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**Indigenous Languages**

# Spoken from the Heart

## *Indigenous Radio in Canada*

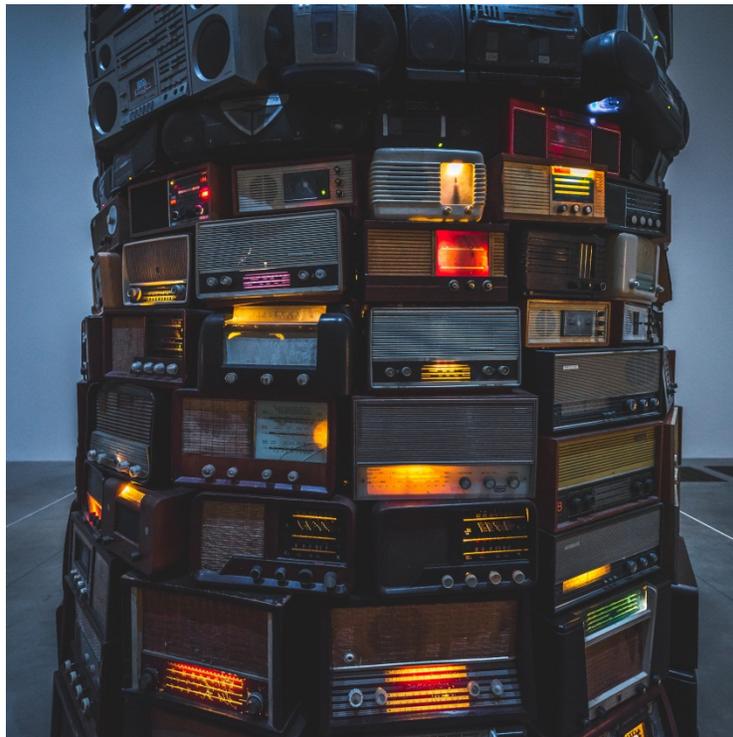


Photo credit: Ryan Stefan (Unsplash)

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The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of Indigenous Culture & Media Innovations and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO.

## **About Indigenous Culture & Media Innovations**

ICMI was created out of a recognized need for Indigenous access into the arts. ICMI opens its doors to the Indigenous community through professional development, projects, productions, facilities, and equipment. Access is first created through skills development followed by expression and production. ICMI welcomes all levels of expertise to produce new works and arts programming through creative communication, employment opportunity and the development of artistic talent.

## **About a2delante**

a2delante Community Building Consultants collaborates with First Nations, Inuit and Indigenous peoples in the Americas as facilitators and advisors in project development, capacity building, research and skills training.

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

Spoken from the Heart addresses the current state of Indigenous radio broadcasting in Canada and its influence on the promotion and revitalization of Indigenous languages.

## Methodology

In-depth interviews were conducted with eighteen (18) First Nations, Inuit and Métis radio stations, programs and podcasts across Canada. Interviews targeted diverse Nations, languages, territories and provinces, in urban, rural and remote communities. The report prioritized stations or programs that emphasize Indigenous culture and language content and covered a range of broadcast and licensing types.

## Findings and analysis

Most Indigenous radio stations interviewed operate with a Native Type B CRTC license. There are currently fifty-three stations in Canada licensed with the CRTC. The number of stations which operate without a license is currently unknown. Indigenous radio programs interviewed in urban settings broadcast from non-Indigenous community or campus stations. The most common mission expressed by both stations and programs is to preserve and promote Indigenous languages, cultures and stories.

The stations surveyed are situated in diverse linguistic landscapes. Some are in communities where the Indigenous language is spoken widely, while others are in territories where the language is severely or critically endangered. All use language revitalization and promotion strategies to ensure the presence of Indigenous languages on their airwaves, including integrating expressions of Indigenous language throughout their programming, making Indigenous language accessible using a casual, informal approach, and connecting Elders with audiences.

Indigenous radio stations and programs offer mentoring and training opportunities for Indigenous youth, including school groups, at-risk youth and young people looking to build skills in radio broadcasting and journalism. Insufficient funding for providing training and hiring new staff can hinder these efforts.

Most community-based radio stations receive basic operational budgets from their local or regional Indigenous government. Only a small minority currently receive direct federal funding through grants. Insufficient funding impacts virtually every aspect of radio station and program functioning. Language revitalization work, including Indigenous language programming, training and youth mentoring, adoption of new technologies and station-to-station networking are all limited by stretched budgets and the precarity that comes with unstable and short-term, project-based funding.

Radio remains a primary means of communication and an inclusive platform for language promotion for remote Indigenous communities. However, new digital technologies, online platforms and content creation tools can represent opportunities for Indigenous radio stations and programs to expand their reach and imagine new ways of supporting language and culture revitalization. Many Indigenous radio broadcasters would like to see the creation of a country-wide network of Indigenous radios, facilitated by online platforms and conferences.

Reconciliation emerged as an overarching theme. The language and culture revitalization efforts are framed by the expectation that the state meet its historical responsibility to recognize Indigenous language rights, to support the work being done and to protect, promote and revitalize Indigenous languages. This approach is in line with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action and the rights-based approach of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Specifically, Indigenous radio broadcasters call on all levels of government to provide adequate and sustained funding to Indigenous radio broadcasters and their language promotion and revitalization initiatives.

# Critical Action Steps:

## Language promotion and revitalization

1. Explicit recognition by the Canadian government of Indigenous language rights as an integral element of Indigenous rights, as laid out in the 13<sup>th</sup> Call to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC);
2. Consistent and sufficient funding for language promotion and revitalization work by Indigenous radio broadcasters;
3. The recognition and acknowledgement of Indigenous languages and ensuring public airwaves are representative of Indigenous linguistic diversity in Canada;
4. Ensuring that any policy development related to Indigenous language revitalization follow from meaningful consultation with, and consent, from Indigenous stakeholders.

