

Annual Report 2022 (Year 2)

Supporting Indigenous Language Revitalization:

Building Capacity for Community-led Indigenous Language Revitalization in Canada



TABLE Of CONTENTS

TABLE Of CONTENTS	2
Executive Summary	3
Project Overview	5
Implementation	6
Speaking	6
Young Indigenous Women's Circle of Leadership (YIWCL)	6
Braiding Stories to Live By (BStLB)	8
First People's House (FPH)	9
Intensive Adult Language Immersion (IALI)	11
Teaching	12
The Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI)	12
Weaving Holistic Learning Experiences through Language Programming and Culture (WHoLE)	13
Language Assessment Program (LAP)	15
Knowledge	16
Leadership	16
Annual Gathering for Leadership for Transforming Educational Systems	17
Monitoring and Evaluation	17
Research	18
Literature Review	18
Preliminary findings	18
Research Study	19
Challenges/Opportunities	21
Staffing	21
University of Alberta Restructuring	21
Relationship Building	21
Success	22
Learning/Next Steps	23
Communication	24
Articles	24
Interviews	24
Videos	24
SILR Resources	24
Finance	25

Executive Summary

Over the past year, the SILR team has been working to meet the goals and objectives outlined in the SILR project plan. The project continues to strengthen our efforts in capacity building and facilitating community-led programming in language revitalization. Internally the project has been challenged with recruitment of key positions due to staff turnover.

To address this challenge, we have shifted to contracts with professionals both academic and non-academic who are recognized for their approaches in revitalizing Indigenous languages. Biannual meetings with the SILR Leadership Council and monthly meetings with the Steering Committee have received positive feedback and support. Moving forward the University of Alberta now recognizes March 31, 2023 in the calendar of events and will connect with the SILR team for support and guidance to raise awareness of Indigenous Languages.

Externally, engagement opportunities with community partners and experts continue to be a priority in building awareness and establishing relationships in Alberta and across Canada. Engagement opportunities include, advisory committees, presentations, one-on-one feedback, focused discussions groups, and surveys. This will be an ongoing process as we seek guidance from community organizations, groups and individuals to build responsive programming in our language revitalization initiatives at the University of Alberta.

In June 2023, the launch of the [Braiding Past, Present and Future: University of Alberta Indigenous Strategic Plan](#) presented an opportunity to highlight the university's commitment to reconciliation in post-secondary education, research and addressing the historical legacy of the residential school system and Canada's colonial history in a meaningful and lasting way. In the plan, Goal 3: Indigenous Ways of Knowing: Programs addresses community action and the strategy to establish institutional partnerships and relationships with Indigenous organizations and communities in support of Indigenous language revitalization, respecting that Indigenous communities have sovereignty over their languages.

The plan is a path forward with specific actions to improve the university experience for students and staff. Most significant is that this document will uphold the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) Calls to Action and [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), including the International Decade for Indigenous Languages, which recognizes Indigenous Peoples' rights, language and culture.

In March 2022, the university released the [Indigenous Student Success Survey Report](#) which provides responses from 232 students. This information has been valuable for the development of SILR planning and project management moving forward.

In 2022, it became apparent that the initial project plan would need to be reshaped as the SILR team reflects on what is working and what is not working as planned. The Steering Committee began discussions in July to address significant shifts that require tweaks and even some projects that have yet to gain traction.

With this in mind, discussions to update the Theory of Change (ToC), Logframe and budget began with the intention to share these updates with Project Officer, BHP Foundation by March 31, 2023.

Project Overview

The SILR project continues to building capacity in these five areas of focus:

SPEAKING: Increase the vitality of Indigenous languages among new young adult learners (15-40 years of age; including critical demographics such as young women) who will serve as a bridge between Elders and children.

TEACHING: Increase the number of teachers (formal and informal) capable of weaving Indigenous pedagogies into their language teaching practice—includes helping teachers to become more proficient in their language, training fluent speakers in language-teaching methods, and enhancing capacity of those teaching in non-academic settings.

KNOWLEDGE: Co-development of high-quality and relevant tools and materials for Indigenous language teachers and learners

LEADERSHIP: Increase the number of school leaders—teachers, principals, superintendents, trustees— with the relevant skills and accreditations to drive Indigenous language revitalization changes across the education system.

GOVERNANCE, SUSTAINABILITY, ADVOCACY & POLICY: Build the appropriate structure across all project initiatives to ensure i) timely implementation and appropriate evaluation, ii) feedback mechanisms to ensure voice is represented and programs remain relevant and fit for purpose as it relates to communities, and iii) best practices and evidence-based lessons emerging from this project are shared through national and international networks.

Implementation

This section will describe how each initiative was implemented from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022.

