

Promises Made or Promises Kept?

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Abstract

Reverberating effects of the Indian Residential School system's legacy continue to threaten Indigenous languages. In establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, all levels of government in Canada and civil society received 94 'Calls to Action' in coming to terms with the country's colonial past and rooted inequities. Some of these Calls stress the need to restore and preserve Indigenous languages. Statistics attest to the decline of these languages. Government commissions and Indigenous governing bodies warn of the implications of neglecting this unique crisis facing Indigenous communities throughout Canada. With the introduction of the *Indigenous Languages Act* in 2016, the federal government appears ready to commit to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recurrent appeals for Indigenous language revitalization. Be that as it may, what this research finds are that Canadian federal and provincial governments have much room for improvement. This paper assesses the details of legislation and compares inconsistencies with promises made and the results of government inaction. Therefore, contrary to Canada's optimism, the steps it takes to revitalize Indigenous languages are inadequate and require significant rethinking to prove truly effective.

Keywords: Indigenous languages, Language revitalization, Residential schools, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Canada, Public policy

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Introduction

For centuries, the two dominant European ethnolinguistic cultures, being Anglophone and Francophone, were regarded as Canada's national and cultural foundation. This narrative overlooks Indigenous peoples who resided in their ancestral territories for millennia preceding European contact. Across the vast landscape of North America, Indigenous nations cherished their languages. Speaking Nêhiyawêwin, Inuktitut, Secwepemcstín, or Mi'kmawí'simk – as some examples – avowed oneself and reinforced their belonging to a family and community. Upon the Europeans' arrival, Indigenous nations negotiated the establishment of a symbiotic, nation-to-nation relationship. Indigenous nations expected such a relationship would discourage Europeans from pursuing settlement at the expense of Indigenous sovereignty and culture.¹ No such arrangement was compatible within Canada's colonialist framework, however.

Due to pressure from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and Indigenous communities, governments made political and moral commitments to address colonialism's legacy in Canada. On 21 June 2019, Bill C-91, known as the *Indigenous Languages Act*, became official law. Bill C-91 adopts the TRC's suggestions for language revitalization, reclamation, and preservation. But how is Canada succeeding or failing its promises? This paper will assess the federal and provincial governments' efforts, citing Calls to Action 10(iv), 14, 15, and 16. Three areas of assessment will examine governments' difficulties in meeting these particular recommendations. First, for Canada's efforts to succeed, governments must engage with Indigenous people, whose communities are at the forefront of reviving the vitality (revitalization) of their languages' prior prominence. Second, revitalization is costly and requires substantial and long-term financial backing from federal and provincial governments. Third, revitalization efforts on Canada's behalf must encourage the practical usage of Indigenous languages within Canada. Before making these assessments, the reader must understand the historical factors of what spurred language revitalization.

Historical Background: Rectifying Colonialism

From the early Canadian government's perspective, Indigenous people adhered to inferior and uncivilized lifestyles and culture. Canada's first prime minister, Sir. John A. Macdonald, spoke of a nationwide struggle against Indigenous "barbarity" in an 1885 parliamentary session:

"[T]he desire of scalping – the savage idea of a warlike glory, which pervades the breast of most men, civilised or uncivilised, was aroused in [Indians and half-breeds], and forgetting all the kindness that had been bestowed upon them, forgetting all the gifts that had been given to them, forgetting all that the Government, the white people and the Parliament of Canada had been doing for them, in trying to rescue them from barbarity ... [in giving] them reserves, the means to cultivate those reserves, and the means to education how to cultivate them – forgetting all these things, they rose against us."²

Six years before this address, Macdonald tasked Nicholas Davin to survey the United States' attempts to assimilate Native Americans via religious boarding schools.³ After reviewing Davin's report, Macdonald felt a Canadian adaptation was needed to reduce Indigenous children's likelihood of adopting an "Indian mode of thought."⁴ Thus, in 1883, the Indian Residential School (IRS) system took shape. It served as Canada's principal tool in assimilating Indigenous people until 1996. Beginning in 1951 and continuing until the 1980s, the Sixties Scoop also contributed to this assimilatory process. Patrick Johnson, a researcher, coined the term in 1983 after observing how Canada's child protection program "scooped up" and separated Indigenous children from their parents without preauthorized consent or knowledge.⁵ In 2008, the Government of Canada established the TRC to investigate and publicize the hurt endured by generations of Indigenous people and their families. Later in 2015, the TRC issued 94

¹ John Borrows, "Wampus at Niagara: The Royal Proclamation, Canadian Legal History, and Self-Government," *Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada: Essays on Law, Equality, and Respect for Difference* 1997, 164-6.

