximately 1.6 million Indigenous people in Canada only 260,000 are able "to conduct a conversation in an Indigenous Language" (Bagnell, 2018, p.19). These dire statistics highlight the urgency of addressing Indigenous language loss. Also signalling the need for imminent action, the United Nations (UN), on December 18, 2019, adopted a resolution to "draw attention to the critical loss of Indigenous languages and the urgent need to preserve, revitalize and, promote Indigenous language." The UN subsequently declared 2022-2032 to be the International Decade of Indigenous Languages.

The purpose of this project is to inform CAP's policy objectives in the area of Indigenous language reclamation. This report will begin by exploring the issue of linguicide and its impact

on identity and overall well-being. The argument is that speaking in one's native tongue is a critical component of cultural survival, resilience and overall well-being; that language in and of itself is not self-sustaining and that without concerted revival efforts, Indigenous Languages *will* be lost. Furthermore, Indigenous language loss in Canada is a direct result of colonization, both historical and ongoing, and as such the government of Canada has an obligation to provide redress, and finally, language reclamation is necessary to achieving true reconciliation.

In support of these arguments, the following document will examine the interconnectedness between the traumatic impact of colonization and language loss, language reclamation, and how trauma affects current day language revitalization efforts. Subsequent to this will be a discussion on the impact of urbanization on language and cultural maintenance, which is relevant to much of CAP's constituency as most Indigenous people in Canada live in urban centers (CAP Report: *Not Just Passing Through*, 2019). Next, this report will review evidence which calls for a multidimensional, cross-generational, community driven approach to language revitalization. Following will be an overview of Indigenous language rights in Canada, and finally, recommendations for CAP's consideration as it moves to advocate on Indigenous language reclamation for off-reserve status and non-status Indians, Métis and Southern Inuit Indigenous Peoples.

Statistics

The 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey revealed troubling numbers highlighting the loss of Indigenous Languages: 11% of off-reserve First Nations (FN) children with registered Indian Status were able to speak their Indigenous language while only 3% of off-reserve non-status First Nations children were able to converse in their mother tongue.

The 2016 Census reported that only 1.9% of persons identifying as non-status First Nations reported being able to converse in an Indigenous language compared with 27.3% of status First Nations. Only 1.4% of First Nations living off-reserve are able to speak an Indigenous language compared to 44.9% of those living on reserve. A 2017 study found that only 17% of off-reserve First Nations children aged 6-14 are able to speak an Indigenous language. (Guèvremont & Dafna Kohen, 2019). Evidence supports the view that urbanization is a threat to language maintenance and revitalization.

The 2017 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) found that Métis and non-status FN have lower involvement in Indigenous community organizations compared to registered FN and Inuit (23% and 26% vs 45% and 60% respectively); Métis and non-status FN have lower rates of "agreeing" they "feel good about their aboriginal identity." Fontaine (2017) notes that in "1996, it was reported that 26 per cent of the Indigenous population learned their ancestral language in their home environment (Statistics Canada, 2008)". In 2011, only 14 per cent of the Indigenous population reported learning their language at home (Statistics Canada, 2011). This is significant

as community and familial connections are the most critical factors in the successful transmission of language, and cultural beliefs and practices.

On average, traditional language speakers are over the age of 60 years; year over year this average age increases (Statistics Canada, 2011). This is significant because as the population ages and the older generation passes on, the likelihood of intergenerational transmission will continue to decline. Of children whose caregivers could not speak an Indigenous language, only 2% of their children could speak the language. By contrast, 86% of children who spoke an Indigenous language had an Indigenous language-speaking caregiver. However, 40% of children whose caregivers spoke an Indigenous language did not speak that language (Forrest, 2018).

PART II

Linguicide

Linguicism refers to the "ideologies and structures which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and non-material) between groups which are defined on the basis of language" (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1992, p. 1). Linguicism encapsulates both the lack of resources provided to minority language maintenance and development and societal attitudes towards minority languages and minority language speakers (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1992).

Linguicide is defined as "the death of a language" and linguistic genocide as "the extermination of a group's language" (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1992, p.2). Western societies or those with "free market economies" have inadvertently, or oft times with intent, established a hierarchy of language. Similar to class, gender and race, language has been used to categorize people into groups; these categorizations equate to a hierarchy of value and by extension, their culture. Aside from language loss itself, Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas (1992), claim that "linguistic underdevelopment parallels economic and political underdevelopment" (p.2). This is significant as it highlights the importance of language reclamation and revitalization in the economic well-being of Canada's Indigenous Peoples.

The everyday use of a particular language, whether that be informally or formally within government structures, results in the "de facto stigmatization and marginalization" of all other languages. In a circular fashion, this further perpetuates the "deprivation of resources for their development and use," consequentially leading to "the extinction of many Indigenous languages" around the world (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1992, p.2).

Bucholtz and Hall (2004) point out that a lack of official recognition of Indigenous Languages ensures primacy of certain languages that unquestionably become the "norm" with "other" languages being viewed as "lesser than." They cite an example of Zambia where over 73

languages are spoken; only 7 of these are considered official languages. Nonetheless, English remains the language of prestige and advantage and “remains largely immune to challenge, unlike the other seven ethnic-group languages” (p.372).

Linguicide: The Canadian Context

I didn't realize until taking this language class how much we have lost – all the things that are attached to language: it's family connections, it's oral history, it's traditions, it's ways of being, it's ways of knowing, it's medicine, it's song, it's dance, it's memory. It's everything, including the land ... And unless we inspire our kids to love our culture, to love our language ... our languages are continually going to be eroded over time. So, that is daunting (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015, p.205).

Before the United Nations (UN) adopted the *International Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* there were discussions around including not just “physical genocide,” but also “linguistic and cultural genocide.” However, when the Convention was finally adopted in 1948 “Article 3, which covered linguistic and cultural genocide was vetoed by some nation states” (Phillipson & Skuttnab- Kangas, 1992, p.3).

In Canada, the 1963 *Hawthorn report* concluded that the annihilation of Indigenous languages would lead “almost inevitably to the loss of their own ethnic identity and cultural traditions” (Hawthorn, 1966, p. 37). Subsequent to this, *The White Paper* of 1968, disagreed with many of Hawthorn's findings but rather advocated for a total assimilation of Canada's Indigenous peoples; recommendations from this report were “...intended to abolish previous legal documents pertaining to Indigenous peoples in Canada, eliminate treaties and assimilate all “Indians” fully into the Canadian state” (<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/the-white-paper-1969>).

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recounted the tragic stories of Indian Residential School (IRS) survivors. The atrocities of colonization and in particular IRS resulted in the loss of land, forced settlement, removal of children from their homes who were then subjected to physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Families were separated and children were forbidden to engage in cultural practices or in speaking their mother tongue. In fact, not only was such cultural expression forbidden but children were actively shamed and punished for engaging in same.

Canada continues to reinforce language hierarchies most notably via the lack of rights afforded to Indigenous languages. The right to Indigenous language instruction is not guaranteed in the constitution, unlike the English and French languages which fall under S. 23 of the Charter. This lack of official recognition significantly contributes to the overall disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians; this disparity is evident in all social determinants of health.

Linguicide: The Impact of Historical and Intergenerational Trauma

As evidenced above, the devastating consequences of colonialist practices have been known for quite some time. The effects of this historic trauma are "...loss of identity, shame, guilt, unresolved grief and depression" which are precursors to "...poverty, poor health, and high homicide and suicide rates" (Whelan, Moss, and Baldwin, 2016, p.2). The devastating impact of this trauma continue to be felt today via the process of the intergenerational transmission of trauma.

Understanding this trauma from both a historical and intergenerational perspective is key to appreciating how and why Indigenous languages have been lost, and what needs to be considered in their revitalization. As Kirmayer, Gone & Moses (2014) explain, by integrating the concepts of psychological trauma and historical oppression we are able to understand individual struggles in the context of colonization. This is powerful because it helps to "de-stigmatize Indigenous individuals whose recovery was thwarted by paralyzing self-blame, and to legitimate Indigenous cultural practices as therapeutic interventions in their own right" (Kirmayer et al., 2014, p. 300).