Speaking

Young Indigenous Women's Circle of Leadership (YIWCL)

The Young Indigenous Women's Circle of Leadership (YIWCL) initiative is focused on developing young Indigenous women's self-worth, pride and respect of self and others through the learning of cultural values using Indigenous languages. The initiative is open to Indigenous women ages 10-18 and focuses on the Cree language with a foundation in Cree knowledge and spirituality through immersion experiences.

Over the winter semester, YIWCL hosted three Mentor Apprentice Program (MAP) cohorts online and in-person gatherings. The *Learning Cree through Beading* cohort started at the end of November 2021 and continued into March 2022, consisting of Cree lessons and beading instructed by Elder-in-Residence Ekti Margaret Cardinal. In an interview, Elder Margaret Cardinal shared her experiences with YIWCL and spoke about her time teaching young women the Cree language, cultural teachings, and traditional arts. For her, the girls just have to be curious, ask questions, and be willing to learn. She noted that sharing teachings is crucial to the survival of Indigenous culture and language and spoke to the overall importance of being involved and connected with young women.

Starting in March 2022, the *Winter Camp* cohort took place online for 12 weeks and included new topics each week. Topics were informed by the participating young women's requests with Cree syllabics, Tipi teachings, and snaring being examples. A community initiative with Ministikwan Elders and teachers in Saskatchewan was offered where YIWCL contributed by providing resources to the after school Cree language Immersion sewing class. Following six weeks of sewing the girls had six weeks of virtual language classes.

During the summer, the annual two-week YIWCL Day Camp marked a return to the university campus for the first time in two years. All activities and events were centered around the theme: *miyo pimâtisiwin* (a good life or living in a balanced way). YIWCL summer staff, Elder-in-Residence, and four instructors planned various opportunities for participants to holistically heal after overcoming the many difficulties of the past two years, including engaging with nehiyaw/iyiniw culture and spirituality, personal identity, the multifaceted roles of Indigenous women, and the importance of community - all enrobed in nehiyawewin and Michif languages. Youth participated in

ceremony and field trips with respected ceremonialist Elders from Alexander, Enoch, and Maskwacis. Participants shared the following:

"I'm really proud to be at this camp, because not a lot of people have this opportunity, especially the people that went to residential schools. I'm really proud to be keeping the Cree language and culture alive."

"I am a jingle dancer. This program really inspired me to really try to be a role model for the next generation to come, because back in the day, we didn't have our language, and we couldn't dance, powwow, or anything. So, it's really inspiring - I really want to be that role model for future generations."

"I am a jigger, I love to embrace my culture, and teach other people how to embrace their cultures. I truly think this is an amazing opportunity, to be a part of this camp, and have all of these amazing teachings from Elders and teachers. One of my most favorite things here is to be with other people and see how they celebrate their culture. I'm having such a great time with these people."

"Overall, it was an absolutely beautiful experience for me to witness and be part of. The girls did a great job at all of their creations during the camp, they made new friends, and learned some Cree that I hope they take away and continue on their language and culture learning journey. Thank you for letting me be a part of it and learn a lot myself, along the way! Hiy Hiy" (Volunteer)

During the fall semester, YIWCL hosted a number of events: kitahkameyimonaw: Exploring Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation; Iskwew Acimowina: Michif Theatre Weekend; metawewina âpacîscikâna: Indigenous Games Workshop; Mossbags and Ribbon Skirt Workshops in Maskwacis; and pe-wîcikaskikwâsomâw kohkom Ekti: Crafting workshops with Elder-in-Residence Ekti Margaret Cardinal.

Events	Total Hours	Total Attendance	Topics
YIWCL 2022 Annual Day Camp: mîyo pimâtisiwin	59	18	Sharing circle; history and treaties; antiracism and tapwewewin; tipi teachings; syllabics and storytelling; theatre ; nikamowin (song) as a healer; hoop dancing; parfleche medallions, rattles/mini moccasins crafts; Cree Feast ceremony and protocol teachings; games
kitahkameyimonaw: Exploring Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation	3	24	Orange Shirt Day, Indian Residential Schools, and Intergenerational Trauma
Iskwew Acimowina: Michif Theatre Weekend	16.5	17	Michif language camp using theatre as a theme.
metawewina âpacîscikâna: Indigenous Games Workshop	15	28	Indigenous Games
Mossbags and Ribbon Skirt Workshops in Maskwacis	15	32	Mossbag cultural and sewing lessons. Ribbon skirts, tipiskawi-pisim (the moon), mikowahpa (tipis), pre-contact dresses/clothing, and syllabics

pe-wíciaskikwâsomâw kohkom Ekti: Crafting workshops	6	4	Buffalo Pound Pouches and history and language surrounding the Buffalo Pound
Total	114.5	123	

Braiding Stories to Live By (BStLB)

Braiding Stories to Live By (BStLB) is a project focused on co-creating gatherings so that multiple generations of Indigenous women can come together and share intergenerational knowledge. Unique to each community and cohort, BStLB incorporates teachings, language, stories and activities that promote holistic wellness and belonging.

