



2025

SILR Annual Report



SILR

**SUPPORTING
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE
REVITALIZATION**
SILR.CA

BHP | **Foundation**



**UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA**

Executive Summary

Aaniin!

As Executive Director of the Supporting Indigenous Language Revitalization (SILR) Project, I am honoured to share our 2025 Annual Report. This year represents a vital bridge in our journey—a time of reflection where we have looked back at our first five years of growth to intentionally shape the path ahead.

Guided by the wisdom of Anishnaabe Elder Art Solomon, who was born and raised on the land in Shebahonaning of the North Channel of Lake Huron, our work this year centered on a community-led evaluation and planning process. We identified six core roles that describe how we walk alongside our partners: as **Builders, Connectors, Advocates, Helpers, Knowledge Seekers, and Nurturers.**

“IN ORDER TO KNOW WHERE WE ARE GOING, WE NEED TO KNOW WHERE WE ARE; TO KNOW WHERE WE ARE, WE NEED TO KNOW WHO WE ARE; TO KNOW WHO WE ARE, WE NEED TO KNOW WHERE WE COME FROM.”
- Art Solomon

2025 Highlights:

- **Lasting Relationships:** Much of our work this year was rooted in long-standing, multi-year partnerships rather than short-term projects, signalling a shift toward true relational continuity and trust.
- **Realizing our Vision:** We have already reached our major goals for student and youth engagement, allowing us to focus more deeply on the quality and care of these programs.
- **Community Strength:** Through the evolution of Living in the Language and the creation of new resources and stories, we continue to build a foundation of identity and belonging for our community.
- **Sovereignty in Knowledge:** Our research initiatives continue to honour Indigenous Data Sovereignty, ensuring community knowledge remains respected and community-held.

As we look toward 2026, we are entering a period of intentional planning to clarify the governance and leadership structures needed to carry SILR forward. We see 2026 not as an endpoint, but as a transition toward a lasting presence.

We extend our gratitude to our Advisory Council, partners, and the BHP Foundation. Together, we continue to support Indigenous languages as living foundations of strength and identity.

Pamela McCoy Jones
Executive Director

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Vision

SILR envisions a future where Indigenous languages in Canada are healthy, vibrant, and actively used across generations and domains, including homes, schools, workplaces, and on the land, as living foundations of culture, identity, and self-determination.

Goal of SILR

SILR's goal is to strengthen Indigenous language revitalization by supporting confident speakers and teachers, advancing community-defined and culturally grounded language programs, and generating, sharing, and scaling effective models, practices, and research across community, program, and policy spaces.

Sustainability Planning

In 2025, SILR undertook an Indigenous Evaluation and Sustainability Planning process to support reflection, learning, and future decision-making after five years of growth. This phase focused on understanding how SILR has shown up in its work and relationships and what future directions are emerging beyond 2025.

The evaluation included systems mapping, dialogue, surveys, collaborative design, and identity-based sensemaking, supporting a shared understanding of SILR's organizational identity as relational, evolving, and context-responsive.

Alongside quantitative outcomes, the evaluation surfaced shared meanings and values held by staff and partners, highlighting alignment and productive tension. Rather than producing fixed conclusions, the process emphasized sensemaking to support clarity, coherence, and adaptability as SILR enters its next phase.



Image: Elder Elmer Ghostkeeper from Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement and Advisor Lyndon Aginas from Alexis First Nation

An Evolving Theory of Change

SILR's Sustainability Planning builds on its Theory of Change, which understands Indigenous languages as living and actively used across generations through community-driven pathways. In 2025, this approach emphasizes clarity of purpose, relational accountability, and adaptability as central to sustaining impact and guiding SILR into its next phase.

Foundations of SILR's Identity: Role, Relationships, Ripples

From 2019 to 2025, SILR grew in response to community priorities and partnerships. By centering relationships and remaining adaptive, SILR generated impact across multiple scales and became a multifaceted presence within the Indigenous language revitalization landscape.

From Pillars Areas to Archetypes

Over the SILR lifespan, its work has been described through five pillars: **Connecting, Speaking, Teaching, Learning, and Leading**, which outline the primary domains in which SILR operates. Through the 2025 evaluation, archetypes were introduced as a complementary lens to deepen understanding of SILR's approaches and relational ways of working.

The six archetypes describe how SILR enacts its purpose across partners and contexts. They are interconnected ways of working that have emerged through practice and reflect the values guiding SILR's work.

While the pillars focus on what work is carried out, archetypes describe how and why SILR shows up. A single initiative may reflect multiple archetypes across pillars, reflecting Indigenous language revitalization as values-led practice.

Role: The 6 Archetypes

The archetypes were developed to make SILR's relational work more visible and tangible. Each represents a distinct way SILR acts, relates, and contributes, offering a shared language for understanding how SILR shows up in practice rather than defining fixed functions.

The archetypes emerged through analysis of SILR's activities, partnerships, and community interactions, alongside reflective dialogue with the SILR team. Through iterative refinement, six archetypes were identified: **Builder, Connector, Advocate, Helper, Knowledge Seeker, and Nurturer**. Each reflects particular strengths and vulnerabilities, emphasizing the dynamic and context-responsive nature of SILR's work.

Together, the archetypes express the breadth of SILR's role without prescribing rigid structure. They are not mutually exclusive, and a single initiative may embody multiple archetypes depending on context and relationships.

Role SILR's Archetypes exemplified by definitions and practices



Connector Bridges people, organizations and worlds

Bridges people, navigates micro/macro/meso spaces, builds networks.



SILR gatherings



Helper Supports community-led revitalization work

Provides funding, support, knowledge, or resources so communities can act.



Living in the language



Nurturer Cares for personal language journeys

Holds space, supports personal journeys, strong relational accountability.



Braiding Stories to Live By



Builder Develops capacity building programs and products

Hands-on, creates curriculum/programs, delivers tangible outputs.



Community Linguistic Certificate



Knowledge-seeker Translates knowledge to learnings

Evidence-based, research and reflection, translates between worldviews.



The Search for Wellness Study



Advocate Champions Indigenous rights and leadership

Champions language rights, ensures visibility, and drives systemic change.



SILR Advisory Council

Relationships: Past and Present Partners

While SILR's network has grown steadily since its inception, the 2025 relationship map (page 8) highlights a shift from relationship expansion toward relational continuity, depth, and stewardship. The partnerships in 2025 reflect multi-year engagement, layered forms of collaboration, and evolving roles that respond to community priorities rather than fixed project scopes.

SILR's partnership base in 2025 remains strongly people- and community-centred. In 2025, SILR engaged with 57 unique partners across 10 Key Efforts, including 22 community-based organizations or programs, 12 Indigenous Nations and communities, 16 primary and secondary schools or school divisions, and 7 institutions.