## Capacity-building and youth

5. Support for youth mentoring and capacity-building efforts carried out by Indigenous radio broadcasters carried out by Indigenous radio;
6. Funding for Indigenous language capacity-building programs for producers, program hosts and radio station staff.

## Adopting new tools

7. Funding for Indigenous radio broadcasters to adopt complementary digital technologies and strategies;
8. Review and update, by CRTC, of the Native Broadcasting Policy and incorporating the importance of online platforms and new digital technologies, in consultation with Indigenous communities;
9. Ensuring stable and continued support to Indigenous broadcast radio as an essential service in remote Indigenous communities across the country.

## Networks

10. Ensuring the availability of support for the creation of a Canada-wide network of Indigenous radio broadcasters, based on digital technology and an online platform.

## Funding

11. Evaluation of fairness of funding allocation, and increasing the availability of accessible core, multi-year funding to Indigenous radio stations.

## Broadcasting policy

12. Develop policy to protect the frequencies of all Indigenous radio stations and recognize Indigenous sovereignty over those airwaves in consultation with Indigenous communities;

13. Require all broadcasters in Canada to carry Indigenous produced programming;

14. Simplify application processes for both funding and licensing applications and renewals;

15. Revise and update the Native Broadcasting Policy and other policy tools at all levels through meaningful consultation with Indigenous radio broadcasters and relevant Indigenous stakeholders.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Context

Spoken from the Heart was planned and proposed by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO) to address the current state of Indigenous radio stations in Canada, and their influence on the promotion and revitalization of Indigenous languages. The report intends to provide a general picture of the landscape of First Nations, Inuit and Métis radio broadcasting in Canada. A more detailed analysis will be generated by exploring the reality on the ground and expressing the needs and priorities of specific Indigenous radio stations and programs from across the country. Based on this analysis, we offer essential next steps for better supporting Indigenous radio stations and programs in Canada to protect, promote and revitalize Indigenous languages.

Two fifteen-minute podcasts were produced by Nuxalk Radio and the Société de communication Atikamekw-Montagnais (SOCAM). These podcasts address the role of Indigenous radio in promoting and revitalizing Indigenous languages, from the unique perspectives and experiences of these two stations.

SOCAM – Spoken From the Heart Podcast

<https://youtu.be/pnTxPa7waXs>

Nuxalt Radio – Spoken From the Heart Podcast

<https://youtu.be/Is9QUOjdXog>

## 2. Methodology

The purpose of Spoken from the Heart is to provide a general overview and enrich the understanding of Indigenous radio broadcasting in Canada. The utilized research methods included a document review and in-depth interviews.

### 2.1. Data collection methods

The document review provided a broad understanding of the policies concerning Indigenous radio broadcasting. Special attention was paid to Canadian and international documents which offered a rights-based approach. Each of the following helped to frame Indigenous broadcasting and Indigenous language promotion and revitalization.

- 1 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)  
<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1309374407406/1309374458958>
- 2 UNESCO Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions  
<https://en.unesco.org/creativity/convention>
- 3 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Calls to Action and Final Report Summary  
[http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

- 4 Canada Broadcasting Act  
<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/B-9.01/FullText.html>
- 5 CRTC Native Broadcasting Policy  
<https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/1990/pb90-89.htm>

Several sources which focus on analyzing Indigenous radio broadcasting were also consulted:

- 6 Indigenous Broadcasting and the CRTC: Lessons from the Licensing of Native Type B Radio  
<https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/acrtc/prx/2018szwarc.htm>
- 7 Conference outcomes from a series of five regional gatherings and one national conference on Indigenous radio organized by the Community Media Advocacy Council, in 2017 (Winnipeg, Iqaluit, Edmonton, Homalco First Nation, Halifax and Ottawa).  
<https://archive.org/details/FutureFNIMBroadcasting>

In-depth interviews were conducted with First Nations, Inuit and Métis radio stations and programs. A set of interview questions were developed in the form of a survey which was conducted over the phone, in person, or online. Most interviews were conducted over the phone by the consultants. A total of three interviews were conducted with radio stations in remote Inuit communities; these were administered in person by locally-hired consultants. One survey was completed online.

An initial list of twenty-nine (29) First Nations, Inuit and Métis community radio stations and Indigenous radio programs were selected from a wide range of Nations, languages, territories and provinces, urban, rural and remote communities. Stations and programs that emphasize Indigenous culture and language content were prioritized. A cross section of station types were also chosen, including:

- CRTC-licensed and non-licensed stations
- Well-established stations
- Stations awaiting CRTC license
- Emerging stations
- High-power stations
- Low-power stations
- Indigenous programming on non-Indigenous radio stations (urban Indigenous communities)
- Webradios.

Of this initial list, eighteen stations (18) and programs responded. Station managers, executive directors, or programming directors were interviewed. In some cases, the person interviewed held all of these positions. When calling Indigenous radio programs the host, or cohost was interviewed.

Of the eleven (11) unsurveyed stations and programs on the original list, one refused, some could not be located, and the remaining did not return calls or emails. In addition, four stations and two networks were excluded after communication with the Executive Director of Aboriginal Multi-Media Society of Alberta (AMMSA) because they had already begun collaborating to develop their own policy recommendations. These included AMMSA stations, CFNR, NCI, MBC, and First Peoples Radio stations.