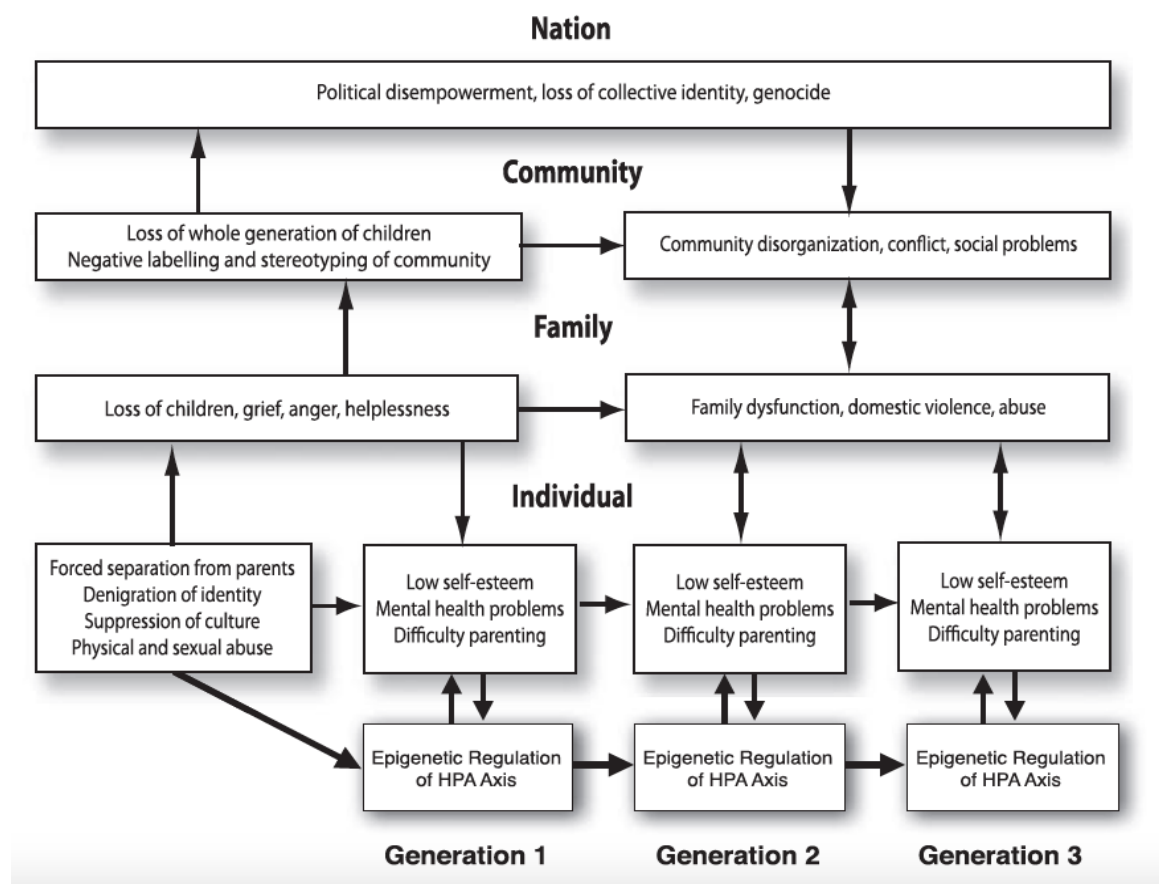
Within IRS, Indigenous children experienced significant trauma as they were subjected to horrible abuses, including physical and sexual abuse, along with emotional neglect. The traumatic effects of child maltreatment are particularly egregious as they may include impaired brain development, poor mental and emotional health, cognitive difficulties, social struggles, and the inability to securely attach to a caregiver resulting in long-lasting effects on relationships and behavior (Elias et al., 2012; Fallon, Ma, Black & Wekerle, 2011).

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study gathered information from 17,237 individuals, between 1995-1997 (Centre for Disease Control (CDC), 2013). Tracking the impact of these ACE's across the lifespan the study found that as the number of ACE's rose so did the adverse effects on health and well-being. Short-term effects of such early exposure to traumatic events include "depression, anxiety, anger, conduct problems, learning impairments, dissociation and developmental disturbances" (ACE, 2013, p.17). Long term effects were noted to be an increased risk of developing life-threatening illnesses such as cancer and heart disease; an increase in adverse health behaviors such as alcoholism; an increase in chronic health conditions such as diabetes and obesity and a significant impact on mental health, including higher rates of depression and suicide (ACE, 2013). Children raised by parents with unresolved trauma go on to experience higher rates of youth and adult criminality, alcohol and drug abuse, and perpetuate abusive behavior themselves (Fallon et.al., 2011).

The transgenerational effects of this trauma become "normalized" and become "a part of the collective, cultural memory of a people" (Atkinson, 2013, p.5), and as a result are carried from one generation to the next with dire consequences. For Indigenous peoples this historic trauma

is intertwined with “material dispossession and political domination”, which are the “fundamental structural causes of distress” (Kirmayer et al., 2014, p.311).

Indigenous language reclamation projects must therefore account for the impact of historical trauma and incorporate ways to mitigate these harms. The following diagram illustrates “some of the hypothetical pathways through which the effects of trauma and loss may be transmitted across generations through processes at multiple levels, including epigenetic alterations of stress response; changes in individuals’ psychological well-being, self-esteem, and self-efficacy; family functioning” (Kirmayer et al., 2014, p.309).



(Figure 1- Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma, Kirmayer et al., 2014, p.309)

There is significant research that links language loss with traumatic experiences (Meissner, 2018). Understanding historical trauma alerts us to the individual and structural factors that affect Indigenous language loss; such as a lack official language status, a lack of funding for Indigenous language reclamation projects; Western-led Indigenous language projects employing Western constructs of language importance and success, and finally, education systems and

policies that are Western based which “fits the few to succeed and the many to fail” (Phillipson & Skuttnab- Kangas 1992, p.2).

Indigenous language loss is directly correlated with a loss of culture; “learning to communicate in ones’ language results in learning the culture; the two go hand in hand” (Fontaine, 2017, p.187). Knowing ones’ culture and speaking ones’ mother tongue has been linked to improved health outcomes amongst Indigenous populations in Canada, New Zealand, Latin America and the United States (Meissner, 2018; Whelan et al., 2016; Fontaine, 2017).

Indigenous scholar Leanne Simpson (2008) states that “addressing linguistic genocide is key to Indigenous resurgence” (in Meissner, 2018, p.267). From a Western lens, language has historically not been considered a significant factor in identity formation, however new studies suggest that language preservation and linguistic sovereignty are key to developing a sense of belonging and self; at the very core of individual human existence is a sense of identity; “identities are orienting, they provide a meaning-making lens...” (Osyerman, 2012, p.69).

It would be reasonable to expect that when cultures are diluted and destroyed the process of meaning making within such a culture becomes very difficult and disorienting. As a result of colonization, Indigenous children have “...lost their languages, lost their cultural identity, and lost their connection to family and community” (Fontaine, 2017 p.189). Because of this, Indigenous peoples and Indigenous and Western scholars alike argue that language loss is as serious as other losses (such as that of land) and that there is no way to separate the damage caused by language loss from that of other losses. Threats to cultural identity pose a corresponding threat to the holistic well-being of Indigenous communities (Hallet et al., 2007). In light of this, there are calls for a resilience-based framework that recognizes that language revitalization serves as a protective factor for both communities and individuals, Fitzgerald (2017) writes; “understanding the context of colonization and trauma is part of the groundwork for understanding resilience” (p.281).

Trauma and Learning

Reoccurring traumatization, such as that which occurred in Indian Residential schools, which was further transmitted from one generation to the next, has pervasive effects on neuro-biologic development” (van der Kolk, 2003, p. 293). The effects can be seen in the areas of 1) Perception; 2) Loss of self-regulation; 3) Impaired learning and memory; and, 4) Lack of social skills which impact the ability to form healthy relationships.

Studies found that children who had experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) were “2.5 times more likely to fail a grade, have lower achievement assessments, are at a significant risk for language delays and difficulties, and are suspended and expelled more often” (Brunzell, Stokes and Waters, 2016a, p.65). Entering a post-secondary environment with “posttraumatic

stress disorder (PTSD) symptomatology” has been also been linked to poor academic performance and increased risk of dropping out of college” (Boyratz et al., p.582).

