B.C. First Nations Languages

Third Edition, 2018

Nłeʔkepmxcín
Sgüüx̱s
Danezāgé'
Éy7á7juuthem
diitiidʔaatx̱
Gitsenimx̱
Sƛ́áƛ́imcets
Dane-Zaa (ᑕ ᑫ)
Huḷ'q'umi'num' /
Halq'eméylem / hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓
Háiłzaqvḷa
Nisg̱a'a
Sk̲wx̱wú7mesh sníchim
Nsyilxcən
Dakelh (ᒐᗱᒡ)
Kwak̓wala
Dene K'e
Anishnaubemowin
SENĆOŦEN / Malchosen /
Lekwungen / Semiahmoo /
T'Sou-ke
Witsuwit'en / Nedut'en
X̱enaksialak̓ala / X̱a'islak̓ala
Tāłtān
X̱aad Kil / X̱aaydaa Kil
Tsilhqot'in
Oowekyala / 'Uik̓ala
She shashishalhem
Southern Tutchone
Sm̓algyax̱
Ktunaxa
Secwepemctsín
Łingít
Nuučaańuł
ᓀᐦᐃᔭᐁᐧᐃᐣ (Nēhiyawēwin)
Nuxalk
Tse'khene

FIRST PEOPLES'
CULTURAL COUNCIL

Cover Art

Janine Lott, *Title: Okanagan Summer Bounty*
A celebration of our history, traditions, lands, lake, mountains, sunny skies and all life forms sustained within. Pictographic designs are nestled over a map of our traditional territory.

Janine Lott is a syilx Okanagan Elder residing in her home community of Westbank, B.C. She works mainly with hardshell gourds grown in her garden located in the Okanagan Valley. Janine carves, pyro-engraves, paints, sculpts and shapes gourds into artistic creations. She also does multi-media and acrylic artwork on canvas and wood including block printing. Her work can be found at *janinelottstudio.com* and on Facebook.

Acknowledgements

The First Peoples' Cultural Council serves:
- *203 B.C. First Nations*
- *34 languages and more than 90 dialects*
- *First Nations arts and culture organizations*
- *Indigenous artists*
- *Indigenous education organizations*

The First Peoples' Cultural Council has received funding from the following sources:

For more information on our funding, please see our most recent annual report.

First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC)
Language Programs
1A Boat Ramp Road
Brentwood Bay, B.C. V8M 1N9
T (250) 652-5952
F (250) 652-5953
E info@fpcc.ca
www.fpcc.ca

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Tracey Herbert, First Peoples' Cultural Council

Weyt-k,

With our third edition of this report, we are pleased to provide an update on the continued progress of communities in their language revitalization work and to share positive news on recent government initiatives which will significantly enhance ongoing endeavours by B.C. language champions. As expected, since our last report, the number of fluent speakers continues to decline with the loss of many of our aging first language speakers. However, the number of learners has increased over the last four years. I want to acknowledge the language champions, Elders, young parents, and teachers and their tireless effort to pass on the languages. The rise in learners is particularly notable in the young adult population; this finding holds much hope for the future of our languages. Indigenous languages are an integral part of Canada's shared history and culture. Revitalizing these languages is important for Indigenous people and all Canadians. Strong links to Indigenous language and culture are the foundations for personal identity and sense of belonging. They support healthy individuals and communities with improved health, economic and educational outcomes. Language has a vital role in the mental, physical and emotional health of Indigenous communities and supports increased academic and economic success. Earlier this year, the B.C. provincial government recognized the importance of Indigenous languages with a new investment in the revitalization of these languages across B.C. The funding will be used for community grants, language revitalization planning and to expand language immersion programs and learning resources. First Peoples' Cultural Council has achieved a lot with limited resources because we work in partnership with Indigenous experts and communities, respecting the knowledge of our own people. This has strengthened and directed us as an organization. The previous lack of resources has limited the opportunities we have been able to provide. This new funding will make a difference. All 34 of B.C.'s Indigenous languages will have a chance to receive the support they deserve. We sincerely thank the B.C. government for taking action to support language revitalization. At the federal level, there are currently no laws that recognize and protect the original languages of this land. In response to repeated calls for action from Indigenous leadership, the federal government plans to enact Indigenous languages legislation, co-developed with Indigenous peoples, that both recognizes the languages as a fundamental right and implements policy to support them. The intent of the legislation is to facilitate the preservation, promotion and revitalization of First Nations, Métis and Inuit languages in Canada. Such legislation is long overdue and will help to turn the page on our dark colonial history. It will require the government to provide long-term support towards efforts to revitalize Indigenous languages in Canada.

The new provincial investment and the proposed federal legislation are both examples of reconciliation in action. Protecting Indigenous languages as a fundamental human right and investing in their revitalization shows respect for culture and heritage. We look forward to seeing the continued growth of our languages over the next four years.

Kukwstsétsemc,

Tracey Herbert

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report on the Status of B.C. First Nations Languages is the third edition of our survey of the language situation in B.C. First Nations communities.

The information is collected directly from community members when they apply for language program funding through First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC). Our goal is to provide information to First Nations communities and leadership and all levels of government to assist with language planning and revitalization. We also hope this information will be useful to the general public to learn more about the languages of this land.

The Facts: Numbers of Fluent Speakers Down; Learners Up

The main variables used for assessing language status are number of speakers (fluent speakers, semi-speakers and language learners), language education and language resources. This report provides statistics on 177 out of 203 First Nations communities. The total population reported to us in these 177 communities is 137,653.

// There are 4,132 fluent speakers, or 3.0% of the total population that reported to us. This is a decrease since 2014. Just over half of fluent speakers (51.9%) are aged 65 and over. While younger fluent speakers aged 0–24 make up a small percentage overall (2.8%), the number of younger fluent speakers reported has increased since the 2014 report.

// First Nations language learners make up 10.2% of the total population reported to us – 13,997 learners. This is an increase since 2014. The vast majority of learners (78.1%) is in the youngest age category, 0–24 years. There is nevertheless a considerable number of adult learners, including Elders over the age of 65; there are 3,063 learners aged 25 and over.

// At the preschool level, there are 2,137 children at 113 Aboriginal Head Starts or other early childhood education centres receiving an average of 4.9 hours per week of language instruction. There are 10 full-immersion Language Nests reported with 119 children attending. These children receive an average of 14.3 hours per week (nearly three hours per day) of immersion in their languages.

// In the 76 First Nations–operated schools reported to us, 4,890 students out of the 5,395 attending receive an average of 3.3 hours per week of language instruction. Three schools in the province offer immersion.

// With respect to language resources, 24/34 languages have a FirstVoices.com archive of their language. Access to curriculum and other language resources for teaching remains limited for most languages.

The Current Climate for B.C. First Nations Languages

Since our last report in 2014, there have been a number of important developments that have the potential to impact First Nations languages in a positive way. In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released its final report on the residential school system. Residential schools were primarily responsible for interrupting the intergenerational transmission of Indigenous languages. The report contained 94 calls to action, four of which concern language.

In response to one of these calls to action, the Government of Canada has begun work to enact official language legislation for Indigenous languages, co-developed with three Indigenous organizations. It is expected that the legislation will be introduced in parliament in fall 2018. In spring of 2017, FPCC held five community engagement sessions across B.C.

to ensure that stakeholders were well-informed about the proposed legislation and to collect responses to our legislation framework. FPCC's framework includes six essential elements that we see as necessary for official legislation:

1. Reclamation, revitalization and maintenance

2. Indigenous language education

3. Recognition

4. Infrastructure and capacity building

5. Guaranteed support

6. Indigenous leadership and control

Our full framework report, a community report including complete notes of the engagement sessions and additional resources on the federal legislation are available on our website: *www.fpcc.ca/language/Legislation*

In addition to the federal government's legislation initiative, the B.C. provincial government is also taking steps to increase support for Indigenous languages. In Budget 2018, B.C.'s provincial government allocated a $50-million grant (to be distributed over three years) to FPCC to help revitalize Indigenous languages in B.C. As a result of the funding, FPCC will expand its support for community immersion programs through larger and multi-year grants. FPCC will also work in partnership with First Nations communities to develop and implement revitalization plans for each Indigenous language in B.C.

This report shows that the overall number of fluent speakers has decreased since the second edition in 2014. However, there are many reasons to be optimistic. The number of learners is increasing. New fluent speakers are being created in many communities through immersion preschool nests, immersion schools and immersion-based adult learning initiatives. We are confident that with increased support from all levels of government and effective language planning, these pockets of growth can spread to all communities and languages.

Who We Are

The First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) is a provincial Crown Corporation dedicated to providing leadership for the revitalization of First Nations languages, culture and arts in British Columbia. FPCC monitors the status of B.C. First Nations languages, cultures and arts, and facilitates and develops strategies that help First Nations communities recover and sustain their heritage. The FPCC is committed to establishing itself as the key source of current and accurate information on the state of First Nations languages in B.C. and to providing program coordination and funding for First Nations language and cultural maintenance and enhancement.

WHY DID WE PUT THIS REPORT TOGETHER?

Background and Goals

The First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) has been supporting B.C. First Nations communities to revitalize and maintain their languages and cultures since 1990.

Throughout the first decade of work, it seemed that the number of people involved in language learning and language work was increasing every year. But was that really true? Were all of the many language initiatives around the province paying off in terms of increasing numbers of speakers? We really had no way of knowing since there were no baseline statistics to show where we started and no way to measure changes over time. It was for that reason that we produced the first *Report on the Status of B.C. First Nations Languages* in 2010.

We had four main goals for our 2010 report:

// *To give direction on language revitalization strategies*

// *To inspire leaders, community members and government to act*

// *To provide evidence for the urgent need to act*

// *To define levels of language vitality for B.C.*

"When I was accepted in to the Mentor-Apprentice Program I was told it would change my life. It's true. Kwak̓wala is part of my life every day... With the support of two fluent speakers I have been leading a community Kwak̓wala class."
— Kwak̓wala language apprentice

The report was mainly concerned with *language status,* which is determined by a number of factors, including:

// *The number of speakers*

// *The age of speakers (particularly, whether children are learning)*

// *The role of language in education*

// *Language resources (curricula, etc.)*

// *Attitudes towards or belief systems ("ideologies") about the language*

The first report was followed by a second in 2014, and for the first time we were able to compare language status over time. We were able to clearly see that, while the number of fluent speakers had decreased, the number of semi-fluent speakers had increased.[1] We are now pleased to present our third edition. We hope that it will be useful for government to see that support for Indigenous languages is effective, for the general public to learn more about B.C.'s unique languages, for B.C. First Nations to support language plans for their communities and for individuals to see that it is possible for everyone to become a speaker of a B.C. First Nations language by joining the thousands around the province who are doing just that.

[1] *Our previous reports are available as follows:*
Amrhein, H., Gessner, S., Herbert, T., Daniels, D. (Xway'Waat), Lappi, M., Hamilton-Evans, D., & Wadsworth, A. (2010). Report on the status of B.C. First Nations languages 2010. Brentwood Bay, BC: First Peoples' Cultural Council. Retrieved from www.fpcc.ca/files/PDF/2010-report-on-the-status-of-bc-first-nations-languages.pdf

Gessner, S., Herbert, T., Parker, A., Thorburn, B., & Wadsworth, A. (2014). Report on the status of B.C. First Nations languages 2014 (2nd edition). Brentwood Bay, BC: First Peoples' Cultural Council. Retrieved from www.fpcc.ca/files/PDF/Language/FPCC-LanguageReport-141016-WEB.pdf

Opportunities

This is an exciting time for Indigenous languages in Canada. The federal government has committed to implementing legislation that will give legal recognition to the Indigenous languages in Canada. The legislation is being co-developed by the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Métis National Council, and it is expected that it will be introduced in parliament in fall 2018. We are hopeful that this bill will become law, resulting in a number of measures that will improve the status of all Indigenous languages in Canada. At the provincial level, the government recently allocated a $50-million grant (to be distributed over three years) to the FPCC, which will expand our support to communities to create new speakers of our languages. This investment puts reconciliation into action, and there is much work to be done. Read more about these initiatives later in the report (pp. 24) under "What is the current climate for B.C. First Nations languages?"

"Learning my language and my culture is changing the future of my children's lives and all the future generations of my family."
— *Molly Wickham, Witsuwit'en language apprentice*

About First Peoples' Cultural Council

The First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) is an Indigenous-led provincial Crown Corporation formed by the government of British Columbia in 1990 to support the revitalization of B.C. First Nations arts, cultures and languages.

The FPCC is supported by legislation: the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Act.

The FPCC mandate, as laid out in the act, is to:

// Preserve, restore and enhance First Nations' heritage, language and culture

// Increase understanding and sharing of knowledge, within both First Nations and non-First Nations communities

// Heighten appreciation and acceptance of the wealth of cultural diversity among all British Columbians

The FPCC is governed by a Board of Directors composed of up to 13 members. The work of the Board is further supported by three sub-committees: the Governance Committee, the Finance and Audit Committee and the Human Resources and Compensation Committee. In addition, the Board is supported by a 34-member Advisory Committee, with one representative for each of the First Nations languages in B.C.

The FPCC is committed to providing communities with a high level of support and quality resources. Our cultural heritage and the living expression of our identities is integral to the health of all members of our First Nations communities, as well as to the well-being of all British Columbians. Since 1990, the FPCC has distributed over $40 million to First Nations communities in British Columbia for language, arts and culture projects.

WHAT DOES LANGUAGE STATUS MEAN?

Definition of Terms

For our first Report on the Status of B.C. First Nations Languages *in 2010, we used terms suited to B.C.'s unique language diversity in order to express our data effectively.*

Here again are important definitions of the terms used in this report.

Language and Dialect

These terms are often used interchangeably and can create some confusion. In B.C., most *languages* are made up of two or more different varieties, or dialects. *Dialects* may vary in many ways (pronunciation, words, grammar), but as long as speakers of different dialects can understand each other, the dialects are considered the same language. Languages are grouped into language families. A *language family* includes languages that developed over time from a common parent language. We respect that some communities refer to their language by their dialect name, but please note that this report groups statistics by language rather than by dialect.

Speaker

The term "speaker" is often used when describing the status of a language. However, the definition of "speaker" is widely variable. Some speakers may not consider themselves to be fully fluent because they may not speak as well as their grandparents did, though others in the community may view them as fully fluent. Acknowledging that there is some subjectivity to these definitions, we differentiate three types of *speakers*: fluent

speakers, semi-speakers, and learners. These terms are defined in this section. *Non-speakers* are defined as having little to no knowledge of their language.

Fluent Speakers

Fluent speakers can speak and understand their language to the degree that they self-identify or are identified by fellow community members as having the ability to converse and understand the language with no use of English. Usually this means that the language is their *mother tongue*, meaning it was the first language they learned as a child. However, many individuals in B.C. have become highly fluent adult speakers of their language, though English was their mother tongue as children.

Semi-Speakers

Semi-speakers can speak and understand their language to the degree that they self-identify or are identified by fellow community members as semi-speakers. This definition allows for great variability, but generally a semi-speaker has less language ability than a fluent speaker. We consider it to be an important rubric since semi-speakers are generally from a younger generation than fluent speakers (who are often Elders), and it is vital to have younger generations of speakers for the longevity of a language. The category of semi-speaker may also include those who discontinued using their First Nations language due to residential school experiences, urbanization, employment and other reasons, but still maintain some fluency in the language. A large number of semi-speakers is a great resource. With further language learning and increased proficiency, semi-speakers can become the next leaders in language revitalization work.

Silent Speakers

Silent speakers are an important category. A silent speaker is someone who has a good understanding of a language but does not speak it. There are many different kinds of silent speakers including residential school survivors, people who grew up hearing but not speaking the language and people with internalized negative beliefs and values about their language that have been promoted by Western society. While we do not have an estimate of the number of silent speakers in the province, we know they make up part of the fluent and semi-speaker categories. Other terms for "silent speakers" include "latent speakers," "passive speakers" and "receptive bilinguals."[2]
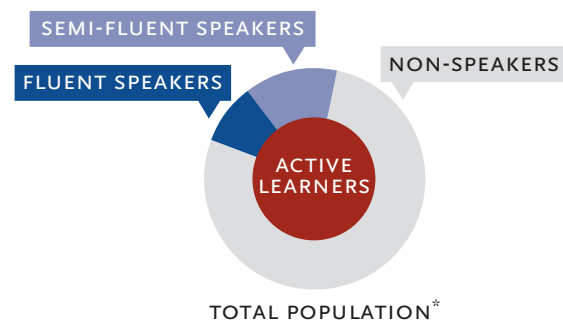
Language Learners

A learner is anyone in the process of learning her or his First Nations language by participating in any type of language learning method, program or class. (It does not have to be in a formal educational setting.) The number of learners is important because it demonstrates the level of interest, desire to learn and presence of language in the community. In many cases the learners of a language are children, which is an encouraging sign for language revitalization. However, it is important to note that the data on learners must be considered with cautious optimism since many language learning programs treat First Nations languages similar to the way second or foreign languages are taught as a subject in school. Language learning programs are not always focused on producing fluent speakers and educational policy does not provide the support to do so. Though there is some investment and goodwill in this area, the strategies tend to focus on creating awareness rather than developing competencies. Targeted investment in immersion education is urgently needed along

with standards in language education including guidelines for the number of hours of language instruction required and standards for curricula.

Difference Between Speakers and Learners

For the numbers provided in this report, *fluent speakers*, *semi-speakers* and *non-speakers* make up the total population of the communities of that language who have reported to us. In other words, fluent speakers + semi-fluent speakers + non-speakers = total population. In addition, we provide the percentage of *learners* for each community as an indication of the revitalization activity for that language. The percentage of learners is a separate category that may overlap with non-speakers, semi-speakers or even fluent speakers who may still consider themselves learners. Therefore, in the data reported, the number of learners *should be considered independently and not combined* with any other category.

