



MEMORANDUM

TO: Grand Chief Ruth Massie and Yukon First Nation Leadership

FROM: Emmie Fairclough, Self Government Secretariat Director

DATE: September 28, 2015

RE: **Language Revitalization Program Final Report**

BACKGROUND

- The objective of the *Walking Together to Revitalize and Recognize Yukon First Nations Languages* was to benefit all Yukon people by having a direct impact on reversing language shift and restoring the natural cycle of intergenerational transmission of language and culture.
- The project was meant to optimize and build upon existing language revitalization efforts of all Yukon First Nations; including all service providers (YNLC, YNTEP, and Yukon First Nations community projects).
- The Language Revitalization Program was administered by the Self-Government Secretariat (SGS) at CYFN over three years and the work-plan implemented in three phases: Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III. This turned out to be an ambitious timeline as the project was extended many times. Phase I began September 2009 and was completed August 2012.
- This report contains summary overviews of work accomplished in phase II and III of the Language Revitalization Program, through Self-Government Secretariat (SGS) for Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) from August 1, 2012 – July 30, 2015.

Projects completed:

- Tlingit Immersion Camp
- Cataloguing of the resource library and digitization of 742 cassettes
- Total Physical Response training at Chief Atahm School in Chase B.C.
- Year-long Language Nests started with Kluane First Nation, Kwänlin Dün First Nation, and Carcross/Tagish First Nation
- Year-long Master Apprentice Programs started with Ta'an Kwäch'an Council, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, and Selkirk First Nation
- Four Language Working Group meetings
- Produced *We Are Our Language Conference* March 5-7th, 2013 for language teachers
- Produced *We Are Our Language* Film and two screenings
- Updating the SGS LRP website
- Supporting Tlingit Language Revitalization Association's Tlingit 1 course with textbook.
- Two Total Physical Response training workshops with Champagne & Ashihik First Nations
- Vuntut Gwich'in Community Language Plan, 2015
- Northern Tutchone Uncles Retreat with the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation
- LSCFN employee training in Total Physical Response at Chief Atahm School

Workplan items not realized:

- Community Language Plans for every First Nation
- Family Literacy Packages for the communities
- Southern Tutchone Intensive Workshop
- Language Revitalization Technology
- Language Legislation and Policy Development

CONSIDERATIONS:

- There were also many obstacles including high staff turnover for the Language Revitalization Program Coordinator
- Lack of governance structure for the Language Revitalization Program Coordinator and the Language Working Group, who would have benefitted from a Terms of Reference
- Some Yukon First Nation communities did not access the program funding resulting in a lack of equity amongst communities and program funding
- A lot has been accomplished in terms of raising awareness about YFN languages and introducing new teaching methods, there is still an overwhelming need for sequential curriculum, classroom materials and resources, and ongoing funding to support these initiatives
- Another pressing matter is how to ensure the digitized materials at CYFN are shared with the First Nations and the public due to the sensitivity nature of the digital recording
- This initiative succeeded in building upon and coordinating efforts of the different First Nations communities and brought new language programs to the community level exposing community workers to training and program management. However, there remains much work to be done towards YFN language revitalization, especially in the creation of tangible resources and curriculum development

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A House of Language
- More engagement with YFN Elders
- A Yukon-wide Language Revitalization Plan
- Curriculum Development and Direction
- Funding for individual YFN communities
- Secured multi-year funding support for language

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Walking Together to Revitalize and Recognize Yukon First Nation Languages

Language Revitalization Program Final Report

(Copy of report and memory stick provided to each YFN attending September 2015 CYFN Leadership and copies mailed to other YFN not in attendance)