² Government of Canada, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada* Fifth Parliament (Third Session), 3119

³ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future* (Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), 55-6.

⁴ Government of Canada, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada* Fifth Parliament (Third Session), 1108.

⁵ Raven Sinclair, "Identity lost and found: Lessons from the sixties scoop," *First Peoples Child & Family Review* 3 (1), 66.

Calls to Action (CTA) in pursuit of transformative change within Canadian society.

Twelve years after the last residential school closed, former Prime Minister Stephen Harper acknowledged Canada's role in what the TRC classifies as *cultural genocide*,⁶ a term describing the process of erasing and destroying a group's cultural and linguistic identity. Macdonald, also the minister responsible for Indian Affairs, championed the assimilation of Indigenous people into a distinctly Eurocentric society. Two years after the IRS system's introduction, Macdonald argued Indigenous children "should be withdrawn as much as possible from parental influence" and put into "industrial schools."⁷ There, they would adopt the "morals" of "better" and "good Christian [white] men."⁸ Academics like Teresa McCarty, Sheilah Nicholas, and Gillian Wigglesworth particularize language loss as *linguicide*,⁹ relating to the IRS process of "killing the Indian in the child" by forbidding Indigenous languages and punishing children for speaking them. Canada's blatant refusal to pursue a nation-to-nation relationship and respect Indigeneity bore grave injustices and inflicted pain reverberating to this day. Indigeneity centres on a person's connection to the natural world.¹⁰ Nature constructs a "dynamic and interconnected concept of Indigenous identity constituted in history, ceremony, language and land," thereby defining Indigenous nationhood and their relationship with others.¹¹

Attempts to detach Indigeneity from Indigenous children caused tremendous generational harm. The TRC describes the average IRS attendee's experiences: "Separated from their parents, [Survivors] grew up knowing neither respect nor affection. A school system that mocked and suppressed their families' cultures and traditions destroyed their sense of self-worth."¹² The TRC also collected numerous Survivor testimonies revealing

heartbreaking stories of identity loss and linguistic alienation. Agnes Mills, a Survivor of Saskatchewan's All Saints School, recalls, "I wanted to be white so bad, and the worst thing I ever did was I was ashamed of my mother ... because she couldn't speak English."¹³ To reverse and heal from this harm, Survivors and their communities expect to reclaim and strengthen their languages, hoping that federal and provincial governments will correct the actions that enabled linguicide.

The TRC's requests for language revival and preservation arrived when reconciliation entered Canada's social and political discourse. CTA-10(iv) obliges the federal government to consult Indigenous communities over education legislation that protects Indigenous languages and funds school and university programs.¹⁴ CTA-14 demands an official law on Indigenous languages that: acknowledges their linguistic value and diversity in Canada; are recognized as Treaty rights; and supports community efforts with adequate funding.¹⁵ CTA-15 necessitates creating a Commission on Indigenous Languages to "report on the adequacy of federal funding" for revitalization.¹⁶ Finally, CTA-16 advises universities to launch for-credit programs in Indigenous languages.¹⁷ Given the passing of Bill C-91, a direct response to CTA-14, the Canadian government appears willing to meet the TRC's petitions. After all, federal statistics confirm a decline in persons conversant in Indigenous languages between 2006 and 2016.¹⁸ While the 2016 Census recognized an increase in secondary speakers of Indigenous languages, the TRC cautions governments that "[what the IRSs] failed to accomplish will come about through a process of systemic neglect,"¹⁹ such as lacklustre funding and public support.

⁶ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools, The Legacy: The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* Vol. 5 (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 3 and 6.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Government of Canada, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada* Fifth Parliament (First Session), 1107.

⁹ Teresa McCarty, Sheilah Nicholas, and Gillian Wigglesworth, *A World of Indigenous Languages: Politics, Pedagogies and Prospects for Language Reclamation* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2019), 1.