## 2.2. Limitations

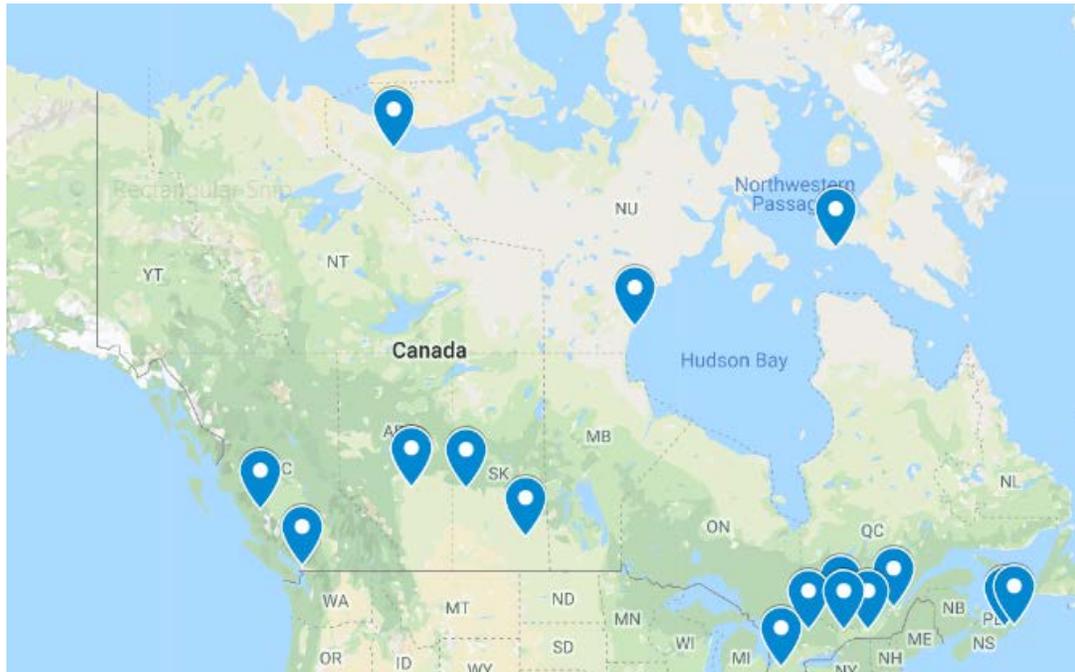
The survey methodology was used to facilitate in-depth case studies. However, not all stations had stable staffing. In some cases, volunteers and radio hosts did not have complete information on the history and were unable to answer all the survey questions. An understandable mistrust of surveys and of researchers in general may have further limited access to stations. The capacity of this study to triangulate responses through other research methods was affected by the time-consuming process of reaching out to potential interviewees and conducting in-depth interviews.



Courtesy Creek FM.

### 2.3. Indigenous Radio Map

The following map illustrates the Indigenous radio stations included in the survey.



Interact with the map at <https://goo.gl/jfVLuA>

## 3. Indigenous radio and language rights in Canada

### 3.1. Indigenous radio in Canada

Indigenous radio in Canada falls under a policy that has remained virtually unchanged since its implementation in 1990. The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) Native Broadcasting Policy was born out of an acknowledgement of the cultural impacts caused by the influx of southern media into remote Indigenous communities, and the arrival of satellite technology. It defines the principal role of Indigenous broadcasters: *to address the specific cultural and linguistic needs of their audiences, while creating an environment in which aboriginal artists and musicians, writers and producers, can develop and flourish.*<sup>1</sup>

The Policy sets out two categories for “Native undertakings”, or non-commercial radio stations owned by a non-profit organization run by a board of directors who are members of the Indigenous community served by the station. ‘Native Type A’ radio stations operate in remote areas where, at the time of licensing, no other commercially licensed radio operated. These stations are exempt from licensing and are required to simply register with the CRTC.

<sup>1</sup> CRTC (1990). Public Notice CRTC 1990-89, Native Broadcasting Policy. Available: <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/1990/PB90-89.htm>

'Native Type B' radio licenses are held by Indigenous stations operating in an area where at least one other commercial radio station is in operation. Type B licenses impose conditions on the Indigenous stations holding them, aside from complying with industry codes and the standard requirements for Canadian musical content and advertising.

Some Indigenous radio stations choose to draw their authorization from their own Indigenous governments, sometimes using the Native Type A licensing exemption, or in limited cases, by functioning independently of CRTC administration.<sup>2</sup>

According to Canada's Forum for Research and Policy in Communications (FRPC), the CRTC has expressed its intention to review the Native Broadcasting Policy a number of times since 2000. For unspecified reasons, these plans have not been put into action. The CRTC's 2015-2018 three-year plan includes the intention of the Commission, in 2015-2016 was:

**to conduct an internal review of its Native Radio Policy to ensure that the regulatory framework is effective and reflects the realities of radio stations serving Aboriginal peoples.**

In 2016-2017, the CRTC intended to issue a notice of consultation to conduct a review of the Native Broadcasting Policy, and in 2017-2018, to implement the new policy.<sup>3</sup>

### **3.2. Indigenous language rights in Canada**

UNDRIP, the TRC Calls to Action and the UNESCO Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) form the foundation, conceptual framework and critical action steps for Spoken from the Heart.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in September 2007. Although Canada has yet to ratify the Declaration, the Canadian government has announced its intent to implement UNDRIP.

