



TOWARDS INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION:
An Informative Resource



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■ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with much gratitude to the Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers who continue to inspire and guide the language revitalization efforts of Indigenous Peoples across Canada. This curated informational resource is an extension of and amplifies these efforts. This resource would not be possible without their continued encouragement and teachings to sustain Indigenous languages and increase the number of speakers.

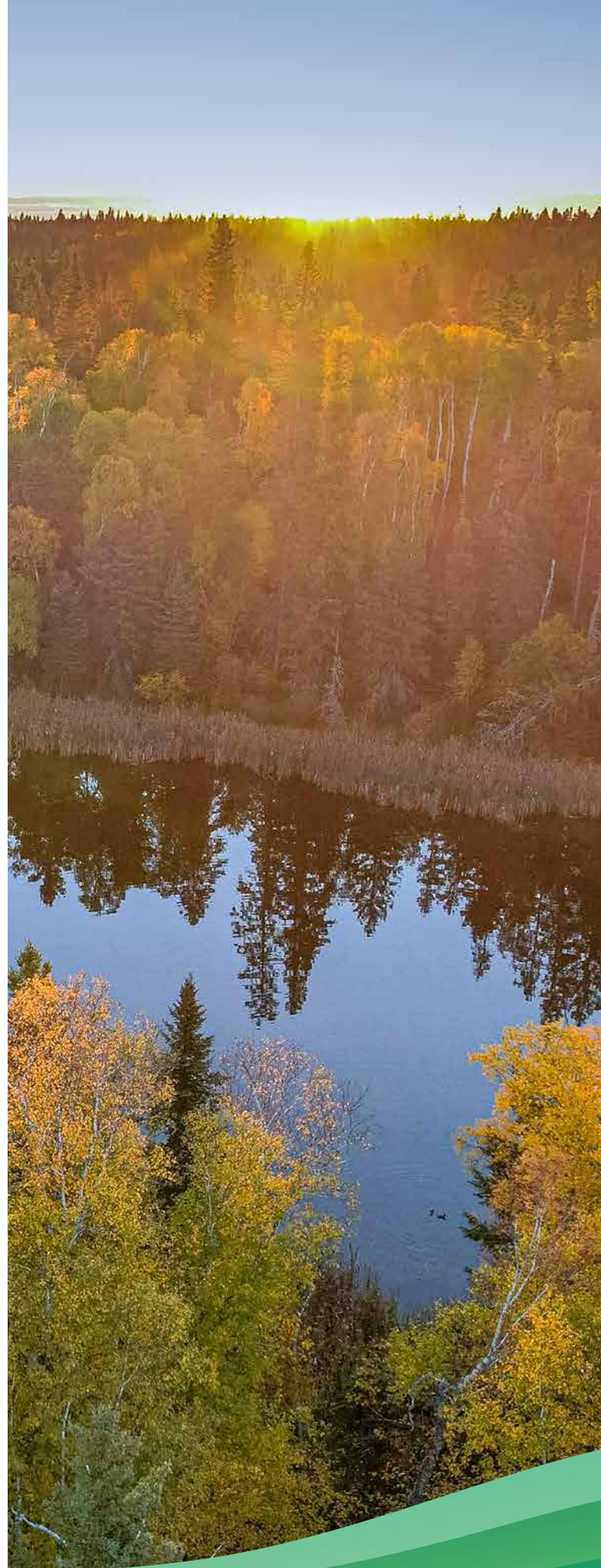
Inherently, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis are stewards of their languages. We are also incredibly grateful to the individuals, groups, families, communities, and allies who are invested in the work to achieve language revitalization. Through the collective perseverance towards language revitalization, the joy of hearing and speaking the language is experienced.

The Supporting Indigenous Languages Revitalization (SILR) initiative began in September 2020 via a five-year partnership with support from the BHP Foundation. Grounded on the advice of Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, SILR's work is governed and administered by the Office of the Vice-Provost (Indigenous Programming and Research Office) at the University of Alberta.

SILR envisions a future where Indigenous languages are healthy and vibrant and spoken in homes, schools, workplaces, and on the land. SILR also works to improve access to Indigenous language programming and develop Indigenous language resources for current and future generations. To amplify Indigenous languages, SILR strives to raise awareness, increase support, and foster collaboration in language revitalization and the connection to cultural well-being.

SILR supports the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and acknowledge that post-secondary institutions have an important role to play in Indigenous language revitalization.

We honour the land on which we stand as the traditional territory of Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, and Ojibway/Saulteaux/Anishinaabe nations; lands that are now known as part of Treaties 6, 7, and 8 and homeland of the Métis. We recognize and acknowledge Indigenous values, traditional teachings, ways of being, contributions and historical inequalities and respect sovereignty, lands, histories, languages, knowledge systems, and cultures of First Nations, Métis and Inuit nations.





OVERVIEW

The *Towards Indigenous Language Revitalization: An Informative Resource* recognizes and is intended to complement the many reclamation and revitalization actions across Canada. As a tool, the curated resource and information are for Indigenous Peoples and organizations, including communities, language teachers, and education systems engaged in efforts to preserve, protect, revitalize, and sustain Indigenous languages.

Indigenous language speakers continue to pass down and share knowledge, culture, and traditions deeply ingrained in the language with younger generations. Upholding this responsibility rests with the language learners. Consequently, acquiring and sustaining the language demands time, assistance, and perseverance.

Language acquisition is a dynamic endeavour that occurs in various environments, including the workplace, educational settings, and communities. Reinvigorating intergenerational language transmission in the home is an important step toward strengthening identity, culture, and well-being.

Maintaining and revitalizing Indigenous languages is a collective responsibility and life-long commitment. It begins by taking action to engage in and support language learning as well as sustained efforts to preserve and promote Indigenous languages. It includes actively involving Indigenous language advocates, making the most of community resources, forming collaborative partnerships, securing financial support, advocating for the preservation of languages, and working together toward shared objectives. This resource also encourages the creation of essential resources, educational initiatives, and policies to support revitalizing and nurturing Indigenous languages. This informative resource is valuable for those passionate about language revitalization who want to take meaningful steps toward language learning.