This winter semester held many exciting BSLTB gatherings across different partnering communities. Early in the semester a cohort of Indigenous women from Fort Vermillion gathered online to learn about medicine wheel teachings, ribbon skirt making, and art journaling. Several participants completed an intake survey where they shared their interest in building a stronger connection to themselves, their community and learning more about their culture. Elder Mary Cardinal Collins joined a session where the group learned more about ribbon skirt teachings, a topic many shared they were eager to learn more about. The second cohort was a group of junior high students from Parkland School who were also fortunate to learn about medicine wheel teachings from Elder Frank Suprenant's book. At the end of the program, Parkland students shared that they enjoyed learning about hoop dances, spirituality, and different teachings. During BStLB gatherings, language is organically integrated into programming with Elders sharing different language components through prayers, teachings and activities. Teachings are embedded in the language and they help foster important BStLB objectives of nourishing participants' resilience, balance, and confidence.

In early 2022, smaller, short-term cohorts were created. The Parkland School Division cohort completed a series of online sessions. A cohort in Fort McMurray with a grade 5 class met once a month until the end of June and resumed in the Fall. The High Level cohort ran from September to December with 16 youth and partnered with Aboriginal Studies to weave in BStLB teachings. All sessions online and in-person have well-being and identity at the center, focusing on Indigenous wisdom and contemporary practices. Moss Bag Teachings have also been provided to the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP) women who gather at the University of Alberta ATEP space.

During the fall, the team grew and began to develop relationships with diverse cohorts, spent time in planning and executed and/or engaged in diverse activities. BStLB kept the flexibility to be responsive to community needs and asks while sharing things that they have learned and developed over the course of the project.

Events	Total Hours	Total Attendance	Topics
Fort Vermillion cohort	6	9	Medicine Wheel Teachings, Ribbon Skirts, Art Journaling
Parkland cohort	5.5	40	Medicine Wheel Teachings
Fort McMurray cohort	12	20	Wintercount, Residential Schools, Trickster Stories Mini-Tipi construction Fried bannock
Moss Bag Sewing June 18, 2022 team leads and potential volunteers / informal focus group	8	10	Usage, wrapping, and design/sewing of the waspison (moss bag) and swing
Moss Bag Teachings Nov 5, 2022 team leads and potential volunteers / informal focus group	8	10	Compassion, nehiyaw history/origin of the waspison (moss bag), sacred bundle
PhotoVoice Workshop August 25, 2022 2 team leads	2	4	Discussed future PhotoVoice project and implementation of <i>paper shoot</i> cameras with youth groups. Developing activities related to identity, Indigeneity, personal development, and well-being
Multiple Events High Level BSTLB Group (High Level, AB) - Jr High class	24-30	16	Cultural pride, identity, confidence, language capacity, beading, goal-setting
Multiple Events Fort McMurray BSTLB Group (Fort McMurray, AB) Elementary students K-6	78	407	Foundational knowledge, diverse Métis experiences and traditions, Métis history, artwork
Multiple Events Jasper Place HS BSTLB Group (Edmonton, AB) Relationship building Nov/Dec 2022	12-15	10 to 15	Ribbon skirt teachings, design/sewing, cultural pride and resurgence, identity
Meeting Metro Continuing Education administrators & BSTLB Recruitment Dec 2022	3	4	Discussed the development and implementation of a BSTLB course, with focus on cultural development for Indigenous high-school students.
	167.5	535	

First People's House (FPH)

First Peoples' House (FPH) is “a home away from home” at the University of Alberta for Indigenous students. First Peoples' House provides an environment of empowerment for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners to achieve their personal and academic goals. It is a student services centre whose programming is guided by the Medicine Wheel. FPH provides access to on-campus residences,

educational resources, financial support, and spiritual/language/cultural resources. One such initiative is the Indigenous Languages Club.

The FPH Indigenous Languages Club (ILC) hosted a new cohort of students this winter semester, offering both online and in-person gatherings through the winter semester. The club featured guest speakers, workshops, and presentations. Participants could access language resources such as Cree dictionaries, notebooks, and Cree Calendars. Participants shared through an intake survey that they joined ILC to learn Cree and other Indigenous languages and make new friends. Many students indicated that they hoped to build their confidence by practicing with others. The majority of feedback from the survey showed that participants' language learning goals centered on speaking Cree, building fluency, and teaching others.

A facilitator shared that she hopes that students who join the club realize that they are all teachers, no matter their fluency. This past semester, guest speakers represented several Indigenous languages, including a Maori speaker that inspired students with stories of language revitalization in the lands known today as New Zealand. Additionally, the club received widespread media attention, gaining features from CBC, Global TV and CTV. The facilitator shared that from an Indigenous perspective, the club's big success came from researching languages and coming together as learners to gain more knowledge.