An important step toward implementation was taken on May 30, 2018, when the House of Commons adopted Bill C-262, *An Act to ensure that the laws of Canada are in harmony with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, a private member's bill sponsored by Eeyou Member of Parliament Romeo Saganash. At the time of writing, Bill C-262 is in second reading with the Senate.<sup>4</sup>

The right of Indigenous peoples to practice, maintain and transmit their cultures and languages is enshrined in UNDRIP. Notably, Article 11(1) states,

*Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.*<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Fairchild, C. (1998). Below the Hamelin Line: CKRZ and Aboriginal Cultural Survival. *Canadian Journal of Communication* 23(2). Available: <https://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/viewArticle/1031/937>

<sup>3</sup> <http://frpc.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/FRPC-comment-7-February-2017.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.parl.ca/LegisInfo/BillDetails.aspx?Mode=1&billId=8160636&View=5&Language=E>

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007). Available: [https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf)

## Article 13 of UNDRIP specifies,



Romeo Saganash Interview courtesy of the James Bay Cree Communications Society website.

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

2. States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected and also to ensure that Indigenous peoples can understand and be understood in political, legal and administrative proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means.<sup>6</sup>

Article 16(1) is directly relevant to the role of Indigenous radio for language promotion and revitalization work. It affirms that *Indigenous*

*peoples have the right to establish their own media in their own languages.*

Article 14(1) directly supports the language education role that many Indigenous radios have taken:

*Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.*<sup>7</sup>

In 2008, the Canadian government established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) to listen to the testimonies of Indigenous survivors of colonial traumas from across the country, specifically survivors of the Residential School system and those impacted by consequent intergenerational trauma.

In 2015, the TRC published its report setting in motion a process of reconciliation by the Canadian government with the Indigenous nations whose lands are within its borders. The TRC published 94 Calls to Action, including a re-affirmation of the rights-based approach to State-Indigenous relations laid out in UNDRIP:

43. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as the framework for reconciliation.<sup>8</sup>

Significantly, the TRC calls on the Canadian government *to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights.*<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (2015). Available: [http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, Call to Action 13

In its 14<sup>th</sup> Call to Action, the TRC asks the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that would enshrine the following principles:

- i. Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them.
- ii. Aboriginal language rights are reinforced by the Treaties.
- iii. The federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal-language revitalization and preservation.
- iv. The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.
- v. Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must respect the diversity of Aboriginal languages.<sup>10</sup>

The UNESCO Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) also serves as a document of reference. Its Article 7 states that,

- 1) Parties shall endeavor to create in their territory an environment which encourages individuals and social groups:
  - (a) to create, produce, disseminate, distribute and have access to their own cultural expressions, paying due attention to the special circumstances and needs of women as well as various social groups, including persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples;
  - (b) to have access to diverse cultural expressions from within their territory as well as from other countries of the world.
- 2) Parties shall also endeavor to recognize the important contribution of artists, others involved in the creative process, cultural communities, and organizations that support their work, and their central role in nurturing the diversity of cultural expressions.<sup>11</sup>

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Radio stations and programs surveyed

A total of eighteen (18) Indigenous radio stations and programs were interviewed. The information gathered from this in-depth survey is presented as aggregated data; individual stations or programs are not identified in relation to the information that they provided. The reason has been that Spoken from the Heart was created to determine and present the overall status, and illustrate an overarching picture of the Indigenous broadcasting.

Of the eighteen stations and programs interviewed, twelve serve First Nations communities, four are Inuit and two are Métis and one is a settlement community. Eleven are Indigenous radio stations, four are Indigenous programs that air

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Basic Texts of the 2005 Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2015). Available: [https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/convention2005\\_basictext\\_en.pdf](https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/convention2005_basictext_en.pdf)

on non-Indigenous community or campus radio stations, and two are podcasts. The settlement community has had experience with a community radio station on their reserve and are in the planning stages of creating one in their territory. Two of these stations are rebroadcast by local community stations across wide Indigenous territories.

Breakdown by Nation	
Nation	Breakdown
First Nations	12
Inuit	4
Métis	2
Total	18

Breakdown by Type	
Type	Breakdown
Station	11
Indigenous Programs	4
Podcast	2
Planning Stage	1

#### 4.2. Profile of Indigenous radio stations and programs

Of the Indigenous radio stations interviewed, the majority are operating with a Native Type B licence from the CRTC. Notable exceptions include one high-power station with significant geographical reach, which operates with a CRTC Community Radio licence, and a community-based station that draws its permission to operate from the First Nation's hereditary leadership, while holding a CRTC licence exemption. One is planning to operate under a Native Type A exemption.

In Inuit territory, one station is owned by CBC North and has limited time-slots with which to broadcast local content. One station has applied for a Native Type B licence and is awaiting CRTC decision. The four Indigenous radio programs interviewed are located in urban centres and broadcast their shows on non-Indigenous community or campus stations.

Only five stations are on air at all times, although all stations have limited, pre-determined schedules for live and original content, while relying on automated music systems or repeat broadcasts to fill in remaining hours. Smaller stations, particularly those with only one or two staff, rely heavily on automated music playlists to fill airtime not taken by live or pre-recorded programming. Early morning, lunchtime and evening time-slots are most commonly used for live shows.

Only two stations have their content rebroadcast by others, while three programs have had their content rebroadcast in the past. Three stations rebroadcast others' content; in two of these cases, stations have agreements with other stations in the region to rebroadcast one another's content. The third station rebroadcasts Indigenous content from various North American and international stations. Another four stations have made attempts to enter into rebroadcasting agreements, or are hoping to do so. Obstacles to rebroadcasting include cost and the challenge of building relationships of mutual support with the right stations.

All well-established stations and programs stream their content online via their station's website or social media, with the exception of stations located in Nunavut, where reliable internet continues to pose a challenge.

### 4.3. Mandate and mission

To preserve and promote Indigenous language, culture and stories is the most common mission expressed by the stations and programs interviewed. Over half of the stations and programs interviewed share this mandate. Revitalizing and reaffirming the presence of a struggling Indigenous language is the specific mission of three of these stations and programs.