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■ INTRODUCTION

Amplifying Indigenous Languages Revitalization

In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, SILR aims to support Indigenous language sovereignty through community-led initiatives that protect, preserve, promote, revitalize, transfer, strengthen, and sustain languages. SILR also acknowledges the United Nations General Assembly's proclamation that the years 2022 to 2032 mark the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, which aims to draw global attention to the critical status of Indigenous languages around the world. Further, SILR recognizes Indigenous language rights as inherent in Section 35 of *The Constitution Act 1982* and the *Indigenous Languages Act (2019)*, respecting Indigenous languages and international human rights, as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Purpose of the Language Revitalization Resource

Indigenous sovereignty is furthered through individual and community-led initiatives for revitalizing Indigenous language, and SILR recognizes the importance of this process. This resource is a valuable tool to inform and inspire the language learning journey and revitalization of Indigenous languages. SILR firmly believes that Indigenous knowledge is held in language, which reflects the land and serves as a vital connection to culture, history, customary laws, spirituality, traditions, and worldviews. These aspects are profoundly interconnected and contribute to the richness of Indigenous languages.

The purpose of this resource is to highlight the significance of Indigenous language learning and provide information and resources to support language advocates, educators, speakers, aspiring learners, and leaders in their revitalization efforts. This resource acknowledges that pathways to language learning require more than resources and materials. Connection and conversation are essential in fostering healthy relationships and reinforcing a more profound sense of community and identity associated with wellness. Engaging in language learning builds meaningful relationships with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, language speakers, and fellow learners. These connections and conversations provide a deeper understanding of the cultural significance of the language and its role in the community and a greater appreciation for the spirit and traditions embedded within.

Activating This Resource

This resource recognizes the rich and distinct Indigenous linguistic diversity and varying dialect differences across Canada. Therefore, the information provided is intended to be adapted to meet the diverse needs of Indigenous Peoples engaged in language revitalization efforts. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to language learning. Pursuing language learning is an individual and collective endeavour requiring patience, time, and support. In efforts to activate this information, readers are encouraged to review the curated content to inspire and inform language learning pathways and consider their role in revitalizing Indigenous languages.

In light of this, individuals, youth, parents, and guardians can be inspired, take action and gain awareness of and identify various informal and formal language learning approaches, set goals, plan their learning journey, and gather resources to strengthen personal and family language learning endeavours.

If you are a language educator or instructor, we invite you to review the content in the resource to evaluate, modify or strengthen educational programs. This process ensures that programming is optimized and enables the growth of language acquisition from guidance to independence. This resource can also inform resource needs and the integration of technology to enhance learning and provide information on pathways to advance language revitalization.

If you are a post-secondary institution, analyst, or policy developer, this resource can be utilized to gain insights and consider Indigenous language ecosystems. This will aid in identifying practical approaches that can inform, strengthen and empower revitalization efforts through amplification and collaboration.

If you are a leader or organization, you can use this resource to review your policies and programs to redefine, develop, endorse, actualize and sustain Indigenous language revitalization efforts. This resource also provides information about the educational and training pathways that can be considered to enhance language acquisition and innovative ways to engage in language preservation and promotion.

■ INSPIRING THE LANGUAGE JOURNEY

Background

The Indigenous language revitalization ecosystem in Canada is complex. Targeting the preservation and rejuvenation of Indigenous languages requires commitment from individual dedication to government support, where all are working together to preserve and revive Indigenous languages. This ecosystem underscores the significance of language as a vital component of culture and identity and recognizes the urgency of its preservation.

At the individual level, language revitalization begins with a personal commitment to learning and speaking Indigenous languages. This commitment involves not only acquiring language skills but also embracing cultural values and traditions deeply connected with the language. Individuals play an essential role in the transmission of language across generations, and their dedication is necessary for the success of revitalization efforts.

Within families and communities, language revitalization efforts gain momentum through intergenerational transmission. Elders are often the most fluent language speakers and play a critical role in passing down and sharing linguistic and cultural knowledge to younger generations. Families become nests for language learning and use, creating a sense of identity and belonging.

Locally based initiatives form another layer of the language ecosystem. Local efforts often involve language immersion programs, cultural activities, and the creation of safe spaces for language speakers at all levels to be exposed to language, gain confidence and demonstrate proficiency. These programs provide positive environments for revitalization, fostering a sense of unity and cultural pride.

Non-governmental organizations and Indigenous language advocacy groups can contribute significantly to the language revitalization ecosystem. By providing resources, expertise, and support to communities and individuals striving to revitalize languages, these organizations facilitate collaboration and knowledge-sharing, enabling communities to learn from each other's experiences.

At the provincial and territorial levels, governments can take steps to support language revitalization. This can involve funding programs, creating educational materials, and collaborating with Indigenous communities to develop language preservation strategies. Provincial and territorial governments can play a vital role in creating a supportive environment for language revitalization initiatives to thrive. Finally, the federal government of Canada also has a role to play in the language revitalization ecosystem. The federal government can provide critical support to Indigenous languages through policies, legislation, and funding. The Indigenous Languages Act passed in 2019, was a significant milestone, acknowledging the importance of Indigenous languages and committing to their revitalization.

The language revitalization ecosystem in Canada is a complex and interconnected network of commitments that span from the individual level to government institutions. It recognizes that preserving Indigenous languages requires a holistic approach involving personal dedication, community engagement, and government support. The complexity of this ecosystem underscores the deep cultural significance of Indigenous languages and the collective effort needed to ensure their survival and revitalization for future generations.

