



# First Peoples' News

FALL 2023

## B.C. FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES REPORT SHOWS INCREASE IN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The First Peoples Cultural Council (FPCC) has released the fourth edition of the *Report on the Status of B.C. First Nations Languages 2022*. We are encouraged by a significant rise in adult learners, semi-speakers and immersion opportunities for all ages. These positive changes show that the hard work happening in language revitalization is supporting the growth of strong, living First Nations languages across B.C.

Highlights include:

- New language learners increased by more than 20%
- Pre-school language nests tripled from 10 in 2018 to 32 in 2022
- Mentor-Apprentice teams grew from 27 to 150
- An increase in children learning their First Nations language at home as their mother tongue.

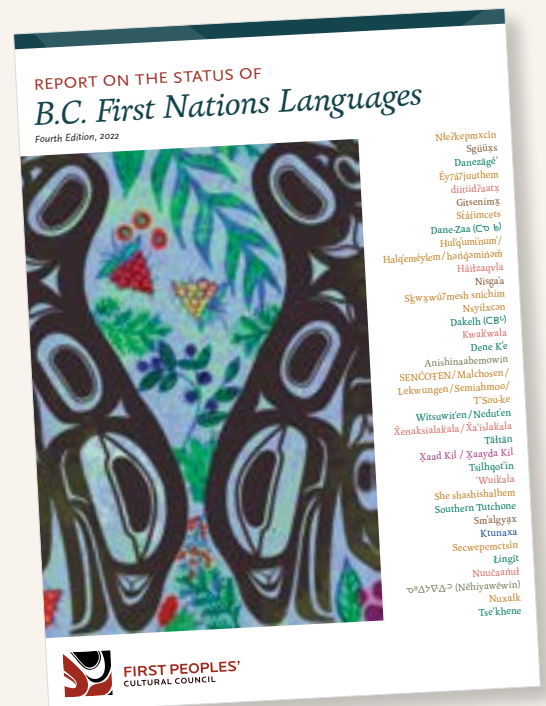
The report highlights several of these families, including Roxanne and Cody Dool, who are raising their three children to speak Halq'eméylem

**“My great grandma played a really big role in language revitalization here in Stó:lō, territory,” says Roxanne Dool, Halq'eméylem speaker from Squiala and Shxw'owhamel. “I feel like the only way I can give thanks to her and fill her shoes is by contributing to the language. And not only me, but taking my entire family along for the ride. It's a part of our culture and who we are. It's what we're supposed to be doing.”**

A special shout-out to Suzanne Gessner, FPCC's Research & Development Linguist, for all her hard work on this report. *“We are*

*super grateful to all the community members who completed the surveys that produced this report,”* says Suzanne. *“We couldn't do it without them!”*

Read the full Status Report and fact sheet here: [fpcc.ca/statusreport2022](https://fpcc.ca/statusreport2022)



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# UN DECADE CELEBRATES INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

Carla Lewis, FPCC's Board Chair, was honoured to attend the official launch of the United Nations (UN) International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–32), together with a global team who are working together to fulfill the Decade's Global Action Plan.

During the panel discussions, FPCC was recognized as a leader in many areas of language revitalization.

**“FPCC has already made great progress towards achieving the goals outlined by the UN Decade’s Global Action Plan,” says Carla. “We will continue working with B.C. First Nations to achieve these by 2030.”**

The official launch of the Decade took place in Paris on December 13, 2022. Carla attended with youth representative Aiyana Twigg and Dr. Lorna Wánosts’a7 Williams, Chair of the First Peoples’ Cultural Foundation Board (featured in the image to the right).

As part of the launch, the UN General Assembly invited Indigenous peoples from around the world to initiate ideas. FPCC developed its own list of goals, which include increasing First Nations control of our languages, access to education, research, resources, advocacy, support and long-term sustainable funding.