Weekly virtual meetings were held in Winter and Spring 2022. In the Spring 2022 term a Cree language tutor was hired to support students registered in the Native Studies 152 Introductory Cree course. The Language Coordinator position was filled with a graduate student on a part-time basis. There is ongoing recruitment for ILC facilitators and guest speakers.

First People's House is moving away from the colonial understanding of learning and practicing language. The focus language is nehiyawewin (Cree) because the University of Alberta is located on Papaschase Cree territory within amiskwaciwâskahikan (Edmonton), which is situated on Treaty 6 territory. First People's House wishes to honour that relation by practicing the language that was original to this territory. However, FPH also wishes to recognize that nehiyawewin is being taught in a colonial institution through courses available in the Faculty of Native Studies - and FPH does not wish to take away from their ways of teaching.

The First People's House supports nehiyawewin being taught in a holistic manner and by living the language within the home. This approach is envisioned by recounting experiences with Kokoms and Mosoms (Grandmas and Grandpas, respectively). Being in their homes and growing up with the language surrounding them was influential. Understanding of this experience allows First People's

House to practice this approach by having Elders and students mimic the way language has been traditionally taught and learned.

First People's House transitioned from having a *Language Club* to *Living the Language*. They have hired a part-time masters student to help their First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students with Cree classes, syllabics and to lead the *Living the Language* initiatives.

Events	Total Hours	Total Attendance	Topics
12	>16	Average Attendance/Session: 18	Indigenous Languages Club

Intensive Adult Language Immersion (IALI)

The Intensive Adult Language Immersion (IALI) project is designed to be community-led and lead to new and improved language proficiency among Indigenous young adults.

Engagement with Poundmaker Cree Nation resulted in a Language Revitalization Land-based Camp in Manitou Lake, Saskatchewan. There is current engagement with Kee Tas Kee Now Tribal Council Education Authority (KTCEA) an education authority for six schools in North-Central Alberta within five Cree First Nations (Loon River, Woodland Cree, Lubicon Lake Band, Whitefish Lake and Peerless Trout First Nations). Agreements for community-led language documentation work have been agreed upon with Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation and Îethka Îabi Institute.

IALI completed a subgrant with Yellowhead Tribal College (YTC) to support their language activities aimed at improving language proficiency for adults enrolled at YTC as well as others in their four constituent First Nations. YTC will be leading a wide range of activities over the next several years to support Cree, Saulteaux and Stoney language learners in central Alberta communities.

IALI hired an advisor to recruit a group of fluent Cree speakers and continuing Cree learners living in the Edmonton metro area to meet and discuss what an urban-based Mentor-Apprentice language learning program could look like. The data collected from this meeting will be used for further planning and development.

Events	Total Hours	Total Attendance	Topics
Language Mentor Meeting	3	10	How mentors can best teach the language
Language Apprentice Meeting	3	13	How apprentices can best learn the language
	6	23	

Teaching

The Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI)

The Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI) is a tripartite initiative between the Faculties of Arts, Education, and Native Studies, established in 2000. CILLDI's mission is to work in collaboration with Indigenous communities, researchers, and educators to support long-term language sustainability through research, training, and development.

In the winter, CILLDI welcomed a new cohort of learners from Paul Band First Nation which consisted of thirteen students pursuing the Community Linguistic Certificate (CLC). This cohort completed two CILLDI courses over the winter semester; including: LING 111: Introduction to Linguistic Analysis for Indigenous Language Revitalization and LING 211: Phonetics of Indigenous Languages.

Several students completed an end of semester survey where they shared their language learning goals and journeys. All new to CILLDI, the students shared that they enrolled in the courses to learn and preserve their language. In pursuing the CLC, the students' hopes centered on building their fluency and vocabulary, creating their own dictionary, and supporting language revitalization overall. Many of the students' language learning goals are to speak, understand, and teach their language so that they can pass on what they have learned to others.

In the summer, CILLDI reevaluated the necessity of a second location, formerly known as CILLDI-East, due to the expanding and improvement of online course offerings. 59 students were recruited for the third Online Summer School in Language Revitalization which took place July 4 - August 12, 2022. An additional cohort of 15 students from Tsuut'ina Nation is taking courses customized for the needs of their community's language revitalization project. The first of these courses took place in Fall 2022.

Item	# of Participants	
Online Summer School	59	
Tsuut'ina Nation Cohort	15	CILLDI course offering

In the fall, CILLDI continued intensive language documentation work with two teams of speakers at Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation, as well as a team at Stoney Nakota First Nation. CILLDI has now gathered over *30,000 recordings of phrases and sentences* from nearly 20 different speakers, as well as

over 5 hours of storytelling and conversation. CILLDI has drafted nearly a dozen basic storybooks in Stoney.