Indigenous Languages

Indigenous languages in Canada encompass a diverse range and level of language mastery and disruption, reflecting the linguistic diversity among Indigenous communities. These languages are not rigid; rather, they exist in varying states of vitality and usage. Some languages are healthy, with a considerable number of fluent speakers, while others are critically endangered. The state of an Indigenous language is impacted by factors such as intergenerational transmission, community efforts, and external support for revitalization. Understanding the broad spectrum of language status is necessary for developing effective strategies for their revival.

While there are limitations with language assessment in general, the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) is an example of a tool which serves as a compass for assessing the vitality and health of Indigenous languages in Canada. It offers a concise yet comprehensive framework for categorizing languages based on their current status and the generational distribution of speakers. This scale ranges from internationally spoken and thriving languages to those that have become dormant or extinct within communities. By incorporating EGIDS, for example, linguists, communities, and policymakers get a quick yet comprehensive overview of the state of Indigenous languages, enabling targeted efforts for reclamation, revitalization, and preservation where they are most urgently needed.

Stages of Proficiency

To determine language status, establishing language proficiency levels provides a structured framework for assessing individuals' linguistic abilities and contributions to the broader revitalization efforts within the community. Language proficiency can be assessed along a spectrum with five stages representing varying degrees of competence.

These five distinct stages offer a structured framework to determine and understand an individual's language proficiency. The information garnered can be applied to tools to assess and determine the status and categorization of the language as well as determine appropriate language programming, support, and learning pathways.

In the intricate braid of Canada's language revitalization ecosystem, every strand, from individual dedication to government initiatives, is woven together to preserve and revitalize Indigenous languages. At its foundation, language revitalization recognizes language not just as a means of communication but as the lifeblood of culture and identity. It is a pressing challenge where every layer of commitment contributes to the strength of preservation. Families and communities nurture the foundation of language, with Elders serving as invaluable guides who demonstrate a deeper understanding of the spirit behind the language and its meaning. Community-based initiatives and support from non-governmental organizations amplify the call for revitalization, fostering unity and language resurgence. Provinces, territories, and the federal government stand as pillars alongside Indigenous governance to provide resources and recognition to ensure the language's survival. Together, this holistic ecosystem is an essential commitment required to safeguard and revitalize Indigenous languages.

Stages of Proficiency



Strategies in Language Revitalization

It's important to involve the community in language programming strategies by conducting a survey to gauge interest and identify fluent speakers and Elders. A language committee can also be formed to guide and support the implementation of these programs. Local governance and partnerships with Indigenous organizations, educational institutions, and First Nation Colleges and Universities can provide valuable support for language revitalization efforts. Ongoing learning and training opportunities are crucial for the success of Indigenous language programs, and certified training programs support individuals to become instructors, educational assistants, interpreters, translators, researchers, and curriculum developers.

Certificated Language Teachers

Teacher certification involves various pathways tailored to individual goals and timeframes. Typical routes include completing a 2-year undergraduate degree followed by a 2-year After-Degree in Education, a 4-year Bachelor of Education Degree, or a concurrent 5-year program combining, for example, Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Native Studies Degrees.

Field training is essential to the Bachelor of Education Degree, which varies across Canadian post-secondary institutions and provinces. During this phase, pre-service teachers engage in school community-based activities, starting from orientation and observation, leading to progressively responsible teaching roles. This hands-on experience allows them to apply classroom learning and understand the multifaceted responsibilities of a teacher. They work alongside a mentor teacher and are supervised by a field service instructor, who evaluates their readiness for graduation.

Upon graduation, candidates must apply for an Interim Professional Certificate, allowing temporary teaching authority. For Permanent Professional Certification, teachers must fulfil specific qualifications determined by the education authority of the province or territory where they work. This certification is vital for their long-term teaching career in educational settings.

Indigenous Language Instructors

Indigenous-focused educational learning opportunities for language instructors in Early Childhood Education, Kindergarten to Grade 12, and Adult education vary. These learning pathways in rural and urban communities are created based on resources and the interests and needs of the participants. For example, several programs are designed to bridge learning from a certificate to a Bachelor of Education Degree. Fluent language speakers are in demand as teachers and instructors, resulting in many learning pathways that can accommodate individual goals and timelines.

Educational Assistants

Educational assistant training equips learners with the necessary skills to support students in educational settings. Working alongside teachers, these assistants help students with diverse learning needs, providing instructional and non-instructional support. This includes aiding students with exceptionalities in language learning and reinforcing language skills in individual or small group settings. The duration and nature of training programs vary across post-secondary institutions and First Nation Colleges or Universities. These programs typically incorporate practicum experiences for practical skill development in inclusive educational environments. Some offer training for speech-language pathologist assistants, focusing on aiding students with communication challenges.

Many First Nation Colleges and Universities in Canada partner with other post-secondary institutions. These collaborations offer flexible learning options, allowing individuals to pursue education while staying in their communities. Such programs often enable credit transfers that can bridge to higher education. For instance, educational assistants can complete a certification program and then progress to a Bachelor of Education Degree, to further professional development and career opportunities in education.

Post-Secondary Initiatives

Across Canada, post-secondary institutions are responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Call to Action, number 16, by creating new and innovative Indigenous language learning pathways for students in urban and rural communities. These specialized pathways and programs vary and include courses, certificates, diplomas, degree programs, and graduate and post-graduate programs.

Furthermore, several post-secondary institutions in Canada also offer affiliated programs and partnerships with rural communities and First Nations Colleges and Universities. These programs enable students to take courses in their home community and transfer to a public post-secondary institution to continue their learning. These partnerships also provide program expansion, training, resource preservation and promotion opportunities.

Canadian post-secondaries are creating long-term strategic and community engagement plans and working on Indigenization efforts across the campus. They are also actively creating pathways and resources to enhance the experiences of Indigenous students through, for example, language and cultural programs, activities, and Elders-in-residence support.

Further, demonstrating the importance of language learning and revitalization, some public post-secondary institutions in Canada have established a community of practice for language instructors and students. This networking provides opportunities to share information about the status of Indigenous languages and revitalization initiatives locally, nationally, and globally.