Perry (2006) states that educators must remember that students with a trauma history are, “at baseline, in a state of low-level fear” (p.24). Therefore, the classroom must be one of structure, predictability and safety and would include things such as having a detailed course outline with clear expectations and regularly engaging in a cycle of goal setting, evaluation and feedback. Finally, educators need to be aware of how trauma can appear in the classroom- as passivity with no future oriented goals, an inability to concentrate, lack of ability, unmotivated, disengaged, resistant to authority or lashing and zoning out (Collins- Sittler, 2009). Equipped with this knowledge, Indigenous language educators should be able to identify learners who may be struggling and intervene accordingly.

Language and Well-being

Indeed, the vitality of Indigenous cultures and worldviews and the languages that compose them have been affirmed as integral to the health and well-being of the peoples with whom they originate (Hallett et al., 2007, p. 393).

There is mounting research that supports the view that addressing trauma is key to well-being. Numerous mental health studies of Indigenous communities over the past two decades have identified trauma as a “critical contributor to an array of personal, family and community behaviors” (Menzies, 2006, p. 41). Learning one’s mother tongue has been found to mitigate many of the harms caused by this historical trauma. For Indigenous children, competency in a native language has been found to have a positive impact on “...ethnic identity formation and can positively affect their social and emotional welfare and their relationships with family members” (Forrest, 2018, p.304). Research indicates that these children are generally happier and have improved emotional well-being. There is also some evidence that Indigenous language reclamation may be associated with lower rates of suicide and self-harm among Indigenous youth (Forrest, 2018; Hallett, 2007; Whelan et al., 2016; Bourgeois et al., 2018).

Studies of bilingualism and multilingualism amongst Indigenous Australian children found that those who learned the official language(s) *and* their Indigenous language simultaneously, were found to have enhanced attention and memory and an overall positive impact on cognitive development. Forrest (2018) notes that this may “in turn, ...boost children’s educational performance and help reduce the significant gaps in educational achievement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children” (p. 305).

Whelan et al., (2016), reviewed existing research that examined the relationship between language maintenance and revitalization and its impact on well-being amongst Native Americans and other indigenous populations; the goal was to uncover ways that language reclamation can

lead to healing of historical trauma (Whelan et al., 2016, p.1). Whelan discovered that there were notable positive impacts on physical health with the following findings:

- The rate of suicide amongst Indigenous youth in British Columbia in communities, where 50% of the community is conversationally fluent, was found to be one-sixth of that experienced by youth in less fluent communities. Bands (Study by Hallett et al., 2007).
- Canadian First Nations groups with greater cultural retention, as indexed by language use, had significantly lower rates of diabetes after factoring out socioeconomic factors (Study by Oster et al., 2014).
- In Australia, speaking an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language was found to reduce several health risk factors, such as, excessive alcohol consumption (8% vs. 18% for English monolinguals), illicit drug use (16% vs. 26%), and violence victimization (25% vs. 37%) (Study by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2005).
- Individuals who spoke their heritage language were found to have half the rate of “poor health” as those who spoke only English (Study by Trewin & Madden, 2005).

Language skills are “a gateway to collective and personal well-being”. (Bourgeois et al., 2018, p. 774). Research has shown that cultural identity improves the way people feel about themselves and others within their group. By way of example, Bourgeois et al., (2018) discuss the James Bay agreement of 1975, which gave people some control over education in Nunavik, Quebec. Communities were supported in providing children an education in both Inuktitut and English or French. Students from kindergarten to grade 3 were evaluated in terms of “personal well-being (self-esteem) and collective well-being” (p.774) This multiyear study found improvements in self-esteem by the end of year one. In addition, findings indicated that children who participated only in French or English versus Inuktitut, had internalized a more negative view of their own culture vs. the dominant culture (Bourgeois et al., 2018).

In Fontaine’s 2017 review of the outcomes of Indigenous language programs, she notes that learning ones’ native tongue is the most important factor in academic success because “it promotes self-esteem, confidence, and cultural identity” (p. 201). Conversely, it has been found that policies that prohibit children from learning “their ancestral languages often result in social dislocation, psychological harms, as well as cognitive, linguistic, and educational harms that have a lasting legacy (Fontaine, 2017, p.199).

Shame and Re-traumatization

*“Whenever I speak Tlingit, I can still taste soap” ...Alaskan Native Elder
(Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1998, p.65).*

Intergenerational transmission is *the* most critical factor in language survival; “if a language is not spoken in homes, by parents to children and by children to parents and others, it will not live, regardless of educational and other official measures” (Phillipson & Skuttnab- Kangas, 1992, p.2-3). Indigenous parents and grandparents are vital to language revitalization efforts, but for those who have either directly, or via intergenerational transmission, received many negative messages about their language and culture, language reclamation can be difficult. Many, like the Elder noted above, may be reminded of painful experiences associated with speaking ones’ language. In this instance it is wise to understand that language reclamation projects may trigger some old psychological wounds.

In residential schools, children were not only forbidden from speaking their language but in many cases, they were physically punished for doing so. Shaming was also used “...to teach children that Aboriginal language and culture was immoral or sinful” (Fontaine, 2017, p.195). Many children only became aware of the impact of this language loss when they returned home to discover that the nature of the relationships between themselves and their families had change. Where there once was a connection, there now existed a sense of estrangement, separation and isolation due to an inability to communicate. Lorena Sekwan Fontaine, an Indigenous scholar and child of IRS school survivors, writes poignantly of the impact of language loss within her family:

As a result, my parents and their siblings left the residential school as young adults ashamed of their cultural identity and afraid to speak their ancestral language. Consequently, very few people of my generation speak our ancestral languages, and none in my daughters’ generation. The assault on traditional languages has also harmed the elder–youth relationship in my family. Regrettably, I was not able to get to know my grandparents very well because they only spoke Cree. I feel an enormous loss because I could never tell them that I loved them or that I cherished them.

My parents and their siblings also had an unhealthy relationship to our language and consequently, lost an opportunity to be close to their parents. My parents did not share our ancestral language with my siblings and me because they were too afraid and ashamed to speak their mother tongue around children. The wall that separates my generation from our cultural identity became denser when the violence my parents experienced in the schools trickled down into our family life (Fontaine, 2017, p.195-196).

When engaging in language reclamation projects it is wise to discuss the potential shame and fear that participants may experience. Acknowledging this can normalize participants’ experience thereby mitigating further harm and increasing the likelihood of success.

Other Challenges

Urbanization

Language reclamation and cultural preservation is often challenging for non-status and off reserve Indigenous peoples who lack access to standardized funding, especially for those who move to urban centres, away from family supports and cultural practices. During the Daniels Forum on March 2-3, 2020, PTO's expressed concern about Indigenous peoples living in urban areas, noting that this disconnect between language and culture are intricate components in defining citizenship.

Baloy (2011), in a study to identify possibilities for urban reclamation projects, identified three primary issues: 1) "confronting lingering stereotypes about urban aboriginal people; 2) addressing diverse linguistic needs of the urban aboriginal population, and 3) identifying and implementing approaches for connecting urban aboriginal people with their homelands, languages, and identities" (p.538). Research is emerging as to the diasporic nature of Indigenous people living in cities; to this end it is suggested that language programs, at their core, must work to maintain or reconnect people with their home territories and culture.

Funding for Indigenous Language programs are disproportionately allotted to rural Indigenous groups/communities. This despite the fact that over one-half (51.8%) of Canada's Indigenous people now live in urban areas (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025a-eng.htm>). This seemingly contrary allocation of funding is tied to the "lingering stereotype that 'Indian' is synonymous with rural and that urban is somehow not genuinely Indian" (Baloy, 2011 p.520). These stereotypes continue to be perpetuated, in particular in mainstream media, "which continue to separate traditional aboriginal identities from contemporary life" (p.522). Baloy (2011) reports that some geographers have argued the establishment of reserves and "the continuation of band governance have served to limit (Indigenous) spaces on Canadian land: 'Reserves' became 'Native space' and the lands in between were 'emptied' for settlement, materially and conceptually" (p. 521).

The increasing shift from rural to urban centres has seen a corresponding decline in the use of an Indigenous languages and participation in traditional practices. In 1996, The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) indicated that urbanization was a challenge to Indigenous language retention (Jewel, 2016). In 2004, it was reported that 3% of Indigenous people in urban environments spoke their native tongue, versus 18% of overall total population and 41% for those living on reserve (Jewel, 2016, p.109).