SEMI-FLUENT SPEAKERS

FLUENT SPEAKERS

NON-SPEAKERS

ACTIVE LEARNERS

TOTAL POPULATION*

Learners are part of this population. Learners may consider themselves to be non-speakers, semi-speakers or fluent speakers.

Language in Education

It is important to consider how much a language is used when measuring the vitality of the language. Generally in B.C., First Nations languages are not used as the primary mode of communication or for natural daily communication. Therefore, usage refers mostly to language revitalization efforts, specifically language learning programs in schools and preschools since this is where the

---

[2] FPCC has piloted a promising new program for silent speakers based on successful work with silent speakers of the Indigenous Sami language. We hope to introduce a grant program for silent speakers within the next year.

majority of the language use takes place. Language revitalization should be focused on increasing the usage of the language in all areas of community.

Although we do not report on other domains of usage, language use in education is an important indicator of the vitality of a language. Community members may wish to think about how their language is being used outside of a school context: at home, in the band office and other workplaces, in the medical centre, in school ceremonies, for hunting or gathering food, in culture camps or fish camps on the land, by artists gathering materials and in their artistic practice, and many more. *New in this edition*, we also report on whether a community offers adult language classes. There is growing interest among adults, especially young adults, to learn their language.

Language Resources

Language resources refer to any kind of documentation, recordings, curriculum materials, computer-based resources, books and archives that are available in the language. This is a broad category, so we ask communities to report on recordings, curriculum materials and computer-based archiving since these cover three important areas of resources in language revitalization.

Level of Vitality

Variables used to determine a language's level of vitality include intergenerational language transmission, number of speakers, percentage of speakers within the total population, domains of language use, amount of materials for language education and literacy, governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies, and amount and quality of documentation.

In our first report (2010), we used a language endangerment / vitality framework, with measures including robust, safe, unstable,

endangered, severely endangered, critical and sleeping.[3] In our 2014 report, we did not apply this framework to every language since all First Nations languages in B.C. are critically endangered. While recognizing that there is an urgent need to provide ongoing, stable, substantial support to ensure that our languages are maintained for future generations, FPCC has been moving away from the use of terms such as "endangered."

Terms like these can be discouraging, and it is arguable whether using such words to engage public interest has any real effect. Further, in our work in B.C., we see many examples of communities that are turning the tide of language shift in their communities by increasing the number of speakers and overall language use.[4]

Elsewhere in the world, there are well-known examples of Indigenous languages which have reversed the direction of language loss, such as Māori and Hawai'ian, and non-Indigenous languages such as Scots Gaelic and Welsh. Incredibly, there are even languages that had no living speakers and are now spoken in their communities again, notably Wampanoag and Myaamia in the United States. For these reasons, FPCC aims to focus on representing our languages in positive ways. Where there are strong and effective language policies and legislation, good language education practices in place, adequate and stable funding, and most importantly, community mobilization, it's really possible for languages to resurge. If readers are interested in measures of endangerment / vitality, we refer them to the Ethnologue or to the UNESCO *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*.[5]

---

[3] Sleeping languages refer to those that do not currently have any speakers but could be reclaimed by speakers in the future.

[4] Language shift refers to a situation where speakers shift from speaking one language to another. For example, because of residential schools, many First Nations people shifted from their own languages to English.

[5] Simons, G. F., & Fennig, C. D. (Eds.) (2017). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (20th ed.) Dallas, TX: SIL International. Online version: *www.ethnologue.com* Moseley, C. (Ed.) (2010). *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* (3rd ed.) Paris, UNESCO Publishing. Online version: *www.unesco.org/culture/en/endangeredlanguages/atlas*

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF B.C. FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES?

First Peoples' Cultural Council Data

The 2014–2018 data used in this report derives from our database of Language Needs Assessments (LNAs) that are completed by community organizations each time they apply for funding through the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC).

The LNAs are filled out online and elicit information regarding the status of each language, such as the number of speakers, semi-speakers, learners, population totals, community language resources, school programming and early childhood education programs, as well as language revitalization challenges and opportunities in the communities. LNAs are required for all grant applicants and are filled out for each community, not each language, providing us with very detailed data. We acknowledge that it is not an easy task to collect this information and appreciate the hard work of our language partners in the community. See *Appendix C* for a sample of the FPCC Language Needs Assessment.

Our data reflects the current state of B.C. First Nations languages in 2018, based on the information we received from communities through their Language Needs Assessments. This report comprises data from *32 out of 34* languages. We currently do not have any data on Anishnaubemowin (Saulteau) and Southern Tutchone speakers in B.C. There are 203 First Nations communities in B.C.; 177 communities

have reported and 26 have not. However, there are 14 communities that traditionally speak two languages, and one community (Saulteau First Nations) has three languages. For communities with multiple languages, not every community reported on all languages. If each community reported on each of its languages, there would be 218 datasets. In this report, we have information on 183 of those 218 datasets. The number of total datasets may fluctuate based on changing community circumstances and on our current knowledge of each community. As an interesting example, Lake Cowichan First Nation had previously only reported on Hul'q'umi'num', but there are also a number of community members connected to diitiidʔaatx̣. Since the last report, the community held a language program for diitiidʔaatx̣, so there are now 21 diitiidʔaatx̣ language learners reported for this nation! On an ongoing basis, we contact communities that have not submitted a Language Needs Assessment (recently or at all) to attempt to fill gaps in our database.

UN-REPORTED

REPORTED COMMUNITIES

177

87% Reported
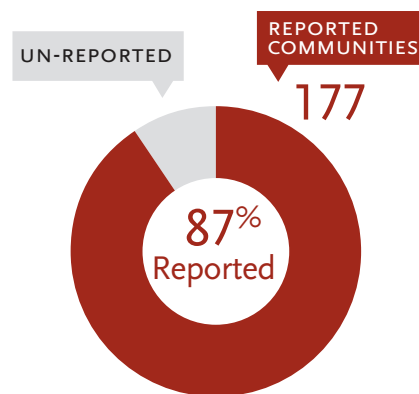
Since our data comes directly from community members who work closely with their languages, we consider it to be as accurate as possible. It is important to note, however, that the data in this

report comes from First Nations communities on reserves, and those reporting the numbers of fluent speakers may not be aware of the fluency status of community members who live off reserve, although we do ask applicants to provide numbers for both on- and off-reserve members. It is also important to note that the data we provide in this report only includes numbers of speakers affiliated with First Nations communities in B.C. Several languages also have speakers outside of B.C. (such as in other provinces or territories or across the border in the United States); these are not factored into our totals. While we hope this report reflects the most accurate information currently available for First Nations languages in B.C., we do acknowledge that errors or inaccuracies may occur. Collecting data for this report is a partnership process with communities so we can get an accurate picture of our languages. We encourage community members to contact us if they can provide us with updated information for any language or community.

A snapshot of the 2018 status of B.C. languages is summarized in *Table 1*. A language-by-language breakdown of the data is provided in *Appendix A.* For further information on each language and a list of the data sources for each, please visit the First Peoples' Language Map of British Columbia (*fp-maps.ca*), where you can view a map of the languages of B.C. as well as the data associated with each language. See the *inside back* cover for a print version of this map.

Table 1 also includes some of the statistics from 2014 as a comparison. However, *each* report should be considered on its own terms and considered a snapshot at a particular time. There are several reasons for this. First, in each report, it is not the exact same set of communities reporting, so it is not the same data pool. Related to that

point, the community response rate is slightly lower for this report – 177 communities reported in 2018 rather than 185 that reported in 2014.

Second, when considering the number of speakers as a percentage of the overall population, it is important to consider that the First Nations population is a fast-growing population. So for example, even if the actual number of fluent speakers remained completely stable between reports, the percentage of fluent speakers as a proportion of the total population would decrease due to the increased population overall.

The third and most important factor concerns community-specific variability in how data was reported. Depending on who applies for funding, it may not be the same individual or organization filling out the Language Needs Assessment for a community. Some individuals may have access to different types of information or knowledge about fluent speakers or may simply have slightly different categorizations of what constitutes a fluent vs. a semi-fluent speaker. Therefore, while it is interesting to compare the 2018 results with those published in 2014, keep in mind that there are many mitigating reasons for a shift in numbers.

TABLE 1: SNAPSHOT OF B.C. FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES

	2018 REPORT		2014 REPORT[6]	
	NUMBER	DETAILS	NUMBER	DETAILS
First Nations				
First Nations communities	203	177 reporting (183/218 datasets reported)	203	185 reporting
Total First Nations population in B.C.	172,520[7]	137,653 reporting (60,727 living on reserve + 76,926 living off reserve)	155,020[8]	129,730 reporting
First Nations languages	34	32 reporting	34	32 reporting
Language Speakers				
Fluent speakers of a B.C. First Nations language	4,132	3.0% of First Nations population reported (3,336 living on reserve + 796 living off reserve)	5,289	4.1% of First Nations population reported
Learners of a B.C. First Nations language[9]	13,997	10.2% of First Nations population reported	11,862	9.1% of First Nations population reported
Language Education				
First Nations–operated schools	130[10]	76 reported	132	98 reported
Number of students taking language classes	4,890	—	NO DATA	—
Total students attending a First Nations school	5,395	—	4,931	—
Average number of hours per grade per week spent on languages in First Nations–operated schools	3.27	—	5.73	—
Head Start (HS) or other early childhood education (ECE) programs	113	2,137 children attending	86	1,622 children attending
Average number of hours per week spent on languages in HS or ECE programs	4.9	—	6.54	Average calculated on hours from HS/ECE/Nest combined
Language Nest (immersion) Program	10	119 children attending	7	—
Average number of hours per week spent on languages in language nest programs	14.33	—	—	—
Adult language classes	54	646 participants	NO DATA	No data

[6] The numbers from the 2014 report are included for comparison, though there are several factors that may affect comparability over time: it is not the exact same set of communities reporting in both reports, so it is not the same data pool; 2018 percentages are based on a much higher total population than in 2014; and most notably, there may be community-specific variability in how data was reported.

[7] This number refers to individuals with First Nations identity (single response). Statistics Canada. (2017). *Aboriginal identity population by both sexes, total - age, 2016 counts, Canada, provinces and territories, 2016 Census – 25% Sample data*. Retrieved from *www.12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hlt-fst/abo-aut/Table.cfm?Lang=Eng&T=101&S=99&O=A*

[8] Statistics Canada. (2011). National household survey. Retrieved from *www.12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/2011001/tbl/tbl03-eng.cfm*

[9] Note that the category of learners may overlap with the categories of semi-fluent speakers, non-speakers or even fluent speakers.

[10] First Nations Schools Association. (n.d.). Meet the schools.Retrieved from *www.fnsa.ca/meet-the-schools*

Language Speakers (Fluent Speakers, Semi-speakers and Learners)[11]

### Language Learners and Language in Education

With each report, our goal is to improve the collection of data. Since the 2014 report, we have made a number of changes to the Language Needs Assessment. In particular, we are now collecting more detailed statistics on *language learners.* For example, we now ask separate questions about the various types of preschool centres: Aboriginal Head Starts[12], other early childhood education centres and full immersion language nests. We collect data on the number of children in each facility and the number of hours per week of language instruction offered. We now have more information about language education in First Nations schools, such as the number of students in *each grade* (not just overall), how many of those students receive language instruction, and how many hours of language instruction are offered per week per grade. Finally, we now ask whether there are adult classes in a community.

As for the number of *learners,* there are now *13,997 learners* of First Nations languages in B.C., which is *10.2%* of the First Nations population that reported to us. This is *an increase of 2,135* since 2014 (where the figures were 11,862, or 9.1% of the reporting First Nations population).

There are learners of all ages. At the preschool level, *2,137 children* at 113 Head Starts or other early childhood education centres receive an average of 4.9 hours per week of language instruction.

It is fantastic to see that most preschool facilities offer some First Nations language programming to the children. Approximately one hour a day of language will not create fluency, but it will create awareness of language and culture and will hopefully lay the foundation for children to continue learning their languages as they get older.

Where it is feasible, creating an immersion environment through a language nest offers the best opportunity for children to become proficient speakers. There are *10 nests* reported with *119 children* attending. These children receive an average of 14.3 hours per week (nearly 3 hours a day) of immersion in their language. In addition, a number of children also learn their languages at home, where their parents or grandparents are fluent or have become proficient enough to raise them in the language.[13]

AN INCREASE OF 2,135 ACTIVE LEARNERS

ACTIVE LEARNERS IN B.C.

11,862 — 2014

13,997 — 2018

---
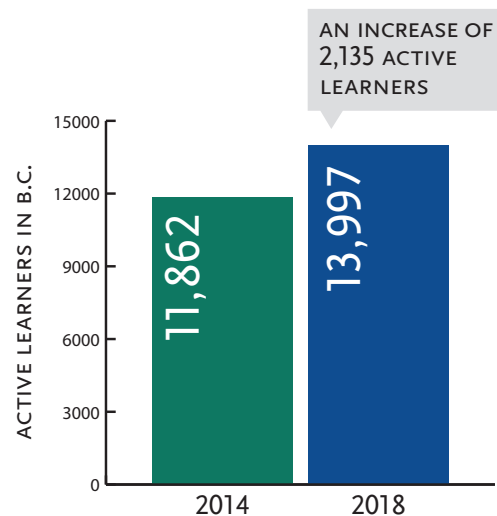
[11] See "Definition of Terms" section (page 9) for a detailed description of speakers.

[12] A Head Start (Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve Program) is an early childhood education program for preschool children. The program is centred around six components: education, health promotion, culture and language, nutrition, social support, and parental/family involvement.

[13] We don't collect data on the number of children learning at home through our Language Needs Assessment, but we know anecdotally that this number is increasing, especially as more adult learners with children develop their own language proficiency through programs such as the Mentor-Apprentice program or other adult immersion programs.

In the *76 First Nations–operated schools* reported to us, *4,890 students* out of the 5,395 attending receive an average of 3.3 hours per week of language instruction. Three schools offer immersion programming; this number has not increased since 2014. The W̱SÁNEĆ School Board offers a SENĆOŦEN language immersion preschool and K–4 immersion at the LE,NO̱NET SCUL,ÁUTW̱, Survival School near Victoria. Xit'olacw Community School in Mount Currie offers immersion in the Ucwalmicwts language from preschool to grade 2. Tselcétqen Clleq'mel'tn, or Chief Atahm School, is a Secwepemctsín language school located on Adam's Lake Reserve near Chase. The school offers preschool immersion, K–4 immersion and grades 5–7 bilingual education. While the number of immersion schools has not changed since the 2014 report, there has been an increase in the number of immersion grades. Since beginning their immersion program, the LE,NO̱NET SCUL,ÁUTW̱, Survival School has been adding one grade per year so the children who started in immersion have been able to continue in immersion. This has been a huge accomplishment, which has gone hand-in-hand with an increase in the number of certified teachers who have gained enough proficiency in their language to teach fully in immersion. This was achieved through support from the University of Victoria.

Finally, there are *54 adult language classes with 646 participants.* We are very pleased to report that among the adult classes offered, there are now two full-time adult immersion classes. The Syilx Language House, offering adult immersion in Nsyilxcn, is located in Penticton, with students travelling from various Syilx communities to attend. The program started in 2015 and currently includes 12 students in the program.

By September 2019, the Syilx Language House plans to start 90 new students in three language houses across their nation with the goal of having the graduating students be language teachers.[14] Second, the Squamish Language Academy teaches Skwx̱wú7mesh sníchim through a partnership with Simon Fraser University. This two-year program consists of 900 hours of immersion instruction and work in the first year and 500 hours of immersion instruction and work in the second year. The program began in 2016; the first cohort of students is nearing completion and a second cohort will begin in fall 2018. The ultimate goal of the program is to have students become advanced level fluent speakers so that they can pass the language on to future generations.[15]

Adults are also learning their languages through FPCC's Mentor-Apprentice Program. This one-on-one immersion program pairs a fluent speaker with a motivated learner and focuses on learning language through everyday activities. Teams complete 300 immersion hours per year, up to a maximum of 900 hours over three years. Since the Mentor-Apprentice Program's inception in 2008, we have had 111 apprentices participate.

In addition to the formal programs outlined here, many more adults learn through various other methods in communities across the province.

14 For more information on the Syilx Language House, see *www.thelanguagehouse.ca/about*
15 For more information on the Squamish Language Academy, see *www.kwiawtstelmexw.com/apply*

Semi-fluent Speakers

Along with the changes made to the education sections of the Language Needs Assessment, we have tried to provide more clarity around the definition of "semi-fluent speaker" in the LNA interface itself. We know that the difference between our definitions of "semi-fluent speaker" versus "learner" can be confusing, especially for people who have not filled out an LNA before. We now specifically ask each respondent to check that they understand the fluency definitions before answering the fluency questions. This is aligned with our goal to try to improve the accuracy of the data with each report.

UNDER 25

25-44 YEARS

45-64 YEARS

65 AND OVER

78.1%   11.9%

8.4%

1.6%
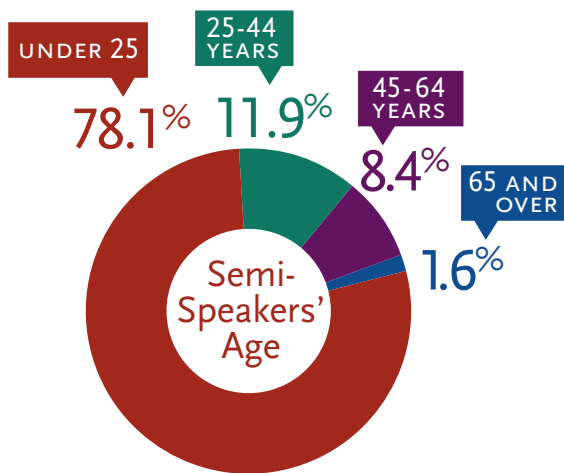
Semi-Speakers' Age

Whether or not this change to our LNA has been the cause, the results compiled for semi-speakers in this report exhibit considerable discrepancies in the numbers reported as compared to both the 2014 and 2010 numbers. A number of communities reported much lower numbers of semi-speakers than they previously reported. Given the difference that we see in individual communities and the population base of those communities, it's *not* reasonable that the drop can be attributed to the number of individuals who might have passed

away between reports. Further, it's clear that the numbers have not straightforwardly transferred between the categories of semi-speakers and learners either. While some communities show fairly consistent trends in the number of semi-speakers reported, others have provided quite different information this time around. In some cases, multiple LNAs submitted from the same community (for different grant programs) count variable numbers of semi-speakers. We will follow up with communities in order to investigate the source of the discrepancies. In spite of these variances, we do believe that it is useful to continue to enumerate semi-speakers. However, because of these inconsistencies, the overall number of semi-speakers is not a useful comparison in this report as compared to 2014. We nevertheless provide the percentage of semi-fluent speakers for each individual language in *Appendix A*.