Early Learning Programs

Creating an engaging, culturally relevant, and flourishing language learning environment for preschool children includes inquiry-based, purposeful play and hands-on learning experiences. This approach nurtures learning, encourages natural curiosity and fosters resilient speakers. In this environment, children can learn, practice, and retain new information that is reinforced in the home or community. This includes exposure to Indigenous language through, for example, stories, songs, games, dance, cultural activities, land-based experiences, traditional teachings, and prayer.

Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education

Kindergarten to grade 12 education offers a unique opportunity to integrate Indigenous languages, ranging from immersion and bilingual to subject-specific programs. Key players in this initiative include language teachers, educational staff, and Elders, who impart language and cultural richness to students, fostering a supportive learning environment within schools.

Effective language education involves tailoring staffing, programming, curriculum, resources, and assessments to each educational level. This requires teachers to have linguistic expertise, training, and access to resources and assessments that cater to varied learner needs. A community of practice for teachers can facilitate knowledge sharing, resource development, and mentorship opportunities to enhance teaching and learning experiences. To increase language skills, teachers can participate in language courses and mentor-apprentice programs.

Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education *(continued)*

School authorities oversee language education, including staff recruitment and retention. Collaborations with post-secondary institutions and Indigenous colleges can provide field experience for student teachers and aid in succession planning. These partnerships can also create bridging programs for language speakers to pursue higher education, such as a Bachelor of Education, and support grants, bursaries, and scholarships for language educators.

Involving Elders and Knowledge Keepers enriches the learning environment while engaging with parents and guardians extends language learning into homes. An operational plan is essential for the success of these language programs. It should include targeted support for program planning and implementation, professional development opportunities for staff, and strategies to celebrate Indigenous languages across schools. This comprehensive approach ensures the education system's effective acquisition and revitalization of Indigenous languages.

Curriculum

Curriculum is a framework that outlines what learners are expected to know, understand, and demonstrate across the grades. A curriculum also includes learning outcomes that assess a learner's understanding and knowledge of the specific learning outcomes identified in each subject and grade from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Creating a relevant and age-appropriate curriculum provides students with opportunities to demonstrate a steady progression of learning throughout their educational journey.

The unique position of federally funded school authorities enables control of education and the development of a curriculum based on local values, goals, and objectives (standards). Provincial and territorial governments have standardized curricula that identify the set of objectives, outcomes, instructional methods and assessment tools that school authorities must implement. Additionally, provincial and territorial governments may specify resources to meet the required curricula.

Indigenous Language Curriculum

Creating and implementing a Kindergarten to Grade 12 Indigenous language curriculum provides teachers, learners, parents, and guardians with a road map to language learning from foundational to fluency, establishes a framework for revitalization and fosters new and future language speakers.

Developing an effective Indigenous language curriculum consists of establishing a curriculum team that includes, for example, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, language teachers, instructors, stakeholders, and partners. The team collaborates on the design, values, goals, objectives, concepts, learning outcomes, and assessments. This work includes the validation, field testing and implementation processes, as well as ongoing monitoring and evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum. This process may involve developing lesson plans and resources to support implementation. Identifying support and professional development opportunities for staff who are implementing or assisting in the delivery of language learning may also be the work of the curriculum team.

As a stand-alone curriculum, language learning in an immersion and bilingual program or subject-specific course builds language skills through listening, reading, writing and conversation that guide learners' progress from beginners to semi-speakers to intermediate, advanced and ultimately, fluent language speakers.

The development of language skills transitions learners to becoming independent and confident speakers. As a language and culture curriculum, the pathway to language learning is through traditional teachings and cultural experiences, including land-based learning and immersion camps.

Language Classes

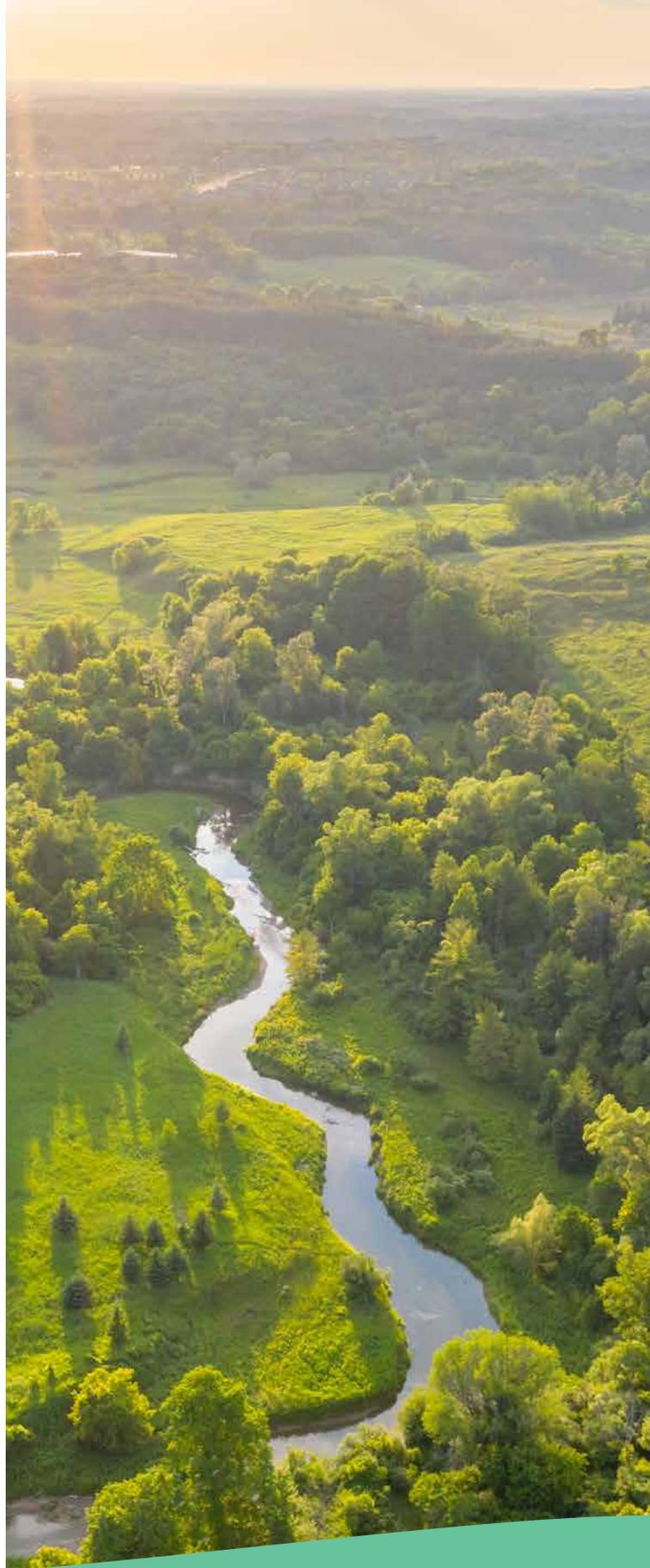
Selecting an inclusive and accessible format for language classes is key to fostering a supportive learning environment. When in-person teaching is not available, web-based tools offer an alternative for interactive, multimedia language lessons.