Reflecting a model grounded in people, places, and practice. 42 partnerships are ongoing or have been extended into 2026, indicating a strong orientation towards sustained engagement rather than short-term collaboration. This reflects a maturing relational ecosystem in which SILR increasingly works with partners through repeated touchpoints and adaptive roles rather than one-off initiatives. Additionally, SILR worked with 39 individual partners, including instructors, knowledge holders, artists, educators, and community leaders, across both multi-partner initiatives and individually led projects.

The relationship map included in this report provides a snapshot of how partnerships remained active, were sustained, or newly emerged in 2025. Rather than serving as a comprehensive inventory, the map shows where relationships converged, intensified, or carried forward into future work.

Overall, the 2025 data point to a clear pattern: SILR's relational work is increasingly characterized by depth, repetition, and stewardship. Rather than focusing on expanding the number of connections, SILR is consolidating and strengthening its relational pathways, positioning relationships themselves as a key outcome and resource for the work ahead.

Indigenous Nations Direct community connections

Organizations/Programs Community-driven or Indigenous-led partners

Schools Primary and secondary education

Institutions Universities and institutional entities

 Duration of relationship

Relationships

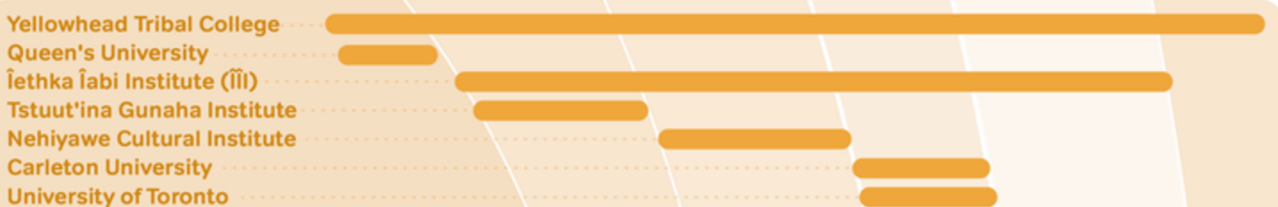
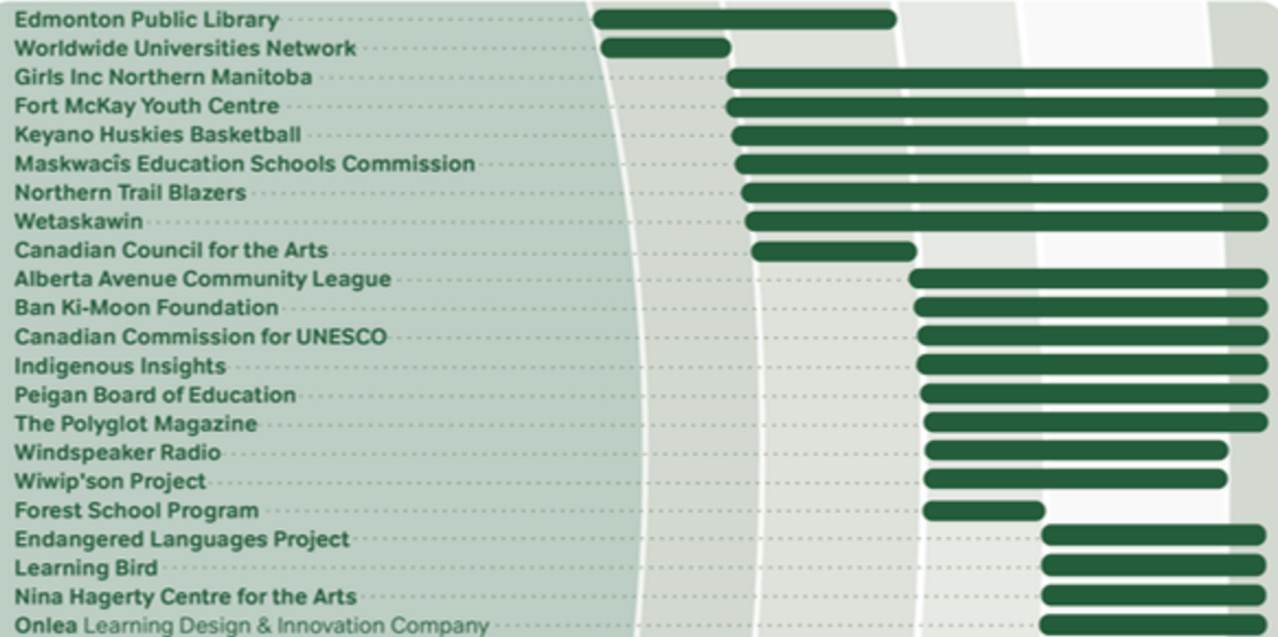
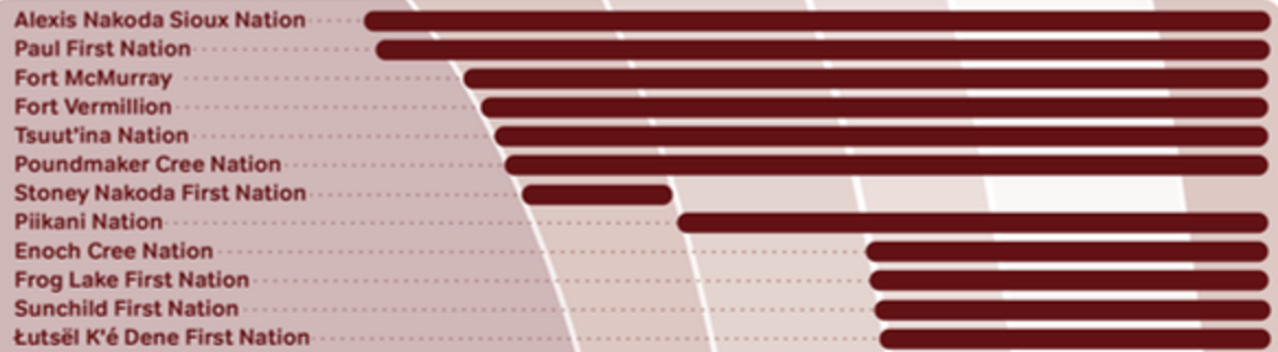
2022

2023

2024

2025

2026



Ripples: Highlighting Impact through Stories

At the outset, SILR set impact targets for 2026, which were exceeded in 2024 and again in 2025, with the exception of teachers, which remains on track for mid 2026.



Image: Impact Goals

In 2025, the focus shifted to understanding how impact is experienced and carried forward through relationships, shared learning, and reflection. Impact is understood as relational and cumulative rather than linear. Across diverse language revitalization efforts, SILR’s work creates ripple effects beyond individual activities, with storytelling emerging as a key method for understanding how impact is felt and sustained.