¹⁰ John Borrows, "Earth-Bound: Indigenous Resurgence and Environmental Reconciliation" in *Resurgence and Reconciliation: Indigenous-Settler Relations and Earth Teachings* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 51-2.

¹¹ Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel, "Being Indigenous: Resurgence against Contemporary Colonialism," *Government and Opposition* 40 (4), 609

¹² Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools, The Legacy*, 3.

¹³ Ibid, 108.

¹⁴ Ibid, 278-9.

¹⁵ Ibid, 279.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid, 280.

¹⁸ Government of Canada, "The Aboriginal languages of First Nations people, Métis and Inuit," *Statistics Canada*, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016022/98-200-x2016022-eng.cfm> (accessed 22 March 2020).

¹⁹ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools, The Legacy*, 6.

Government Engagement with Indigenous Communities

Success in language revitalization hinges on Indigenous communities' insight and expertise, whose members are aptly familiar with their language's status. Historically, the revitalization, reclamation, and preservation of Indigenous languages gained little legislative attention. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) identified lacking government consultation with communities. To draw their attention in 1998, the AFN demanded that governments, harnessing their copious resources, help prevent "the extinction of our languages."²⁰ Since then, the federal government passed legislation and promised to address the CTAs expeditiously. This section will evaluate government cooperation with communities and their revitalization efforts.

Indigenous communities are on the frontier of language revitalization and understand best how to revitalize their languages. There is no shortage of examples of Indigenous organizations dedicated solely to strengthening their community's cultures through various teaching methods. For example, the Nêhiyawak Learning Experience hosts a language camp for Plains Cree learners in Saskatchewan, aiming to "produce authentic language engagement in the context to enhance and share *nehiyaw* identity, including ways of knowing and being."²¹ Some languages and dialects are more endangered (e.g. Kaska in the Yukon) than those with more speakers (e.g. Cree). In either case, linguistic immersion suits best for cultivating interest and generating new speakers.²² Learners might also have family members as speakers, community-produced materials, such as books and mobile apps (e.g. Challenge4Change²³), and education programs. Thanks to these efforts, the number of Indigenous people who can speak – not necessarily converse – in an Indigenous language increased 3.1 percent between 2006 and 2016.²⁴ Bill C-91 recognizes the need for federal consultation and partnership with provinces and Indigenous organizations²⁵ and, relating to CTA-15, establishes a Commission on Indigenous

Languages to work with communities and provide ample funding for revitalization programs.²⁶ Otherwise, scarce federal and provincial support merely reduces the efficacy of community-led efforts.

What exists on paper is not always implemented. In a 2019 report, the AFN contended that cooperation between Indigenous communities, education experts, and Canadian governments would determine how successful language revitalization becomes.²⁷ After Bill C-91's passing, Inuit leaders disapproved of Ottawa's failure to answer their requests to engender Inuktitut in public services.²⁸ The Inuit leaders also demanded that public services accommodate all Indigenous languages, a guarantee repeated throughout Bill C-91. It appears that an "all talk, no action" process in policy formulation and implementation has taken shape. The federal government is willing to make policy on language revitalization but does not articulate precisely *what* Ottawa will accomplish and *how* it plans to do so.

Belinda Daniels, the founder of the Nêhiyawak Learning Experience, insists that by way of history, the federal government's inaction is due to its perceived burden of upholding its constitutional and Treaty-based obligations to Indigenous people. Daniels reiterates the meaning of language as a connection to land, which cannot be realized if Indigenous people are not provided self-determination, declaring, "[I]f our languages become legislated under the power of Canadian government, we hand over our nationhood ... which in turn domesticates Indigenous people under Canadian authority."²⁹ Indeed, language revitalization and the reclamation of Indigeneity are inseparable. In Bill C-91's case, then, critics suggest that the very act of legislating Indigenous languages does not go far enough. Canadian governments simply cannot legislate problems away, especially without understanding revitalization's value outside the context of a political promise. Revitalization requires either cooperating with Indigenous communities or empowering them to manage their own affairs.

²⁰ Assembly of First Nations, "A Guide to 'An Act respecting Indigenous languages': A Tool for First Nations Revitalization," 55-6.