Because Intergenerational transmission is the most critical component of language survival, much of CAP's constituency are disadvantaged in that they are disconnected from their families and communities. Of children whose caregivers could not speak an Indigenous language, only 2% of their children could speak an Indigenous. By contrast, 86% of children who spoke an Indigenous language had an Indigenous language-speaking caregiver. However, 40% of children whose caregivers spoke an Indigenous language did not speak that language (Forrest, 2018).

Language revitalization work in cities can often feel overwhelming due to the linguistic and cultural diversity of urban Indigenous populations. Service delivery agencies often wonder where to begin. In Jewel's 2016 study with language learners, the consensus, which aligns with Indigenous worldviews, was to begin with the language of the peoples of that particular territory.

Baloy (2011) noted that research participants suggested that urban language learning can "...strengthen individuals' bonds with their own identity and their ties to homelands, enhance their pride and sense of self, and contribute to wider community- building efforts" (p.531). Baloy (2011), offers these five strategies for urban Indigenous language reclamation;

1. Building relationships between homeland communities and urban populations.
2. Use of *Language Immersion Camps* which are short-term, intensive immersion programs aimed at bringing together fluent speakers and a group of language learners, especially youth, to spend time together, often on their homelands, immersed totally in the ancestral language of their territory
3. Use of the Internet through programs like The First Voices project, an online aboriginal language portal, which was developed by the First Peoples Cultural Foundation; which provide learners with "audio, video, and text of dozens of Canadian aboriginal languages" in the form of language games, practices, and listening to native language speakers.
4. Language is best learned via cultural expression; Baloy found that learners were more vested in learning the language when teaching was directly related to a cultural practice, such as dance or storytelling.
5. Alternative methods such as The Master-Apprentice Language Learning Method, which is a mentored learning approach, created for people who may not have access to language classes, but, instead, have access to a speaker. In this model, speakers and learners commit to spending 10 to 20 hours per week together speaking primarily in the (native) language. The immersion program is designed to allow motivated individuals to pair with a native language speaker whereby, "language teaching/learning (is) on their own without outside help from experts" 67. (Baloy, 2011, 515- 548.)

Value

Language reclamation is complicated and not all are in favor. Some worry that learning an Indigenous language will have a detrimental impact on the ability of their children to succeed in post-secondary educational programs and will diminish potential employment opportunities. Consequently, some Indigenous communities/members have questioned the value of teaching their children their native tongue.

Studies however have confirmed, that Indigenous Language immersion did not negatively impact children's ability to learn one of the official languages, but rather was shown to "foster(ed) proficiency in the dominant language" (Bourgeois et al., 2018, p. 776). Fitzgerald (2017) reports on a 12-year longitudinal that found that when children participated in immersion programs from k-3 there were gains in both the official and Indigenous language, however once immersion ended, heritage language skills deteriorated. A "two-way bilingualism" program that offers equal instruction in both languages is recommended, versus the standard immersion model which tends to offer the majority of instruction in one language.

As Indigenous populations increase "understanding how these populations value Indigenous language and the contributing factors to increased perceptions of language value has very important political and cultural implications" (Jewel, 2016, P. 110). Studies have shown that exposure to Indigenous languages, both inside and outside of the home, increases its perceived value. This highlights the need to make language reclamation programs widely available as this increase in perceived value in ones' native tongue is "a key factor for the survival of endangered languages and the worldviews reflected therein" (Jewel, 2016, P. 110). As always, close relationships with Indigenous community members and leaders are crucial so as to ensure that all language revitalization efforts meet the needs of our constituency. Language programs must develop according to the values of the peoples they are trying to help.

Indigenous Language Frameworks

Fettes (1997) states "the modern notion of languages, (as) stable 'things' that are taught, learned and used- a concept deeply embedded in the grammar of Western languages and in linguistic theory-is fatal to the goal of revitalizing indigenous languages" (p.302). This is a critical point as it alerts us to use caution when developing and evaluating language projects that are designed from Western perspectives.

Language reclamation projects that originate from colonizing views may perpetuate colonizing practices. Meissner (2018) states that current reclamation projects perpetuate the dependency between Indigenous peoples and Western governments and academics, she writes; "they return us to narrative in which Indigenous People cannot heal from our imposed trauma without the assistance of the researchers, universities and nation states complicit in our own colonization" (p.272). Such an approach can reinforce negative beliefs around self-worth and hopelessness.

Western language projects evaluate success by determining the level of language proficiency, however this is not necessarily the end goal of such projects. Fitzgerald (2017) notes the success of an Indigenous language reclamation program must consider other benefits, such as how it contributes to overall well-being. She makes the point that Indigenous community members often hold "different definitions and ideologies of language" that may diverge from traditional Western worldviews (Fitzgerald, 2017, p.285). In a similar vein, Baloy (2011), notes that an

Indigenous language revitalization project perhaps should begin with “updating the vocabularies of their languages to reflect the everyday activities of their potential speakers” (p.531). These examples highlight the need for language reclamation projects to be driven by Indigenous communities themselves.

Finally, language reclamation projects will be more successful if they available to all age groups within the community. The *Indigenous languages recognition, preservation and revitalization*¹ report by the First Peoples’ Cultural Council out of British Columbia, offer an in-depth examination of the issues and challenges associated with developing such diverse language programs.

Funding

As previously indicated, there is a lack of funding for Indigenous language projects: in 2005 Canada proposed allocating \$160 million over 10 years for Indigenous Language initiative’s while \$751.3 million for 8 provinces for French language over 5 years. In Nunavut, French speakers receive \$3902 per capita for language programs and services whereas the Inuit language received \$44 per capita (Fontaine, 2017).

This issue is especially relevant for Indigenous peoples living in urban environments. Fontaine (2017) notes that some community leaders “will assert publicly how crucial language is to cultural identity and then fail to support the revitalization”(p.198) efforts in their respective home territories. Fontaine interestingly notes that perhaps “this lack of support may also partly stem from the legacy of the residential school that instilled people with shame about Aboriginal languages and identity” (p.198). Resources for language projects are often in competition with other community needs that are (or are perceived to be) of greater importance than Indigenous language revitalization. Placing language acquisition in the context of improved health benefits and overall well-being, may help to secure more funding.

PART III

Political and Legal Context

If the preservation of Aboriginal languages does not become a priority both for governments and for Aboriginal communities, then what the residential schools failed to accomplish will come about through a process of systematic neglect (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015, p. 202).

Many scholars believe that the only way Indigenous Language reclamation will become a priority within Canada is via constitutionally guaranteed rights. Current language rights and

¹ See annotated bibliography for further information on this report.

policies in this country continue to privilege English and French over Indigenous languages. Haque and Patrick (2015), refer to the 1982 Constitution as, “colonial constitutionalism” and as such call for an appeal of Section 35. The authors state that existing “language policies operate to embed and re-inscribe racial hierarchies...” (p.39).

Davis (2017), also states that the linguistic hierarchies in Canada contribute to “...social, cultural and economic inequities between different language groups; that these inequities are issues of rights that need to be addressed...” (p.53). Other inequities that exist as a result of these deficient language policies include such things as the ability to access government services, access to employment opportunities, rights to Indigenous language instruction or access/right to a fair trial. Fontaine (2017), looks at the legal and educational framework in Canada that has resulted in the destruction of Indigenous languages and culture, in an attempt to highlight the federal government’s responsibility to address this issue. This author maintains that as it stands now Canada’s Constitution fails to recognize the “cultural and linguistic harm that resulted from assimilation” (p.186).

Phillipson & Skuttnab- Kangas (1992) offer up a tool used to examine the political and legal climate around a government’s commitment or lack thereof to Indigenous language reclamation. This tool plots “the degree of overtness, on which one can mark the extent to which laws or covenants are explicit in relation to the rights of minority languages in education” and the second axis is used to record “the degree of promotion, on which the extent to which a language is prohibited, tolerated or actively promoted” (p. 4). While further examination of this tool is beyond the scope of this paper, it may be a useful exercise for organizations to consider in the course of advocacy.