The Decade champions the rights of Indigenous Peoples to freedom of expression, education in our mother tongue and access to language in our everyday lives. It’s an opportunity to celebrate our languages and the First Nations people across B.C. who are working to revitalize them.

Take a look at FPCC’s 10 goals and celebrate the Decade with us as we share stories, resources and more at [fpcc.ca/decade](https://fpcc.ca/decade) and on our social media channels.



## FPCC'S LANGUAGE FOR LIFE:

*Nourishing Indigenous Languages in the Home provides tips and strategies to use Indigenous language in everyday life. It includes games, tips, activities and steps your family can take to build a family language plan. Find out more here: [fpcc.ca/resource/language-for-life](https://fpcc.ca/resource/language-for-life)*

# HERITAGE INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT SUPPORTS FRAGILE CULTURAL COLLECTION

The U'mista Cultural Centre in 'yális (also known as Alert Bay) sits by the water and is surrounded by rainforest. The centre provides space for community cultural collections and performances. Here it rains an average of 203 days a year. This humid climate means the Kwakwaka'wakw cultural collection needs protection from moisture damage.

Beginning in 2021, multi-year funding from FPCC's Heritage Infrastructure Program (HIP) is supporting upgrades to the HVAC system at U'mista. The upgrades create a temperature-controlled environment to protect the most fragile pieces in the collection.

**"The nature of our collection is that it's a lot of cedar bark," says Tłaliłilas Juanita Johnston, Director of U'mista Cultural Centre. 'Kadzək'w (softened cedar bark) begins to degrade the moment work such as pounding and soaking begins. So the material is by nature highly vulnerable to deterioration."**

Controlling temperature and humidity is important to protect pieces made of organic materials such as cedar, wood, leather and hide. The centre's old HVAC system could not keep a consistent temperature or handle seasonal temperature changes.

Tłaliłilas is grateful for FPCC's "well-thought-out" programming. She also likes the monthly check-ins with other grant recipients, "so we can hear what everyone else is doing, and that inspires." The HIP funding will protect their collections so they can share 'yális history and knowledge with their community and visitors for years to come.

"One of the things that we stress in our tours is that it is a living culture. It's still being practiced," says Tłaliłilas. "We always recognize those who came before us. We wouldn't have a cultural centre without the old people who fought so hard for the return of the collection."

Do you have an infrastructure need in your community? The HIP supports projects that conserve, repair or develop local heritage infrastructure. Funding

## NEW RESOURCE!

*The Indigenous Heritage Stewardship Toolkit is a resource for First Nations communities interested in protecting, revitalizing and celebrating their heritage. It includes a blueprint for planning heritage programs and policy. It also has resources for best practices, training and funding. Explore all FPCC toolkits here: [fpcc.ca/toolkits](https://fpcc.ca/toolkits)*

goes to First Nations communities, organizations and First Nations-led museums and cultural spaces in B.C.

Learn more about the Heritage Infrastructure Program and other heritage project funding here: [fpcc.ca/heritage](https://fpcc.ca/heritage)



# UPDATED BC SANS FONT NOW AVAILABLE



The B.C. government has launched a new edition of the open-source BC Sans font in collaboration with FPCC's FirstVoices.

BC Sans was first introduced in 2019 to support the special characters found in Indigenous languages based in B.C.

This new updated version corrects limitations with certain character sets and now offers more formats, including light, regular



and bold characters with matching italics. It supports typing in all 34 B.C. First Nations languages.

**“FPCC was pleased to contribute expertise to the development of BC Sans 2.0, an important technology tool for First Nations in B.C.,” says Bridget Chase, FirstVoices Manager. “This free, open-source font makes it possible for community members and the public to digitally render all characters used in the 34 First Nations languages of this land. The investment by the Government of B.C. to develop and adopt this font is an important step towards reconciliation.”**

This resource provides support for First Nations peoples to use their languages and shows the B.C. government's commitment to Declaration on the Rights

of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) by improving access to our languages in digital spaces.