CILLDI also developed *two new mobile applications*: one to record narrative descriptions of pictures and illustrations from fluent speakers, and the other to help train speakers and learners to accurately transcribe those recordings. Both apps are currently in use with the Stoney language teams.

CILLDI continued the review and expansion of the CILLDI Linguistics curriculum, developing new resources for the courses and exploring ways of adding more flexibility to the Certificate program by adding new optional courses that will allow students to focus on their areas of greatest interest.

CILLDI also partnered with the Tsuut'ina Gunaha Institute to offer two courses in the Fall semester for Tsuut'ina language teachers and learners, with an additional two courses planned for the Winter.

Events	Total Hours	Total Attendance	Topics
LING 111 - Paul Band Cohort	30	Average Attendance: 9.33	
LING 211 - Paul Band Cohort	27.5	Average Attendance: 6.09	
Stoney Transcription Workshop	12	15	Training people to learn to write in Stoney
	69.5	30	

Weaving Holistic Learning Experiences through Language Programming and Culture (WHoLE)

The Weaving Holistic Learning Experiences through Language Programming and Culture (WHoLE) initiative connects Indigenous preservice teachers with community based initiatives and professional development opportunities to build their capacity to lead and foster Indigenous language learning in classrooms. WHoLE aims to highlight and support a growing network of language learners and speakers from the University of Alberta and beyond to collaborate and inspire language learning

This winter, WHoLe has been building connections, relationships, and capacity for developing language learning opportunities. Events hosted have been centered on inspiring language learning in preservice students with various fluency levels. The first WHoLE event was a workshop on Métis poetry writing with guest speaker and Métis author Naomi McIlwraith. The workshop was a great opportunity for student writers to explore language and identity, and to engage with Naomi McIlwraith's book of poems titled *kiyâm*. This workshop was followed by an online event hosted by

Molly Chisaakay, a Dene Tha speaker who shared Grandmother teachings and sought to inspire language learning. In addition to hosting events, WHoLE shares relevant opportunities and events through regular newsletters to amplify Indigenous language learning initiatives. In building a network of Indigenous language revitalizers across campus and beyond, WHoLE continuously seeks to organize gatherings for learners, speakers and teachers to come together to encourage language reclamation where it has been interrupted.

During the fall, the Curriculum Director and the Program Assistant reviewed the results from the Student Survey conducted in September 2022, organized and conducted three student gatherings, two Indigenous Languages Sharing Series, an Indigenous Language Revitalization Panel, and sponsored Indigenous preservice teachers to attend three Indigenous education conferences. The conferences provided additional education and professional development opportunities for the students.

Student Survey Results

The purpose of the survey was to collect information based on enhanced supports and resources needed for Indigenous education preservice teachers. Seventy-three responses were received, and half of the respondents identified themselves as First Nations, and the other half as Métis. When asked to identify the resources or experiences that would help learn and/or teach Indigenous languages while attending university, the participants suggested face to face language sessions, accessibility to on-line videos, mobile apps, language learning games and books, and the opportunity to participate in culture ceremonies. Other suggestions provided by the preservice Indigenous teachers included comments such as, "Start as soon as possible," "Create an inclusive environment," "Have more Nehiyaw speaking professors", and "Having guest Elders come in to help with the learning/meaning behind it."

Events	Total Hours	Total Attendance	Topics	Resources
Workshop and Grandmother Teachings	3.5	32	Workshop with Métis Writer Naomi McIlwraith, Grandmother teachings with Molly Chisaakay (Dene)	"kiyam", a book of poems, by Naomi McIlwraith
Student Gathering 1 - September 14, 2022	2	2	Brief Overview of the SILR Student Project Survey Results	(Revised) SILR powerpoint Student Survey Results Report
Student Gathering 2 - October 19, 2022	2	5	Identification of specific needs for the Student Gathering (i.e. Healthy well-being session ...)	Elder's Knowledge (on the History of Edmonton)
Student Gathering 3	2	22	Sharing of Oral Traditions:	Elders' Knowledge (of the