Following are the political/legal tools that the Congress has utilized in its’ advocacy for off-reserve Indigenous Peoples:

Political Accord: Canada and the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples

The political accord, signed on December 05, 2019, solidified CAP’s role as “national voice for off-reserve Status and Non-Status Indians, NunatuKavut Inuit and Métis peoples” making it one of five designated National Indigenous organizations (NIO). This Accord, among other things, makes the following commitment; “Canada and the Congress both support the full implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) 94 calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)”. Both the TRC and UNDRIP speak to the importance of Indigenous language reclamation. Despite this Accord, Canada has continued to exclude CAP from discussions that impact MNSI and off-reserve Indigenous Peoples.

Daniels Decision

This decision outlines and ratifies the Government of Canada's role and responsibility to Métis and Non-status Indians. While "the Daniels Decision does not compel the federal government to pass any specific laws or programs for Métis and Non-Status Indians it does serve as a starting point for those seeking programs and services" (Handbook, The Daniels Decision, CAP). Daniels decision also supports the advocacy of rights for Métis and non-status Indians by way of the fact that they are now recognized as "Indians" within the Canadian Constitution. The Congress continues to analyze the full implications of the Daniels Decision; as was the case during the recent Daniels Decision Forum held on March 2-3, 2020.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

In May 2016, Canada became a signatory to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The Prime Minister has verbally indicated his intention to fully implement the articles of UNDRIP, however, it is unclear as to what exactly this means. While the legalities and implications of UNDRIP implementation are still being considered, it is a tool that CAP can use to support its advocacy of Indigenous language rights. Articles 13, 14 and 16 are relevant and applicable to Indigenous Languages; they can be found in *Appendix A*.

CAP's PTO's voiced their support for the use of UNDRIP as a model that is preferable to existing constitutional and legislative constructs. Participants noted that UNDRIP needs to be adopted more fulsomely by governments in Canada (CAP Forum, March 2-3, 2020).

Section 23

Section 23 of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms provide a constitutional guarantee for the rights of children at primary and secondary school levels to be educated in their mother tongue, in either French or English. Such a guarantee also solidifies the governments obligation to fund such endeavors. According to Fontaine (2017), "part of the objective of Section 23 is the prevention of minority languages from assimilation" (p.200). Despite this, Section 23 does not provide any such "constitutional guarantee" to Canada's Indigenous Languages.

Section 35

Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution speaks to the "Rights of Aboriginal Peoples of Canada". Fontaine (2017), maintains that as it stands now Canada's Constitution fails to recognize the "cultural and linguistic harm that resulted from assimilation" (p.198). Indigenous children do not have the "right" to be educated in their mother tongue.

In her article *Redress for linguistic: Residential schools and assimilation in Canada*, Fontaine (2017) provides a thorough overview of Section 35. Fontaine, a Cree-Anishinabe lawyer at the

University of Winnipeg, and colleague David Leitch, are planning a constitutional challenge to Section 35. I have contacted Ms. Fontaine to ascertain the status of this challenge, however, to date I have received no further information.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Of the TRC's ninety-four Calls to Action, four are specifically related to Indigenous Languages; namely, numbers 13, 14, 15 and 16 (see *Appendix B*). Fontaine (2017) argues that because of the "intricate links between Indigenous language and cultural identity, reconciliation requires assistance in Indigenous Language reclamation projects" (p.267). The government of Canada indicates they have responded to these calls of action. Please follow this link to see the entirety of the government's response: <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524495846286/1557513199083>

Bill C-91

On June 21, 2019 Bill C-91 received royal assent. This bill recognizes the critical importance of the preservation of Indigenous Languages and the rights of Indigenous people in this regard. The passage of Bill C-91, which also includes a call to establish the *Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages*, presents a unique opportunity for advocacy.

Unfortunately, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples were excluded from discussions around the development of the Office of the Language Commissioner. Considering that CAP represents 79% of Canada's Indigenous Peoples their exclusion is particularly concerning and makes suspect the government's claim for the equitable treatment of *all* Indigenous peoples. In a similar vein, in 2019, while Canada sent a delegation to the opening ceremonies for the *Decade of Indigenous Languages*, CAP was not invited, though it was attended by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Métis National Council and the Assembly of First Nations. Further examination and concerns for CAP regarding Bill C-91 are contained within *Appendix C*.

Fontaine states that Bill C-91 will only be effective if it "fund(s) modern schools offering immersion in their ancestral language". She states that Bill C-91, like Section 35 of the Charter, lacks detail and clarity regarding "rights, obligations and enforcement mechanisms" (p.) Fontaine also maintains that Bill C-91 ignores the scope and purpose of S. 35 of the charter. She proposes that Bill C-91 should have enacted Article 14 of UNDRIP which would "recogniz(e) both the right of Indigenous children to be educated in their own languages and the State's obligation to implement that right" (Yellowhead Institute)

Fontaine states that the powers of the new Commissioner of Indigenous languages (CIL) is limited to "mediating complaints or making recommendations" and that under Bill C-91 there is no recourse to the courts for adjudication of languages rights". She notes the government idnored

repeated calls from Indigenous groups for regional language institutes that would place control in the hands of Indigenous regions/communities. (<https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2019/05/09/how-canadas-proposed-indigenous-languages-act-fails-to-deliver/>)

PART IV- Moving Forward

Indigenous language loss is directly correlated with a loss of culture; “learning to communicate in ones’ language results in learning the culture; the two go hand in hand” (Fontaine, 2017, p.187). Knowing ones’ culture and speaking ones’ mother tongue has been linked to improved health outcomes amongst Indigenous populations in Canada, New Zealand, Latin America and the United States (Meissner, 2018; Whelan et al., 2016; Fontaine, 2017).

One of the significant issues faced by CAP in relation to language advocacy is the fact that CAP’s constituency is diverse in both ethnicity and in location; from rural to urban and all points in between. At the recently held forum on the Daniels Decision (March 2-3, 2020), PTO’s voiced their support for advocacy on Indigenous and Cultural programming, indicating that language and culture are key components of citizenship, and that off-reserve Indigenous people face significant barriers in learning and connecting to their culture and language.

Following is an overview of some of the key points and suggestions as to how CAP may wish to move forward:

1. Engage in an environmental scan with PTO’s to ascertain their needs by utilizing a structured and validated community language assessment tool such as the *Fishman’s Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale* (https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/17-12-12_Languages_AFN-ILI-Report_FINAL.pdf)
2. The Native Council of PEI is the only PTO that currently has a program on language and culture; it would be helpful to ascertain both the model and the success of this program.
3. Establish a permanent Language portfolio with dedicated staff. Ideally, this team would consist of a researcher, a language expert and legal counsel who is able pursue any Legislative and Constitutional challenges.
4. CAP may wish to become a national “clearinghouse” of language resources for the PTO’s. In this scenario CAP would become the “go-to” source of information regarding language; including the source for funding options, a variety of language programs, program evaluations and recent literature. As a beginning, make Sharepoint, or parts thereof, accessible to PTO’s
5. There is a necessity to “co-create just language reclamation projects...” (Meissner, 2018, p.275). All Indigenous language programs should be driven by community needs and members. This should include the model of programme delivery and what constitutes success, as this may differ from Western ideas; as an example, In the same vein, one of the key recommendations from Bourgeois et al., (2018) is that evaluation of Indigenous

language revitalization efforts and program should include an assessment of health outcomes, along with standard measures.

6. Advocacy for funding for Language revitalization programs have been traditionally been framed around redress and loss of culture. While these are valid reasons, a more effective approach might be to place Indigenous language loss in the context of overall health and well-being. There are an increasing number of research projects that point to the healing effects of learning ones' mother- tongue which is correlated with improved individual and collective self-esteem, as it provides a sense of pride and belonging. Other health benefits have been noted throughout this report. As Bourgeois et al., (2018) go on to point out, language projects that result in improved health outcomes are generally speaking, much less expensive than other health interventions. A cost-benefit analysis may prove useful in this regard.
7. A concerted effort is needed to address the cultural and language needs of off-reserve status and non-status Indians, Métis and Southern Inuit Indigenous Peoples residing in urban areas. Research is emerging as to the diasporic nature of Indigenous people living in cities; to this end it is suggested that language programs, at their core, must work to maintain or reconnect people with their home territories and culture.
8. Advocate for immersion programs. Many scholars and Indigenous peoples alike are firm in the belief that only language immersion is capable of producing fluent speakers and “only fluent speakers are capable of passing languages on to future generations” (Fontaine, 2019, Yellowhead Institute).
9. Kirmayer et al., (2014) makes the point that is “what works best for political influence toward restorative justice may be a powerful, coherent, and consistent narrative that ignores the vagaries of individual experience (and) that which aims toward the therapeutic cannot necessarily achieve justice, and that which achieves justice may not be therapeutic” (p. 313). This highlights a need for a multi-pronged approach that addresses the grief and loss caused by this trauma, combined with an approach that addresses systemic discrimination.
10. Fontaine (2017) notes that there is a shortage of “Aboriginal language teachers and scarce numbers of teacher training programs for Aboriginal languages” (p.199). Resources must be allocated here.
11. As a way to garner public support, Fontaine (2017) also recommends educating Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike as to the importance of speaking one's native tongue; whether that be Cree, English or French, as an example.
12. Many scholars believe that the goal of language reclamation will not be achieved until there are constitutionally guaranteed language rights. CAP may wish to explore Lorena Fontaine's impending constitutional challenge to Section 35, and further explore a Charter challenge of Section 23.
13. CAP may wish to offer itself as a liaison between Heritage Canada and its PTO's and furthermore, should inquire as to whether elements of Bill C-91 will be included in the

upcoming modernization of the Official Languages Act.