Use of the BC Sans font is also required by all new and current government employees, as well as government services that are hosted externally.

**“BC Sans is a gesture towards bringing reconciliation to life,” says Andrew Pratt, former Government Communications & Public Engagement Graphic Communications Director and one of the initial founders of the BC Sans typeface.**

You can start using BC Sans by installing the font on your devices. To download, search “BC Sans 2.0” in your web browser. BC Sans is compatible with Windows and Mac operating systems.

To explore the First Nations languages of B.C., visit **FirstVoices.com**

# MADE-IN-B.C. MAP SHOWCASES INDIGENOUS CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

The First Peoples' Map of B.C. was developed with First Nations in B.C. The interactive site weaves cultural information with content contributed by community members and Knowledge Keepers. The result is a living picture of our diverse, yet interconnected languages, arts, cultures and heritage.

The map can be used to hear language names and greetings. Users may also view First Nations language regions, artists and their artwork, heritage spaces and community landmarks. The map includes all 34 First Nations languages in B.C.

The First Peoples' Map is an impressive display of the incredible work being done by First Nations people in B.C. to revitalize and celebrate our unique languages, arts, cultures and heritage.

## Contribute to the map!

Do you have content you would like to add to the map for your community? Sign in to contribute language recordings, cultural sites, landmarks, images, videos and place names. We also

encourage Indigenous artists to create profiles so they can promote their work.

**“The First Peoples' Map makes it easy for me to share my career and various disciplines with people from all over. It also gives viewers a better understanding of where my community is,” says Nisga'a artist Kari Morgan. “You can easily search other artists around you or search by artistic background. It creates a feeling of community.”**

An additional goal of this map is to support non-Indigenous visitors to better understand Indigenous ways of being. They can learn about the people, languages and cultures where they live, as one small step towards reconciliation.

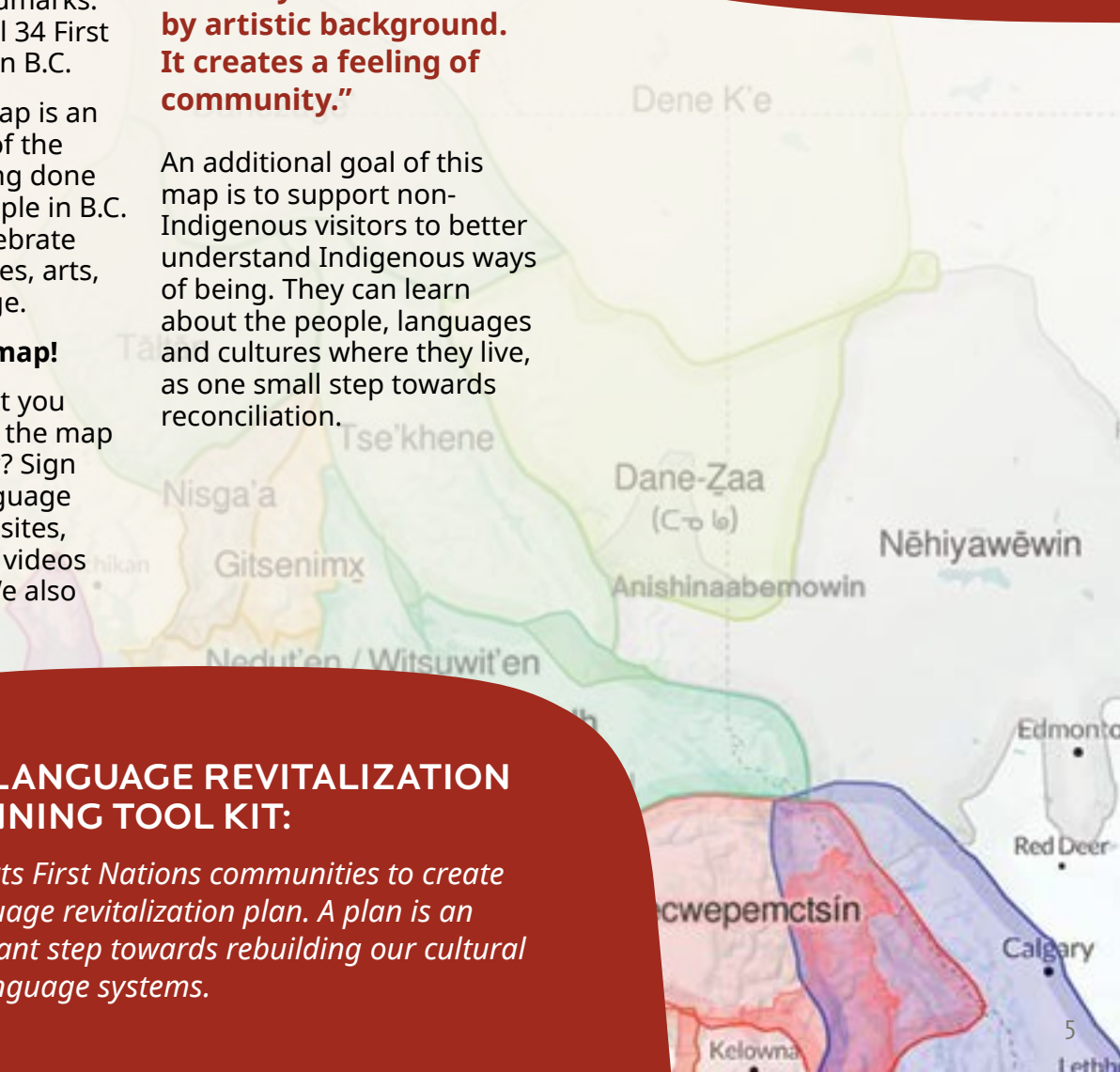
Explore the map and find out more here:  
[maps.fpcc.ca](https://maps.fpcc.ca)