Proud Moments

To support this work, the evaluation introduced the Proud Moments tool, a dialogue-based process that invites participants to reflect on moments that mattered to them. Centring relationships and shared responsibility, the tool, alongside the Story Seed Card Deck (2024), supported deeper reflection and collective sensemaking.

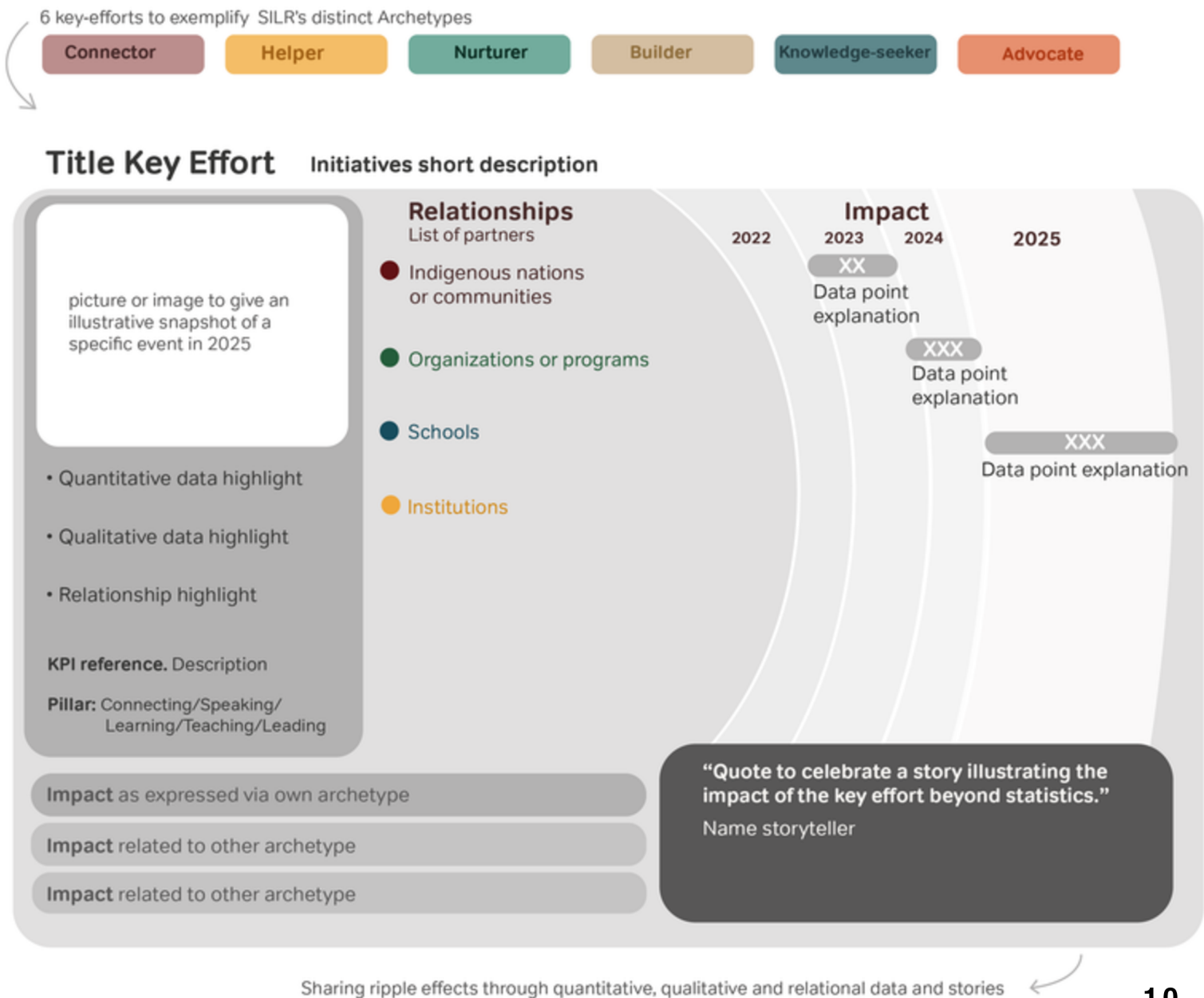
Proud Moments shared in 2025 revealed the depth of SILR’s relational impact, including responsibility to future generations, youth leadership, and strengthened confidence, self-love (Sâkhitowin), and cultural identity. Reflections also highlighted broader impacts across institutions, reciprocal learning, and ceremonial moments that underscored the spiritual and relational dimensions of the work. Together, these stories affirm that language revitalization is lived through relationship and experience and cannot be fully captured through metrics alone.

Together, these stories affirm that language revitalization is lived through relationship and experience, and that its impacts are not fully captured through metrics alone.

To illustrate how these ripples move, the following section highlights six of the ten Key Efforts that exemplify SILR’s archetypes in action. Key Efforts are SILR’s core program streams that organize and hold clusters of related initiatives. They reflect sustained partnerships, shared purpose, and strategic alignment rather than single projects, and often function as long-term partnerships through which multiple activities are delivered. These examples are not intended to be comprehensive, but show how impact travels.

The image below provides a legend of each Key Effort’s visual summary.

Legend Ripples Visual



SILR's Role as Connector

Across Key Efforts, gatherings have connected language speakers, learners, Elders, educators, youth, artists, and institutional partners. One of these is the Annual SILR Gathering, which continues to function as a core relational space. In 2025, the Gathering convened 291 attendees from several provinces and territories, the majority of whom identified as First Nations. Notably, 77% identified as fluent speakers or active language learners, grounding the Gathering in lived language practice. Advisory Committee members also observed participation extending beyond registration through word of mouth and existing relationships.

Building on earlier feedback, the 2025 Gathering emphasized interactive, community-centred formats, shared language journeys, and collective problem-solving.

As a Connector, the primary function of the 2025 SILR Gathering was not only to bring people together but to strengthen and renew relationships beyond the event itself. Connections formed or renewed at the Gathering continue to inform collaborations, initiatives, and shared learning across SILR's network, illustrating how intentional convening supports continuity, trust, and collective responsibility in language revitalization efforts.

Annual SILR Gatherings A (multi-)day gathering to connect in languages



- In the last 4 years 1155 people attended SILR annual gatherings.
- Participants emphasize impact beyond the gathering itself.
- Diverse partners connect, build relations and hear their language.

KPI 5.1. Building a Language Revitalization Network

Pillar: Speaking

Relationships

List of partners

- Language teachers, speakers, learners, and Elders, from Indigenous communities and nations across Turtle Island.
- Language Revitalization advocates and innovators.
- Educators, students, school district leaders and administrators,
- Linguistic representatives of University of Alberta and partner institutions.

Impact

2022	2023	2024	2025
	264 participant at a 1-day gathering	225 participants at a 1-day gathering	375 participants during a 2-day gathering
			291 participants at a 2-day gathering including returning attendees and a waitlist of those wanting to participate

Connect across individuals, communities and organizations.