APPENDICES**Appendix A- UNDRIP**

Article 13

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons, and,
2. States shall take effective measures to ensure that these rights are protected and also to ensure that indigenous peoples can understand and be understood in political, legal and administrative proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means.

Article 14

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.
3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

Article 16

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish their own media in their own languages and to have access to all forms of non-indigenous media without discrimination.
2. States shall take effective measures to ensure that State-owned media duly reflect indigenous cultural diversity. States, without prejudice to ensuring full freedom of expression, should encourage privately owned media to adequately reflect indigenous cultural diversity.

Appendix B- TRC Calls to Action

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

Call to Action #14. We call upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates the following principles:

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

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

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

<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524495846286/1557513199083>

Canada updates its progress on TRC's Indigenous language.

Appendix C- Bill C-91²

Section 5: Purposes of Act

General comment: Caution should be exercised to avoid making the mistakes of the past by adopting western methods for teaching Indigenous languages.

Section 5.3

This section indicates a purpose to “create technological tools, educational materials and permanent records of Indigenous languages, including audio and video recordings of fluent speakers of the languages and written materials such as dictionaries, lexicons and grammars of the languages, for the purposes of, among other things, the maintenance and transmission of the languages”

Comment: Considering that Indigenous peoples who live in urban environments are among the poorest and least healthy metropolitan residents, a technological model “is only as good as its availability, purpose and use”

Section 7: Consultations

This section states that “The Minister must consult with a variety of Indigenous governments and other Indigenous governing bodies and a variety of Indigenous organizations in order to meet the objective of providing adequate, sustainable and long-term funding for the reclamation, revitalization, maintenance and strengthening of Indigenous languages.

Comments

- There is a pressing need for the development and funding of Indigenous language initiatives that reflect the diversity of Indigenous populations in rural, urban and remote areas. The number of those off-reserve, including the Indigenous youth who are the fastest growing segment of Canada’s population, will only continue to rise in the years to come.
- Urbanization presents additional challenges to Indigenous language revitalization by contributing to the fracturing of language groups, the scarcity of immersion environments, and the dispersal of populations thereby reducing targeted funding opportunities (more than half of Indigenous peoples now live in metropolitan areas)
- Advocate for the development and funding of Indigenous language initiatives that reflect the diversity of Indigenous populations i.e. (off-reserve and non-status, urban and remote).
- Statistics indicate the need for cultural programs, policies, and a targeted strategy for Aboriginal language revitalization among non-status Indians, as well as, status First Nations, Métis and Southern Inuit living off-reserve.

² This commentary on Bill C-91 prepared by Catherine St. Jacques, Policy Advisor

Funding

- Present funding plans for bill C-91 equal \$333.7 million over five years, and \$115.7 million annually thereafter – this equates to \$210 dollars per Indigenous Canadian for the first five years, and \$72 annually thereafter.
- There are major funding gaps for programs offering services in Indigenous languages during the critical early years – 26% of the Indigenous population is age 0-14, and they require services in their traditional languages be available. Even if programs focused exclusively on this population, funding would equal \$800 for the first five years, and \$280/year thereafter.
- Does the Languages act reflect best practices outlined in the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework?

Section 11: Federal Institutions – Translation and interpretation

A federal institution may cause: (a) any document under its control to be translated into an Indigenous language; or (b) interpretation services to be provided to facilitate the use of an Indigenous language in the course of the federal institution's activities.

Comments

- Will there be changes in Canada's top institutions such as the House of Commons? (For instance, when the Hon. Romeo Saganash addressed the house in Cree, translation services were not provided and subtitles on national news media simply stated "Other Language").
- Are we taking into consideration the justice system, or the health care system?
- Where will the funding come from to support these translation services in government departments and federal institutions?
- Department service provision should not take away from the general C-91 funding for supporting language services for communities and individuals.

Section 16.2: Appointment of directors – Interests of First Nations, Inuit and Métis

Before making recommendations under subsection (1), the Minister must seek comments in order to ensure that the Governor in Council appoints persons who have the ability to represent the interests of First Nations, the Inuit and the Métis.

Comment

This statement erases non-status Indians from the discourse. CAP could be a contact point for consultation on behalf of this demographic.

<https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/bill/C-91/first-reading>

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Haque, E. & Patrick, D. (2015). Indigenous languages and the racial hierarchization of language policy in Canada. *Journal of multilingual and multicultural development*, 36(1), 27-41. Doi: 10.1080/01434632.2014.892499

Hawthorn Report, *A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies*, <http://caid.ca/HawRep1a1966.pdf>

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.5663/aps.v5i2.25411>

Kirmayer, L. J., Gone, J. P., & Moses, J. (2014). Rethinking Historical Trauma. *Transcultural psychiatry*, 51(3), 299-319.

Meissner, S.N (2018). The moral fabric of linguicide: Unweaving trauma narratives and dependency relationships in Indigenous Language reclamation. *Journal of global ethics*, 14 (2), 266-276. DOI:10.1080/17449626.2018.1516691

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Nettle, D., & Romaine, S. (2000). *Vanishing Voices*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Oyserman, D., Elmore, K., & Smith, G. (2012). Self, self-concept, and identity. In M. R. Leary & J. P. Tangney (Eds.), *Handbook of self and identity* (p. 69–104). The Guilford Press.

Perry, B.D. (2006). Fear and learning: Trauma-related factors in the adult education process. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 110. www.interscience.wiley.com. DOI: 10.1002/ace.215

Phillipson, R., & Skuttnab- Kangas, T. (December 17-18, 1992). Language policy in the Baltic States, Conference Presentation. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/32244769/LINGUISTIC_GENOCIDE

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Whalen, D.H, Moss, M & Baldwin D. (2016). Healing through language: Positive physical health effects of indigenous language use [version 1; peer review: 2 approved with reservations]. *F1000Research*, 5(852), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.8656.1>

White Paper, 1969, Retrieved from <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/the-white-paper-1969>).

Wilk, P., Maltby, A. & Cooke, M. (2017). Residential schools and the effects on Indigenous health and well-being in Canada—a scoping review. *Public health reviews* 38(8), 1-23. DOI 10.1186/s40985-017-0055-6

Annotated Bibliography

Academic Articles

Baloy, N. (2011). We can't feel our language: Making places in the city for aboriginal. *Language American Indian Quarterly* 35, (4), 515-548. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5250/amerindiquar.35.4.0515>

This is a very useful and informative article as it offers an examination of the issues facing Indigenous language reclamation efforts in urban areas. Generally speaking, Baloy states that urban Indigenous people feel particularly disconnected from their communities and their culture. She states that learning ones' native language can mitigate these feelings of isolation and lack of belonging.

Baloy explores three primary challenges for both workers and learners, regarding Indigenous language reclamation projects in urban areas, they are; "confronting lingering stereotypes about urban aboriginal people, addressing diverse linguistic needs of the urban aboriginal population, and identifying and implementing approaches for connecting urban aboriginal people with their homelands, languages, and identities" (p. 538).