- December 8, 2022			Indigenous & non-Indigenous Worldviews	significance of language)
Conference 1 - Indig Lang Revitalization Land-based Camp (July 15 - 18, 2022)	28	1	Sharing of Oral Traditions (from Elders/KKs) i.e. Spirit & Language; Cree Games & Songs	Elders' Knowledge (of the significance & importance of language)
Conference 2 - Transformative Reconciliation Gathering (September 25 - 28, 2022)	28	5	Elder Sharing Indoor & Outdoor Activities	Elders/Knowledge Keepers (of the importance of language & culture)
Conference 3 - Soaring with Knowledge Conference (November 17 - 19, 2022)	28	9	Treaties, Language Learning, Land-based Learning, Indigenous Ways of Knowing	Networking with other Indigenous educators Partnering with other Education Programs/Organizations Cultural and Language Resources List
Indigenous Language Sharing Series (ILSS) - October 17, 2022	1.5	26	Cree Language Programming & Land-based Education	Powerpoint Video of guest presentation (SILR website/ Youtube links)
ILSS - December 14, 20	1.5	18	Nehiyaweyan kikinahk - Speaking Cree at Home	Powerpoint (by guest presenter) Book Video of guest presentation (SILR website/ Youtube)
Indigenous Language Revitalization Panel - November 16, 2022	2	60	Indigenous Language Revitalization Land-based Learning and programming Traditional Stories	Powerpoint Presentations Video of guest presentation
Total	98.5	180		

Language Assessment Program (LAP)

The Language Assessment Program (LAP) seeks to support pathways for fluent speakers of Indigenous languages to gain advanced credit for the University of Alberta's Secondary Teacher Education program. By establishing partnerships and relationships with communities working with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, LAP's goal is to support the development and implementation of language assessment tools led by First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, and educational institutions. The impetus behind this initiative is that the development of culturally appropriate assessment programs can facilitate fluent Indigenous language speakers seeking to become credentialed teachers.

To date, a Memorandum of Relational Understanding (MORU) has been established between Yellowhead Tribal College (YTC) and the University of Alberta. Working closely with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, YTC has developed a Language Assessment Tool for Cree, Stoney, and Anishinaabe. The relationship built with YTC and their work on the various Indigenous language assessment tools is a noted success by the LAP Principal Investigator. Another success has been the clear recognition that Indigenous Communities have sovereignty over their language and that the University of Alberta does not seek any ownership of that work. A contractor was hired to support the development of a committee focused on language assessment from a Indigenous worldview. LAP continues to build relationships and partnerships to explore what the development of culturally appropriate language assessment tools that are unique to each speaking community could look like. A Language Assessment Circle with Indigenous academics with an interest and background in assessment began meeting regularly.

In the fall, the Language Assessment Circle met to continue to learn from committee members' presentations and subsequent discussions. These discussions were significant and led to the development of a project plan and Terms of Reference. This will include gathering Indigenous experts with a broad range of knowledge in the field of language assessment and lead into community contracts with a workshop planned for Spring 2023.

Events	Total Hours	Total Attendance	Topics
Language Assessment Circle meeting	2	6	Dr. Belinda Daniels presentation
Language Assessment Circle	2	10	KTCEA Presentation Proposed Project Plan
Total	4	16	

Knowledge

WUN

Leadership

The Master of Education in Education Studies - Supporting Leadership in Indigenous Languages (MES) program has had engagement with academic staff, SILR staff and advisors. Through discussions, program goals and objectives were defined for feedback.

The goal of the MES is to equip leaders (Indigenous and non-Indigenous allies) to support Indigenous language development and revitalization in their schools and school authorities. This

program is open to Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders with interest in supporting Indigenous language development and revitalization in their schools and school authorities.

The program outcomes include: students will develop a deeper understanding of Indigenous foundational knowledge focused on Indigenous ways of knowing and being, the connection between language, culture, and land, and Indigenous language development then apply this knowledge to their work as education leaders to support Indigenous languages in classrooms, schools and school authorities.

For students who need Alberta Education's Leadership Quality Standard certification (principal certification), the program meets the academic requirements for this certification.

Meeting the shifts that have occurred during the pandemic, this is a hybrid program. Both summer terms will be in-person with other courses fully online.

Annual Gathering for Leadership for Transforming Educational Systems

From September 20-23, 2022, SILR co-hosted the Worldwide Universities Network (WUN) Research Conference focusing on *decolonizing the capture of Indigenous Knowledge*. Members of BHP Foundation/Board were in attendance on September 22-23, 2022.

Planning for a one-day language gathering for Indigenous language learners, speakers and advocates began to:

- Raise awareness on the importance of language revitalization
- Explore the connection of mind, body and spirit in language and culture
- Share language learning and teaching strategies and resources
- Foster a network and communities of practice

It also helps to facilitate engagement with various language programming, along with providing an excellent opportunity for learners, language speakers and language advocates with interest in networking and establishing communities of practice.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The evaluation team worked closely with different SILR initiatives to collaborate on integrating timely and appropriate evaluation processes. In addition to tracking output data, the evaluation team met with project teams to co-develop surveys, interview guides and other data collection methods that help document multi-faceted initiatives. This will continue to be an evolving process over the entirety

of the SURL project. The team additionally met with a First Nations community representative and began development of a needs assessment workshop and guide which is to be completed in 2023.