To understand and speak Kwak̓wala and to pass the language to my grandchildren and participate in the revitalization of a Kwak̓wala-speaking community is both a birthright and a responsibility: It is about my identity, my connection to community and family, and my place in the world.
— Trish Rosborough (PhD dissertation, 2012)

Fluent Speakers

In 2018, there are *4,132 fluent speakers* of First Nations languages in B.C. This is 3.0% of the population reported to us. This is a decrease of 1,157 from 2014 numbers, when there were 5,289 speakers (4.1% of the population reported to us). As mentioned above, there was a slightly lower response rate this time and there may be some variation with the way communities are counting fluent speakers; this may account for some of the decrease. However, anyone in a First Nations community is acutely aware of the passing of fluent Elders. This is the main source of the decrease in numbers of fluent speakers.

government is a good start. FPCC can now increase support to First Nations communities for the high-quality work that is already being done and will offer support to all communities that wish to develop a language plan to ensure each language continues to have fluent speakers well into the future. There is much work to be done, and stable long-term support will be required.

"I hope that — no, I know that — my learning our language is making a difference. Even if I am only one person, I am one person that can speak."
— *Sheri Ann Stelkia, Nsyilxcən language apprentice*

45-64 YEARS
38.5%

65 AND OVER
51.9%

25-44 YEARS
6.7%

2.8%
UNDER 25

Fluent Speakers' Age

As we expressed in 2010 and 2014 and continue to emphasize today, the situation is urgent. Creation of new fluent speakers through immersion-based programs (for all ages) must be increased as quickly as possible, according to each community's state of readiness. Where immersion has been put in place, communities have seen excellent results. But each one of our 203 First Nations communities needs to reach the stage where immersion for all is possible. The domains of life where language is used needs to be increased in all areas. The recent increase in funding from B.C.'s provincial

Age of Speakers

The LNAs ask community members to provide an estimate of the ages of speakers and language learners; these are summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF SPEAKERS BY AGE GROUP IN 2018

AGE GROUP	FLUENT SPEAKERS	LEARNERS
65+ years	2,146 (51.9%)	222 (1.6%)
45–64	1,591 (38.5%)	1,182 (8.4%)
25–44 years	278 (6.7%)	1,659 (11.9%)
0–24 years	117 (2.8%)	10,934 (78.1%)
TOTAL	4,132	13,997

Just over half of fluent speakers (51.9%) are aged 65 and over and 38.5% are aged 45–64. While younger fluent speakers make up a small percentage overall, it is interesting to note that the number of younger fluent speakers reported has increased since the 2014 report. In the 0–24 age group, there were 54 fluent speakers reported in 2014 in contrast to 117 reported here. This may speak to the growing number of children in the three immersion schools and those who are being raised bilingually with English and a First Nations language.

Looking at learners, on the other hand, the age group concentrations are inverted, with the vast majority of learners (78.1%) in the youngest age category, 0–24 years. There are nevertheless considerable numbers of adult learners, including Elders over the age of 65.

Language Resources

For language resources, communities report whether they have recordings of their language, language curricula or access to a FirstVoices archive for their language. FirstVoices is a suite of web-based tools and services designed to support Indigenous people engaged in language archiving, language teaching and culture revitalization.

The FirstVoices Language Archive contains thousands of text entries in many diverse writing systems, enhanced with sounds, pictures and videos. A companion set of interactive online games is designed to present the archived FirstVoices language data in creative learning activities. Some language archives at FirstVoices are publicly accessible, while others are password protected at the request of the language community. Of the 34 languages in B.C., 24 have a FirstVoices.com language archive for one or more dialects:

- Dakelh
- Dane-Ẕa
- Danezāgé'
- diitiidʔaatx̣
- Éy7á7juuthem
- Gitsenimx̱
- Hul'q'umi'num'/ Halq'eméylem
- Kwak̓wala
- Nēhiyawēwin
- Nisga'a
- Nłeʔkepmxcín
- nuučaańuł
- Nuxalk
- Secwepemctsín
- SENĆOŦEN
- She shashishalhem
- Sm̓algya̱x
- Southern Tutchone
- St̓át̓imcets
- Tse'khene
- Tsilhqot'in
- Wet'suwet'en
- X̱aayda Kil
- X̌enaksialak̓ala / X̌a'islak̓ala

There are also FirstVoices archives for several languages outside of B.C., including Dene Sųłiné, Gathang, Gwich'in, Hän, Huron-Wendat, Mi'kmaw, Kanien'kéha and Tagish.

All communities continue to contend with the lack of language resources. While most communities have some sort of recordings, a basic dictionary or other learning materials, it is rare that there is a centralized place for community members to access these resources, and the available materials are not especially useful for language learning. FPCC hopes to expand FirstVoices.com to permit communities to share language resources more easily. With respect to curricula, few communities have extensive curriculum materials, either for the K–12 system or for adult learners. The resource situation has not changed much since 2014, and resource development for all languages is needed.

Language-Specific Measures of Speakers

The 2018 language-specific measures of fluent speakers are summarized in *Table 3*. Table 3 includes numbers from 2014 as a rough comparison, but as discussed on page 13, each report should be considered on its own terms. The group of communities reporting in each report is not identical and there may be community-specific variability between reports depending on whether the same individual or organization filled out the Language Needs Assessment. Detailed data and more information for each language are provided in *Appendix A*.

In *Table 3,* we also report data from the 2016 Census for comparison purposes. We include the census count of mother tongue speakers.[16] Mother tongue speakers are not directly comparable to our category of "fluent speakers" since the category of fluent speakers may include people who became fluent as adults. Further, many people spoke a First Nations language as a mother tongue but are no longer fluent speakers because of their residential school experience or other factors. Census data also includes information from all communities in B.C., not just First Nations communities. This means languages that are also spoken outside of B.C., such as Nēhiyawēwin (Plains Cree) will have higher census numbers because the census includes speakers of Nēhiyawēwin who live in B.C. but are connected to Cree communities outside of B.C. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile comparing language figures provided in different sources. The 2016 census results are particularly interesting because analysis of the Indigenous language data indicates that "The number of Aboriginal people able to speak an Aboriginal language exceeded the number who reported an Aboriginal mother tongue. This suggests that many people, especially young people, are learning Aboriginal languages as second languages" (Statistics Canada, 2017, p. 1).[17] This assertion is consistent with the findings of our 2014 report, that an increase in semi-speakers can be attributed to non-speakers (a.k.a. non-mother-tongue speakers or second language learners) becoming more proficient.

[16] Statistics Canada. (2017). Language highlight tables. 2016 Census. Catalogue no. 98-402-X2016005. Ottawa. Released August 2, 2017. Retrieved from *www.12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hlt-fst/lang/index-eng.cfm*. The census data is based on the short-form questionnaire that goes to 100% of households as well as those living in collective dwellings. The reader may also be interested in comparing census data from the long-form questionnaire, which includes a question on "Knowledge of Aboriginal languages" – whether people can speak an Aboriginal language well enough to conduct a conversation. The long-form census goes to 25% of households.

[17] Statistics Canada. (2017). *The Aboriginal languages of First Nations people, Métis and Inuit: Census of population, 2016.* Catalogue no. 98-200-X2016022. Ottawa. Released October 25, 2017. Retrieved from *www.publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.844674/publication*

TABLE 3: LANGUAGE-SPECIFIC MEASURES OF SPEAKERS

B.C. First Nations Language	Response Rate [18]	2018: Number of Fluent Speakers	2014: Number of Fluent Speakers	2016 Census: Mother Tongue Speakers
Tsilhqot'in	7/7	765	864	780
Gitsenimx̱	6/6	523	350	1010
Wit'suwit'en / Nedut'en	4/9	523	434	130
Dakelh	11/13	399	680	1200
Nisga'a	4/4	331	857	450
Secwepemctsin	15/17	187	197	625
Dane-Ẕaa	4/6	160	156	180
Kwak̓wala	10/15	139	165	425
Nłeʔkepmxcín	13/15	133	127	375
Nsyilxcən	7/7	132	194	330
Nuučaańuł	12/13	108	134	345
Sṫáṫimcets	11/11	98	137	360
Hul'q'umi'num' / Halq'eméylem / hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓	33/42	93	263	585
X̱enaksialak̓ala / X̱a'islak̓ala	1/1	89	242	145
Tse'khene	3/3	59	30	95
Dene K̓e	1/1	58	58	100
Sṁalgya̱x	6/6	58	106	230
Nēhiyawēwin (Cree)	4/4	51	54	190
Éy7á7juuthem	3/4	47	36	85
Tāłtān	2/2	43	45	115
Háiłzaqvḷa	2/2	39	60	120
Ktunaxa	4/4	31	25	115
X̱aad Kil / X̱aaydaa Kil	2/2	19	9	125
Nuxalk	1/1	11	17	No data
diitiidʔaatx̱	3/3	7	7	No data
SENĆOŦEN / Malchosen / Lekwungen / Semiahmoo / T'Sou-ke	7/10	7	7	110
Oowekyala / ʼUik̓ala	1/1	6	6	No data
Sḵwx̱wú7mesh sníchim	1/1	6	7	55
Danezāgé'	2/3	4	16	15
She shashishalhem	1/1	4	4	No data
Lingít	1/1	1	2	30
Sgüüxs	1/1	1	0	No data
Anishnaubemowin	0/1	No data	No data	185
Southern Tutchone	0/1	No data	No data	0

[18] Response rate = number of communities reported to us out of the total number of First Nations communities where the language is spoken.

How can we help your community?

Get in touch with us and we can help you identify language opportunities for your community.

We have not received Language Needs Assessments from a number of communities, so their information has not been included in this report. However, that also means that these communities have not applied for any of our funding programs during the last four years. If this includes *your community,* we encourage you to contact us to find out whether there's a language program that might meet the current language needs of your community and to see how we can help you get started. These communities are:

> *"I love, love, love my language and am proud to say I am a part of the language preservation."*
> — *Jessica Creyke, Witsuwit'en language apprentice*

COMMUNITY	LANGUAGE
BOK̲EĆEN (Pauquachin)	Hul'q'umi'num' / Halq'eméylem / həńq̓əmińəḿ (has reported on SENĆOŦEN)
Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN)	Southern Tutchone
Chawathil First Nation	Hul'q'umi'num' / Halq'eméylem / həńq̓əmińəḿ
Cheslatta Carrier Nation	Nedut'en / Witsuwit'en
Gwawa'enux̱w	Kwak̓wala
Huu-ay-aht First Nation	Nuučaańuł
K'ómoks First Nation	Éy7á7juuthem AND Kwak̓wala
Kwicksutaineuk	Kwak̓wala
Liard First Nation	Dane-Z̲age
MÁLEXEȽ (Malahat First Nation)	SENĆOŦEN / Malchosen / Lekwungen / Semiahmoo / T'Sou-ke (has reported on Hul'q'umi'num')
Mam̓alilik̲ala / Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em	Kwak̓wala
Nazko First Nation	Dakelh

Nee-Tahi-Buhn Indian Band	Neduťen / Witsuwiťen
Oregon Jack Creek Band	Nłeʔkepmxcín
Qualicum First Nation	Hulʼqʼumiʼnumʼ / Halqʼeméylem / həńq̓əmińəm
Saulteau First Nations	Anishnaubemowin AND Dane-Ẕaa (has reported on Nēhiyawēwin)
SEMYOME (Semiahmoo First Nation)	SENĆOŦEN / Malchosen / Lekwungen / Semiahmoo / T'Sou-ke
Skin Tyee Nation	Neduťen / Witsuwiťen
Skwah First Nation	Hulʼqʼumiʼnumʼ / Halqʼeméylem / həńq̓əmińəm
Soowahlie Indian Band	Hulʼqʼumiʼnumʼ / Halqʼeméylem / həńq̓əmińəm
Spuzzum First Nation	Nłeʔkepmxcín
Sťuxwtéws (Bonaparte First Nation)	Secwepemctsín
Sumas First Nation	Hulʼqʼumiʼnumʼ / Halqʼeméylem / həńq̓əmińəm
T'Sou-ke Nation	SENĆOŦEN / Malchosen / Lekwungen / Semiahmoo / T'Sou-ke
Takla Lake First Nation	Neduťen / Witsuwiťen (has reported on Dakelh)
Tlatlasikwala	Kwaḵwala
Tsawwassen First Nation	Hulʼqʼumiʼnumʼ / Halqʼeméylem / həńq̓əmińəm
Ts'il Kaz Koh (Burns Lake First Nation)	Dakelh AND Neduťen / Witsuwiťen
Tskʼwéylecw (Pavilion First Nation)	Secwepemctsín (has reported on Sťáťimcets)
Union Bar Band	Hulʼqʼumiʼnumʼ / Halqʼeméylem / həńq̓əmińəm
West Moberly First Nations	Dane-Ẕaa (has reported on Nēhiyawēwin)
Yakweakwioose Band	Hulʼqʼumiʼnumʼ / Halqʼeméylem / həńq̓əmińəm

WHAT IS THE CURRENT CLIMATE FOR B.C. FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES?

The Report on Truth and Reconciliation

Since our last report in 2014, a number of important developments have the potential to impact First Nations languages in a positive way.

Beginning in 2009, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada began proceedings to investigate the effects of the residential school system. In large part, this involved listening to survivors of the schools. We know that the residential school system is the primary reason for the interruption of intergenerational transmission of Indigenous languages. Its effects are ongoing. The commission released its report in 2015 with 94 calls to action. Four of these calls concern language.

Calls to Action on Language and Culture

(Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015, p. 321–322)[19]

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

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

   i. Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them.

   ii. Aboriginal language rights are reinforced by the Treaties.

   iii. The federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal-language revitalization and preservation.

   iv. The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.

   v. Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal languages.

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

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

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

---

[19] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future: Summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.* Retrieved from *www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Honouring_the_Truth_Reconciling_for_the_Future_July_23_2015.pdf*

Federal Indigenous Language Legislation

In response to Call #14 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in December 2016 Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced the intent of his government to enact official language legislation for Indigenous languages. The legislation is currently being co-developed by the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Métis National Council and the Assembly of First Nations. It is expected that the legislation will be introduced in parliament in fall 2018.

FPCC's Response to Federal Indigenous Language Legislation

In spring of 2017, the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) held five community engagement sessions across B.C.; the sessions had two main goals. First, we wanted to ensure that stakeholders and other interested people were well-informed about the proposed legislation in order to have the opportunity to provide feedback to government. Second, we wanted to present our draft framework to community members and collect responses on this issue.

FPCC's legislation framework includes six essential elements that we see as necessary for official legislation.[20]

1. *Reclamation, revitalization and maintenance:* We need investment in immersion-based approaches that result in fluent speakers and extensive, high-quality documentation of fluent speakers with the infrastructure to support it (training, equipment, archiving, etc.).

2. *Indigenous language education:* All Indigenous People 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" (United Nations, 2008, p. 7).[21] This right must be must be supported through adequate resources to prepare curricula, train teachers, develop teacher fluency and provide the necessary infrastructure for immersion schools.

3. *Recognition:* Each Indigenous language must be recognized nationally, with the means to implement that recognition at a local level (e.g., bilingual signs in traditional territories).

4. *Infrastructure and capacity building:* Legislation will require a national Indigenous Language Commission office, with regional offices to support the revitalization and documentation of each language. Overall, a coordinated and collaborative approach and investment across all ministries, institutions and organizations is necessary.

[20] Gessner, S., Herbert, T., & Parker, A. (2017a). A framework for Indigenous language legislation. Brentwood Bay, BC: First Peoples' Cultural Council. Retrieved from *www.fpcc.ca/files/PDF/Language/FPCC-LegislationFrameworkReport.pdf*

[21] United Nations. (2008). *United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples. New York, NY.* Retrieved from *www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf*

5. *Guaranteed support:* There must be a statutory guarantee of the funding necessary to support language revitalization initiatives. Funding must be based on the cost of what is needed to implement initiatives to recover, restore and maintain the vitality of Indigenous languages.

6. *Indigenous leadership and control:* All decisions and actions for Indigenous language development and implementation must be a collaborative process led by Indigenous language experts and Indigenous people of each Indigenous language.

Our full framework report, a community report including complete notes of the engagement sessions and additional resources on the federal legislation are available on our website *www.fpcc.ca/language/Legislation*

"We are taking action now to support Indigenous communities' work to preserve and revitalize endangered languages – languages that are cornerstones of cultural and social identities across our province," said Carole James, Minister of Finance. "I am proud our government is making this historic commitment."

Provincial Investment in First Nations Languages

It is not only the federal government taking action to support Indigenous languages. In Budget 2018, B.C.'s provincial government allocated a $50-million grant (to be distributed over three years) to the FPCC to help revitalize Indigenous languages in the province.

As a result of the funding, FPCC will expand its support for community immersion programs that increase the fluent speakers of Indigenous languages. These include the Mentor-Apprentice Program, which pairs fluent speakers with apprentices for one-on-one immersion training, and the Language Nest Program, which supports the creation of language and culture immersion environments for children and their parents. FPCC will also work in partnership with First Nations communities to develop and implement revitalization plans for each of the languages in B.C.