Hearing people speak and **advocate** for their languages.

People **help** people; find useful resources, create capacity.

"My language journey has healed me in ways that nothing else could have done. I feel closer to myself and my family because of learning my language."

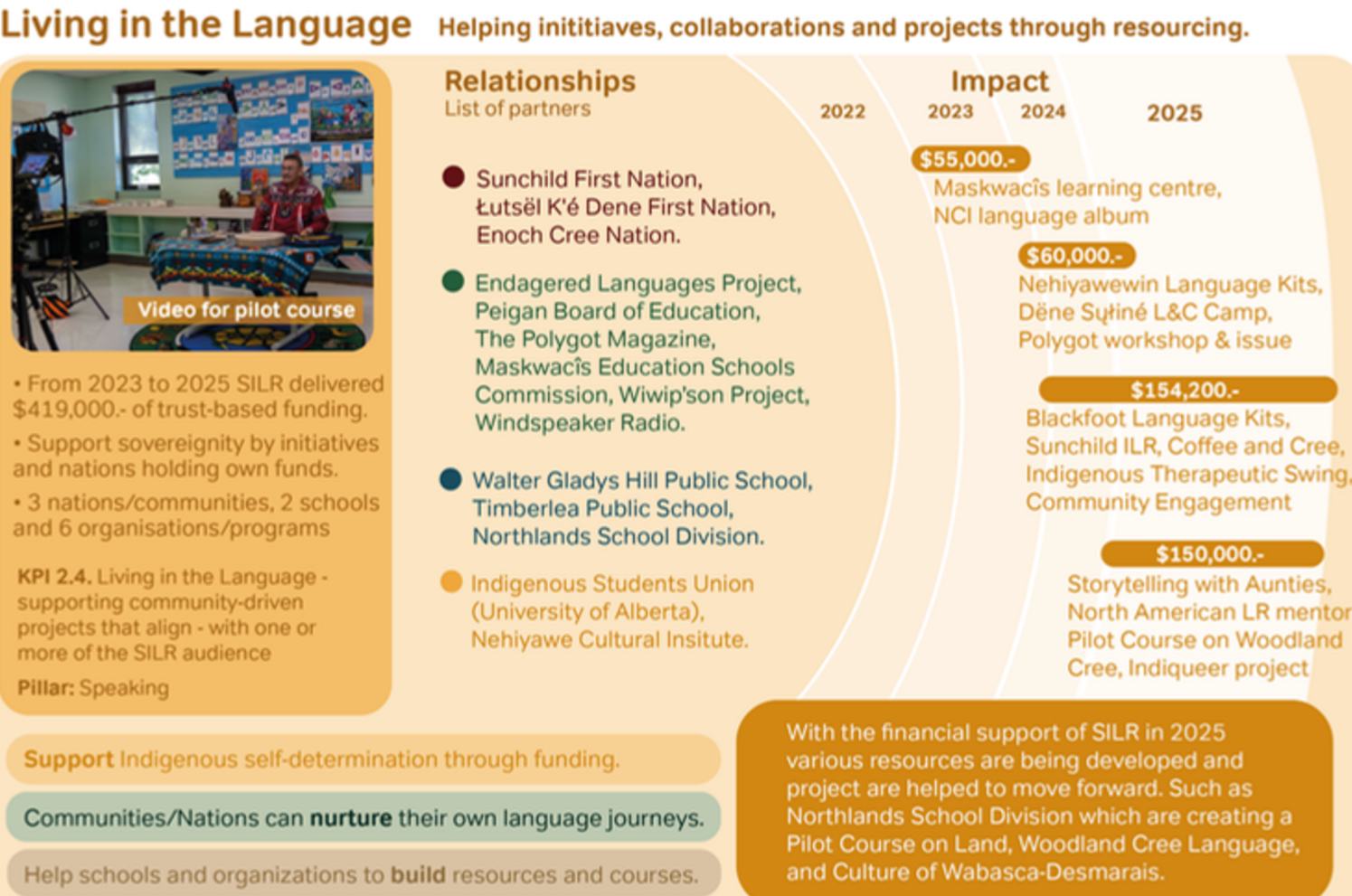
Participant at 2025 SILR gathering

SILR's Role as Helper

In 2025, Living in the Language (LiL) continued as a flexible, community-driven Key Effort grounded in trust, relationship, and Indigenous self-determination. Launched in response to community-defined priorities, LiL supports Indigenous-led language revitalization by resourcing communities to do the work they already know is needed. LiL is structured around trust-based resourcing rather than prescriptive programming, with funding flowing into community-led initiatives with minimal conditions that recognize Indigenous governance and data sovereignty.

Throughout 2025, LiL supported a range of initiatives, including land-based language and cultural camps, community language-sharing spaces, resource creation, cultural and healing activities, and language preservation efforts. These initiatives were shaped and led by Indigenous Nations and partners, with SILR's role focused on accompaniment and responsiveness rather than oversight.

As a Helper, LiL reflects SILR's commitment to showing up alongside communities by reducing administrative burden, honouring Indigenous governance, and centring trust, reciprocity, and sustained community leadership as measures of success