²¹ Nêhiyawak Language Experience Inc, "About," *Nêhiyawak Language Experience Inc.*, <https://nehiyawak.org/about/> (accessed 10 April 2020).

²² McCarty, Nicholas, and Wigglesworth, *A World of Indigenous Languages*, 11.

²³ Challenge4Change Org., "Home," *Challenge4Change*, <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/challenge4change/> (accessed 29 March 2021).

²⁴ Government of Canada, "The Aboriginal languages of First Nations people, Métis and Inuit."

²⁵ Government of Canada, "Bill C-91: An Act respecting Indigenous languages," *Statutes of the Parliament of Canada* Forty-second Parliament (First Session), 9.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 10.

²⁷ Assembly of First Nations, "A Guide to 'An Act respecting Indigenous languages'," 17.

²⁸ Donna Lee, "New Indigenous languages law does not protect Inuit languages, leaders say," *CBC News*, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-languages-bill-c91-nunavut-1.5191796> (accessed 26 February 2020).

²⁹ Belinda Daniels, "Indigenous identity rooted in language, land and sovereignty," *CBC News*, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/opinion-indigenous-language-land-sovereignty-1.4588138> (accessed 22 March 2020).

Expenses and Funding Divergences

When exploring community-led efforts, we discover a quantifiable problem facing Indigenous language revitalization in Canada. According to Bill C-91, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, which supervises the Commission on Indigenous Languages, pledges to provide “adequate, sustainable and long-term funding.”³⁰ Funding must be provided to provincial and territorial governments as well as Indigenous governing bodies, communities, and organizations.³¹ How much actual funding they eventually receive remains unclear. As such, this section will examine fiscal gaps and inconsistencies in government support.

While the Commission on Indigenous Languages reports on forthcoming funding, actual distribution is at an uncertain juncture. Most Indigenous community and cultural organizations do not receive funding that meets the demands for language revitalization. Challenge4Change received a federal donation of \$500,000, but this is an exception.³² In Québec, the Tsi Ronterihwanónhna ne Kanien'kéha Language and Cultural Center relied on its students to “hold fundraising raffles regularly to keep the program activities going,” since the \$75 thousand received from Ottawa was deemed insufficient.³³ The TRC confirms discrepancies in federal promises and actual funding exist. In 2006, a national strategy on Aboriginal cultures and languages intended to fund the AFN with a single \$160 million payment.³⁴ Suddenly amending the strategy, Ottawa chose to deliver annual payments of \$5 million instead. Without accounting for inflation, that is \$90 million less than initially promised. In comparison, the Official Languages Program, whose intention it is to promote English and French nationwide, received \$350 million annually in 2013-14; Indigenous language funding at the same time received \$14 million annually.³⁵ These figures prove Ottawa is not respecting its financial commitments.

By contrast, some provincial governments seem to make more headway. Saskatchewan’s government

allocated \$34.5 million towards a new location for the St. Frances Cree Bilingual School in Saskatoon, set to open in 2023.³⁶ In 2018, the Albertan government committed \$6 million toward procuring language learning resources and funding provincial First Nations schools and organizations.³⁷ British Columbia’s government also committed a massive \$50 million grant to support Indigenous communities revitalizing their languages.³⁸ Although options for language courses remain limited, universities are satisfying CTA-16: the Universities of Victoria and Saskatchewan grant academic certificates and diplomas in Indigenous language studies. While these are noteworthy achievements, Tracey Herbert, a lead figure for the B.C. First People’s Cultural Council, insists more support is required to meet the expensive nature of the process “because the languages have been neglected for so long.”³⁹ Even with combined federal and provincial funding, Canada still falls short.

How can federal and provincial governments meet their financial obligations? The straightforward answer is that those leading the efforts to revitalize, preserve, and reclaim Indigenous languages must receive the funds promised. Funding insufficiencies begin a dangerous cycle: cutbacks occur, fewer resources become available, fewer teachers are hired, and programs and schools close, all of which contribute to linguicide. Such volatility contradicts Canada’s promises for sustainable and predictable funding. Therefore, financing revitalization projects must truly reflect the needs of communities, organizations, and educational institutions. The TRC notices these inadequacies and criticizes Canada’s “betrayal” of residential school Survivors.⁴⁰ Canada has yet to meet CTAs 10(iv), 14, and 15 fully.