Informing residents about community events, connecting community members and creating a space for Indigenous voices is common throughout many of the stations. One radio station and two programs on campus radio, whose audiences include non-Indigenous communities, aim to promote reconciliation and to connect Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences.



Courtesy of Paqtnkek community radio.

### 4.4. Programming and audience

Stations typically program live and pre-recorded interviews, community announcements, musical performances, commercial and independent music recordings, and request shows. Local spoken-word content tends to include community news, event announcements, weather, sports and interviews. Many stations run radio bingo as a way to raise funds for the station.

Some stations use airtime to promote health and well-being by informing about community health and social services, and interviewing health professionals. A minority of stations promote their programming through flyers, newsletters and roadside billboards. Many stations currently deliver remote broadcasting, particularly live coverage of community events or council meetings.

Musical programming varies widely and is designed to appeal to different generations. Many stations include Indigenous music, including pow-wow, fiddle and local Indigenous artists, through dedicated shows or integrated into automated playlists. Often, this music was donated to stations by community members, or acquired online. Many stations reach out to local artists to promote their music. Social media plays an important role in sourcing music, via listeners' suggestions and requests.



Courtesy of MicMac Maliseet News.

Stations and programs do not have exact statistics or clear knowledge of the breakdown of their audiences, but try to tailor content to a range of age groups, from young children to Elders. Spoken-word broadcasts tend to be more popular with older audiences. Social media tools, primarily Facebook live, are important for reaching new, younger audiences, and are also valued by people wishing to stay in touch with their community while away for medical travel, employment or study.

Podcasting and live streaming audio and video through social media platforms is gaining popularity with many radio stations and programs. This allows language and cultural programming to reach youth who are encouraged to both hear and create content. It also helps create volunteer mentoring opportunities at Indigenous radio programs.

Documenting and archiving programs is time-consuming and difficult to accomplish without dedicated staff. While not an issue that was widely mentioned, it constitutes a real need, and is undoubtedly important for language and cultural revitalization. A small number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous schools and universities do make use of Indigenous radio podcasts in the classroom. Some interviewees raised concerns about protecting the content they create from inappropriate use.

The audiences often include non-Indigenous listeners especially on community-based stations located in non-remote regions and those of urban radio programs. These stations and programs describe themselves as open and accessible to everyone, and many make consistent efforts to widen the reach of their programs to new listener categories. Some include other Indigenous languages in their programming, and in one case, offer airtime for minority-spoken non-Indigenous languages. Those who make use of social media report Indigenous and non-Indigenous audience engagement from across the world.

**Reconciliation is the outcome of truth. Once the truth of Indigenous history has been normalized in Canada, then reconciliation can begin. Indigenous radio can start that conversation.**

The theme of reconciliation emerged in relation to engaging non-Indigenous audiences, principally for facilitating greater understanding and knowledge about Indigenous cultures and languages. For some stations and programs, opening spaces for dialogue with non-Indigenous communities is seen as important for “build(ing) positive relationships and break(ing) down misconceptions” about Indigenous peoples. In this respect, a notable emerging demand is for youth to be heard on Indigenous and non-Indigenous radio stations in urban areas, as well as to create spaces for the interests and voices of Indigenous survivors, foster children and at-risk adults.

All but a few of the stations interviewed use some form of survey to obtain regular audience feedback and increase engagement, most through call-in segments and some through social media. Surveys help stations obtain a sense of audience interest in different topics and to engage listeners on important issues. Hosts regularly invite listeners to call in with requests, concerns and information about events and activities, including celebrations, training and employment opportunities, and community news. Call-in radio is especially important in remote northern communities.

Most stations and programs interviewed make or plan to make ongoing efforts to engage youth as listeners and as content creators. Youth are an outreach priority, as radio managers and hosts observe that youth tend to turn to social media as a way to access content of interest, while radio has traditionally catered to older audiences. Radio programmers want to bring youth into interesting discussions about their own culture, in their own language, as a way to increase their sense of wellbeing and "support people in their ability to thrive."

Stations and programs alike have a need for volunteers, but the lack of funding for training was frequently cited as a barrier to meeting this demand. Volunteers are also concerned about their own need to earn income, leading to high turnover as they move on to paid opportunities. Nonetheless, a number of people are putting in hours at Indigenous radio stations and programs with minimal or no compensation, preparing, researching and conducting programs that they deem critical to language and cultural revitalization.



Courtesy of 95.3 Creek FM.



Courtesy of Nipivut Radio 90.3FM Montreal.

#### 4.5. Indigenous languages

The Indigenous broadcasters surveyed are situated in diverse linguistic landscapes. Some are located in communities where the Indigenous language is spoken widely - this is particularly the case in remote and especially, northern communities. Others are located in territories where the Indigenous language is severely or critically endangered, that is, where few fluent speakers are left, mostly Elders.

UNESCO's *Language Vitality and Endangerment framework* identifies six levels of language vitality, based on a series of nine factors. Intergenerational language transmission is the most significant of these factors. In accordance with intergenerational transmission, the six levels of language vitality are the following:

**Safe:** language is spoken by all generations; intergenerational transmission is uninterrupted.

**Vulnerable:** most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains (such as the home).

**Definitely endangered:** children no longer learn the language as mother tongue in the home.

**Severely endangered:** language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves.

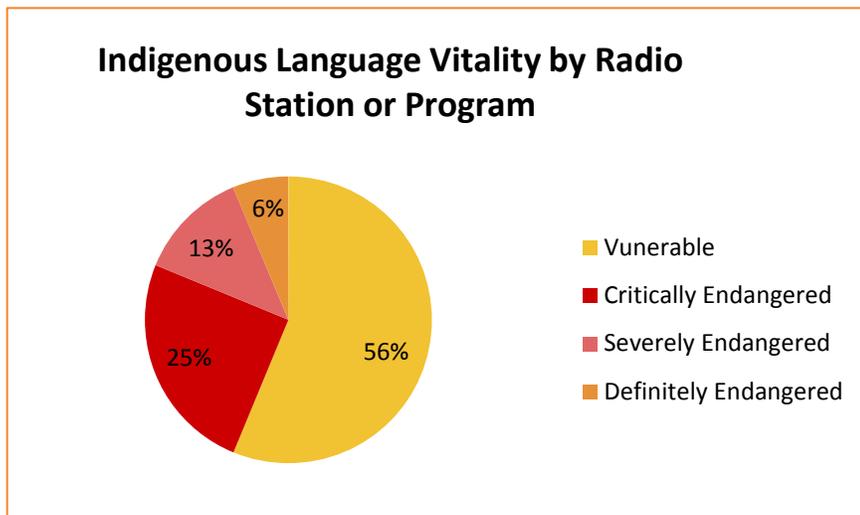
**Critically endangered:** the youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently.

**Extinct:** there are no speakers left.

<http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/index.php>

Volunteers are the primary support for Indigenous radio programs broadcasting on non-Indigenous campus and community stations. At community-based radio stations, the audience generates a portion of the broadcasted content through call-in shows, and by approaching the hosts with news, questions, information and music donations and suggestions. Recurrent guests and experts who have a long-standing relationships with their community radio station also make significant volunteer contributions.

According to the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, we can classify the Indigenous languages represented by the radio stations and programs interviewed as shown in the chart below.



In some cases, stations represent wide territories where multiple languages are spoken, and offer multilingual programming; we have classified these stations according to the main languages spoken in the territory or on air. No Indigenous languages in Canada are classified as Safe.

Radio programming tends to be primarily in the Indigenous language among community-based radio stations located in territories where a vulnerable Indigenous language is spoken (where most children speak the

language). The language is often followed by translation to English, or alternates equally between the Indigenous language and English.<sup>12</sup> In these cases, prioritization of the Indigenous language is often integrated into the mandate of the station and takes into account that members of the community - especially Elders - may be unilingual Indigenous language speakers.

In some cases, English is primarily used when non-Indigenous individuals are interviewed or visit the station to provide community members with information; in these cases, hosts provide translation to the Indigenous language. Four stations were interviewed who operate in this manner. All four are located in regions where dialects of Cree or Inuktitut are spoken – which are two of the most frequently spoken Indigenous languages in Canada, according to the 2011 Census.<sup>13</sup>

Radio stations serving communities whose Indigenous language is endangered, integrate language programming in different ways. Indigenous language use by these stations falls into two main categories: language teaching, such as “word of the day” segments, language lessons and conversations with Elder language speakers, and the use of Indigenous words and concepts during regular programming, such as opening prayers and introductions.

When radio hosts are not fluent speakers and stations do not have access to language teachers, they make use of content sourced elsewhere, such as archival material and recordings of language classes. Although the Mi'kmaq language is classified as vulnerable, stations interviewed who were located in Mi'kmaq communities reported a low rate of fluent speakers and difficulty finding language speakers. As a result, they employ the strategies otherwise associated with endangered language environments.



Language Speaker Courtesy of Socam.

<sup>12</sup> All radio stations and programs interviewed serve populations whose Official Language of choice is English.

<sup>13</sup> Statistics Canada (2011). Census, Aboriginal languages in Canada. Available: [https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-314-x/98-314-x2011003\\_3-eng.cfm#fnb4](https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-314-x/98-314-x2011003_3-eng.cfm#fnb4)

### Several stations hope to introduce dedicated Indigenous language programming in the near future.

Stations lacking language-oriented spoken-word programming tend to include Indigenous language content through music. Several stations hope to introduce dedicated Indigenous language programming in the near future. These stations cite insufficient staffing, a lack of available language speakers and inconsistent or inadequate funding as barriers to the establishment of language programming.

Indigenous radio programs broadcasting on non-Indigenous community and campus stations tend to employ similar language strategies as those stations operating in communities with endangered languages. This is due to a combination of factors, including a target audience that is not composed of fluent speakers, program hosts who are not fluent language speakers and outreach to non-Indigenous urban audiences.

Many stations and programs that emphasize Indigenous languages, or that would like to do so, share the common goal of promoting and affirming the presence, relevance and accessibility of their language by using it whenever they can, especially in casual and fun ways.

Most stations and programs reported receiving enthusiastically positive comments about the availability of Indigenous language content. Audiences provide feedback in many ways, directly to the station managers and program hosts, and through comments in social media. Listeners, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are demanding more variety and frequency of content in Indigenous languages.

Audiences notice and promptly express concern when a language show ends or is interrupted, particularly in remote communities, where radio is a central part of community life. Station managers and program hosts observe the impact of their programming among community members, particularly when they are approached by listeners who express their gratitude and interest, but also by observing changes in the way people use Indigenous language in everyday interactions.

Stations and programs are divided when it comes to an assessment of the impact their programming has had on language revitalization. About two-thirds believe they have had a positive impact, some citing the uptake by youth of Indigenous concepts and words previously featured as “word of the day” on their programs.

Some radio hosts report that their own knowledge of their Indigenous language has increased significantly since they have integrated Indigenous language into radio programming. The remaining stations and programs feel that their impact has been limited or that they have not been able to do enough. Reasons cited include a lack of accessible language learning resources and the need for more support, such as staff or volunteers, particularly in the case of those who are working alone. Several of those interviewed highlighted they would require access to dedicated funding for culture and language work.