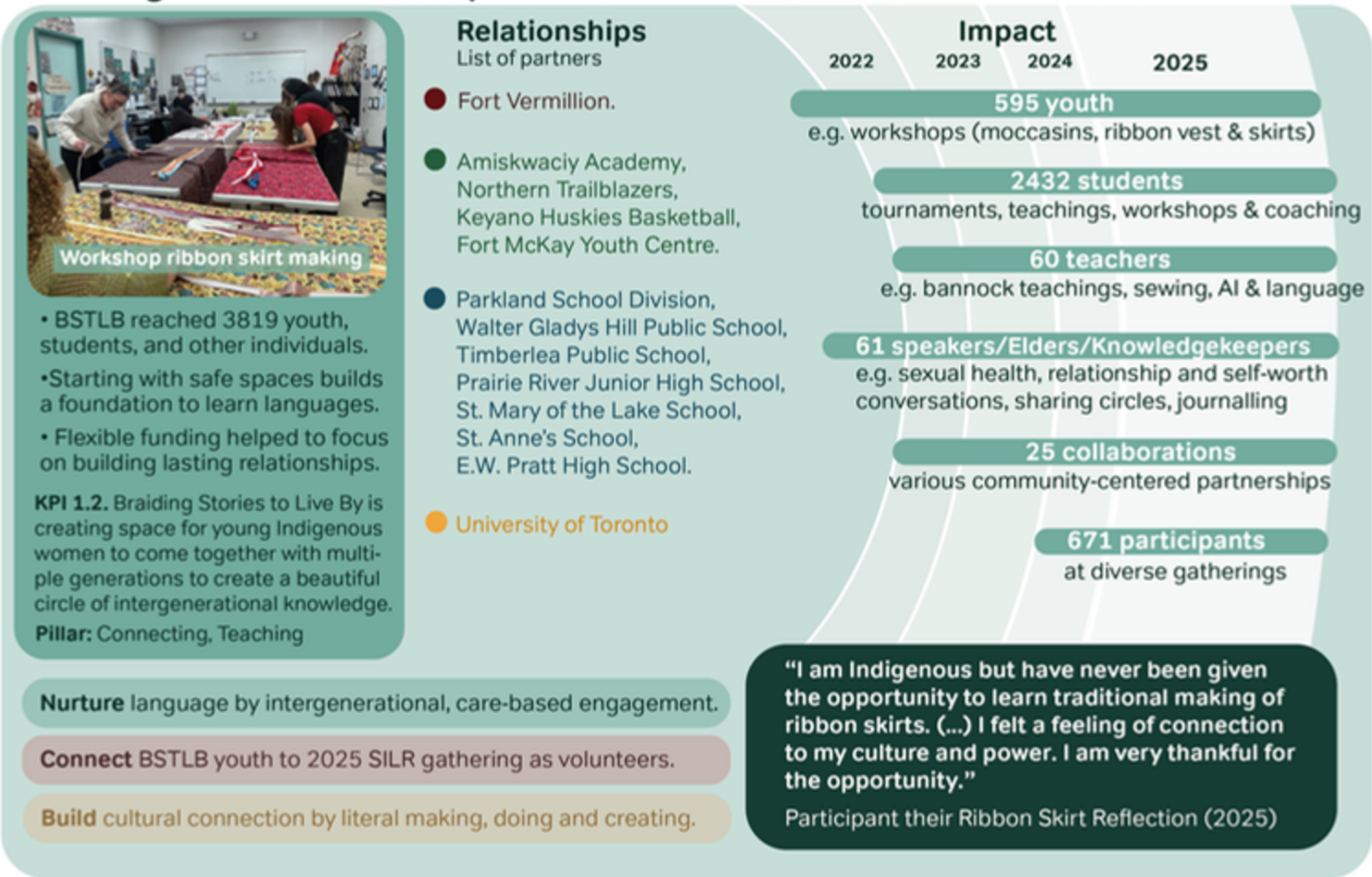
SILR’s Role as Nurturer

Braiding Stories to Live By (BStLB) creates intergenerational, land-based learning spaces where young Indigenous women engage alongside Knowledge Keepers, Aunties, educators, and community partners. Language revitalization is supported through practices that strengthen identity, belonging, wellness, and kinship.

In 2025, BStLB deepened its focus on youth leadership and relational continuity through regular gatherings youth could return to over time. Activities included food making, sewing, moccasin-making, sports, leadership events, and community-based learning, moving beyond introductory cultural experiences into conversations about wellness, kinship, and responsibility. BStLB also generated practical resources to support ongoing delivery. These materials contribute to SILR’s broader learning about promising practices in intergenerational, land- and culture-based programming.

As a Nurturer, BStLB demonstrates how sustained, care-based engagement supports continuity in Indigenous language learning by prioritizing relational consistency, flexibility, and youth-led growth within intergenerational, community-grounded learning spaces.

Braiding Stories to Live by Nurture personal journeys through kinship, belonging and culture.



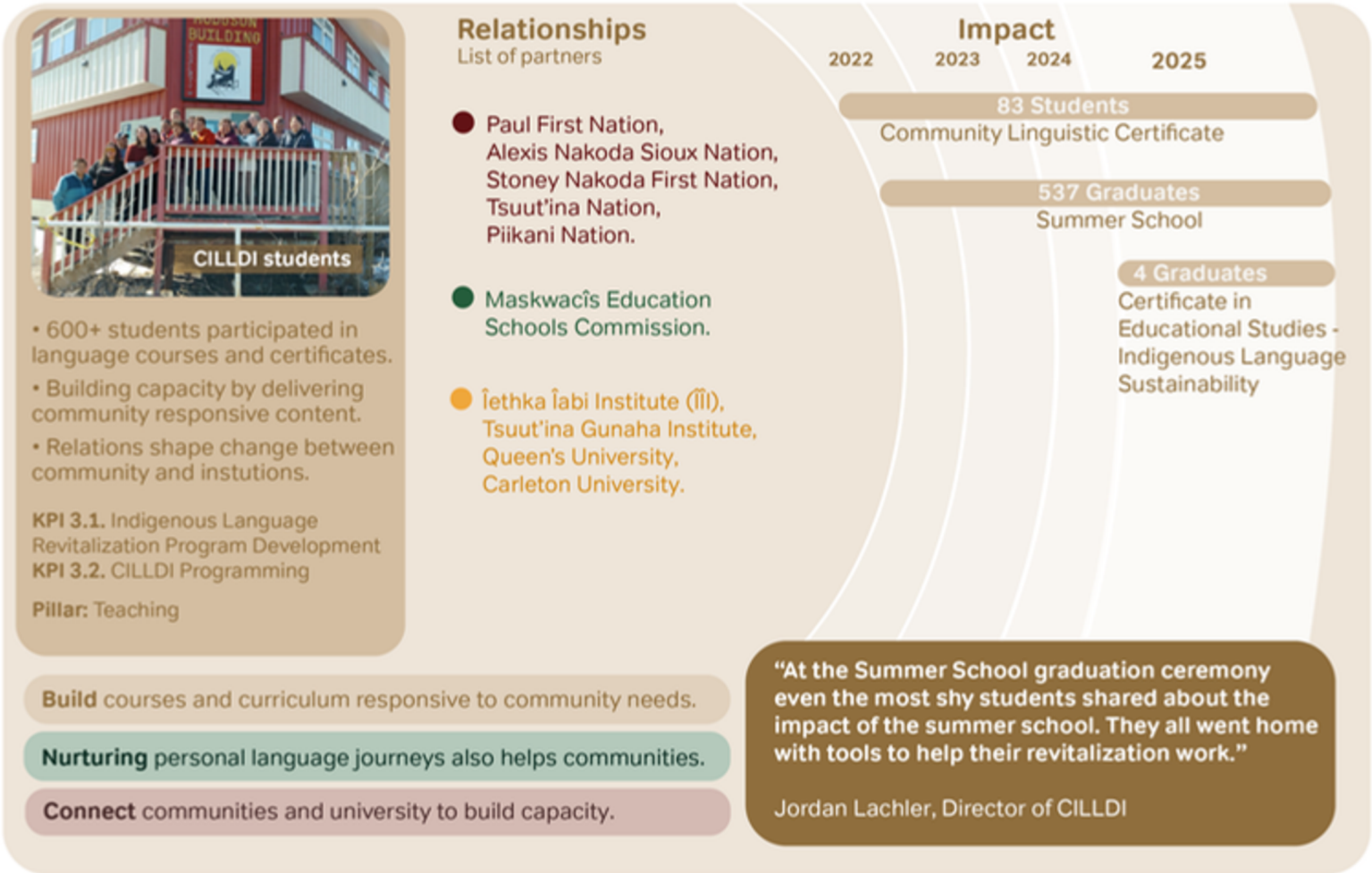
SILR's Role as Builder

SILR supports and extends the work of the Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI) through curriculum and course delivery, including the Community Linguist Certificate, the Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Language Sustainability, and the summer school. Together, these offerings work to make academic and training spaces more accessible and relevant for Indigenous language teachers, community language workers, and learners, including those engaged through other SILR initiatives.