Developing a comprehensive plan for the delivery of language classes requires stakeholder collaboration. This plan should outline clear goals, objectives, resources, budget, and a communications strategy. It also involves selecting language instructors, determining class frequency and locations, and identifying teaching tools, evaluation methods, learning materials, cost, and participant recognition strategies. Promoting language use in diverse environments like homes, workplaces, schools, and the broader community is essential.

Assessing participants' language skills is fundamental to tailoring learning pathways that cater to varying proficiency levels, from beginners to advanced learners. This assessment aids in designing courses that enhance reading, writing, and conversational skills. Promoting these language classes through social media, local radio, and advertisements in strategic locations like educational settings and social events ensures broader outreach and participant engagement. This holistic approach ensures that language programs effectively align with community needs and goals, enhancing learning outcomes.

Resource Development

One of the most essential aspects of language revitalization is the availability of high-quality teaching and learning resources, which is often a challenge for many communities. These resources help to bring a curriculum to life and reinforce all aspects of language learning, including engagement, planning, implementation, assessment, and reporting. They also help to strengthen language acquisition through the use of learning materials, technology, and communication tools. It is essential that language learning resources are relevant, interactive, and age-appropriate and that they are accessible to learners of all ages, abilities, and linguistic skill levels. In addition, maintaining an inventory of physical resources and experienced individuals is important to learning, promoting and preserving Indigenous languages. Experiential learning opportunities such as Elder recordings, language and culture resources, and teachings made available through a language-lending library or cultural museum emphasize the importance of language revitalization. Communication tools are also important resources for informing and promoting language learning. These include posters, newsletters, infographics, reports, podcasts, video and audio, radio and television.



Integrating Technology

Strategies to revitalize Indigenous languages include leveraging technology. This approach creates equity of access and opportunities for language learning regardless of location. At the community level, assessing infrastructure and strengthening technology skills is crucial to Indigenous language revitalization efforts. Technology enhances language learning with the emergence of new software and audio and visual technology, including devices like headsets and microphones that optimize language acquisition for learners of all ages and abilities. Technology enables collaboration, creation and sharing of resources and learning tools. Online Indigenous dictionaries, language apps, keyboards, maps, atlases, and interactive websites, including videos and games, strengthen language learning. Additional language learning opportunities can also be accessed through social media and online communication platforms.

Technology also enables networking and the opportunity to create and share resources and learning tools. Many computer programs are open-sourced, user-friendly, and customizable. The digital preservation of images and audio recordings enables ease of access and aids in language learning and teaching. Technology can be used as a tool to create language-learning ecosystems that personalize the learning process. This includes using social media, websites, blogs, ebooks, videos, podcasts, and digital resources. Tools are available to organize, create, store, analyze, manage, edit, record, and share information, such as language keyboards, maps, apps, and dictionaries, that can be valuable repositories for Indigenous languages.

Research and Evaluation

An essential process in the revitalization of Indigenous languages is to conduct research and evaluations. Indigenous-led research is vital to data sovereignty, self-determination, and the protection and preservation of Indigenous languages. (see Appendix B). Evaluating and conducting research can assist in the understanding and status of Indigenous languages and the identification of promising practices and revitalization strategies. This understanding can be used to develop programs, curricula, and teaching materials that effectively revitalize language. It can further expand knowledge to inform policies and partnerships.

Research contributes to the revitalization of Indigenous languages and plays a critical role in engaging communities in the process. Researchers can work with Elders, language speakers, and other community members to develop research projects that are relevant and meaningful to the community. This can build trust between researchers and community members to ensure that the research is conducted in a culturally appropriate way. In addition, research can assist in documenting and preserving Indigenous languages, which is particularly important to endangered or at-risk languages. Documenting language ensures that language is preserved and that future generations can learn and speak it.

Political Advocacy

Advocacy efforts raise awareness of the importance of Indigenous languages and their role in sustaining Indigenous cultures, knowledge systems, and community well-being. Advocacy can also build support for implementing initiatives that improve, protect, and revitalize languages. Political advocacy is one form of advocacy that can be used to effect change. It involves negotiating and influencing decision-makers at all levels to take action to support or develop policies, acts, or legislation aimed at sustaining Indigenous languages. Additional forms of political advocacy include letter writing, strategic use of media and the Internet, peaceful protests, lobbying, and legal action. Collaborating with local, provincial, and federal entities and creating meaningful partnerships, networks, and allies are necessary steps to protect and enable actions that ensure the intergenerational transfer of language. These partnerships can build support for language revitalization efforts and initiatives that are integrated into broader policies and programs.

Policy Development

Indigenous language policies are vital for safeguarding and reviving at-risk languages. They encompass laws, regulations, principles, and guidelines influencing language practices. These policies are integral to ensuring the survival and use of Indigenous languages in education, media, and government services, particularly for languages facing extinction.