Indigenous Languages: Practical Component of Canadian Society

It is possible to revitalize, reclaim, and preserve languages, but this section will consider how those

³⁰ Government of Canada, “Bill C-91,” 2.

³¹ Ibid, 6.

³² Challenge4Change, “Home.”

³³ Jessica Deer, “Revitalizing Kanien'kéha: Immersion program seeks to protect Mohawk language,” *CBC News*, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/kanesatake-mohawk-language-immersion-1.5359348> (accessed 10 April 2020).

³⁴ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada’s Residential Schools, The Legacy*, 116.

³⁵ Ibid, 117.

³⁶ Nicole Di Donato, “St. Frances Cree Bilingual School helps First Nations students ‘be proud of who they are,’” *CTV News Saskatoon*, <https://saskatoon.ctvnews.ca/st-frances-cree-bilingual-school-helps-first-nations-students-be-proud-of-who-they-are-1.5091750> (accessed 16 November 2020).

³⁷ Michael Franklin, “Alberta commits funding to teach Indigenous languages,” *CTV News Calgary*, <https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/alberta-commits-funding-to-teach-indigenous-languages-1.4178833> (accessed 16 November 2020).

³⁸ Chantelle Bellrichard, “Budget’s Indigenous languages funding ‘insufficient’ to support revitalization work, says B.C. advocate,” *CBC News*, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/indigenous-languages-budget-funding-1.5066806> (accessed 16 November 2020).

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

languages can be applied more practically. For Indigenous people, reuniting with their Indigeneity and bolstering their communities are central to decolonization and self-determination.⁴¹ Yet, how can we include Indigenous languages into broader Canadian society? This is not to suggest that the current efforts to reclaim and strengthen ethnolinguistic identities are impractical. Instead, expanding the reasons why one learns Indigenous languages should be a focus of revitalization. Speakers are needed to keep these languages alive. To provide them with equal opportunities as English and French in education, institutions, and other professional settings would concurrently increase demand, afford more reasons to learn Indigenous languages, and incorporate them within Canada's social, political, and economic milieu.

A practical application requires commitment on the speaker's part to achieve a high level of proficiency. Section 24(1)(b) of Bill C-91 views fluency as a top priority for preserving and revitalizing Indigenous languages.⁴² Communities and households are the foundations where learners and soon-to-be speakers can engage in the language. Additionally, immersion programs attract more learners and develop their capacity to speak fluently.⁴³ More casual activities like speaking with relatives (especially elders), travelling, and cooking can enhance one's skills.⁴⁴ With some Canadian universities and off-reserve schools granting for-credit and immersion education, Indigenous people and Canadians gain opportunities to learn and use Indigenous languages. To assess the effectiveness of these methods, one must consider if already fluent speakers and language learners meet regularly, if their meeting spaces are accessible, the amount of community support, how many teachers are trained and readily available, and whether these university programs provide accreditation to students.⁴⁵ These methods can encourage learners and increase their prospects of proficient language acquisition.

Unfortunately, coupled with the fact that federal and provincial governments' engagement are lacking, the insufficient funding obstructs the practical application of Indigenous languages in Canada. Immersion programs and classes require an available number of teachers and instructors, learning materials, digital resources, and technology, which prove vital in engaging learners and producing fluent speakers. How can these languages strengthen and thrive when governments fail to do their part

in providing sufficient funding? The practical usage of Indigenous languages hinges on Canadian governments to work with communities and address financial discrepancies.

Indigenous languages are deprived of the same privileges afforded to English and French. English and French's designation as the sole official languages in Canada further illuminates Canada's refusal of, and initial aim at, destroying Indigeneity. There are well-funded federal and provincial programs like *J'Explore* that facilitate English and French learning. Workplaces function in English and French, proving that knowledge in either or both languages is practical. If Canada wants Indigenous languages to thrive, it will need to provide equally practical opportunities for Indigenous speakers to use their languages in Canadian society. No political nor legal recognition of Indigenous languages is of consequence without meaningful action.