In 2025, CILLDI-related efforts continued to support capacity-building and institutional change through community-responsive course delivery and curriculum development. Partnerships with Indigenous Nations enabled customized language courses, applied documentation practices, and flexible learning pathways, while the Faculty of Education continued exploring ways to broaden access despite small cohort sizes.

As a Builder, this work focuses on creating enduring structures such as curriculum, credential pathways, and institutional relationships that can hold Indigenous languages over time.

CILLDI curriculum Build community capacity through courses, lesson materials and certificates.

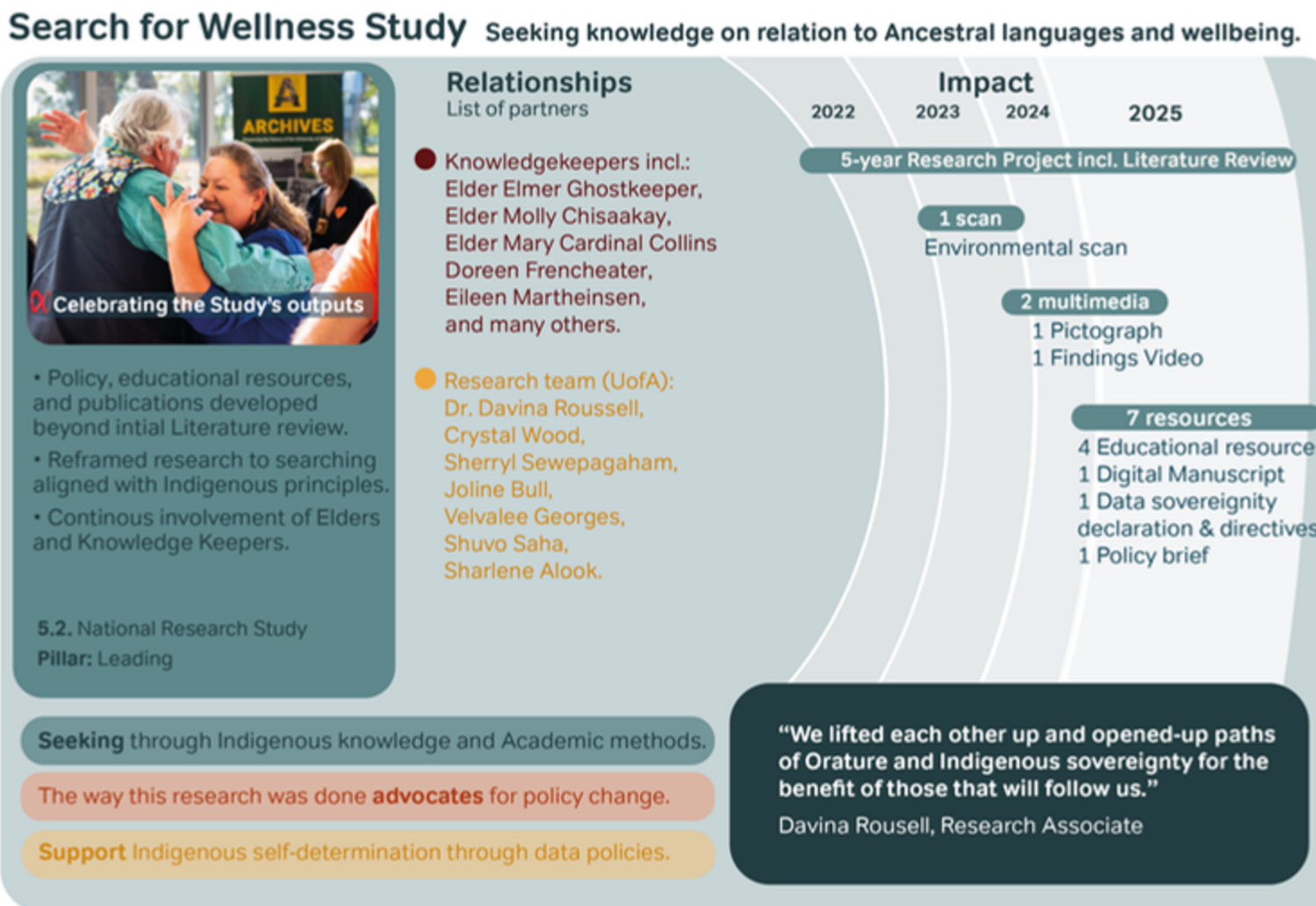


SILR's Role as Knowledge-Seeker

The Search for Wellness Study is a national research initiative examining the relationship between Indigenous language knowledge and individual and collective well-being, grounded in Indigenous understandings of health, language, and belonging. Launched in 2022, the study includes a core research project and interconnected activities. It employs community-guided story-sharing methodologies that prioritize relational accountability, consent, care, and respect for Orature.

In 2025, the study reached several milestones, including the release of a fully digital manuscript grounded in Orature, a findings video, and community-oriented resources. A central outcome has been the development of Indigenous Data Sovereignty practices, including Data Sovereignty Declarations and care-taking directives that assert participant control over data.

As a Knowledge-Seeker initiative, the study informs program design, evaluation, and governance across SILR, functioning as a learning spine that strengthens relational, ethical, and practice-based work.



SILR’s Role as Advocate

The SILR Advisory Council is a model of community-led governance composed of Elders, cultural knowledge keepers, and language speakers who guide SILR through spiritual, relational, and protocol-based leadership. Its role extends beyond advice to actively shaping how responsibility, accountability, and care are understood in SILR’s work.

Established as one foundational governance effort, the Advisory Council brings together community and institutional collaborators to ensure decision-making, partnerships, and evaluation remain accountable to Indigenous governance principles rather than institutional timelines or funding cycles. Through this work, the Advisory Council has contributed to governance frameworks, data sovereignty declarations, and care-taking directives that assert Indigenous authority over language-related knowledge and relationships.

As an Advocate, the Advisory Council reflects SILR’s transition from project-based coordination toward long-term language stewardship, providing governance capable of holding sustained responsibility and protecting relationships within complex institutional contexts.