Scan to explore

## THE LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION PLANNING TOOL KIT:

*Supports First Nations communities to create a language revitalization plan. A plan is an important step towards rebuilding our cultural and language systems.*



# COMMUNITY LANGUAGE TEAM USES FIRSTVOICES TO CONNECT BEARS, LANGUAGE AND LAND

The first year of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages celebrated how technology can support language revitalization. A great example of this can be found right here in B.C.

In the Stein-Nahatlatch region, members of the Státimc First Nation are using their FirstVoices language site in a project to save an endangered Stalhálam (grizzly bear) population. The community-led recovery uses DNA to study the i Stalhálama (grizzly bears) and their health.

Further DNA research with the Raincoast Conservation Society shows a deep connection between the bears and language. There are three distinct genetic groups of i Stalhálama. The territory of each matches the boundaries of three First Nations language families almost exactly.

FPCC's FirstVoices.com has been supporting the use of Státimcets in this project. Since 2003, this free online platform has been making it possible to upload content to community-run language pages. In this case, the Stalhálam project team used the FirstVoices Státimcets database of words and phrases. With it, they created a phrase list and prayer of thanks.

**“The phrases from FirstVoices are key to the work we’re doing to bring the language and that connection to the table so that people remember it’s not just about population density or genetics,” says Lenora Starr. “It’s so much more than that – the language connects us to the land and the land connects us to those bears.”**

We raise our hands to Kitrina McDonald (FirstVoices language recorder), Lenora Starr (Státimc Chiefs Council Lands and Heritage Manager) and Art Adolph (Státimc Chiefs Council Lands Director of Operations) for using their FirstVoices language site for such important work.

To check out some words and phrases about i Stalhálama, visit **FirstVoices.com** and click “Explore” to find the Northern Státimcets site.