With increased attention and funding being directed toward Indigenous language revitalization, it is essential now more than ever that communities and nations develop comprehensive strategic *language revitalization plans.* A language revitalization plan is a long-range document that outlines a community's vision for its language and the actions needed to achieve that vision. It considers all domains of language use and all demographics within a community or nation and lays out the strategic actions necessary to reach its language goals. Language plans guide the efforts of the community or nation to ensure that the available funding achieves the desired outcomes. A plan allows for language projects to be sequenced

appropriately so that they each build on previous successes. It unites the community around a shared vision and can be useful for generating buy-in and support from both leadership and the community at large. Moreover, a strategic language plan is useful for generating an accurate cost for language revitalization, which is essential information both for the community and for funders. It provides clear information to government and funders about the needs for resources and support, and it positions the community as the expert and leader of its own language revitalization work.

FPCC has offered support for community and nation-wide language planning since 2010 through the Language Revitalization Planning Program. We are currently conducting a full review of the program, with the intent to restructure it to be more effective at meeting communities' needs for support in the language planning process. In conjunction with this review, FPCC will be developing a Language Planning Toolkit that will have resources, guides and tools for community language planners, administrators, leadership and other stakeholders.

To learn more about the language planning process, please see *A Guide to Language Policy and Planning for B.C. First Nations Communities* (2013) *www.fpcc.ca/language/ Programs/Language_Policy_Guide.aspx*

The Importance of Language Diversity

British Columbia is unique within Canada when it comes to Indigenous language diversity. As discussed earlier in this report, there are seven distinct language families, completely unrelated to each other. Within these families are 34 First Nations languages and at least 93 dialects (varieties) of those languages. Besides these 34 living languages, at least three languages that were once spoken in B.C. are now sleeping. In addition to First Nations languages, Michif, the language of the Métis people, is spoken here, and Chinuk Wawa (Chinook Jargon), a Creole language, was once actively spoken. And of course, languages indigenous to other parts of Canada are now spoken in B.C. due to the migration of people from other provinces and territories. In the context of Canada, B.C.'s languages make up more than 50% of the approximately 61 languages indigenous to this country.

Why does diversity matter? Languages are more than just communication. Maintaining Indigenous languages is one piece of the larger struggle for social justice by Indigenous peoples in Canada as they seek to reclaim their ways of life that were taken away. Indigenous languages are part of Canada's unique cultural heritage, but more importantly, they are the rightful heritage of Indigenous peoples. Language, culture and identity form an inseparable bond that directly affects the health and well-being of a people. Knowing and being able to speak one's heritage language is a human right. Language diversity also allows us to see the world through more than one lens. Indigenous languages have linguistic structures and systems that are different from other languages. They provide insights into the different ways that humans think, interact and use language.[22]

22 First Peoples' Cultural Council. (2018). Language diversity in B.C. *First Peoples' Cultural Council Fact Sheet Series, Fact Sheet 1.* Brentwood Bay, BC: First Peoples' Cultural Council.

For the last decade, FPCC has been working to gain a better understanding of the linguistic and cultural diversity in the province through its status of language reports (2010, 2014, and this current report). While we have learned much about the state of languages here, there is still much more work to be done. In the rest of Canada, there is much we still don't know about Indigenous languages. For this reason, we call on the Department of Canadian Heritage to facilitate a review of Indigenous languages, dialects and their names. This facilitated process should be led by Indigenous people and guided by accepted linguistic principles. The key issues are:

1. In the spirit of reconciliation, undertaking such a review would finally give Indigenous peoples a chance to name themselves, rather than living under the labels ascribed to them by others. Current language lists and maps in use have not been developed by Indigenous peoples and/or Indigenous peoples have not been consulted in their development. Indigenous people must be supported to lead the work both of determining languages and of identifying language status. Indigenous people should control that process and the resulting data.

2. Many of the language names used in current lists and maps are outsider labels. Continuing to use them perpetuates misinformation about our languages from a colonial lens.

3. There is a perception that diversity is a "problem" and that a "one-size-fits-all" approach to language maintenance and revitalization is easier or more practical. However, such an approach denies the existing diversity and homogenizes Indigenous peoples into groups in which they don't see themselves. A pan-Indian approach ignores the assertion that Indigenous people have diverse civilizations and once again leaves Indigenous people without a voice on a matter that will determine whether or not Indigenous languages will be supported and revitalized.

We must protect and promote the diversity of Indigenous languages in B.C., and in Canada as a whole, and we call on all individuals, First Nations community members, First Nations and government leadership and policy-makers at all levels to join us.

"Learning my language has been an amazing journey that I wouldn't trade for any monetary value because it is priceless. My identity is slowly emerging and I'm beginning to feel whole and powerful as a woman of my Nation!"
— *Yvonne Joe, Nłeʔkepmxcín language apprentice*

WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE TO REVITALIZE B.C. FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES?

What can First Nations leadership do?

First Nations languages are an important piece of the multilingual culture that makes up Canada.

Everyone can play a role in ensuring that these languages are supported and celebrated. Here are some suggestions.

As leaders at the community level, there is much that First Nations leadership can do. Ideas include:

▪ *Set an example. Chief and council members: learn your language if you don't already know it.*

▪ *Promote use of the language in First Nations government and businesses.*

▪ *Enact an official language policy.*

▪ *Create awareness through community language events.*

▪ *Ensure signage on reserve is in your language; advocate for local non-First Nations communities to provide signage in your language.*

▪ *Identify speakers and silent speakers in your community. Encourage all to get involved with language revitalization work.*

▪ *Promote knowledge sharing and collaboration with other communities that share the same language.*

▪ *Create partnerships with research institutes, universities and other language advocacy organizations to support language activities.*

▪ *Advocate with other levels of government for increased funding and support for language programs. Ensure your own budget includes funding for language programs.*

What can other levels of government and educational institutions do?

Here are some ideas for action on the part of government and educational institutions:

▪ *Current Western education models are failing Indigenous people; things need to be done differently. Language instruction (ideally immersion) should be the keystone of educational policy. This is the only way to achieve fluency along with other positive educational outcomes.*

▪ *More universities need to respond to community needs by building programs that work towards building fluency. Prioritize and support increased language teacher training.*

▪ *Enact language legislation at the provincial and national level.*

▪ *Provide adequate, stable and ongoing funding support for language revitalization activities at all levels. This must be done now, while fluent speakers remain.*

What can individuals do?

While all levels of government have a responsibility in effecting change for First Nations languages in B.C., individuals can also play a role. Individual actions can support language revitalization. Here are some suggestions. Consider the role you can play, as an individual, a parent or a community leader, whether you are First Nations or non-First Nations.

// *Learn more. Visit* fpcc.ca *to learn about language revitalization work in B.C. and visit the B.C. First Peoples' Language Map* maps.fphlcc.ca.

// *Visit the Royal BC Museum in Victoria to see the award-wining Our Living Languages exhibit that tells the story of B.C. First Nations languages.*

// *Visit* endangeredlanguagesproject.com *to learn about global language revitalization.*

// *Go to* FirstVoices.com *to browse the B.C. language archives or download a language app.*

// *If you are near a university, see if you can take a First Nations language course.*

// *Support the language champions in your community. Ask what you can do to help to develop a plan for the language.*

// *Advocate with all levels of government and post-secondary institutions to enact the Truth and Reconciliation calls concerning language. This would include legislative support for Indigenous languages and offering more post-secondary courses in Indigenous languages.*

// *Advocate for your local school to offer the local First Nations language.*

// *Advocate with local businesses and government to include language signage in the local First Nations language.*

// *Talk with your religious or community organization about supporting language initiatives. For example, the Aboriginal Neighbours of the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia fundraises to support Mentor-Apprentice teams on Vancouver Island.*

// *Donate to the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation at* fpcf.ca.

We encourage all British Columbians to get involved in our shared heritage, the Indigenous languages that originate here on this land. We look forward to reporting on continued progress for our languages in 2022.

Finally, we welcome your feedback on this report. Please contact us:

FIRST PEOPLES'
CULTURAL COUNCIL

First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC)
1A Boat Ramp Road
Brentwood Bay, B.C. V8M 1N9
T (250) 652-5952
F (250) 652-5953
E info@fpcc.ca
www.fpcc.ca

Appendix A

LANGUAGE SPECIFIC DATA

APPENDIX A:
LANGUAGE SPECIFIC DATA

In this appendix, we provide data for individual languages.[23] *British Columbia's seven language families:*

Algonquian Language Family

Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit (Or Na-Dené) Language Family

Ktunaxa Language Family

Salishan Language Family

Tsimshanic Language Family

Wakashan Language Family

X̱aad Kil / X̱aaydaa Kil Language Family

Languages

Language data is grouped according to *language family.* Language families are groups of related languages that have developed from a common parent language. Language families are completely different from one another. For example, just as English in the Germanic language family has no relation to Mandarin in the Chinese language family, neither are the languages of different language families in B.C. related to each other. British Columbia has seven distinct language families: Algonquian, Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit (or Na-Dené), Ktunaxa, Salishan, Tsimshianic, Wakashan and X̱aad Kil / X̱aaydaa Kil.

Each language family contains one or more *languages.* Separate languages within a family are not *mutually intelligible.* This means that, although the languages are related to each other, they are different enough that speakers of one language cannot understand speakers of another.

Each language may include different *dialects.* Dialects tend to be mutually intelligible; speakers of one dialect can understand speakers of another dialect. Sometimes dialects are so different that speakers of different dialects have a hard time understanding one another. Some argue that their dialect is, in fact, a language of its own. The way we have chosen to classify the languages here is generally accepted by B.C. First Nations, and given the magnitude of the data we collect, we have chosen not to give data for separate dialects. However, we do acknowledge the dialect differences within languages.

Numbers

The number of *fluent speakers, semi-speakers* and *non-speakers* is given as a percentage of the total population of the communities of that language that have reported to us. In other words, fluent speakers + semi-fluent speakers + non-speakers = total population. In addition, we provide the percentage of *learners* for each community as an indication of the revitalization activity for that language. The percentage of learners is a *separate category* that may include those who consider themselves fluent, semi-fluent or non-fluent speakers, so the learner category is also shown as a percentage of the total population.
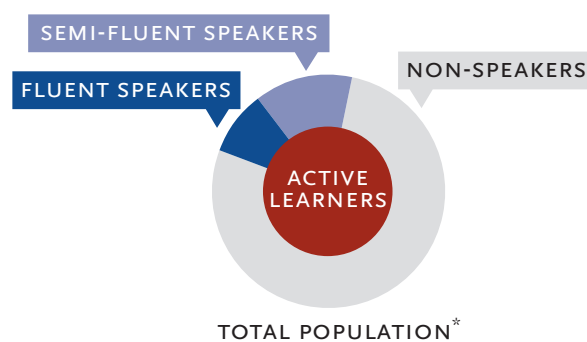
SEMI-FLUENT SPEAKERS

FLUENT SPEAKERS

NON-SPEAKERS

ACTIVE LEARNERS

TOTAL POPULATION*

Learners are part of this population. Learners may consider themselves to be non-speakers, semi-speakers or fluent speakers.

---

[23] The general descriptions in this section are repeated from our 2014 report (Gessner et al., 2014).

Communities and populations vary in size from language to language, so percentages allow us to more easily compare numbers between languages. However, a percentage for one language can be, in terms of actual numbers of speakers, quite a different number for another language. For example, about 2% of both the Secwepemctsín and Oowekyala / ’Uiḱala populations are fluent speakers. For Secwepemctsín, this is 2% of a total population of 8,968, which means that there are 187 fluent speakers. For Oowekyala / ’Uiḱala on the other hand, this is 2% of a total population of 280, which means that there are only six fluent speakers. Therefore, we also include the total population numbers for each language. We also provide the number of communities that reported to us and the total number of communities to give an indication of the response rate for each language.

Finally, it is important to note that the data we provide in this report only includes numbers of speakers in B.C. Several of the languages also have speakers outside of B.C.; these are not factored into our totals.

In addition to the statistics on communities, populations and speakers, we provide education information. For *language education*, communities provide numbers of First Nations–operated schools, early childhood education (ECE) facilities and adult classes. ECE facilities include Head Starts, language nests or other ECE programs. A Head Start (Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve Program) is an ECE program centred around six components: education, health promotion, culture and language, nutrition, social support, and parental/family involvement. A language nest is an ECE program that aims to provide full immersion in a First Nations language, generally 15–20 hours per week.

"Language is critical for connecting Indigenous peoples to their culture, spirituality, identity and land," said Scott Fraser, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. *"For too long, Indigenous language has been under threat. The time has come for us to support First Nations in exercising their human right to speak and pass on their language and culture."*

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S SEVEN LANGUAGE FAMILIES:

3,890
Language Learners

ATHABASKAN-EYAK-TLINGIT (OR NA-DENÉ) LANGUAGE FAMILY

Dakelh · Dane-Ẕaa (ᑕᓀ ᖚ) · Danezāgé
Dene K'e · Witsuwit'en / Nedut'en
Southern Tutchone · Tāłtān · Tse'khene
Tsilhqot'in · Lingít

6,097
Language Learners

SALISHAN LANGUAGE FAMILY

Éy7á7juuthem · Hul'q'umi'num' / Halq'eméylem / hǝńǫ̀ǝmińǝm̀
Nłeʔkepmxcín · Nsyilxcǝn · Nuxalk · Sḵwx̱wú7mesh sníchim
Secwepemctsín · SENĆOŦEN / Malchosen /
Lekwungen / Semiahmoo / T'Sou-ke
She shashishalhem · Sƚaƚimcets

2,110
Language Learners

WAKASHAN LANGUAGE FAMILY

diitiidʔaatx̣ · Háiłzaqvḷa · Kwak'wala
Nuučaańuł · Oowekyala / 'Uiḵala
X̌enaksialaḵala / X̌a'islaḵala

74
Language Learners

ALGONQUIAN LANGUAGE FAMILY

Anishnaubemowin
Nēhiyawēwin

13,997

TOTAL ACTIVE LANGUAGE LEARNERS
2018

1,218
Language Learners

TSIMSHANIC LANGUAGE FAMILY

Gitsenimx̱ · Nisga'a
Sgüüx̱s · Sm̓algya̱x

265
Language Learners

X̱AAD KIL / X̱AAYDAA KIL LANGUAGE FAMILY

X̱aad Kil · X̱aaydaa Kil

343
Language Learners

KTUNAXA LANGUAGE FAMILY

Ktunaxa

ALGONQUIAN LANGUAGE FAMILY

The Algonquian language family is a large family with many languages that stretches from the east coast of Canada and the United States to northeastern B.C., where there are two languages spoken: Anishnaubemowin (Saulteau) and Nēhiyawēwin (Plains Cree). It is interesting to note that the Algonquian languages are distantly related to two languages in California, Wiyot and Yurok. These languages together with the Algonquian languages are known as the Algic family.

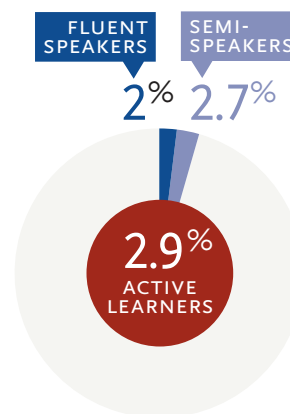## Anishnaubemowin *(Algonquian language family)*

Anishnaubemowin is also known as Saulteau (and is commonly called Ojibway in eastern Canada). Although there are not many speakers in B.C., Anishnaubemowin is the third most widely spoken First Nations language in Canada, with 20,470 speakers according to the 2016 Census of Canada.[24]

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs
1	0	—	—	—	0

Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs	# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners	
—	0	—	0	—	

Communities where spoken:
- *Saulteau First Nations (near Chetwynd)*

Nēhiyawēwin *(Algonquian language family)*

Nēhiyawēwin is also known as Plains Cree. The Cree language is the most widely spoken First Nations language in Canada, with more than 84,000 speakers across Canada according to the 2016 Census.[25]

FLUENT SPEAKERS **2%** SEMI-SPEAKERS **2.7%**

2.9% ACTIVE LEARNERS

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us
4	4	2,564

First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
2	2.5	3	1.25

# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
0	—	0	74

Communities where spoken:
- *Blueberry River First Nation*
- *Fort Nelson First Nation*
- *Saulteau First Nation*
- *West Moberly First Nations*
- *Many urban centres, especially Vancouver*

# ATHABASKAN-EYAK-TLINGIT (OR NA-DENÉ) LANGUAGE FAMILIES

Dene (Athabaskan) language sub-family

The Dene (or Athabaskan) language family has a fascinating family tree. The Dene language family itself is made up of three separate branches: a northern branch, which includes the languages in B.C. as well as in Yukon, Northwest Territories, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba; a southern branch in the southwest United States, which includes well-known languages such as Navajo and Apache; and a Pacific Coast branch in northern California and Oregon. The Dene family of languages is distantly related to the languages Lingít (Tlingit) and Eyak, which together make up the Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit or Na-Dené family. But the family tree doesn't stop there! Recently, it has been established that Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit family is related to a small language family called Yeniseian located in central Siberia.

Dakelh *(Dene language family)*

Dakelh is also known as Carrier. It is spoken over a wide area of central interior B.C. and has a lot of variation with many different dialects spoken.

FLUENT SPEAKERS 4.5

SEMI-SPEAKERS 4.7%

20.7% ACTIVE LEARNERS

| Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
13	11	8,956	
First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
6	3.15	5	1.25
# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
1	10	4	1,856
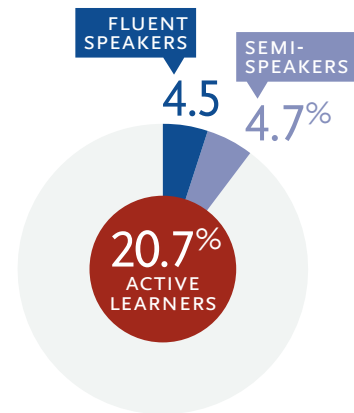
Communities where spoken:
- Lheidli-T'enneh Band
- Lhoosk'uz Dene Nation
- Lhtako Dene Nation
- Nadleh Whut'en Band
- Nak'azdli Band
- Nazko First Nation
- Saik'uz First Nation
- Stellat'en First Nation
- Takla Lake First Nation
- Tl'azt'en Nation
- Tsil Kaz Koh (Burns Lake)
- Ulkatchot'en First Nation
- Yekooche First Nation
- Urban centres, especially Prince George and Quesnel

Dane-Ẕaa *(Dene language family)*

Dane-Ẕaa (also known as Beaver) is spoken in northeastern B.C. and northwestern Alberta and the name means 'the real people'.