**The remaining stations and programs feel that their impact has been limited or that they have not been able to do enough.**

## 4.6. Funding

Most community-based radio stations receive operational budgets from their band council or Indigenous government. This funding rarely covers more than a single staff salary and base operational costs. Two stations do not receive support from their local government (band council), in one case because the community's finances are “in the red.”

Two stations and one program receive direct federal funding through grants. Only one radio station receives project-based funding specifically for language programming, which covers wages and allows the station to allocate staff to language programs. Of the radio stations and programs interviewed, most have applied or are planning to apply for federal or territorial government funding. A minority are concerned that taking government funding will mean losing control over program content. One respondent reported being sufficiently funded through community contributions (donations and other support).



Courtesy of the James Bay Cree Communications Society website.

Large and small stations must be able to cover operational costs that include utilities, Internet and telephone, rent (for about half of respondents) and salaries. Some stations also generate costs such as honoraria for Elders, broadcasting fees (SOCAN) and building and equipment maintenance. A few stations are also on the hook to raise funds for a new building or space, along with its furniture and equipment. Station budgets range from six digit figures to cover operational costs and multiple staff (the minority), to a single monthly salary and basic services (the majority).

Alternate ways of raising funds include radio bingo, lottery ticket sales, fundraising marathons, advertising by local businesses and renting space out for events. One station has received equipment donations, while another relies on private donations.

Most stations recognize a need to earn advertising revenue, but not at the cost of their programming priorities. Advertising revenue is generally not a significant source of support. Due to the small pool of businesses available, most stations can only earn advertising revenue on contingency events, such as political campaigns, government PSAs, and a few local business events. One station cited resistance within the organization to selling ads, which are seen as detrimental to freedom of information and to scheduling priorities.

Indigenous radio programs that air on campus and community stations cannot generate their own advertising revenue; any advertising money raised is passed on to the host station. Some programs are required to raise a certain amount of funds annually for the radio station that hosts them. One podcast program builds reciprocal relationships with non-Indigenous consumers of their content, such as with professors who use podcasts in their classrooms, asking for a contribution in return.

Of the respondents who provided information on previous funding, about half report significantly reduced or terminated government funding, citing more competition or changing federal government priorities, resulting in discontinued grants.

#### 4.7. Challenges and opportunities

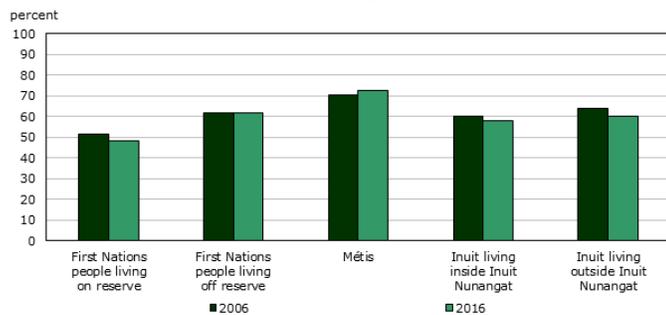
The Indigenous radio stations and programs interviewed pointed to various challenges that they face in running their station or program, meeting their mandate and promoting Indigenous language and culture. They also made mention of a number of opportunities that, if properly harnessed, would facilitate their work.

Four broad categories summarize the key challenges brought up by interviewees: staffing shortages, funding shortages, infrastructure and equipment, and access to information.

### Staffing shortages

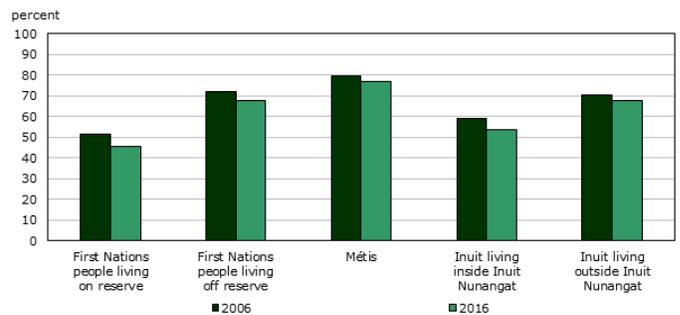
Many Indigenous radio stations and programs are chronically understaffed. Two-thirds of the stations and programs interviewed are run by one individual who is often responsible for many tasks: management, hosting shows, applying for funding, training volunteers. The job often requires long hours and much dedication; some report that this can put a strain on family relations.

**Chart 10**  
Employment rates of Indigenous women aged 25 to 54



Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006 and 2016.

**Chart 11**  
Employment rates of Indigenous men aged 25 to 54



Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006 and 2016.

Courtesy Statscan <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-659-x/89-659-x2018001-eng.htm>

**Staffing shortages, funding shortages, equipment, infrastructure and access to information and resources all contribute to almost insurmountable barriers for Indigenous community radio stations.**

Several stations and programs cited poverty and high rates of unemployment and underemployment of Indigenous people as a reason why they cannot, or choose not to, rely on volunteers. As one respondent said, “we can’t have volunteers because people need food and money. People are worried about their next meal.”

Staff and volunteer turnover is an issue for many stations and programs. Reasons commonly cited for turnover are burnout and exhaustion due to long hours and too much work - or as one respondent put it, “they have the passion but they run out of energy.” Other reasons include insufficient funding to pay staff a living wage, which forces staff to work multiple jobs or to accept better offers elsewhere. Several stations mentioned aging staff or staff who have recently passed away, especially older radio hosts and language teachers - a significant concern in communities with few young Indigenous language speakers to take up the job.

Several stations and programs mentioned that highly qualified individuals are already in high demand - especially those who are fluent Indigenous language speakers and who are willing to go on air.