SILR Advisory Council Advocating for community needs to guide and align the SILR project.



Indigenous Guidance

- 6 Knowledgekeepers and Elders contribute to governance model.
- Reciprocal learnings on level of both individual and institution.
- Representation of community (relationships) through council.

KPI N/A
Pillar: Leading

Relationships
List of partners

- Current Advisory Council:
Molly Chisaakay ,
Lynda Minoose,
Elmer Ghostkeeper,
Mary Cardinal Collins,
Doreen Frencheater,
Lyndon Aginas.

In memoriam:
Millie Kuliktana,
Betty Jean Bastien.

Past member:
Edna Elias.

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Impact				
33 Steering committee meetings/retreats			2021 (6), 2022 (12), 2023 (7), 2024 (3), 2025 (5).	
8 Internal Leadership Councils			2021 (1), 2022 (2), 2023 (3), 2024 (1), 2025 (1).	

Advocate for centering community voice in all SILR’s work.

Governance to **connect** institutional and Indigenous leaders.

Integrate and honour Indigenous **knowledge** in leadership.

“Here I am, 73 years old, finally dawned on me. I’m doing what I’m supposed to be doing... reviving our language and sharing the teachings.”

Elder Lynda Minoose, Dene

Other Key Efforts, Initiatives, and Resources

In addition to the highlighted Key Efforts, SILR supported a range of initiatives and partnerships in 2025 that reflect the diversity of Indigenous language revitalization work underway. These highlights offer a snapshot of community-led efforts advancing language, culture, and relational learning through youth leadership, storytelling, publishing, mentorship, and community-governed knowledge sharing across diverse contexts.

Young Indigenous Women's Circle of Leadership

In 2025, the Young Indigenous Women's Circle of Leadership (YIWCL) continued to foster a youth-centred community through school-based circles, pop-up gatherings, and intensive programming. A key moment was the youth-led decision to name their group "Empowered Indigenous Youth," reflecting growing ownership and collective identity. Through hands-on cultural activities, leadership conversations, and seasonal teachings, YIWCL created relational spaces that strengthened belonging, confidence, and kinship, supporting future Cree language engagement and intergenerational connection.

Image: Ribbon Skirt Workshop led by Trudy Cardinal.



Image: YIWCL Participant Journalling



Storytelling with the Aunties

Storytelling with the Aunties is a community-led initiative rooted in the Métis community of St. Louis, Saskatchewan. The project centres the cultural role of the "Auntie" as a foundation of wâhkôhtowin (kinship) and keeoukaywin (visiting), using children's literature as a site of language and cultural regeneration. In 2025, the project hosted three book-writing workshops that brought together Métis women, artists, and Michif language holders to co-create seven children's books. These works reflect Michif as a living, relational language grounded in community experience and collective storytelling.

Endangered Language Project

SILR's collaboration with the Endangered Language Project (ELP) strengthened in 2025, marked by the integration of a North American Mentor to provide region-specific expertise. This partnership supported culturally responsive mentorship tailored to Indigenous language contexts across the continent. Over the year, the Language Revitalization Mentors program delivered more than 100 mentoring sessions, offering technical and pedagogical support to grassroots practitioners and reinforcing a shift from short-term projects toward sustained language revitalization capacity.



Image: Families gather for a nature walk as part of the 1.000 Familh Brezhoneg language revitalization program, Brittany, France. Photo by Matyas Le Brun

Community-Based Multimedia with Northlands School Division



Image: Video Production with Onlea and Elders from Wabasca-Desmarais

In 2025, SILR supported community-led multimedia resource development focused on Woodland Cree language, land, and culture in partnership with Wabasca-Desmarais and Northland School Division. This work centred on strengthening Sakawiyiniwak knowledge through formats that bridge ancestral teachings and contemporary learning environments.

Key outputs included two podcasts and two videos featuring community Elders sharing cultural teachings and oral histories. Content was guided by community protocols and consent processes to ensure cultural teachings remained respected and community-governed.

These resources are being integrated into blended learning models from early childhood through high school, with continued support planned for future community-driven materials aligned with local governance and curriculum needs.

Children's Books (Resources)

The Giggle Tent, written by Cindy Gaudet and illustrated by Jennifer Brown, is a children's book inspired by Métis women gathering in ceremony. In 2025, it reached a major milestone through a partnership with Parks Canada Batoche, where it launched as their first-ever children's book exhibit. Debuting on Indigenous Peoples' Day, the exhibit featured large-scale displays in Michif, French, and English alongside artwork by Métis women artists, and drew more than 5,000 visitors over the summer. The book, which centres Métis women's kinship and visiting practices, was nominated for a UNESCO award.

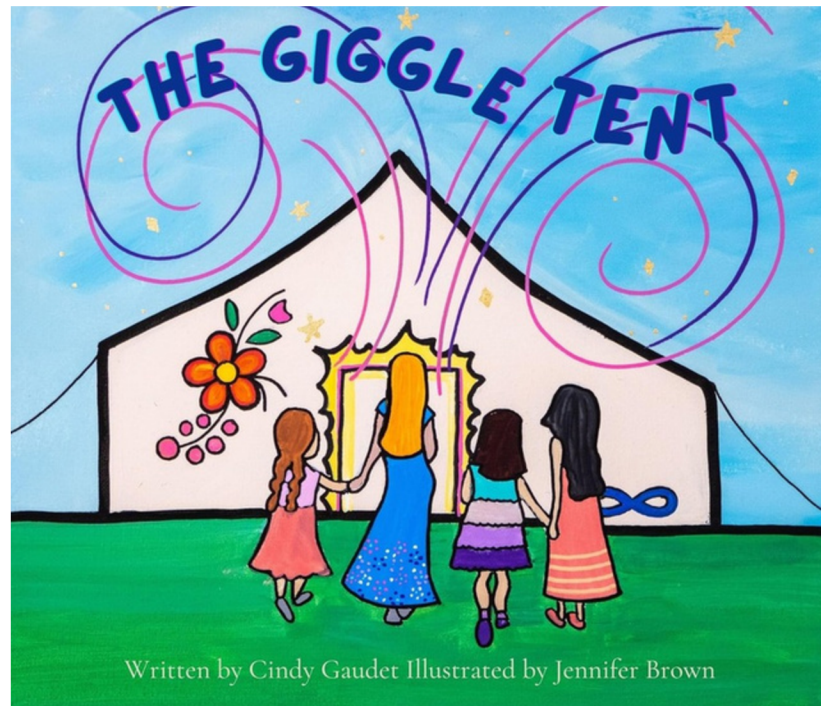


Image: *The Giggle Tent* by Cindy Gaudet Cover



Image: *Stinky Sock Jam* by Doris McDougall Cover

Stinky Sock Jam is a Michif children's book authored by Elder Doris McDougall and developed through the Lii Aanfans pi Lii Mataants community storytelling project. Created through an intergenerational process involving Métis storytellers, language carriers, artists, and mentors, the book was written in Michif with community language support. In 2025, it was published in partnership with the Gabriel Dumont Institute, marking the first children's book released in this specific Michif (French) variation spoken in Métis homelands such as Batoche and St. Paul.