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
6	4	1,328	
First Nations operated schools	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools**	**Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs**	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs**
2	2.5	2	2.5
# of Language Nests	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests**	**Community adult language classes**	**Number of active language learners**
0	—	1	214

FLUENT SPEAKERS
12%

SEMI-SPEAKERS
21.6%

16.1% ACTIVE LEARNERS
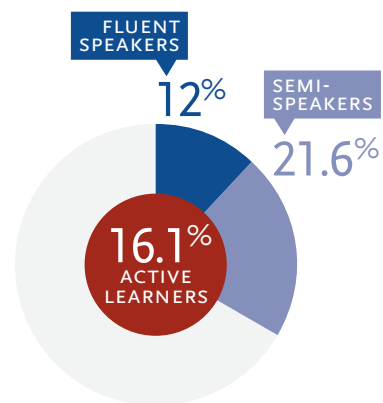
Communities where spoken:
- Blueberry River First Nation
- Doig River First Nation
- Halfway River First Nation
- Prophet River Band
- Saulteau First Nations
- West Moberly First Nations

Danezāgé' *(Dene language family)*

Danezāgé' is also known as Kaska, and is spoken in northern B.C. and over the border in the southeastern Yukon. The name Kaska is an English adaptation of the Kaska name for McDame Creek.[26]

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
3	2	518	
First Nations operated schools	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools**	**Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs**	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs**
1	3	1	1
# of Language Nests	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests**	**Community adult language classes**	**Number of active language learners**
0	—	1	48

FLUENT SPEAKERS
0.8%

SEMI-SPEAKERS
4.2%

9.3% ACTIVE LEARNERS
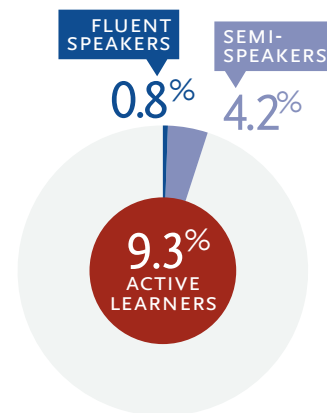
Communities where spoken:
- Daylu Dena Council (Lower Post, B.C.)
- Dease River First Nation
- Liard First Nation

---

[26] Poser, W. J. (2003). The Names of the First Nations Languages of British Columbia. Retrieved from *www.billposer.org/Papers/bclgnames.pdf*

Dene K'e *(Dene language family)*

Dene K'e is also known as Slavey. While Fort Nelson First Nation is the only B.C. First Nations community where it is reported to be spoken, the Slavey (or Slave) language is spoken in greater numbers across northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories. Like several of the Dene languages, Dene K'e uses tones (distinctive pitches), like Chinese languages do.

FLUENT SPEAKERS 7.1%
SEMI-SPEAKERS 15.7%
23.7% ACTIVE LEARNERS

| Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
1	1	813	
First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
1	1.38	2	5
# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
0	—	0	193
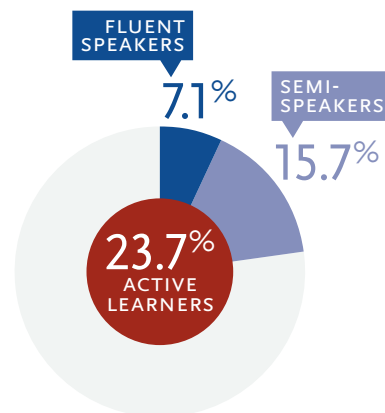
Community where spoken:
· *Fort Nelson First Nation*

Tāłtān *(Dene language family)*

Tāłtān is spoken in northwestern B.C. The name is borrowed from the Tlingit language referring to a low flat at the mouth of the Tahltan River that served as an important trading ground.[27]

FLUENT SPEAKERS 1.6%
SEMI-SPEAKERS 2%
5.8% ACTIVE LEARNERS

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
2	2	2,695	
First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on languagae in ECE programs
1	1	2	1.5
# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
2	16	2	156

Communities where spoken:
· *Iskut Nation*
· *Tahltan Nation (Telegraph Creek)*
· *The village of Dease Lake*

27 Goddard (1981c;465) as cited in Poser, W. J. (2003). The Names of the First Nations Languages of British Columbia. Retrieved from *www.billposer.org/Papers/bclgnames.pdf*

Tse'khene *(Dene language family)*

Tse'khene is spoken in northeastern B.C. Tse'khene dene means "people on the rocks".[28]

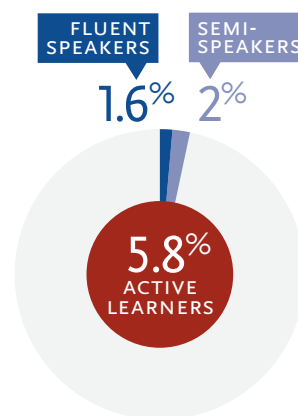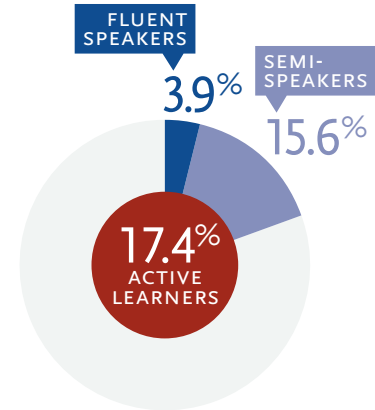| Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
3	3	1,503	
First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
2	2.41	2	7.5
# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
0	—	0	261

FLUENT SPEAKERS 3.9%

SEMI-SPEAKERS 15.6%

17.4% ACTIVE LEARNERS

Communities where spoken:
- *Kwadacha Band*
- *McLeod Lake Indian Band*
- *Tsay Keh Dene Band*

Tsilhqot'in *(Dene language family)*

Tsilhqot'in is spoken in central interior B.C. Compared to many other B.C. languages, Tsilhqot'in has a larger number of young people fluent in the language. Of languages that are contained within B.C. (without speakers in other provinces or states), Tsilhqot'in has the largest number of speakers.

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
7	7	4,791	
First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
4	2.5	4	8.75
# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
0	—	1	766

FLUENT SPEAKERS 16%

SEMI-SPEAKERS 8.2%

16% ACTIVE LEARNERS

Communities where spoken:
- *ʔEsdilagh First Nation*
- *Tl'esqox Indian Band*
- *Tl'etinqox-T'in Government*
- *Tsi Del Del First Nation*
- *Ulkatcho'en First Nation*
- *Xeni Gwet'in First Nations Government*
- *Yunesit'in Government*
- *Urban areas, especially Williams Lake*

[28] Denniston, G. & Goddard, I. (1981) as cited in Poser, W. J. (2003). The names of the First Nations languages of British Columbia. Retrieved from *www.billposer.org/Papers/bclgnames.pdf*

Southern Tutchone *(Dene language family)*

Southern Tutchone is spoken in Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, which span the B.C.–Yukon border. This is just one of several examples where borders created in the formation of Canada have divided traditional territories. The community is now primarily based in the Yukon, though the traditional territory extends into B.C. We have been unable to obtain any data on speakers in B.C., but we do know there are at least a few fluent speakers residing in urban centres such as Victoria.

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools
1	0	—	—	—

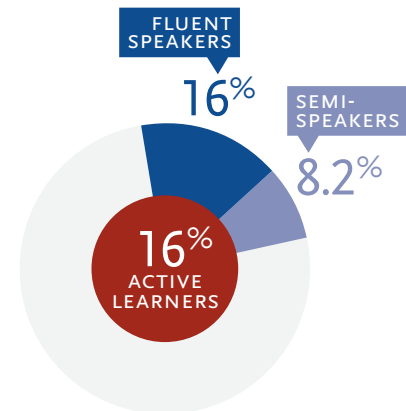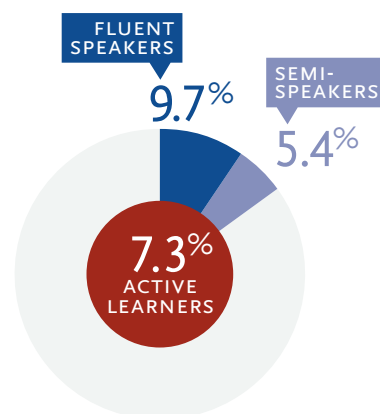| Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs	# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
—	—	—	—	—	—

Witsuwit'en/Nedut'en *(Dene language family)*

Witsuwit'en/Nedut'en is spoken in central interior B.C. Although the language is sometimes called Carrier, it is a different language from the language called Dakelh / Carrier. The language is known for having an interesting feature where consonants can affect the pronunciation of neighbouring vowels.[29]

FLUENT SPEAKERS 9.7%

SEMI-SPEAKERS 5.4%

7.3% ACTIVE LEARNERS

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us
9	4	5,404

First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
2	3.4	2	13

# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
0	—	0	394

Communities where spoken:
- *Cheslatta Carrier Nation*
- *Hagwilget Village Council*
- *Lake Babine Nation*
- *Nee-Tahi-Buhn Indian Band*
- *Skin Tyee Nation*
- *Takla Lake First Nation*
- *Tsil Kaz Koh (Burns Lake)*
- *Wet'suwet'en Nation*
- *Witset First Nation*

---

[29] Hargus, S. (2007). Witsuwit'en Grammar: Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology. Vancouver: UBC Press.

ATHABASKAN-EYAK-TLINGIT (OR NA-DENÉ) LANGUAGE FAMILIES

Lingít (Tlingit) language sub-family

Lingít *(Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit or Na-Dené language family)*

Lingít (Tlingit) is the only language on a branch of the large Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit or Na-Dené family tree. Another branch is for the Eyak language, and the rest of the tree is for the large Dene (Athabaskan) family. Lingít is spoken in B.C., Yukon, and Alaska.

FLUENT SPEAKERS 0.3% **SEMI-SPEAKERS** 0%

.7% **ACTIVE LEARNERS**

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
1	1	300	
First Nations operated schools	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools**	**Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs**	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs**
0	—	0	—
# of Language Nests	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests**	**Community adult language classes**	**Number of active language learners**
0	—	0	2

Community where spoken:
· *Taku River Tlingit First Nation*

Ktunaxa *(Ktunaxa language family)*

Ktunaxa is spoken in the Kootenay region of B.C. and its language territory spreads over the border into the United States. The language family is a special kind of family, because it is a language family which contains only one language! This is called a language isolate, and it means there is no apparent connection between Ktunaxa and any other language. Languages with no known relatives are relatively rare among the world's languages, though there are two such families in B.C., Ktunaxa and Xaad Kil / Xaaydaa Kil.

FLUENT SPEAKERS 2.9%

SEMI-SPEAKERS 11.1%

32.1% ACTIVE LEARNERS

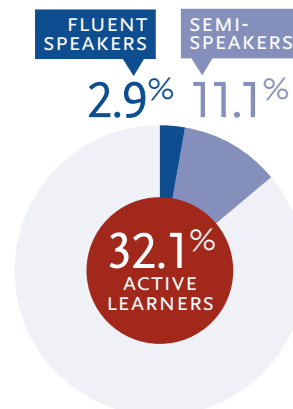| Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
4	4	1,067	
First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
1	8	2	2
# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
0	–	1	343

Communities where spoken:

- *yaqan nuʔkiy (Lower Kootenay Band)*
- *ʔakinkʼumɬasnuqɬiʔit (Tobacco Plains Indian Band)*
- *ʔakisq̓nuk (Akisqnuk First Nation)*
- *ʔaq̓am (St. Mary's Indian Band)*
- *Urban areas, especially Cranbrook and Nelson*

SALISHAN (OR SALISH) LANGUAGE FAMILY

The Salishan language family is made up of 23 languages in the Pacific Northwest, in B.C. and the states of Washington, Idaho and Montana. There are three subgroups to the family: Nuxalk (Bella Coola), the Coast Salish languages and the Interior Salish languages.

Éy7á7juuthem *(Salishan language family)*

Éy7á7juuthem (sometimes called Comox) has been taught in the public school system since the early 1990s and it is accepted as a second language at three universities.

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
4	3	2,037	

First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
1	2.5	0	—

# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
0	—	2	361

FLUENT SPEAKERS 2.3%
SEMI-SPEAKERS 5.2%
17.7% ACTIVE LEARNERS
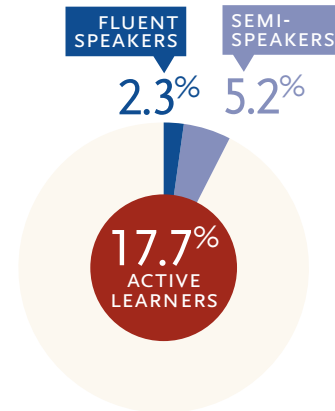
Communities where spoken:
- Homalco First Nation
- Klahoose First Nation
- K'omoks First Nation
- Sliammon First Nation
- Urban areas, especially Courtenay and Powell River

Nłeʔkepmxcín *(Salishan language family)*

Nłeʔkepmxcín is an Interior Salish language. It is sometimes called the Thompson language due to the Thompson River flowing through its territory.

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs
15	13	6,349	2	2.43	5

Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs	# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	
2.25	1	15	

Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners		
2	440		

FLUENT SPEAKERS 2.1%
SEMI-SPEAKERS 2.9%
6.9% ACTIVE LEARNERS
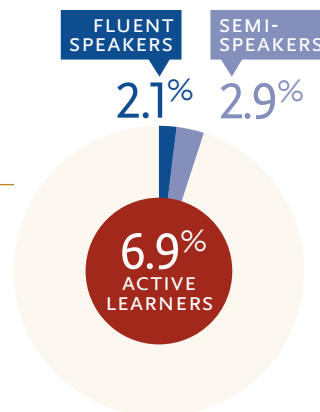
Communities where spoken:
- Ashcroft Indian Band
- Boothroyd Band
- Boston Bar First Nation
- Coldwater Indian Band
- Cook's Ferry Indian Band
- Kanaka Bar Indian Band
- Lower Nicola Indian Band
- Lytton First Nation
- Nicomen Indian Band
- Nooaitch Indian Band
- Oregon Jack Creek Band
- Shackan Indian Band
- Siska Indian Band
- Skuppah Indian Band
- Spuzzum First Nation
- Urban areas, especially Merritt

Hul'q'umi'num'/Halq'eméylem/hənq́əmińəḿ
(Salishan language family)

Hul'q'umi'num'/Halq'eméylem/hənq́əmińəḿ are three distinct dialects of the same Coast Salish language, but there is no cover term for the language as a whole. The language territory includes areas of the east coast of Vancouver island (Hul'q'umi'num'), the Lower Mainland (hənq́əmińəḿ) and the Fraser Valley (Halq'eméylem).

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools
42	33	18,235	6	1.47

Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs	# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes
18	5.7	0	—	8

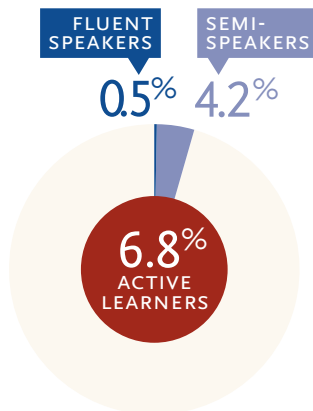**Number of active language learners**

1,238

FLUENT SPEAKERS 0.5%
SEMI-SPEAKERS 4.2%

6.8% ACTIVE LEARNERS

Communities where spoken:
- Aitchelitz Band
- BOK̲EĆEN (Pauquachin)
- Beecher Bay First Nation
- Chawathil First Nation
- Cheam First Nation
- Chehalis Indian Band
- Cowichan Tribes
- Halalt First Nation
- Katzie First Nation
- Kwantlen First Nation
- Kwaw-kwaw-aplit First Nation
- Kwikwetlem First Nation
- Lake Cowichan First Nation
- Leq'a:mel First Nation
- Lyackson First Nation
- MÁLEXEȽ (Malahat First Nation)
- Matsqui First Nation
- Musqueam Indian Band
- Penelakut Tribe
- Peters Band
- Popkum First Nation
- Qayqayt First Nation
- Qualicum First Nation
- Scowlitz First Nation
- Seabird Island Indian Band
- Shxw'owhamel First Nation
- Shxwhá:y Village
- Skawahlook First Nation
- Skowkale First Nation
- Skwah First Nation
- Snaw-naw-as (Nanoose) First Nation
- Snuneymuxw First Nation
- Soowahlie Indian Band
- Squiala First Nation
- Stz'uminus First Nation
- Sumas First Nation
- Tsawwassen First Nation
- Tsleil-Waututh Nation
- Tzeachten First Nation
- Union Bar Band
- Yakweakwioose Band
- Yale First Nation
- Urban areas, including the Metro Vancouver area, Chilliwack, Abbotsford and Nanaimo

Nsyilxcən *(Salishan language family)*

Nsyilxcən (also called Okanagan) is an Interior Salish language whose language territory spreads through the area of the Okanagan valley and beyond, including over the border into the United States. The language is known for having a whole series of textbooks for language learning. (Most languages in B.C. do not yet have extensive textbooks.)