Bourgeois, L.F., de la Sablonniere, R., & Taylor, D.M. (2018). Revitalizing Indigenous languages: A call for community action to address systemic discrimination. In P.P Trifonas & T. Aravossitas (Eds.), *Handbook of research and practice in heritage language education* (pp. 771-785). Springer International. DOI:10.1007/978-3-319-44694-3_45

This is a very useful article for a number of reasons; it is recently written, it outlines specific recommendations for the use of a survey to assess language needs within Indigenous communities, and it speaks to the health benefits of learning ones native language. The authors suggest that any language project must be firmly grounded in the context in which they occur. To this end, they recommend a survey that is designed by elders and other community members and is completed by everyone within the community who is 16 years of age and older.

The authors note that language projects that result in improved health outcomes are generally speaking, much less expensive than other health interventions. A cost-benefit analysis may prove useful in this regard. The authors also recommend that assessment of health outcomes should become an integral part of the evaluation of language projects; citing an study from Nunavik, Quebec that found students from K to grades 3 who participated in bilingual education, whereby one was their native tongue, showed improvements in self-esteem by the end of year one. In addition, findings indicated that children who participated only in French or English versus Inuktitut, had internalized a more negative view of their own culture vs. the dominant culture.

Bucholtz, M., & Hall, K., (2004). Language and identity. In A. Duranti (Ed.), *Companion to linguistic anthropology* (369-394). Blackwell Publishing.

Bucholtz and Hall (2004) state that “language is central to the production of identity” (p.370). The article reviews emerging research that studies the formation of identities via a linguistic, anthropological lens. The authors note that “despite a long history of scholarship that relies implicitly on identity to understand the relationship between language and culture, the field has only recently begun to address the topic overtly” (p. 387).

Bucholtz and Hall (2004) point out that a lack of official recognition of Indigenous Languages ensures primacy of certain languages that unquestionably become the “norm” with other languages being viewed as lesser than, and that this lack of recognition has a direct impact on identity. The authors advocate for the intersectional study of language and identity that account for “markedness, essentialism, and institutional power as central components of identity” (p.387).

Davis, L. (2017). Addressing Indigenous language loss by unsettling the racialized linguistic hierarchies entrenched in Canada’s language policies. *Working papers of the linguistics circle of the University of Victoria* 27(1), 52-78.

This article advocates for the need to understand Indigenous language loss and Canada’s language policy, in the context of the larger historical and social context. In particular Davis discusses the existence of linguistic hierarchies within Canada, and how these hierarchies’ impact both language loss and language reclamation efforts. The author argues that this hierarchy contributes to social, cultural, and economic inequities experienced by Canada’s Indigenous peoples.

Davis states that these inequities are issues of rights and discusses the gaps in the *Official Languages Act (1969)* and Canada’s *Multiculturalism Act (1988)* whereby both have failed to address the diversity it espouses. Davis contends that these gaps need to be addressed in the context of Canada’s national and international commitments, one that addresses this language hierarchy and finally, in a way that links language to “social market value” and economic prosperity.

Fitzgerald, C.M. (2017). Understanding language vitality and reclamation as resilience: A framework for language endangerment and ‘loss’ (Commentary on Mufwene). *Language*, 93(4), 119-136.

Fitzgerald (2017) relying significantly on Indigenous scholarship calls for “more holistic and inclusive notions of language and language vitality” (p.280). Fitzgerald calls for a resilience-based framework that recognizes that language revitalization serves as a protective factor for

both communities and individuals. She states that “understanding the context of colonization and trauma is part of the groundwork for understanding resilience” (Fitzgerald, 2017, p.281).

Fitzgerald (2017) notes the success of an Indigenous language reclamation program must consider other benefits such as how it contributes to overall well-being; from both a social and an economic perspective. She makes the point that Indigenous community members often hold “different definitions and ideologies of language” that may diverge from traditional Western worldviews (Fitzgerald, 2017, p.285).

This article is particularly useful as it represents recent work and explores in depth, the connections between trauma and language. It represents a shift away from the very narrow focus of language to a broader, more holistic view. There is much to be examined and learned from this work.

Fontaine, L.S. (2017). Redress for linguicide: Residential schools and assimilation in Canada. *British journal of Canadian studies*, 30(2), 183-204. Liverpool University Press.

This article is an excellent read. Published in 2017, Indigenous scholar Lorena Fontaine, provides a thorough and thoughtful look at the issues surrounding Indigenous language loss. She explores the concept of linguicide and offers a unique perspective as a child of IRS survivors.

Fontaine examines a range of issues; from legal and educational frameworks, to rights, inequitable funding models, trauma and how to move forward. Fontaine, a Cree-Anishinabe lawyer at the University of Winnipeg, and colleague David Leitch, are planning a constitutional challenge to Section 35.

Forrest, W. (2018). The intergenerational transmission of Australian Indigenous languages: Why language maintenance programs should be family focused. *Ethnic and racial studies*, 41 (2), 303–323. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1334938>

In another recently published article, Forrest (2018), reported that competency in a native language has been found to have a positive impact on “...ethnic identity formation and can positively affect their social and emotional welfare and their relationships with family members” (p.304). Research indicates that these children are generally happier and have improved emotional well-being.

Studies of bilingualism and multilingualism amongst Indigenous Australian children found that those who learned the official language(s) *and* their Indigenous language simultaneously, were found to have enhanced attention and memory and an overall positive impact on cognitive development. Forrest (2018) notes that this may “in turn, ...boost children’s educational

performance and help reduce the significant gaps in educational achievement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children” (p. 305).

Kirmayer, L. J., Gone, J. P., & Moses, J. (2014). Rethinking Historical Trauma. *Transcultural psychiatry*, 51(3), 299-319.

Kirmayer, Gone & Moses (2014) offer a very helpful and necessary exploration of the concept of historical trauma; “by consolidating two preexisting constructs: historical oppression and psychological trauma (p.300)” we are able to “contextualize Indigenous health problems as forms of postcolonial suffering, to de-stigmatize Indigenous individuals whose recovery was thwarted by paralyzing self-blame, and to legitimate Indigenous cultural practices as therapeutic interventions in their own right” (Kirmayer et al., 2014, p. 300).

The authors explain that the concept of historical trauma is important on both an individual and a collective level, as it helps situate the current struggles of Canada’s Indigenous peoples in the larger societal context. Furthermore, such an understanding highlights how this historic trauma is intertwined with “material dispossession and political domination”, which are the “fundamental structural causes of distress” (Kirmayer et al., 2014, p.311). This article is very informative and offers a visual representation of the way in which negative impacts of historical trauma continued to be felt in subsequent generations.

Phillipson, R., & Skuttnab- Kangas, T. (December 17-18, 1992). Language policy in the Baltic States, Conference Presentation.

Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/32244769/LINGUISTIC_GENOCIDE

While old this discussion on Language policy is far from outdated. Phillipson and Skuttnab-Kangas, (1992) in their 1992 conference presentation, give a detailed examination of the issues of linguistic and language hierarchies. As the authors point out these language hierarchies contribute to both the lack of resources provided to minority language maintenance and development, and societal attitudes towards minority languages and minority language speakers.

Similar to class, gender and race, language has been used to categorize people into groups; these categorizations equate to a hierarchy of value and by extension, their culture.

The de facto primacy of English within Canada, stigmatizes and marginalizes all other languages and cultural groups. Phillipson & Skuttnab- Kangas (1992), claim that “linguistic underdevelopment parallels economic and political underdevelopment” (p.2). This is significant as it highlights the importance of language reclamation and revitalization in the economic well-being of Canada’s Indigenous Peoples but also illuminates the intricate link between language loss, rights and political agendas.

Whalen, D.H, Moss, M & Baldwin D. (2016). Healing through language: Positive physical health effects of indigenous language use [version 1; peer review: 2 approved with reservations]. *F1000Research*, 5(852), 1-10.

(<https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.8656.1>)

Whelan et al., (2016), reviewed existing research that examined the relationship between language maintenance and revitalization and well-being, amongst Native Americans and other indigenous populations; the goal was to uncover ways that language reclamation can lead to healing of historical trauma (Whelan et al., 2016, p.1). Whelan discovered that there were positive correlations between language reclamation and reductions in the following; suicide, diabetes, drug use, smoking, violent victimization, and alcohol and drug use.

This is a timely and informative article as it demonstrates, minimally, the need for increased research into the connection between speaking ones' mother tongue and improved well-being. Most significantly, these researchers suggest that evaluation of language programs include an assessment of health incomes. In keeping with other research, this emerging knowledge may prove useful in the advocacy of funding for language programs.