Research

Literature Review

In January 2022, the research team commenced phase 1 of the systematic literature review which entailed identifying the research question, the search strategy and the search parameters. Once these aspects of the research study were developed, the research team began identifying academic and grey literature that aligned with the research project goals and the research question.

In June 2022, the research team transitioned to phase 2 and began the process of critically examining the academic and grey literature to identify emerging themes, challenges, limitations, successes, interesting findings and how the literature is related to and informs the research question. The research team anticipates completing this phase and beginning phase 3 in March 2023. Below is a brief summary of the preliminary findings that have begun to arise from phase 2 of the systematic literature review as well as a significant gap.

Preliminary findings

Studies using quantitative analysis have found that there are links between the use of Indigenous languages and certain aspects of health. For example, and using correlational analysis, studies have found that for communities that speak their Indigenous language(s) on a regular basis have lower rates of youth suicide (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; Hallett et al., 2007; Chandler & Lalonde, 2008), lower rates of cigarette smoking (Henderson et al., 2005), lower rates of alcohol consumption (Whitbeck et al., 2004; Stone et al., 2006), lower rates of diabetes (Oster et al., 2014), and higher rates of high school graduation (Wilson, 2012). In addition, studies have identified that use of Indigenous language(s) can have a positive impact on higher rates of overall health and well-being (Coe et al., 2004; Hodge & Nandy, 2011; Whalen et al., 2016). In addition, one qualitative study interviewed Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and identified that persistent use of Indigenous peoples language(s) causes “pleasure, joyful emotions, wellness, balance, a healthy spirit, identity and direction” (Taff et al., 2018, p. 870). In contrast, the disuse of Indigenous language was found to cause a “lack of direction, stress tears, and alcohol and drug abuse” (Taff et al., 2018, p. 870).

Although this area of research is just emerging, collectively the above studies have found that there is a relationship between health, well-being, and the use of Indigenous language(s). As a result, this line of inquiry has the potential to provide significant findings and arguably requires further research. In addition, it is important to note that current studies predominantly used quantitative

methods, analysis and focused on the Western concept of health and were not designed to examine the relationship between the use of Indigenous language(s) and well-being. In response to this dearth in the literature and to answer the research question, the research team will design and conduct a research study to identify and examine the relationship between the use of Indigenous language(s) and well-being.

Research Study

While continuing to conduct the systematic literature review, in October 2022 the research team began the process of developing a research proposal and are currently in the process of reviewing and finalizing this document as part of the ethics application. It is anticipated that the ethics application will be completed and submitted to the University of Alberta's Research Ethics Board (REB) by February 2023.

In total the research team has:

- 4 graduate students that worked 504 hours between October and December
- Completed phase 1 and 50% of phase 2
- Completed a research proposal

During phase 3 the research team will synthesize and re-evaluate the information and literature that was collected throughout phase 1 and 2. Once this process has been completed the research team will begin to compile a literature review that will outline, examine and provide a foundation of knowledge on current gap(s), evidence and areas for future research to further our collective understanding of the research question.

After gaining REB approval in the spring of 2023, the research team will begin conducting a qualitative inquiry that weaves together Indigenous and Community-based participatory research (CBPR) methodologies to begin an in-depth exploration with local Indigenous Language Speakers and Knowledge Keepers. The research study has been designed to address the current gap in the literature that was identified during phase 2 of the systematic literature review process. The research team will then use and braid together the findings from literature review and the research study to engage in public speaking opportunities, attend conference and publish policy, academic and white papers to begin mobilizing this knowledge and building a foundation of knowledge for further funding and research opportunities.

Challenges/Opportunities

Staffing

The project teams have undergone staffing shortages due to the competitive nature of the current labour market in Canada. According to Statistics Canada, [labour shortage](#) is expected to continue to be a significant obstacle for over 35% of business and retaining skilled employees is an anticipated obstacle for 27% of business. This is more significant for Indigenous professionals in evaluation, linguists, and project management as they continue to be in high demand. During the spring and summer, both the project coordinator, evaluation coordinator and research assistant left their positions, and a new evaluation coordinator was hired. As the team builds capacity internally it is apparent that contracts and consulting services will be beneficial to the project.

University of Alberta Restructuring

In 2019, the University of Alberta received notice of a \$224M over the years and a mandated tuition increase of 7 per cent over the same period. The combined impact of a reduction in annual operating budget of \$1.1 billion and the effects of the global pandemic has had a direct impact on the SILR programing.

The university has embarked on significant changes in the academic and administrative structure and it is anticipated that we will continue to learn these new processes and adjust accordingly by allowing more time for hiring, processing finances, and technical support.

Relationship Building

On May 27, 2023, [Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc](#) announced they had found 215 potential unmarked graves of children who attended Kamloops Indian Residential School. Over the coming months many more discoveries were made, including the former [Marieval Indian Residential School](#), [Kuper Island Residential School](#) and many more. Varying numbers were reported on social media, which cast doubt across the nation. First [6,000](#), [10,000](#), [then 12,000](#) and the foundation was laid for individuals to *downplay the numbers and cast doubt on the results*.