FLUENT SPEAKERS **2.3%**

SEMI-SPEAKERS **1.1%**

12.2% ACTIVE LEARNERS

| Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
7	7	5,717	
First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
6	3.6	7	3.6
# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
1	16	2	700
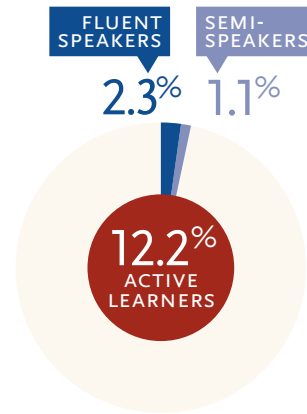
Communities where spoken:
- Lower Similkameen Indian Band
- Okanagan Indian Band
- Osoyoos Indian Band
- Penticton Indian Band
- Upper Nicola Band
- Upper Similkameen Indian Band
- Westbank First Nation
- Urban areas, especially Vernon, Kelowna, Penticton and Osoyoos

Nuxalk *(Salishan language family)*

Nuxalk (or Bella Coola) is spoken in the area of Bella Coola, B.C., including Nuxalk First Nation. Its neighbours are languages from the Wakashan and Dene language families, and it does not neighbour any other Salishan languages. This has resulted in the language having some unique characteristics which differentiate it from related Coast and Interior Salish languages.

FLUENT SPEAKERS **0.6%**

SEMI-SPEAKERS **1%**

35.9% ACTIVE LEARNERS

| Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
1	1	1,732	
First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
1	1.69	1	1
# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
0	—	1	621
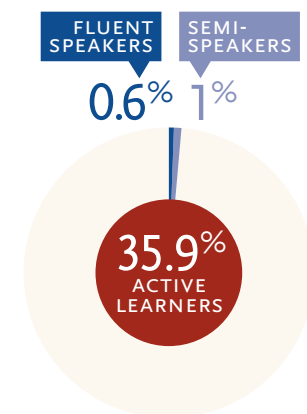
Community where spoken:
- Nuxalk First Nation

Secwepemctsín *(Salishan language family)*

Secwepemctsín (also called Shuswap) is an Interior Salish language, and is known for having the first language nest (preschool immersion program) and immersion school (T'selcéwtqen Clleqmél'ten, otherwise known as Chief Atahm School) to operate in B.C.

FLUENT SPEAKERS 2.1%

SEMI-SPEAKERS 7.7%

11% **ACTIVE LEARNERS**

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
17	15	8,968	
First Nations operated schools	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools**	**Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs**	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs**
9	3.48	11	6.31
# of Language Nests	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests**	**Community adult language classes**	**Number of active language learners**
1	18	6	989
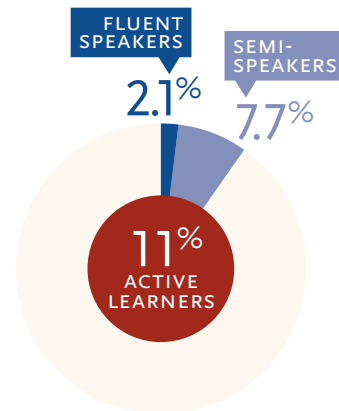
Communities where spoken:
- *Esk'etemc First Nation*
- *Kenpésq't (Shuswap Indian Band)*
- *Llenllenéy'ten (High Bar First Nation)*
- *Pelltíq't (Whispering Pines / Clinton Band)*
- *Qw7ewt (Little Shuswap Lake Indian Band)*
- *Sexqeltqín (Adams Lake Indian Band)*
- *Simpcw First Nation*
- *Sk'atsin (Neskonlith Indian Band)*
- *Skeetchestn First Nation*
- *Splatsín First Nation*
- *St'uxwtéws (Bonaparte Indian Band)*
- *Stswécem'c (Canoe Creek Band)*
- *T'éxel'c (Williams Lake Indian Band)*
- *Tk'emlúps (Kamloops Indian Band)*
- *Tsq'éscen (Canim Lake Band)*
- *Xats'ull First Nation*
- *Urban areas, especially Kamloops and Salmon Arm*

SENĆOŦEN/Malchosen/Lekwungen/Semiahmoo/T'Sou-ke
(Salishan language family)

SENĆOŦEN/Malchosen/Lekwungen/Semiahmoo/T'Sou-ke are five related dialects of the same Coast Salish language, though there is no cover term for the language as a whole. It is spoken in the southern end of Vancouver Island including the area of Victoria. SENĆOŦEN (previously called Saanich) is well-known for having a unique alphabet that was created by a fluent community member in the 1970s.

FLUENT SPEAKERS 0.2% **SEMI-SPEAKERS** 1.5%

15.1% ACTIVE LEARNERS

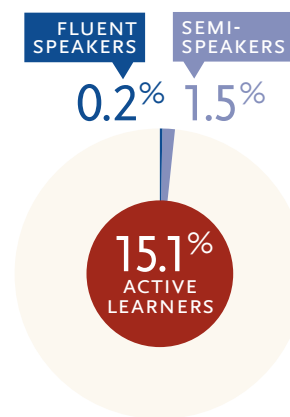| Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
10	7	3,340	
First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
2	13.27	6	2.83
# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
1	17	4	503

Communities where spoken:
· BOḰEĆEN (Pauquachin)
· MÁLEXEȽ (Malahat)
· Scia'new (Beecher Bay)
· SEMYOME (Semiahmoo)
· Songhees Nation
· SȾÁUTW̱ (Tsawout)
· SXIMEȽEȽ (Esquimalt)
· T'Sou-ke Nation
· W̱JOȽEȽP (Tsartlip)
· W̱SIḴEM (Tseycum)
· Urban areas, especially the Victoria area

She shashishalhem (Salishan language family)

She shashishalhem (Sechelt) is a Coast Salish language spoken in shíshálh Nation (Sechelt Indian Band) near Sechelt, B.C.

FLUENT SPEAKERS 0.3% **SEMI-SPEAKERS** 2.4%

12.4% ACTIVE LEARNERS

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
1	1	1,414	
First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
0	1	1	7.5
# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
0	–	1	175

Community where spoken:
· shíshálh Nation
· The town of Sechelt

Sḵwx̱wú7mesh sníchim *(Salishan language family)*

Sḵwx̱wú7mesh sníchim (Squamish) is a Coast Salish language which literally means the language of the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh, or Squamish, people. Since the 2010 Winter Olympics, it can be seen on some highway signs between Vancouver and Whistler.

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
1	1	4,280	

First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
1	1.4	0	—

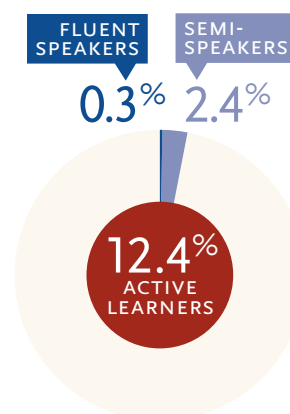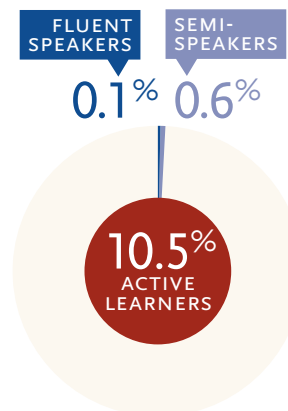| # of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
0	—	1	449

FLUENT SPEAKERS 0.1%

SEMI-SPEAKERS 0.6%

10.5% ACTIVE LEARNERS

Communities where spoken:
- *Squamish Nation*
- *Urban areas, especially in Squamish, North Vancouver and West Vancouver*

Sƛ'áƛ'imcets *(Salishan language family)*

Sƛ'áƛ'imcets is an Interior Salish language spoken in the southern Coast Mountains and Fraser Canyon region of B.C. with two main dialects (Sƛ'áƛ'imcets and Ucwalmícwts).

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
11	11	6,826	

First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
5	5.08	7	6

# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
0	—	1	796

FLUENT SPEAKERS 1.4%

SEMI-SPEAKERS 11.4%

11.7% ACTIVE LEARNERS
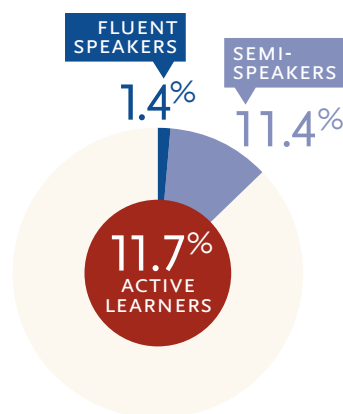
Communities where spoken:
- *Cayoose Creek Band*
- *Douglas First Nation*
- *Lil'wat Nation*
- *N'Quatqua First Nations*
- *Nxwísten (Bridge River Indian Band)*
- *Samahquam Ucwalmicw*
- *Seton Lake Band*
- *Skatin Nations Council*
- *T'it'q'et*
- *Ts'kw'aylaxw First Nation*
- *Xaxli'p Band*

TSIMSHIANIC LANGUAGE FAMILY

The Tsimshianic language family consists of four languages spoken along the northwest coast of B.C. and in southern Alaska.

Gitsenimx̱ *(Tsimshianic language family)*

Gitsenimx̱ means "people of the Skeena River".[30] There are two main dialects of the language, and the main communities are located along the Skeena, Kispiox and Kitwanga Rivers.

| Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
6	6	9,849	
First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
3	3.41	4	6.17
# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
0	–	1	344

FLUENT SPEAKERS 5.3%

SEMI-SPEAKERS 6.5%

3.5% ACTIVE LEARNERS
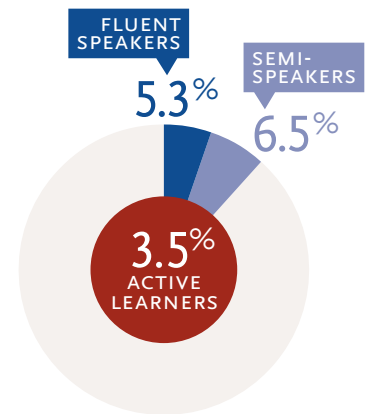
Communities where spoken:
- *Anspayaxw (formerly Kispiox Band Council)*
- *Gitanmaax*
- *Gitanyow*
- *Gitsegukla*
- *Gitwangak*
- *Sik-e-Dakh (formerly Glen Vowell band)*
- *Urban areas, especially Terrace and Prince Rupert*

Nisg̱a'a *(Tsimshianic language family)*

Nisg̱a'a is spoken in the four main communities of Nisg̱a'a Nation located along the coast northwest of Terrace.

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
4	4	6,113	
First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
0	–	4	6.25
# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
0	–	4	294

FLUENT SPEAKERS 5.4%

SEMI-SPEAKERS 2.6%

4.8% ACTIVE LEARNERS
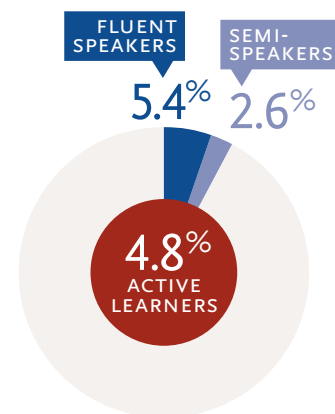
Communities where spoken:
- *Gingolx Village Government*
- *Gitlaxt'aamiks Village Government (formerly New Aiyansh)*
- *Laxgalts'ap Village Government*
- *Nisg̱a'a Village of Gitwinksihlkw*

[30] Poser, W. J. (2003). The Names of the First Nations Languages of British Columbia. Retrieved from *www.billposer.org/Papers/bclgnames.pdf*

Sgüüx̱s *(Tsimshianic language family)*

Sgüüx̱s was traditionally spoken in Kitasoo / Xai'xais Nation (Klemtu, B.C.).[31] Sgüüx̱s is closely related to the Sm'algyax language. In our 2014 report, the community reported having no fluent speakers, though there are semi-fluent speakers. Since the last report, however, the community has located a fluent speaker living in another community!

| Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
1	1	519	
First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
1	2.38	1	—
# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
0	—	0	4

FLUENT SPEAKERS 0.2%
SEMI-SPEAKERS 0.8%
0.8% **ACTIVE LEARNERS**
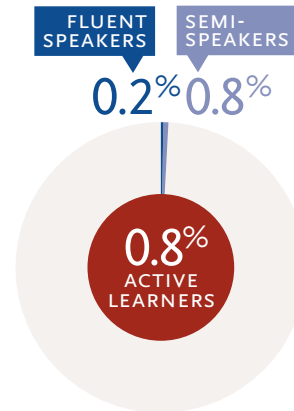
Community where spoken:
· Kitasoo / Xai'xais Nation

Sm̓algya̱x *(Tsimshianic language family)*

Sm̓algya̱x (Coast Tsimshian) means 'real or true language' and Tsimshian is an anglicization of a word referring to people 'at the entrance of the Skeena River.'[32]

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
6	6	8,153	
First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
4	4.21	4	2.67
# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
0	—	0	576

FLUENT SPEAKERS 0.7%
SEMI-SPEAKERS 1.6%
7.1% **ACTIVE LEARNERS**
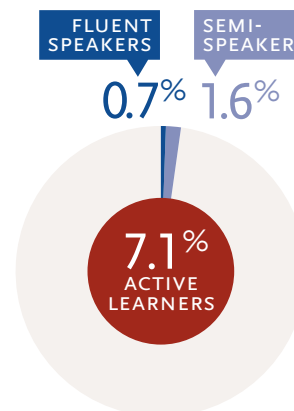
Communities where spoken:
· Gitga'at (Hartley Bay Village Council)
· Gitxaala Nation
· Kitselas First Nation
· Kitsumkalum Band Council
· Lax Kw'alaams Band
· Metlakatla Governing Council
· Urban areas, especially Terrace and Prince Rupert

---

31 Sgüüxs was formerly spelled Ski:xs

32 Halpin and Seguin (1990) as cited in Poser, W. J. (2003). The Names of the First Nations Languages of British Columbia. Retrieved from *www.billposer.org/Papers/bclgnames.pdf*

WAKASHAN LANGUAGE FAMILY

The Wakashan language family consists of seven languages. The northern branch of the family includes Hailhzaqvla, Kwak̓wala, Oowekyala and X̌enaksialak̓ala/X̌aʼislak̓ala. The southern branch of the family includes diitiidʔaatx̣ and Nuučaańuł in the province of B.C., and the language Makah which is spoken in Washington state.

diitiidʔaatx̣ *(Wakashan language family)*

diitiidʔaatx̣ was originally the name of the people around Nitinat Lake, but interestingly, the "n" in the language has changed to "d" since the placename was borrowed into English.[33]

| Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
3	3	1,354	
First Nations operated schools	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools**	**Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs**	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs**
1	3.46	1	10
# of Language Nests	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests**	**Community adult language classes**	**Number of active language learners**
0	—	1	83

FLUENT SPEAKERS 0.5% SEMI-SPEAKERS 2.2%

6.1% ACTIVE LEARNERS
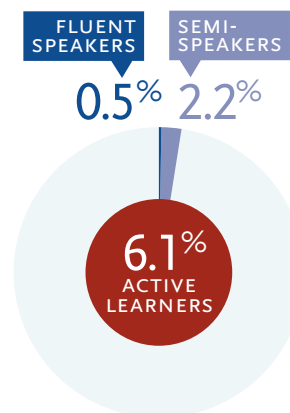
Communities where spoken:
· *Ditidaht First Nation*
· *Lake Cowichan First Nation*
· *Pacheedaht First Nation*

Háiłzaqvḷa *(Wakashan language family)*

Háiłzaqvḷa (also called Heiltsuk or Bella Bella) is closely related to ʼUik̓ala/Oowekyala, and is known for words with long sequences of consonants, including words only containing consonants.

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
2	2	3,330	
First Nations operated schools	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools**	**Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs**	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs**
2	2.69	3	11.5
# of Language Nests	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests**	**Community adult language classes**	**Number of active language learners**
1	15	1	337

FLUENT SPEAKERS 1.2% SEMI-SPEAKERS 5.1%

10.1% ACTIVE LEARNERS
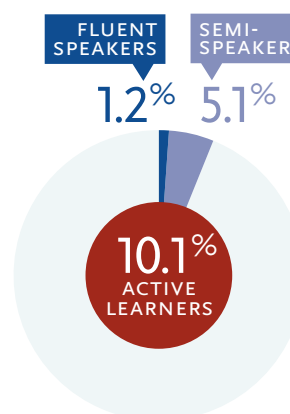
Communities where spoken:
· *Heiltsuk Nation (Bella Bella)*
· *Kitasoo / Xaiʼxais*

---

33 Kinkade 1985 as cited in Poser, W. J. (2003). The Names of the First Nations Languages of British Columbia. Retrieved from *www.billposer.org/Papers/bclgnames.pdf*

Kwak̓wala *(Wakashan language family)*

Kwak̓wala is spoken on northern Vancouver Island and the smaller islands and mainland directly to the east. It includes several dialects that are quite different from each other.

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs
15	10	6,224	5	3.21	6

Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs	# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests
7.25	0	—

Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
5	763

FLUENT SPEAKERS 2.2%
SEMI-SPEAKERS 5.9%
12.3% ACTIVE LEARNERS

Communities where spoken:
- Da'naxda'xw First Nation
- Dzawada'enuxw First Nation
- Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation
- Gwawaenuk Tribe
- K'omoks First Nation
- Kwakiutl Band Council
- Kwiakah First Nation
- Kwicksutaineuk / Ak-Kwa-Mish Tribes
- Ławit'sis (Tlowitsis)
- Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em Band
- Namgis First Nation
- Quatsino First Nation
- Tlatlasikwala First Nation
- Wei Wai Kai First Nation
- Wei Wai Kum First Nation
- Urban areas, especially Port Hardy and Campbell River

ʼUik̓ala/Oowekyala *(Wakashan language family)*

ʼUik̓ala / Oowekyala is very closely related to Heiltsuk.