## WORDLE FOR FIRSTVOICES

*Word games are a great way to practise using your language! The FirstVoices team has made it possible to add this popular game to existing FirstVoices language sites. Find out more here: [fpcc.ca/wordle](https://fpcc.ca/wordle)*

The International Decade of  
Indigenous Languages 2022-2032

W O R D L E

for

FirstVoices



# MUSIC PROGRAMS

## AMP UP FIRST NATIONS VOICES



As part of our ongoing commitment to revitalizing First Nations arts and cultures, FPCC was excited to host many of the musicians who performed in 2021's Indigifest at the 2022 FPCC Music Retreat. Postponed from 2020 due to COVID-19, the retreat was a four-day, in-person professional development program. It took place at the Brew Creek Centre, south of Whistler on the unceded shared territory of the Squamish and Lil'wat Nations.

Activities included workshops, roundtable discussions and one-on-one meetings with FPCC staff and coaches. There was also mentorship from four music industry professionals. Each day included evening performances and jamming.

FPCC continues to be passionate about offering

programs and mentorships for B.C. First Nations musicians and music industry professionals. Our goal is for B.C. First Nations voices to be recognized and celebrated, in Canada and around the world.

**"Feedback on the gathering has been very positive," says Arlene Deptuck, FPCC's Arts Program Manager. "We were thrilled to support the participants' career goals, expand industry knowledge and make space for valuable networking. It is an honour to support the voices of these important storytellers of our communities."**

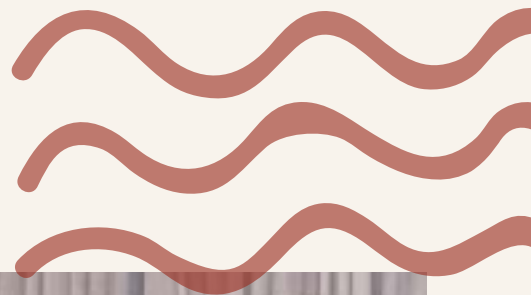
Indigenous Music Retreat 2022 participants and staff: Back row: Myc Sharratt, Rob Thomson, Jaahljuu, Quinn Pickering, Garret T. Willie, Quannah Style. Middle row: Koralee Tonack, Arlene Deptuck, Jodie B, Leah Anthony, Bobby Garcia, Doug Cox, Lindsay Eekwol Knight, K'ijjuuhaas Nathaniel White, Saltwater Hank. Front row: MJ Dandeneau, Michel Bruyere, Lorissa Scriven, Shawn Bullshields.

**CHECK OUT SOME GREAT MUSIC!**

Add this talented group of musicians to your Spotify music playlist. Visit: [indigifest.ca](https://indigifest.ca)



# HÍSWŪKE (THANK YOU) TO FPCC'S BOARD AND ADVISORY



Back row: Grant Alphonse, Jennifer Melles, Laura Webb, Sara Child, Carla Lewis, Sharlene Frank, Gerald Lawson, Connie Watts, Carla George, Sonya Morigeau, Tamara Goddard. Front row: Marlene Erickson, Liz Logan, Cynthia Bonhn, Bernice Touchie, Cheryl Gabriel, Mandy Jimmie, Gail Tait, Louise Mason.

As an organization, we honour the work of our dedicated FPCC Board and Advisory Committee members.

The Board and Advisory Committee are pictured here at the 2022 FPCC Annual General Meeting in Richmond, B.C. It was our first in-person meeting together since 2019! We were happy to celebrate the successes of the past three years.

This newsletter uses the BC Sans font, designed by the Government of British Columbia to support special characters and syllabics found in First Nations languages in B.C. To find out more about BC Sans, go to page 4.

## First Peoples' News

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The First Peoples' Cultural Council is grateful to have our home in the beautiful traditional unceded territory of the WSÁNEĆ Nation people, in the village of WJOŁŁP. We have an additional satellite office at Tk'emlups, within the traditional territory of the Secwepemc people.

*We gratefully acknowledge the funders whose financial support has contributed to our success. Please visit our funding partners page on the website to see the full list: [www.fpcc.ca/about-us/funding-partners](http://www.fpcc.ca/about-us/funding-partners).*