Today, many families are searching for the remains of their family members and the searches using various technologies will continue for years to come. According to [Kisha Sueprnault](#),

There are likely thousands of graves at former Indian Residential Schools across the country, but we don't yet have enough information to know where most of them are located — some are likely lost forever. As the number of anomalies reported increases over the months and years to come, we can't forget that every child matters. Each grave represents a beloved member of a family

who was torn away from their community. Each grave represents a story of a child stolen. Every family that lost their children to this genocide deserves answers. Reconciliation isn't possible without truth and we must not turn away from the truth.

We know that residential schools had a direct result on language loss in communities across land that is now known as Canada and must take great care as we take steps towards language revitalization.

Learning/Next Steps

This year we have learned:

- there is a need for decolonized evaluation and assessment language, approaches and methods to be created for SILR
- the need and desire for evaluation capacity and support varies widely between the UofA projects, SILR office, and also at the community level
- the pandemic has slowed (1) the development of partnerships with communities and other institutions, (2) the progress of the overall project, and (3) the relevance of the current theory of change and the logframe
- despite our best efforts to hire Indigenous staff (in evaluation and the main SILR office) it is challenging and there is a need for capacity in this space

The original evaluation model intended for SILR evaluation support to be housed between the SILR office and CUP in a blended model. Given the challenge of hiring and retaining staff in both the main SILR office and CUP over the past 2 years, the evaluation roles and tasks have flowed back and forth between the 2 spaces in an attempt to sustain evaluation supports and processes. Given the community based nature of this work, the shifts that COVID has created, and the evolution of SILR's focus, some aspects of the original model have been challenging.

In the spirit of decolonising approaches to evaluation and assessment terms and ways to speak about facilitating learning without using these colonial based terms. This process could start with this conversation.

The emergent ToC and logframe will need to resonate with and engage all UofA projects so the learning they are capturing aligns with the needed metrics for reporting and impact stories.

A revised budget will be presented to the BHP Foundation in the Quarter 1 update and discussion.

Communication

Articles

[Donor Impact Report 2022 | Give to UAlberta](#)

[New community-driven project aims to support revitalization of Indigenous languages for current and coming generations](#)

[Student-led Indigenous Language Club fosters connections to community, culture and history | Folio](#)

[National Indigenous Languages Day: Keeping languages thriving for generations to come | The Quad](#)

[New school in Leduc has Cree name inspired by location, history and hope for students | CBC News](#)

[Five Things I've Learned About Preserving Indigenous Languages | New Trail](#)

Interviews

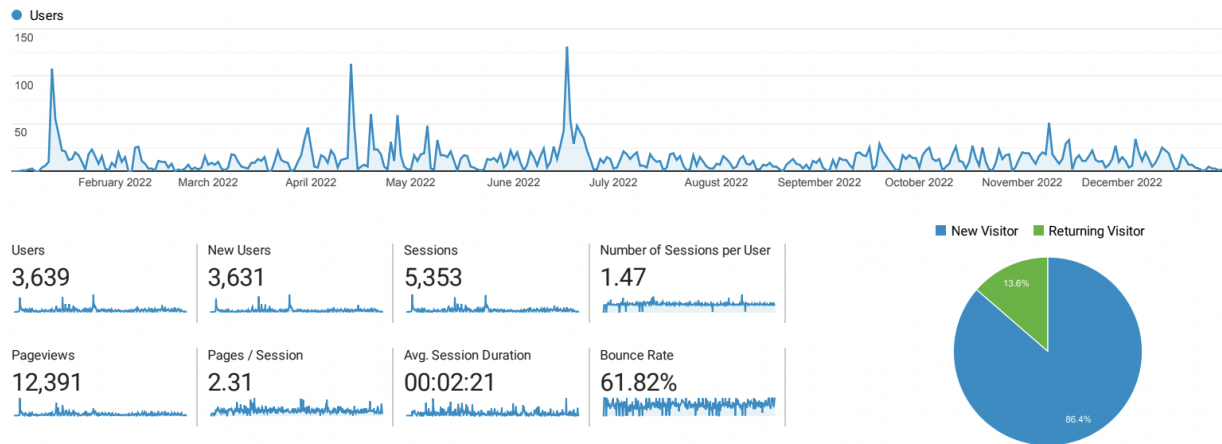
[CFWE FM Radio: The Raven Interview with Pamela McCoy Jones - Supporting Indigenous Language Revitalization](#)

Videos

[Keeping Indigenous languages alive | CTV News](#)

SILR Resources

[SILR Info - YouTube](#)



[SILR Website Analytics](#)

Finance