FLUENT SPEAKERS 2.1%
SEMI-SPEAKERS 1.8%
3.6% ACTIVE LEARNERS

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us
1	1	280

First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
0	—	0	—

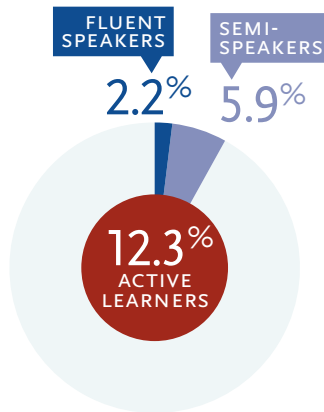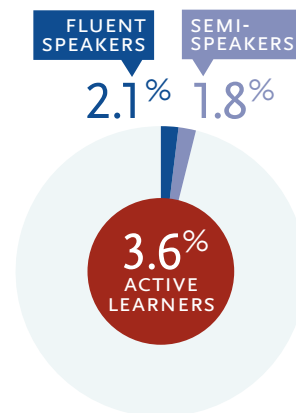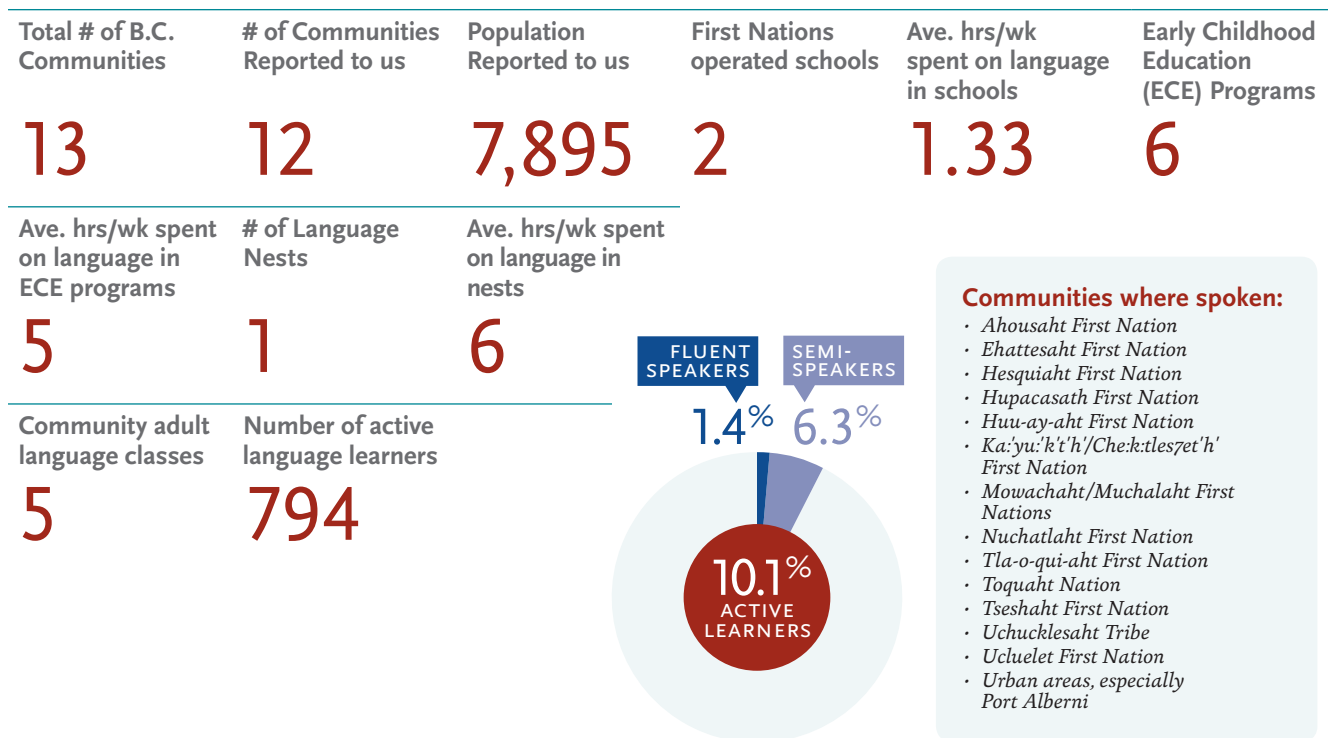| # of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
0	—	0	10

Communities where spoken:
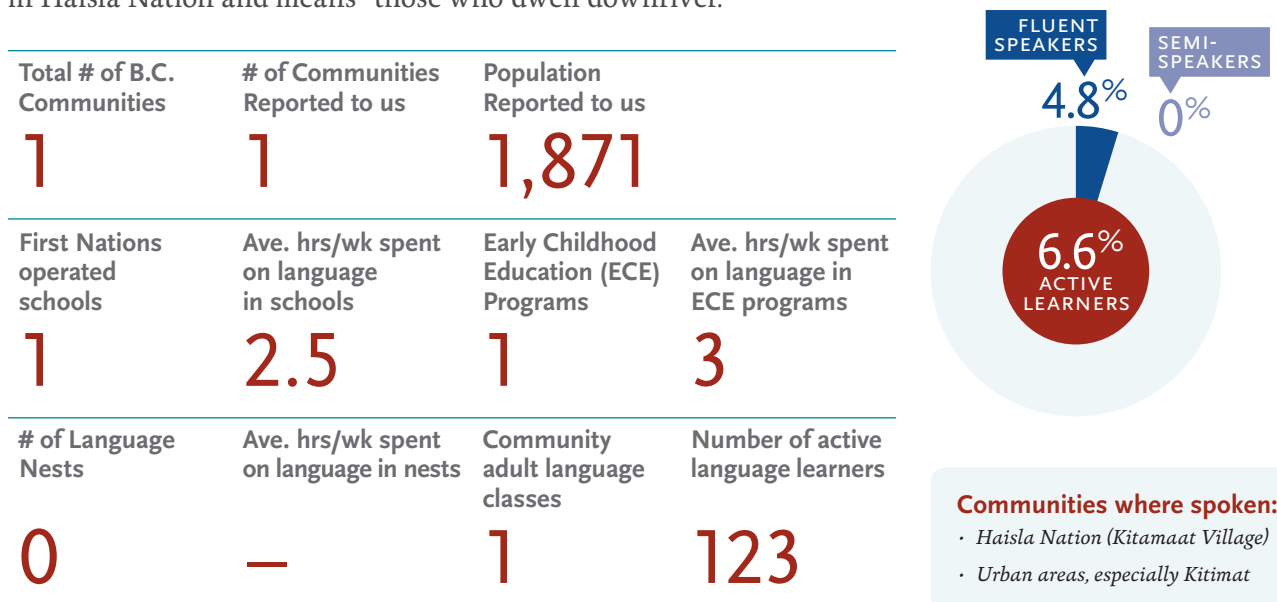- Wuikinuxv Nation (Rivers Inlet and Owikeno Lake area)

Nuučaańuł *(Wakashan language family)*

The dialects of the Nuučaańuł language are very diverse, so much so that speakers often consider them to be separate languages rather than separate dialects.

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs
13	12	7,895	2	1.33	6

Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs	# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests
5	1	6

Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
5	794

FLUENT SPEAKERS 1.4% **SEMI-SPEAKERS** 6.3%

10.1% ACTIVE LEARNERS

Communities where spoken:
· Ahousaht First Nation
· Ehattesaht First Nation
· Hesquiaht First Nation
· Hupacasath First Nation
· Huu-ay-aht First Nation
· Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k:tles7et'h' First Nation
· Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nations
· Nuchatlaht First Nation
· Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation
· Toquaht Nation
· Tseshaht First Nation
· Uchucklesaht Tribe
· Ucluelet First Nation
· Urban areas, especially Port Alberni

X̄enaksialaḱala/X̄a'islaḱala *(Wakashan language family)*

X̄enaksialaḱala/X̄a'islaḱala, also known as Haisla, is spoken in Haisla Nation and means "those who dwell downriver."

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us
1	1	1,871

First Nations operated schools	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs
1	2.5	1	3

# of Language Nests	Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests	Community adult language classes	Number of active language learners
0	—	1	123

FLUENT SPEAKERS 4.8% **SEMI-SPEAKERS** 0%

6.6% ACTIVE LEARNERS

Communities where spoken:
· Haisla Nation (Kitamaat Village)
· Urban areas, especially Kitimat

X̱aad Kil / X̱aaydaa Kil *(X̱aad Kil language family)*

X̱aad Kil / X̱aaydaa Kil also known as Haida, is spoken in Haida Gwaii (formerly known as the Queen Charlotte Islands). It is a special kind of language family, because it is a language family which contains only one language! This is called a language isolate, and it means there is no apparent connection between X̱aad Kil / X̱aaydaa Kil and any other language. Languages with no known relatives are relatively rare among the world's languages, though there are two such families in B.C., Ktunaxa and X̱aad Kil / X̱aaydaa Kil.
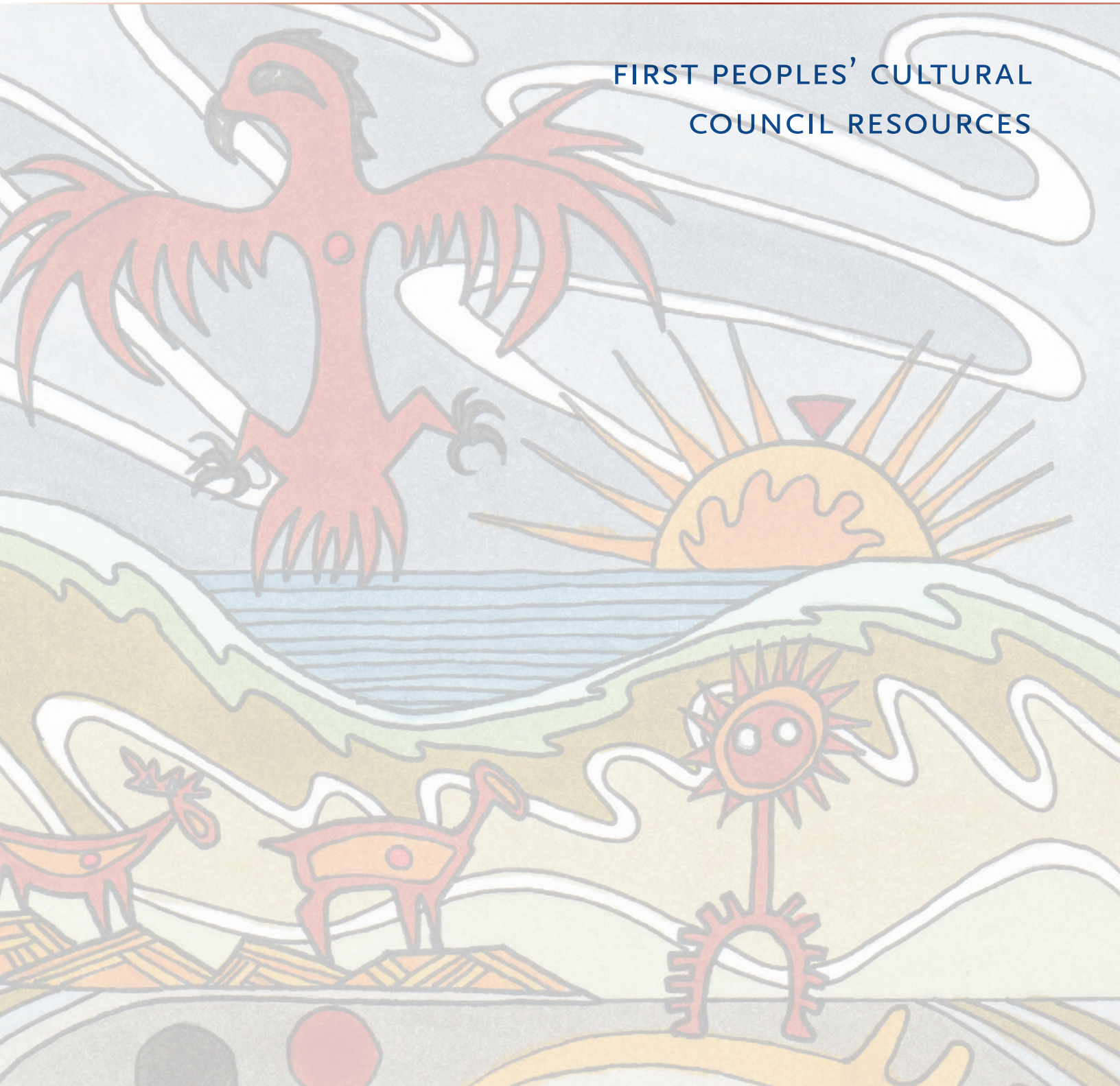
FLUENT SPEAKERS 0.6% **SEMI-SPEAKERS** 0.6%

7.7% ACTIVE LEARNERS
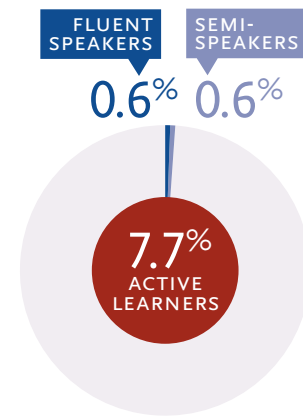
Communities where spoken:
- *Old Massett Village Council*
- *Skidegate Band Council*

Total # of B.C. Communities	# of Communities Reported to us	Population Reported to us	
2	2	3,442	
First Nations operated schools	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in schools**	**Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs**	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in ECE programs**
2	3.5	3	4.25
# of Language Nests	**Ave. hrs/wk spent on language in nests**	**Community adult language classes**	**Number of active language learners**
1	15	1	265

FIRST PEOPLES' CULTURAL
COUNCIL RESOURCES

APPENDIX B:
FIRST PEOPLES' CULTURAL COUNCIL RESOURCES

The First Peoples' Cultural Council Language Program supports B.C. First Nations communities to maintain and restore their languages by providing funding, training, capacity building and advocacy for language immersion, collaboration, planning, and archiving strategies.

The First Peoples' Cultural Council Language Program distributes federal and provincial funding and administrates immersion-focused programs. Additionally, we collaborate with B.C. First Nations language revitalization experts to develop resources and deliver training that meets the needs of communities, and we provide ongoing support to community-based language projects.

Funded Strategies

Find out about our current language programs at *www.fpcc.ca/language*

Strategies include:

⁄⁄ *Language Immersion: Language immersion is the most effective way of building language fluency. FPCC funds and supports a variety of language immersion strategies, including mentor-apprentice and language nest strategies.*

⁄⁄ *Documentation and Archiving: It is essential to continue documenting as much language as possible. FPCC funds and supports a variety of documentation and archiving strategies, including the use of FirstVoices online language archives.*

⁄⁄ *Planning: Strategic language planning is crucial to the long-term success of all language revitalization strategies. FPCC supports communities to collaborate and develop language revitalization plans.*

⁄⁄ *Resource Development: All language programs need new and updated resources to continue to be successful. FPCC supports communities to develop language resources specific to their needs.*

Language Resource Publications

Publications can be downloaded from *www.fpcc.ca/about-us/Publications*

FPCC Language Revitalization Fact Sheet Series (2018)

Language revitalization is a complex task, requiring knowledge in areas as diverse as linguistics, education, community development and even health. This resource addresses common questions about various topics in language revitalization. The one-page fact sheets share information for community language champions as well as others who are interested and include links to additional resources for those who want to learn more.

Language Nest Handbook for B.C. First Nations Communities (2014)

Language nests are language immersion programs for preschool children. This handbook outlines the vision and goals of the language nest model, summarizes research on language acquisition in young children and provides practical solutions to common challenges in running a language nest program.

Report on the Status of B.C. First Nations Languages 2014 (2014)

The second edition of the status report provides updated information on the province's First Nations languages, including the numbers of speakers and resources for each language and examples of language revitalization work being done.

A Guide to Policy and Planning for B.C. First Nations Communities (2013)

This resource is an all-in-one guide to language planning and policy development. It lays the foundation for community-based language revitalization efforts, from surveying speakers to developing a community language plan and implementing language policies and programs. The guide has also been translated into Mandarin by Yedda Palemeq (卑詩省第一民族 社區語言政策 及規劃指南, 2016) and is available at *www.ilrdc.tw/achievement/2016_policy/index.php*

B.C.'s Master Apprentice Language Program Handbook (2012)

This handbook provides ideas and guidance for planning and carrying out the Master-Apprentice method of language learning. FPCC's Mentor-Apprentice program supports a fluent speaker and an adult learner to spend 300 hours together immersed in the First Nations language. The handbook has been translated into Spanish by J. R. Ríos Morales (Manual del Programa de Lenguaje "Mentor-Aprendiz" de Columbia Británica, 2016).

Report on the Status of B.C. First Nations Languages 2010 (2010)

This report provides concrete data from 2010 on the province's First Nations languages, including the numbers of speakers and resources for each language, as well examples of language revitalization work being done.

Culture Camps for Learning: An Immersion Handbook (2010)

This handbook is a practical tool for everyone involved in language and culture camps. It includes key points and details for each step of the entire process of planning and carrying out a language and culture immersion camp.

Language and Culture Immersion Programs Handbook (2009)

This handbook provides tips for language teaching and learning, ideas for language immersion games and activities, as well as suggested language teaching methods and approaches. It is intended to be a practical tool for Elders, community members, teachers and anyone else involved in language revitalization, especially language and culture immersion programs.