Governmental institutions, the economy, and other professional workplaces should consider more functional approaches to involving Indigenous languages. Breaking down the term "revitalize" supposes that the process aims to boost a language's status. A language used within the daily workplace yields tremendous social, political, and economic importance. It helps when a large portion of the population speaks the language, such as Inuktitut's official status in Nunavut. While Inuktitut is exceptional, its prevalent usage represents the standard, or rather the goal, by which Canada should endeavour to meet with respect to other Indigenous languages. There are cases like Saskatchewan where Cree and Dene remain situated outside of key municipal and provincial institutions despite its growing First Nations population.

A fundamental question remains: how do we determine what is practical and whether there is a need for Indigenous languages in such settings? Bill C-91 recognizes the need for Indigenous languages to be incorporated into federal institutions, the likes of which are nonexistent in provincial legislation. More specifically, translations from and into Indigenous languages must be provided by Ottawa.⁴⁶ In 2018, the Parliament of Canada agreed to provide translations of Member Statements delivered in Indigenous languages.⁴⁷ That said, one might doubt the effectiveness of Indigenous language usage in institutions. There are more than 70 Indigenous languages in Canada, and accommodating each of them presents enormous challenges for federal and provincial governments to

⁴¹ Alfred and Corntassel, "Being Indigenous: Resurgence against Contemporary Colonialism," 605-14.

⁴² Government of Canada, "Bill C-91," 11.

⁴³ McCarty, Nicholas, and Wigglesworth, *A World of Indigenous Languages*, 11.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 13.

⁴⁵ Assembly of First Nations, "A Guide to 'An Act respecting Indigenous languages'," 40.

⁴⁶ Government of Canada, "Bill C-91," 7.

⁴⁷ The Canadian Press, "Commons to provide translation for MPS speaking Indigenous languages," *CBC News*, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-commons-to-provide-translation-for-mps-speaking-indigenous-languages> (accessed 13 April 2020).

navigate. Another problem ensues over how functional Indigenous languages would compare to English and French. For example, researchers discovered that learning Ojibwe added little to no value to one's professional career.⁴⁸ The assumption here is that Indigenous languages – which are tied to identity, land, and culture – are not as lucrative for one's career as English and French. However, “[s]ocial and economic capital are intertwined,” meaning that the act of learning an Indigenous language could create a “concurrent demand” for new language teachers and employment opportunities in the public and private sector.⁴⁹ Perhaps, then, Indigenous language revitalization is an innately practical endeavour for Canada.

financial promises, practical uses of Indigenous languages will not develop fully – if at all. There is no doubt that Canada has embarked on language revitalization, but Canada's negligible progress is discouraging to those who anticipate a successful recovery of their languages.

Conclusion

It is apparent that CTAs 10(iv), 14 and 15 have been met on paper, but in practice, they are nowhere near becoming realized. Only CTA-16 seems to have generated some success. This paper assessed the federal and provincial governments' actions to fulfill the TRC's demands on Indigenous language revitalization. The first section found that communities and Indigenous people guide efforts to revitalize their languages much without the federal and provincial governments' assistance. Community leaders, organizations, teachers, and students all play a unique and defining role. How Canadian governments expect to address the CTAs without properly engaging with Indigenous communities remains suspect.

Second, insufficient funding persists as a principal obstacle. The efforts to revitalize, preserve, and reclaim Indigenous languages require programs, materials, and personnel. As such, funding must be adequate, sustainable, and long-term. Revitalizing many languages across the country requires substantial investment on a continual basis; not one-time grants that barely cover community and learning expenses. Interestingly, English and French continue to receive disproportionately more funding than already underfunded Indigenous language programs and communities. Given this assessment, Canada is failing the TRC and Indigenous communities considerably by failing to fulfill its promises.

Finally, this paper assessed how Indigenous language speakers could apply their language skills in Canadian society. Immersion programs, post-secondary opportunities, and incorporating Indigenous language usage within institutions and other professional settings are ways to furnish practicality. Inasmuch as Canada refuses to engage with Indigenous communities and deliver on its

⁴⁸ Mary Hermes and Kendall King, “Task-Based Language Learning for Ojibwe: A Case Study of Two Intermediate Adult Language Learners” in *A World of Indigenous Languages*, 147.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 148.

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