Indigenous language policies may involve decisions regarding intellectual property, copyright, trademarks, and cultural appropriation, which are critical for the protection of Indigenous knowledge and culture. (see Appendix A). Policies may address issues related to the use of Indigenous languages in commercial products, the protection of traditional knowledge, and the prevention of cultural misappropriation. Indigenous-led language policies empower communities to take an active role in revitalizing and protecting languages. This approach fosters community stewardship and active engagement in preserving language and culture.

Documentation and Preservation

As Indigenous languages inherently carry the wisdom of generations, the commitment to safeguard cultural identities and ancestral insights becomes increasingly important. Indigenous-led initiatives to document and preserve Indigenous languages are on the rise as many are at risk and either vulnerable, definitely endangered, severely endangered, or critically endangered. Language, shared in written, oral, audio, or video forms and efforts to document and preserve them also protect Indigenous Peoples' distinct cultural identity, history and sovereignty.

The methods, practices, and tools used to document and preserve Indigenous languages vary. Technology can play a crucial role in these efforts as a central repository to store, access, organize, plan, collaborate and share information and resources. Accessing and using language labs, digital archives, and digital tools supports the creation of digitization projects such as dictionary production, orthography development, literacy, translation, and language documentation. In addition, there are digital tools to create, analyze, manage, edit, and record information. Training and workshops to integrate digital tools, create digital archives, and document and preserve languages are on the rise.

Collaboration amongst Indigenous language experts, teachers, instructors, translators, linguists, and technicians to document and preserve Indigenous languages ensures the resources are available for generations. This process not only protects Indigenous languages but is critical in identifying documentation and preservation methods as well as the access and utilization of resources.

Taking Action

Pathways

As individuals and communities strive to revitalize Indigenous languages, there are many diverse learning pathways to consider. When exploring and participating in a pathway, it's important to choose one that aligns with personal goals and is meaningful and accessible. Finding the right path for continued learning may require flexibility, depending on the availability of online, local, regional, or national programs.

On the other hand, the process of creating, enhancing, facilitating, volunteering, and extending language learning opportunities is a shared responsibility that requires careful planning, time, support, resources, and commitment. To optimize the effectiveness of the learning pathways, the active involvement of language stewards, Elders, fluent speakers, and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers is crucial for enriching program development and advancing learners' language skills.

In creating successful learning pathways, it's important to take action and consider several factors such as strengths, interests, areas of need, and available resources. By identifying and leveraging these factors, Indigenous language learners can experience a more meaningful and effective language-learning journey. This involves engaging with Indigenous language leaders, leveraging local assets, fostering partnerships, identifying funding sources, championing languages, and collaborating on common goals, including developing resources, educational programs, and policies. These actions nurture and reinvigorate Indigenous languages. Ultimately, creating a successful learning pathway requires a collective effort from all stakeholders involved in Indigenous language revitalization.

Early Childhood Education

Early exposure to language strengthens a sense of belonging and identity and is integral to development. Daycares, Head Start, and preschool early learning programs are an opportunity to create a new generation of language learners and fluent speakers. Children thrive in a learning environment that includes land-based learning experiences and cultural and play-based programs that optimize and reinforce Indigenous language. Reinforced by language used in the home, budding language learners will be prepared for further learning in the school environment or community.

Language Nests

As an immersion program, Indigenous language nests are considered one of the most successful approaches to intergenerational language transfer. In this program, early learners and fluent speakers interact in a fully immersed language-learning environment. The program is offered part-time and encourages the active participation of parents, guardians, and Elders. This significant pathway enhances early learners' language learning skills, which can be expanded throughout their learning journey.

Language nests provide children and families with meaningful engagement and exposure to Indigenous languages. To strengthen language learning, parents and caregivers are encouraged to engage their children in language learning activities at home and in the community. Participating in a language nest reclaims language and culture and strengthens identity and well-being.

Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education

The learning journey for students varies depending on the language and cultural programming available within these grades. Given this, schools determine programming based on resources, staffing, time, space, and interest, often resulting in bilingual, immersion, or subject-specific language learning opportunities. Programs also consider pathways for learners to build language skills, confidence and proficiency.

In the earlier grades, language programs focus on fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and word recognition. As students advance to higher grades, the focus transitions to developing writing, reading, and conversational language skills in various prompted and unrehearsed situations. The frequency of these classes varies based on the school community, with some schools offering classes daily while others are scheduled multiple times a week.

Immersion Programs

There are several types of immersion practices, such as cross-generational and community-based, early childhood nesting programs, kindergarten to grade 12 immersion schools, and adult-focused immersion programs. A benefit to participating in immersion programs is that they are viewed as the most effective strategy to revive language. In an immersion pathway, all educational programming is offered in the Indigenous language. This pathway requires program planning to ensure the curriculum, resources, and assessments in all subjects are tailored to the needs of all students and provide for a steady progression of learning. This is essential to ensure that students gain confidence and fluency in the language throughout their learning journey. The success of an immersion program depends on the collaboration and support of students, parents, guardians, Elders, Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, fluent speakers, school staff and leadership, as well as community leaders.

Bilingual Programs

There are varying degrees of bilingual programs which are designed for school-age students. Bilingual programs are subject-specific. The subjects taught in a bilingual program are based on the interest of the students, school or community, as well as the skills and experience of language teachers. For a bilingual program to be effective, it is important to have subject-specific and age-appropriate curricula and accessible resources and assessments in the Indigenous language. A benefit to participating in a bilingual program is exposure to language and culture that also fosters identity and well-being. Bilingual programs can also be a starting point for schools to move towards an immersion program.