Wilk, P., Maltby, A. & Cooke, M. (2017). Residential schools and the effects on Indigenous health and well-being in Canada—a scoping review. *Public health reviews* 38(8), 1-23. DOI 10.1186/s40985-017-0055-6

This is a very useful article that undertakes a comprehensive review of empirical peer-reviewed literature on the health impacts of Residential Schools. Using a standard methodology, developed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005), the authors reviewed sixty-one articles that focused primarily on the impact among First Nations Communities with fewer studies focusing on Métis and Inuit. The purpose was to identify the extent and range of research on residential school attendance on specific health outcomes and the populations affected.

The study revealed consistent findings that demonstrate the negative impacts of Residential Schools on health and well-being; Physical health outcomes were poorer general and self-rated health, increased rates of chronic and infectious diseases, while impacts of emotional and mental health included mental distress, depression, addictive behaviours and substance misuse, stress, and suicidal behaviours. These negative health impacts were observed in those who attended Residential schools and in subsequent generations. The authors note that the majority of these studies demonstrate correlation versus causation. The authors note that further study is required to understand the mechanisms by which these negative impacts occur as well as an examination of those people and communities who demonstrate resiliency. This article is useful in that it provides, in one place, a review of a significant amount of research in this field.

Reports/Organizations

Indigenous Languages Recognition, Preservation and Revitalization: A Report on the National Dialogue Session on Indigenous Languages (2016)- First Peoples' Cultural Council

In 2016, the First Peoples' (FP) Cultural Council of BC (a provincial crown corporation formed to administer the FP Heritage, Language and Cultural program) invited twenty Indigenous Language experts from across the country, as well as representatives from the department of Canadian Heritage, to discuss approaches to Indigenous language revitalization.

Discussions during this three-day meeting were centered around four areas: (1) language rights, legislation and policy, (2) community-based revitalization, (3) education, and (4) urban strategies. The resultant report produced from these discussions is comprehensive; providing an in-depth exploration of a wide range of issues that impact indigenous language reclamation within Canada. It also includes information on a variety of language programs. This should be a go-to document as CAP moves forward on its' language file.

The link to this document is as follows:

http://www.fpcc.ca/files/PDF/General/FPCC_National_Dialogue_Session_Report_Final.pdf

Assembly of First Nations Engagement Sessions. Indigenous Languages Initiative. National Engagement Sessions Report, December 05, 2017.

In preparation for the new language legislation, the AFN held engagement sessions across the country. The report is noted to be a guide for the co-development of language legislation with the Department of Canadian Heritage, IITK and MNC. Information in this report is centered around four major themes:

1. **Recognition.** The Indigenous languages of this land have existed since time immemorial and pre-exist Canada; they must be recognized, protected, respected, valued, promoted, acknowledged, supported and used.
2. **Indigenous Rights and Control.** It is the constitutional and inherent right of each Indigenous government to direct, maintain and develop their own language and culture (Indigenous control of Indigenous languages).
3. **Access.** All Indigenous languages need to be accessible to all Indigenous people regardless of where they reside.
4. **Establishment of a Language Structure(s).** Legislation must mandate the establishment of a language body or bodies that orchestrate the following four critical roles: government accountability, funding, support for language learning, and public promotion and awareness.

Again, this is a comprehensive report, that in tandem with the first report mentioned, covers many aspects of the language revitalization project. One interesting tool mentioned (and included) in this report is *Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale*: this is a tool to assess the language needs within a community. This document also provides a solid policy framework that could be adapted to meet CAP's needs. This report can be viewed here:

https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/17-12-12_Languages_AFN-ILI-Report_FINAL.pdf

The State of Indigenous Peoples' Languages and Cultures in Canada: Submission to the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: the role of languages and culture in the promotion and protection of the rights and identity of Indigenous peoples. (Kontinóhstats – The Mohawk Language Custodians, Kanehsatà:ke, Quebec)

The date of this submission is unclear; though it appears to have been in 2012. This document reiterates much of the research on Indigenous Languages, as well as the political and legal context such as the Indian Act, UNDRIP, etc. This document can be found here.

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/EMRIP/Pages/StudyLanguages.aspx>

The Kontinóhstats – The Mohawk Language Custodians, has a website dedicated entirely to Indigenous language issues, tools and initiatives; the link to this website is as follows:

<http://www.kanehsatakevoices.com/>

Yellowhead Institute

This institute is a First Nation-led research centre based at Ryerson University in Toronto. Its' priorities are related to land and governance. Aside from offering an abundance of resources around Indigenous resurgence, "it also aims to foster education and dialogue on First Nation governance across fields of study, between the University and the wider community, and among Indigenous peoples and Canadians". The link to this website is as follows:

<https://yellowheadinstitute.org/>

Government of Canada: Learning and Teaching Resources

This government of Canada website offers a variety of teaching and learning resources as well as information on numerous education and training programs across the country. The site can be found here:

<https://www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/en/ressources-resources/autochtones-aboriginals/apprentissage-learning-eng>

South African Government: National Language Policy Framework, 2003

South Africa is one of the few countries to have multilingual official languages. This document offers a policy framework to expanding the number official languages, and the inclusion of Indigenous languages. In support of such a move, they note the following: "...the value of our languages is largely determined by their economic, social and political usage. When a language loses its value in these spheres the status of the language diminishes". This document can be viewed here:

Articles by Subject Area

Trauma and Learning

Boyratz, G., Granda, R., Baker, C.N., Lorehn Tidwell, L., & Watts, B. (2016). Posttraumatic stress, effort regulation and academic outcomes among college students: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 63(4), 475-486. DOI: 10.1037/cou0000102

Brunzell, T., Stokes, H and Waters, L. (2016a). Trauma-informed positive education: Using positive psychology to strengthen vulnerable students. *Contemporary School Psychology*, 20, 63-83. DOI: 10.1007/s40688-015-0070-x

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Collins Sitler, H. (2009). Teaching with awareness: The hidden effects of trauma and learning. *The clearing house: A journal of educational strategies, issues and ideas*, 82(3), 119-124, DOI: 10.3200/TCHS.82.3.119-124

Davidson, S. (Year). Trauma- informed practices for postsecondary education: A Guide. Education Northwest. Retrieved from <http://educationnorthwest.org/resources/trauma-informed-practices-postsecondary-education-guide>.

Frazier, P., Anders, S., Perera, S., Tomich, P., Tennen, H., Park, C., & Tashiro. (2009) Traumatic events among undergraduate students: Prevalence and associated symptoms. *Journal of counselling psychology*, 56(3), 450-460. doi: 10.1037/a0016412

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Read, J.P., Ouimette, P., White, J., & Colder, C. (2011). Rates of DSM-IV-TR trauma exposure and posttraumatic stress disorder among newly matriculated college students. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice and Policy*. 3(2), 148-156. DOI: 10.1037/a0021260

Wolpow et al., 2009 in Trauma Informed Practices for Post-Secondary Education: A Guide, p. 8-9) <http://educationnorthwest.org/resources/trauma-informed-practices-postsecondary-education-guide>.

Trauma and Well-being

Centre for Disease Control and Prevention and Keiser. (2013). Adverse Childhood Experience Survey. https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/about_ace.html

DeMarni Cromer, L., Gray, M., Vasquez, L., & Freyd. (2018). The relationship of acculturation to historical loss awareness, institutional betrayal, and the intergenerational transmission of trauma in the American Indian experience. *Journal of cross-cultural psychology*, 49(1) 99-114. DOI: 10.1177/0022022117738749

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Scohting, I., Corrado, R., Cohen, I.M., Ley, R.G. & Brasfield, C. (2007). Traumatic pasts in Canadian Aboriginal people: Further support for a complex trauma conceptualization. *Medical Journal*, 49(6), 320-326.

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Language Loss and Revitalization

- Baloy, N. (2011). We can't feel our language: Making places in the city for aboriginal. *Language American Indian quarterly* 35, (4), 515-548. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5250/amerindiquar.35.4.0515>
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- Whalen, D.H, Moss, M & Baldwin D. (2016). Healing through language: Positive physical health effects of indigenous language use [version 1; peer review: 2 approved with reservations]. *F1000Research*, 5(852), 1-10. (<https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.8656.1>)