Children's books developed through this storytelling ecosystem are gaining momentum beyond their initial communities. As of 2025, titles including *The Giggle Tent* and *Stinky Sock Jam* have been integrated into school curricula in Saskatchewan and British Columbia, with the Saskatchewan Francophone Education Board exploring broader system-wide inclusion. Together, these developments demonstrate how community-led storytelling can extend into educational spaces while remaining grounded in Métis governance and cultural practice.

Looking Ahead



2025 marks a threshold moment for SILR. After five years of growth, the project is entering a transition focused on sustaining existing work while clarifying how SILR will continue within the Indigenous language revitalization landscape beyond 2026. The 2025 evaluation provides a strong foundation for this shift, supporting continuity alongside intentional change.

The evaluation supports a move from describing how SILR has operated toward clarifying who it is becoming. The six archetypes function as a bridge in this process, articulating SILR's emerging organizational identity and how it acts in relationship with communities and partners. Identity narratives developed through internal reflection and external feedback surface areas of coherence and tension that will guide decision-making in 2026.

Building from this identity work, the next phase will focus on entity planning, including clarifying organizational form, governance, and operational capacity. This work will attend to SILR's ecosystem role, institutional alignment, and funding realities, with the aim of ensuring that governance and resourcing structures support relational practice and long-term stewardship. Several priorities emerging from 2025 learning include maintaining intergenerational gatherings, deepening educator-focused offerings, and strengthening documentation practices aligned with Indigenous data sovereignty.

These reflections lead into the 2026 SILR Gathering, taking place April 27–29, 2026, in Edmonton. Guided by the theme *Mâdawô-wîcihitowin* (“All people helping each other”), the gathering will centre celebration, connection, and collective responsibility for Indigenous languages.

Approach

From evaluation insights to sustainability planning

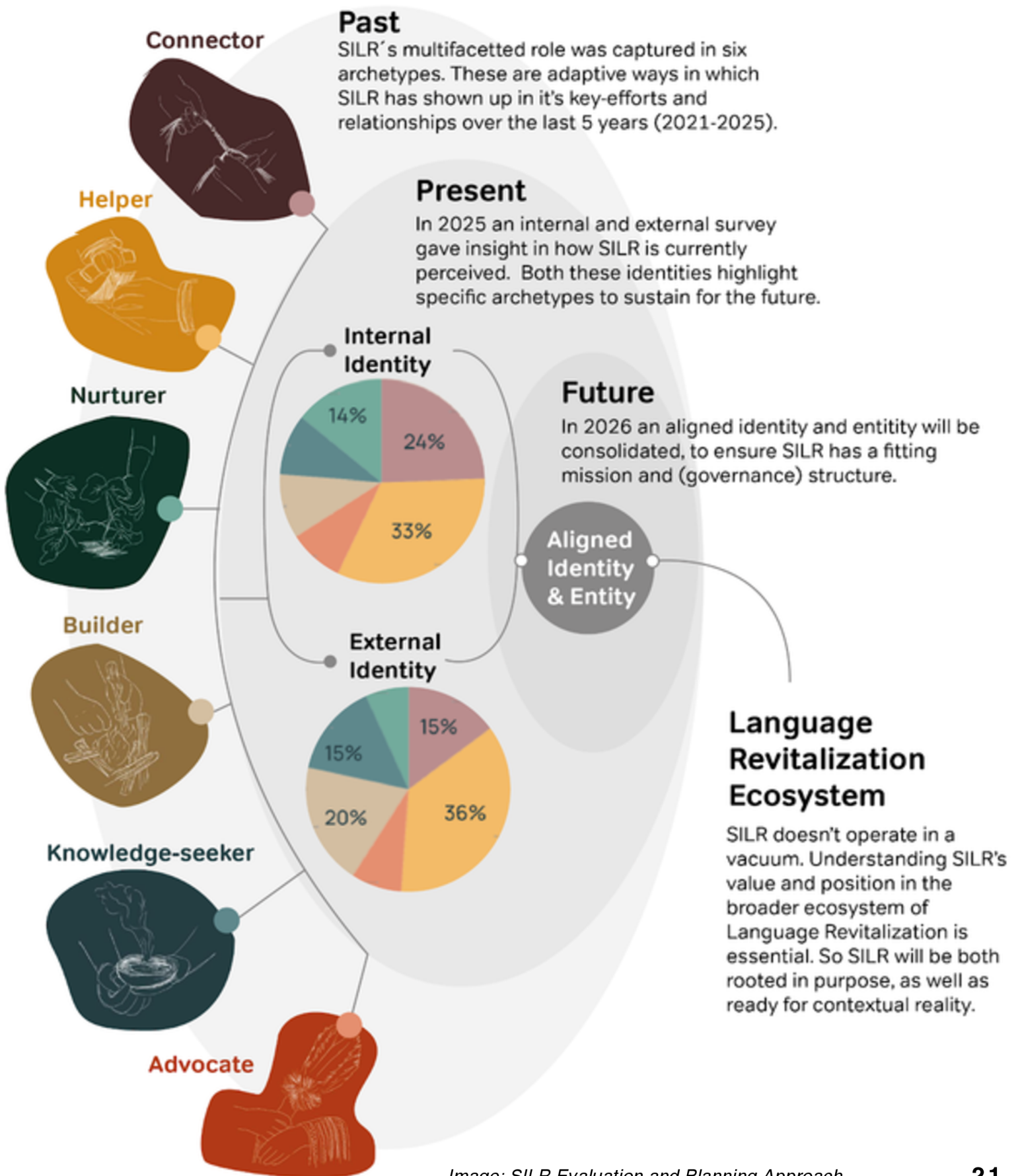


Image: SILR Evaluation and Planning Approach

Financial

In 2025, the BHP Foundation contributed \$2,163,246.81 to the University of Alberta, a significant investment that reinforces our collective capacity for community-led Indigenous language revitalization. These resources were intentionally directed toward high-impact areas, including youth-led programming, community engagement, and community-centered research.

These expenditures represent more than just operational costs; they are a strategic investment in honouring Indigenous sovereignty through culturally responsive evaluation and the development of sustainable, long-term frameworks for language health.

Moving forward, our remaining budget will focus on sharing our research findings broadly, deepening our engagement with partners, and refining the structures needed to ensure the project's impact continues to serve Indigenous communities effectively into the future.



Image: Data Sovereignty Ceremony at the University of Alberta