Post-Secondary Education

Public post-secondary institutions and First Nation Colleges and Universities in Canada offer a variety of educational pathways focused on Indigenous language, including certificates, diplomas, degree programs, and graduate and post-graduate programs. In addition, an array of specialized pathways, programs, and courses in linguistics, language documentation and revitalization are offered at various national institutions. Partnerships with post-secondary institutions provide opportunities for initiatives and programs to meet local needs, including language learning and revitalization efforts that can be tailored to the specific context of the community. Attending a post-secondary institution or First Nations College or University provides opportunities to gain or strengthen knowledge and skills to advance language learning and revitalization efforts locally, provincially, or nationally.

Continuing Education

Many Canadian public post-secondary institutions offer affiliated programs and partnerships with rural communities and First Nations Colleges and Universities. These programs enable students to take courses in their home community and transfer to a public post-secondary institution to further their learning. This pathway provides an opportunity to begin higher education in the learners' home community. In some partnerships and programs like Early Childhood and Education, a practicum or field experience can be arranged in a home community. Several unique courses that focus on Indigenous language learning and revitalization are offered nationally, for example, sign language, language guardianship, and specialized language training for early learners.

Language Programs

Indigenous language-focused programs offered in a community vary depending on access to fluent speakers, teachers, technology, and space. The programs created are also based on the resources available and the interests of participants. Language programs are often offered in the evening or in the workplace. Participants are oftentimes immersed in Indigenous-specific language learning, writing and reading skill development, as well as opportunities to strengthen their conversational skills.

Community language instructors and advocates strive to make language learning accessible to interested participants regardless of location. In situations where in-person learning is not possible, participants are encouraged to attend language learning programs offered virtually. These classes are often offered for a minimal fee or at no cost to the participant. Non-Indigenous teachers and leaders can attend language classes and learn about Indigenous cultures. At the same time, language-focused programs for youth, adults, and Elders are also available in many communities to support or facilitate language programs.

■ BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER: LIVING IN THE LANGUAGE

Community Language and Culture Programs

Indigenous language learning is made accessible to individuals of all ages through various language and culture-based experiences such as land-based learning, summer programs and culture camps. The variety of culturally-based programs are generally offered intermittently throughout the year and are community-led based on interest, availability of instructors, resources, and geographic location. In addition, Indigenous language is embodied in cultural ceremony, dance and song and is incorporated in community events. The variety of language and culture programs offered depends on the availability of fluent language speakers

Mentor-Apprentice Programs

In this immersive language learning program, a fluent speaker is paired with a language learner to advance their linguistic skills and commitment towards fluency. The mentor and apprentice spend quality time together in various settings, fully immersed in language learning over several months. This approach has proven effective in helping learners achieve their language goals.

Language is the fundamental way Indigenous Peoples connect with identity and spirituality, share knowledge, and communicate an understanding of the world. The journey towards Indigenous language revitalization is a complex journey deeply rooted in the custodianship of Indigenous Peoples that nurtures cultural pride, strengthens identity, and safeguards the profound wisdom embedded within it. Despite the multitude of challenges presented by globalization, politics, economics, and cultural marginalization, the pursuit of language revitalization is a critical endeavour. By seeking the guidance of Elders and language mentors, embarking on language revitalization opens doors to new perspectives and a profound sense of belonging. Embracing the learning journey with an open heart, making mistakes, connecting with community and immersing oneself in the language are all part of building language fluency and appreciation.

The importance of language as a vessel for heritage and wisdom cannot be overstated. It embodies land, place, culture, kinship, and tradition, making Indigenous language revitalization a transformative endeavour. Striving to ensure the intergenerational transmission of language is embarking on a journey that not only preserves history and culture but also affirms a sense of self and unity. The urgency to protect, revitalize, promote, and mobilize language is evident in its vital role in sustaining Indigenous culture.

■ GLOSSARY

- **Assessment** - a process of gathering information to inform student learning
- **Bilingual Program** - education pathway that is offered in two languages
- **Constitution Act** - contains the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that are enforced by law
- **Community of Practice** - a group of individuals who interact to support and further knowledge or initiatives
- **Copyright** - is a process that grants owners control and exclusive right to reproduce, perform, or publish a work
- **Curated** - information or resources that are organized and shared for specific purposes
- **Curriculum** - a framework that identifies the progressive concepts of what learners are expected to know, understand, and demonstrate in particular subjects and grades
- **Data Sovereignty** - the right to control, maintain, and share information
- **Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale** - is a tool to assess the vitality and health of Indigenous languages in Canada
- **Extinct Languages** - has no living speakers of the language
- **Immersion Program** - a method of teaching a program in one language
- **Indigenous Languages Act** - specifies the support and promotion of Indigenous languages
- **Intellectual Property** - owners of an individual or collective expression and creation
- **Language Acquisition** - the process of understanding and ability to communicate
- **Language Ecosystem** - a complex interconnected system to develop and preserve language
- **Language Nest** - immersion-based language learning for preschool children
- **Language Revitalization** - efforts to reverse the decline or loss of language
- **Legislation** - written laws approved by Parliament
- **Mentor - Apprentice** - a one-on-one immersion program to aid in language fluency
- **Trademark** - intellection property identified as a symbol to distinguish the goods and services of a brand, product, or service
- **Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action** - a series of recommendations to address the impacts of residential schools
- **United Nations General Assembly** - a decision-making body on international issues

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Indigenous Intellectual Property

Indigenous intellectual property encompasses the safeguarding of culturally rich and collectively nurtured Indigenous knowledge and expressions, spanning both tangible and intangible forms. This gathered wisdom and knowledge, meticulously protected and carefully passed down through generations by Indigenous peoples, stands as a testament to their profound and enduring cultural resiliency.

Law and Legislation

In Canada, a comprehensive legal framework encompasses a spectrum of Intellectual Property protections, including the *Patent Act*, *Copyright Act*, *Trademarks Act*, *Industrial Design Act*, and *Plant Breeders' Rights Act*. These laws intricately define the diverse avenues available for safeguarding various forms of intellectual property.