Online Resources

Language Toolkit
This is a collection of resources to guide language learners and First Nations communities in the development of language revitalization projects. *www.fpcc.ca/language/toolkit*

Language Nest Online Toolkit

This collection of resources is geared towards administrators and staff of language immersion early childhood programs. It is intended to act as a companion resources to the Language Nest Handbook for B.C. First Nations Communities. *www.fpcc.ca/Language/ Resources/Online_Companion_Toolkit*

Language Map

The map provides an interactive representation of the languages of B.C., including information about each language and the communities in which they are spoken. *www.maps.fphlcc.ca*

FirstVoices

This innovative and dynamic website is a group of web-based tools and services designed to support language archiving, language teaching and culture revitalization. Communities can record, document and archive their languages for current and future generations. Recent FirstVoices innovations include the FirstVoices Chat app, which allows for texting in Indigenous languages; FirstVoices Language Apps, which make language archives accessible on mobile devices; FirstVoices Language Tutor, which allows communities to build intuitive language lessons following the principles of computer assisted language learning, along with the FirstVoices Language Lab, which makes the lessons available on mobile technology; and FirstVoices Kids, which offers a set of interactive online picture dictionaries and language games to pre-readers. *www.FirstVoices.com*

Other Publications

Gessner, S., Florey, M., Slaughter, I., & Hinton, L. (2018). Organizations. In L. Hinton, L. Huss, and G. Roche (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of language revitalization* (pp. 51–60). London: Routledge. Retrieved from *www.routledge.com/The-Routledge-Handbook-of-Language-Revitalization/ Hinton-Huss-Roche/p/book/9781138674493*

Hinton, L., Florey, M., Gessner, S., & Manatowa-Bailey, J. (2018). The Master-apprentice language learning program. In L. Hinton, L. Huss, and G. Roche (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of language revitalization* (pp. 127–136). London: Routledge. Retrieved from *www.routledge.com/The-Routledge-Handbook-of-Language-Revitalization/ Hinton-Huss-Roche/p/book/9781138674493*

Gessner, S., Herbert, T., & Parker, A. (2017). Indigenous languages in Canada. In C. Seals and S. Shah (Eds.), *Heritage language policies around the world* (pp. 30–47). London: Routledge. Retrieved from *www.routledge.com/Heritage-Language-Policies-around-the-World/ Seals-Shah/p/book/9781138193321*

Virtue, H., & Gessner, S. (2015). B.C.'s language authority and language plan development program. In K. A. Michel, P. A. Walton, E. Bourassa, and J. Miller (Eds.), *Living our languages. Papers from the 19th stabilizing Indigenous languages symposium* (pp. 3–16). Ronkonkoma, NY: Linus Learning. Retrieved from *www.linuslearning. com/product/living-our-languages*

FIRST PEOPLES' CULTURAL COUNCIL
LANGUAGE NEEDS ASSESSMENT
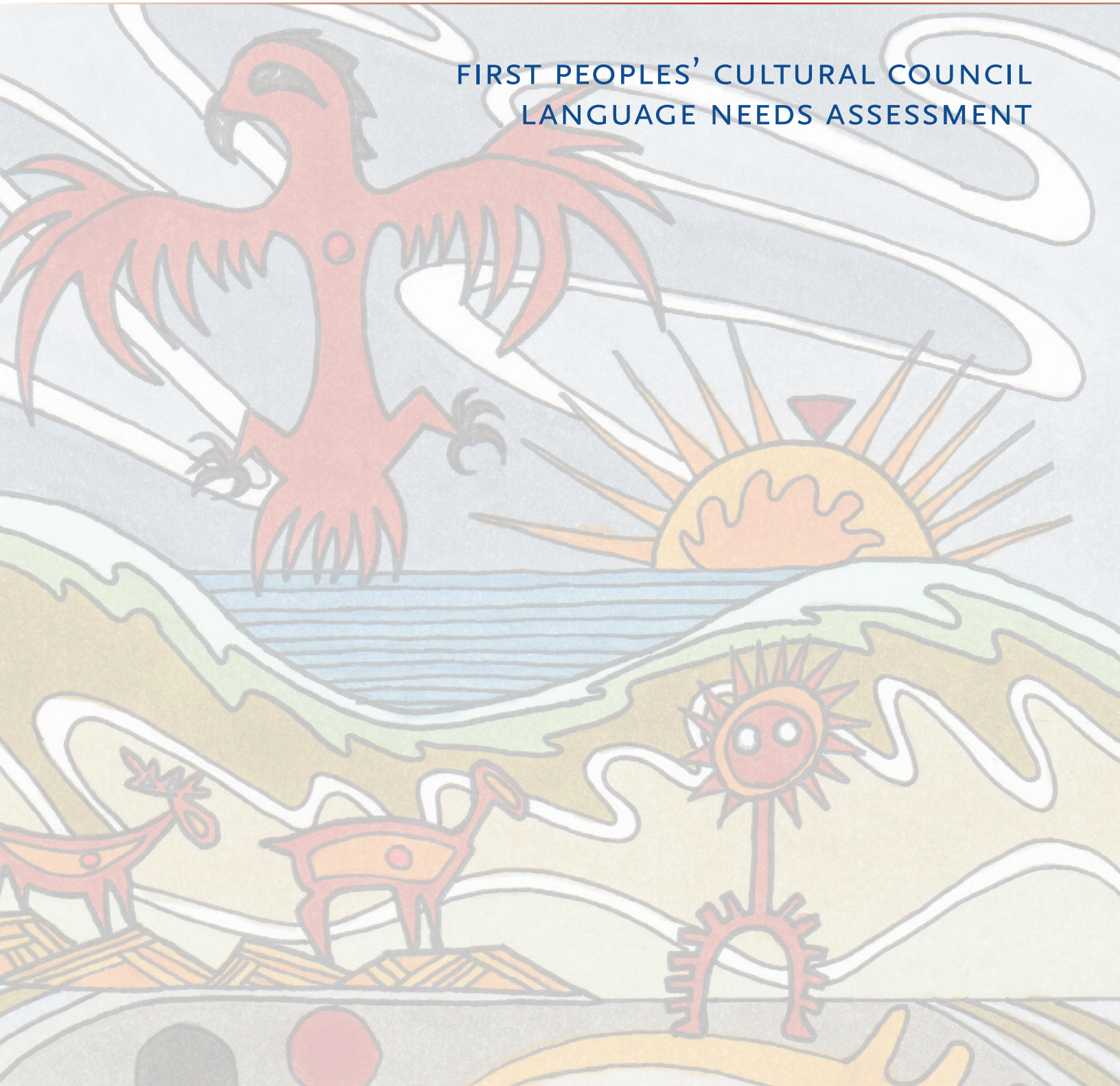
Language Needs Assessment (LNA): Part 1

① LNA Information

Contact person for this LNA	
Job title	
First Nation / Organization / Government	
Phone Number	
Email	
Application Year & Program (if applying for funding)	
Language	
Dialect	
Community	

② Strengths and Challenges

Please describe the strengths that currently support language projects in the community:

Please describe challenges that are preventing language learning, use and implementation in the community:

Community Needs Assessment (CNA): Part 2

❶ General Information

Please provide the following information to the best of your knowledge.

Community Population

On-Reserve Population:	
Off-Reserve Population:	
Population Source:	
Year of Population Source:	

❷ Language Fluency & Learners

Please identify your knowledge of fluent speakers, semi-fluent speakers and language learners in the community. Please fill out section 2a for the on-reserve population and section 2b for the off-reserve population.

On-Reserve

	Fluent Speakers: # that speak and understand fluently	Semi-fluent Speakers: # that understand and/or speak some	Learners: # of people learning the language
AGE 0–4			
AGE 5–14			
AGE 15–19			
AGE 20–24			
AGE 25–44			
AGE 45–54			
AGE 55–64			
AGE 65–74			
AGE 75–84			
AGE 85+			
TOTAL #			

Community Needs Assessment (CNA): Part 2

Off-Reserve

	Fluent Speakers: # that speak and understand fluently	Semi-fluent Speakers: # that understand and/or speak some	Learners: # of people learning the language
AGE 0–4			
AGE 5–14			
AGE 15–19			
AGE 20–24			
AGE 25–44			
AGE 45–54			
AGE 55–64			
AGE 65–74			
AGE 75–84			
AGE 85+			
TOTAL #			

❸ School Language Programs

Do you have a First Nations–operated school? If yes, please fill out the following information for *each* First Nations–operated school in the community.

School Information

School Name	
Number of students in the school	

Community Needs Assessment (CNA): Part 2

❹ Grades, Students & Hours of language Instruction

Please indicate 1) the number of students per grade that are receiving language instruction in the school, and 2) the number of hours per week that each grade receives language instruction.

Grade	# of students	# of hours per week spent on language
GRADE 1		
GRADE 2		
GRADE 3		
GRADE 4		
GRADE 5		
GRADE 6		
GRADE 7		
GRADE 8		
GRADE 9		
GRADE 10		
GRADE 11		
GRADE 12		
TOTAL #		

Community Needs Assessment (CNA): Part 2

⑤ Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs

Head Start Programs

Do you have a *Head Start* program? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please provide the following information for each Head Start program in the community.

HEAD START PROGRAM	
NAME	
LOCATION	
TOTAL # OF PARTICIPANTS	
# OF HOURS PER WEEK SPENT ON LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION	
HOW IS THE PROGRAM CONNECTED TO THE OTHER LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING IN THE COMMUNITY?	

Language Nest Programs

Do you have a *Language Nest Program*? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please provide the following information for *each* language nest in the community.

LANGUAGE NEST PROGRAM	
NAME	
LOCATION	
TOTAL # OF PARTICIPANTS	
# OF HOURS PER WEEK SPENT ON LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION	
HOW IS THE PROGRAM CONNECTED TO THE OTHER LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING IN THE COMMUNITY?	

Other Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs

Do you have a *ECE program*? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please provide the following information for *each* ECE program in the community.

ECE PROGRAM	
NAME	
LOCATION	
TOTAL # OF PARTICIPANTS	
# OF HOURS PER WEEK SPENT ON LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION	
HOW IS THE PROGRAM CONNECTED TO THE OTHER LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING IN THE COMMUNITY?	

Community Needs Assessment (CNA): Part 2

❻ Adult Language Classes

Do you have any formal or informal adult language classes in your community? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please provide the following information for *each* adult language class or program in the community.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADULT LANGUAGE CLASSES	
TOTAL # OF PARTICIPANTS	
# OF HOURS PER WEEK SPENT ON LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION	
HOW IS THE PROGRAM CONNECTED TO THE OTHER LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING IN THE COMMUNITY?	

❼ Resources

Indicate Y/N if your community has the following:

Language recordings/oral history archived (multi-media): ☐ Yes ☐ No
Finalized writing system: ☐ Yes ☐ No
Curriculum Materials developed: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Indicate Y/N if your community has access to the following:

Access to a cultural or language centre: ☐ Yes ☐ No
Access to the Internet: ☐ Yes ☐ No
Access to *FirstVoices* Archive: ☐ Yes ☐ No

First Peoples' Language Map
of British Columbia

The province now known as British Columbia is home to many unique Indigenous languages connected to this land. There are currently 203 First Nations communities and 34 Indigenous languages in B.C., representing approximately 60% of the First Nations languages of Canada.

This map provides an evolving depiction of the Indigenous languages in B.C. from a First Nations perspective. The language boundaries shown on the map are not an authoritative representation of First Nations territories. Language areas overlap in many places, showing that there are no strict boundaries between adjacent languages, which may be closely connected through marriage ties, shared stories, beliefs, customs and traditions. Provincial and national borders were imposed by colonial governments and divide many First Nations territories; several neighbouring languages with traditional territories extending into B.C. are included for context. Linguistically related languages are represented with corresponding shades of the same colour.
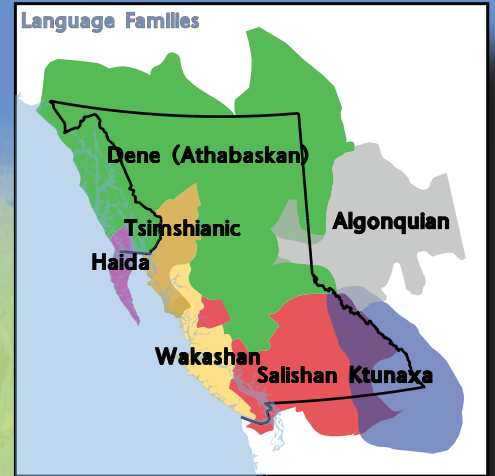
The language names listed on the map use each language's unique spelling system and were gathered in partnership with B.C. First Nations, the First Peoples' Cultural Council and from the FirstVoices online language archive.

This project was initiated by the First Peoples' Cultural Council in 2005 with funding from the B.C. Ministry of Education. Multiple updates have been made with the best available knowledge from First Nations experts actively involved in language revitalization in their territories.

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

Language Families

Dene (Athabaskan)

Algonquian

Tsimshianic

Haida

Wakashan

Salishan Ktunaxa

Tutchone

Den k'e

Łingít

Danezāgé'

Dene K'e (ᑌ ᒫ ᒡ)

Fort Nelson

Anishnaubemowin

Tāłtān

Lingít

Dane-Zaa (ᒐ ᑊ)

Tse'khene

Nisg̲a'a

Fort St John

ᓀᐦᐃᔭᐍᐏᐣ (Nēhiyawēwin)

Wetalh

Gitsenimx̱

Smithers

Nedut'en / Witsuwit'en

Prince Rupert

Prince George

Smalgyax

Dakelh (ᑕᑍᑋ)

X̲aad Kil / X̲aaydaa Kil

X̲a'islak̲ala / X̲enaksialak̲ala

Quesnel

Sgüüx̱s

Nuxalk

Háiłzaqvla

Bella Coola

Williams Lake

Tsilhqot'in

Secwepemctsín

Golden

Oowekyala / 'Uik̓ala

Kwak̓wala

Kamloops

Nsyilxcən

Port Hardy

Stát̓imcets

Merritt

Ktunaxa

Éy7á7juuthem

Nłe7kepmxcin

Kelowna

Nelson

Cranbrook

She shashishalhem

Nicola

Nuučaańuł

Pəntl'áč

Vancouver

Osoyoos

S̱k̲wx̱wú7mesh sníchim

Lhéchelesem

diitiid?aatx̱

Victoria

Huľ'q'umi'num' / Halq'eméylem / hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓

Nqlispélišcn

SENĆOŦEN / Malchosen / Lkwungen / Semiahmoo / T'Sou-ke

Nəx̌ʷsx̌ayəmúcən

Languages

➤ **Languages** *(only spoken in communities indicated)*

Neighbouring languages

Sleeping Languages *(No fluent speakers left)*

🟡 **Reserves** *(boundaries have been enlarged to offer visibility)*

Cities & Towns

For more information on B.C. First Nations languages, please see the First Peoples' Cultural Council website at www.fpcc.ca, or visit www.firstvoices.com for games and learning materials.

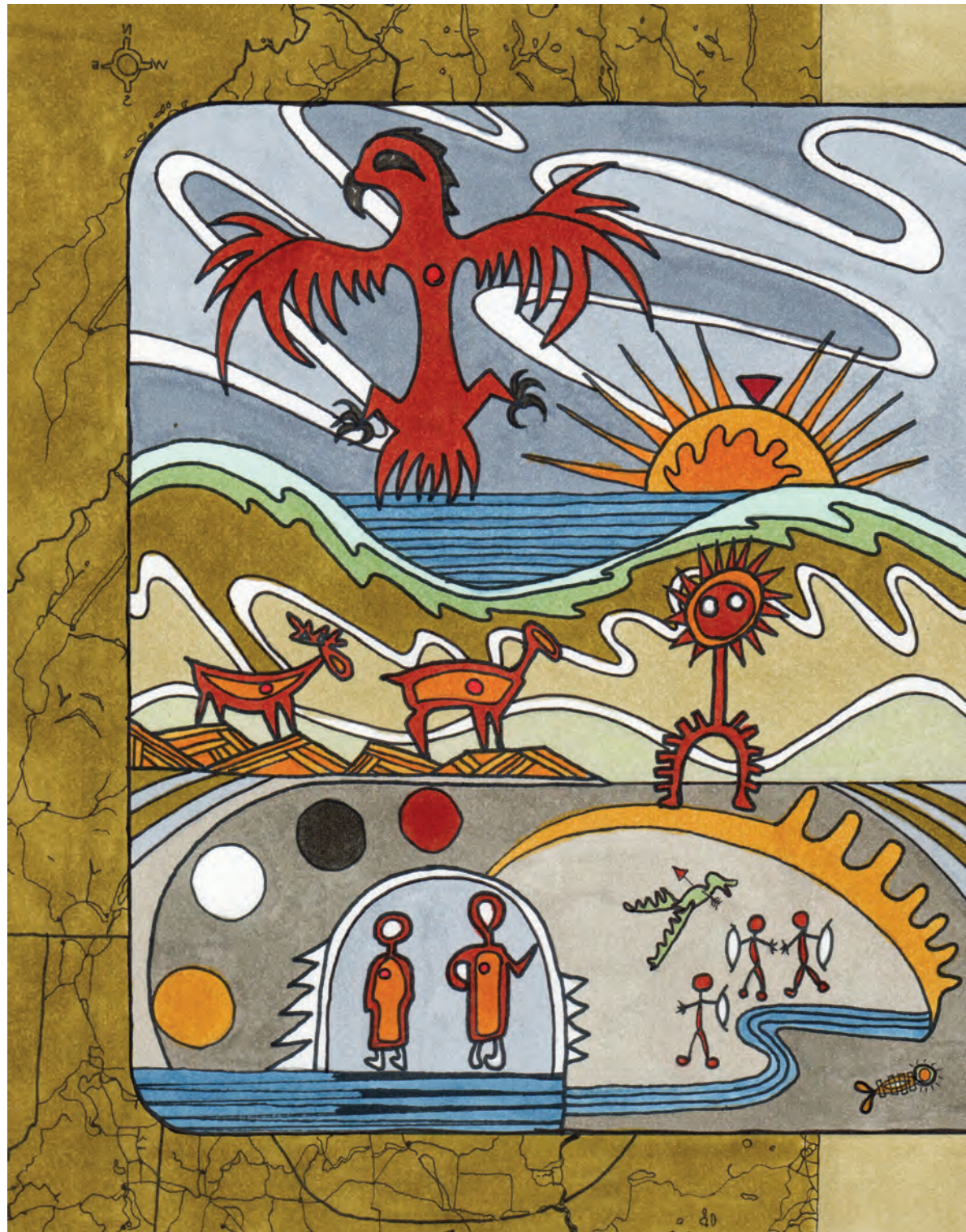View the interactive online version of this map at

maps.fpcc.ca

FIRST PEOPLES' CULTURAL COUNCIL

"Okanagan Summer Bounty" by Janine Lott

A celebration of our history, traditions, lands, lake, mountains, sunny skies and all life forms sustained within.
Pictographic designs are nestled over a map of our traditional territory.

FIRST PEOPLES'
CULTURAL COUNCIL