Examples of Traditional Knowledge

- Plants and medicine
- Ethnobotany
- Ethnoastronomy
- Traditional tools for hunting and agriculture
- ...and much more

Examples of Cultural Expressions

- Indigenous dances
- Indigenous songs
- Indigenous ceremonies
- Indigenous artworks
- ...and much more

Addressing Gaps and Barriers

Indigenous worldviews and contemporary Intellectual Property systems often diverge, leading to fundamental disparities. One notable conflict arises from the concept of ownership, especially in the context of collective knowledge, where worldviews clash with established legislative frameworks. Another discrepancy pertains to the protection of innovations while leaving the underlying knowledge used to create them vulnerable and unshielded.

To bridge these gaps and address these disparities, exploring alternative pathways becomes imperative. Complementing Intellectual Property mechanisms with contractual arrangements and tapping into resources related to Intellectual Property Strategy can help mitigate these challenges and barriers, creating a more harmonious and inclusive framework for safeguarding intellectual property within Indigenous contexts.



Trademarks and Copyright

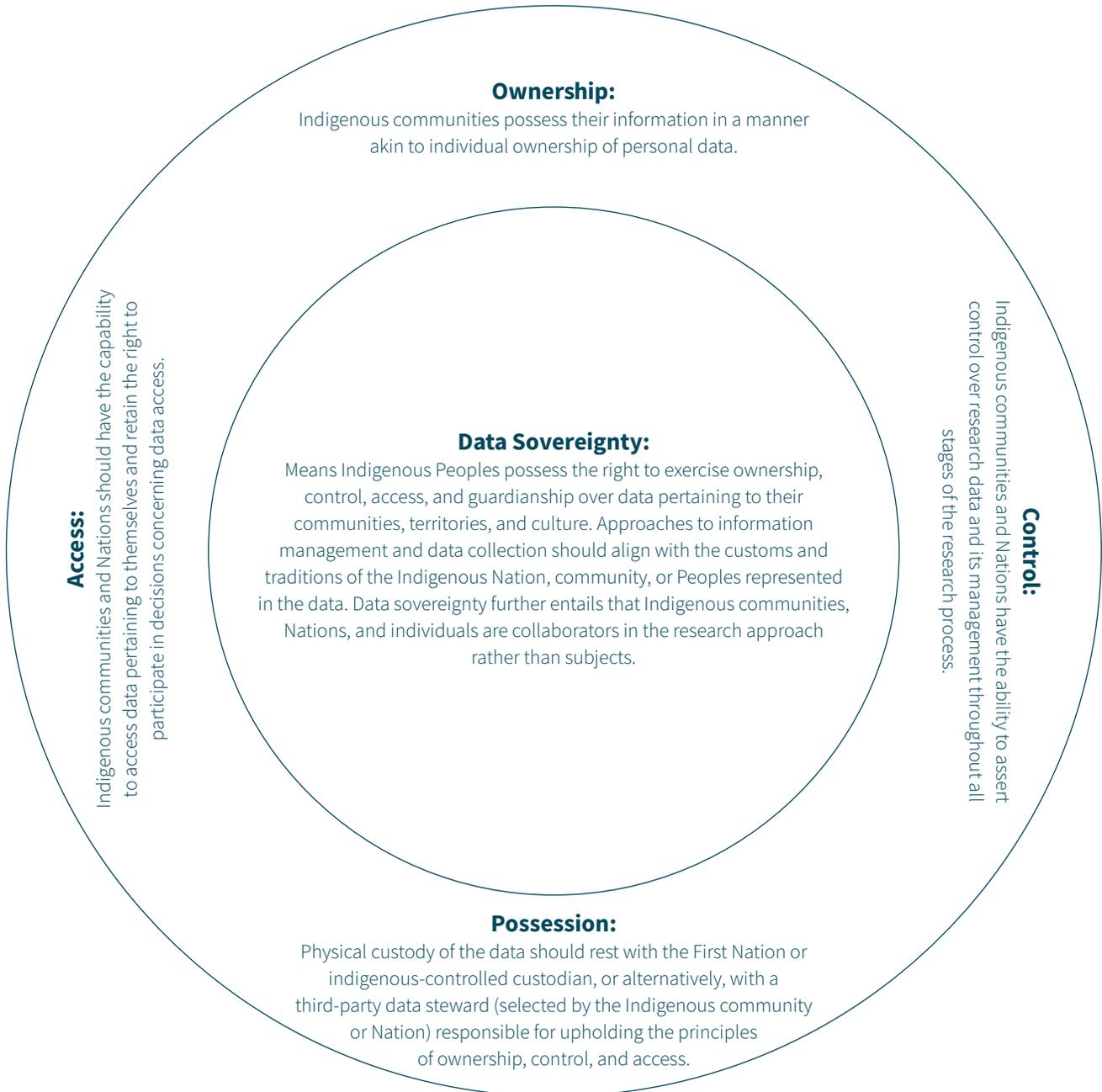
Canadian legislation extends protection to Indigenous trademarks, encompassing symbols, names and distinctive signs, exemplified by the logo employed by SILR. These trademarks reinforce Indigenous rights to self-determination and serve as powerful conduits, conveying the authenticity of goods and services offered as well as the protection of Indigenous knowledge. Moreover, the *Copyright Act* plays a pivotal role in safeguarding artists' rights, particularly concerning works rooted in Indigenous tradition and cultural.

Ethics:

Indigenous rights and wellbeing must be at the forefront throughout all phases of the data lifecycle. Risk assessments should be approached from an Indigenous perspective.

Responsibility:

Researchers must be accountable to Indigenous communities and demonstrate how their utilization of Indigenous data contributes to the wellbeing and self-determination of Indigenous Peoples. Proof of benefits must be shared, and resources should be rooted in Indigenous languages and worldviews.



Authority to Control:

Indigenous Peoples should have the power to determine data governance and their representation within it. Access to Indigenous data should be granted to Indigenous communities.

Collective Benefit:

Indigenous communities should reap the advantages of the data and research aligning with their needs and aspirations.