### Funding shortages

Insufficient funding is often cited as the cause of staffing shortages. Several stations reported major reductions in government funding over the years, while others pointed to funds that do not grow, despite an increasing pool of applicants among which funding must be distributed.

One station cited the complexity of the funding application process as a major obstacle, which often results in missed deadlines. Few have been successful at obtaining funding through grant applications, and this has been a cause of frustration. One station explained that they have been rejected for government grants because the station makes “too much money” with bingo fundraisers.

Many of those interviewed pointed out that most funding available is project-based, making it difficult for programs and stations that do not receive core funding to ensure their sustainability; notably, there are far fewer funding opportunities available for operational expenses, equipment and infrastructure. Indigenous radio programs broadcasting from non-Indigenous community and campus stations are further limited, as they are required to raise funds annually for their host station and must turn over any advertising revenue they generate.

### Infrastructure and equipment

Many stations and programs expressed a need for more or better equipment and improved infrastructure. This challenge is a direct result of limited access to funding. Equipment needs cited by stations include studio equipment and software, a transmitter with better reach, an emergency generator, and updates of existing equipment to modernize the studio.

Six stations and programs do not run out of a permanent, dedicated or adequate space for their needs. One of these, an Indigenous radio program that airs on a campus radio, would like to expand to offer more Indigenous language content to the urban community, but is limited by the full programming schedule of the radio station whose airwaves host the show.

### Access to information and resources

Many of the station managers and program hosts that were interviewed felt that they did not have all the information needed to run their station or program effectively. This includes information on where to find different types of funding, how to complete applications for CRTC approval and technical knowledge. One respondent, who is helping to set up a new station, reports that someone in the community had previously attempted to create the station, but had felt so intimidated by the various government forms required that the project had died. Some respondents emphasized the challenge of finding and accessing language learning resources.

Several individuals mentioned that they were helped along in the process of starting their station or program by already established stations and programs. Many of those interviewed would like to see some sort of network or platform that would help connect Indigenous radio stations and programs to allow for information and resource sharing and mutual support.

### Opportunities

In spite of these challenges, those interviewed pointed to some opportunities that could facilitate their work. Many radio managers and hosts mentor and train youth. They see great potential in building capacity in the young Indigenous



Courtesy of CFPQ FM.

population, both to create a new generation of radio hosts and staff, and to use radio as a professional development opportunity for Indigenous youth.

One respondent did, however, highlight the challenge of integrating the responsibility of training new people into her already overwhelming schedule. Several respondents cited the challenge of training people and then losing them to turnover or better job offers. Others believe that if they were able to offer more comprehensive training, they would have no problem awakening an interest in radio - and speaking or learning Indigenous languages - among youth and other community members.



Youth mentoring Courtesy of Socam.



Courtesy of the James Bay Cree Communications Society website.

New technologies are also seen by many as presenting opportunities to engage wider audiences. Digital equipment and access to the internet enables more people to bring cultural and language content to audiences in more exciting, dynamic ways. Respondents cited podcasting, live streaming, social media, online radio and cell phones as technologies that can make radio more accessible, mobile and exciting for younger audiences and content creators.

## 5. Discussion

Canada's Indigenous radio experts - station managers, directors, producers, hosts and volunteers - are all acutely aware of the advantages and potential of Indigenous radio as a relatively accessible, independent and flexible instrument for the revitalization of Indigenous languages and cultures. They see the culture as vital to the well-being of communities and individuals. Indigenous radio is valued as an essential service, with tremendous potential for opening new spaces, amplifying voices and advocating for Indigenous priorities.

Throughout discussions with these Indigenous radio experts and in the documents reviewed, reconciliation emerged as an overarching and cross-cutting theme. Those who ensure the day-to-day functioning of Indigenous radio across the country point to the Canadian state as morally and legally obligated to support Indigenous cultural and language revitalization and promotion and to ensure the presence of Indigenous voices in the media and on the airwaves.

Many cite the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Canadian government's own commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples,<sup>14</sup> as well as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), as providing a rights-based approach within which to frame their demands. This emphasis on rights and reconciliation is grounded in the UNDRIP and TRC assertions of the rights of Indigenous peoples to practice and revitalize their cultures and languages, to educate their people in their own languages and in ways that are culturally appropriate, and to establish their own media in Indigenous languages (see Section 3.2). Adequate federal funding for such initiatives is seen as a Crown responsibility congruent with the government's stated intent to reconcile its relationship with Indigenous peoples. Finally, a rights and reconciliation approach is framed in the concepts of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination and a nation-to-nation relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Crown (TRC Calls to Action 45,46,47<sup>15</sup>; UNDRIP Articles 3,4,5<sup>16</sup>).

### 5.1. Language promotion and revitalization

*We know that to feel well and holistic and connected, to every tree and blade of grass, we need that connection to our past generations who died here, and the language. Culture saves lives.*

- Radio show host



The health of Indigenous cultures and languages is closely connected with Indigenous peoples healing from the traumas of colonization. The role that culture, identity and language play as part of holistic health and healing processes has been demonstrated in a number of studies.

Chandler & Lalonde (1998) found that cultural continuity has a direct impact on the prevalence of youth suicide. First Nations youth suicide rates were almost 140 times greater in communities with no cultural continuity than in communities where all factors of cultural continuity were present. These factors include self-government, control over services, efforts to control traditional lands and the presence of cultural facilities.<sup>17</sup> The same authors then applied the single factor of Indigenous language as an indicator of cultural continuity and found that youth suicide rates were very low in communities where over half of the population had conversational knowledge of their Indigenous language.<sup>18</sup>

Courtesy of Socam.

<sup>14</sup> <https://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2018/02/14/remarks-prime-minister-house-commons-recognition-and-implementation-rights-framework>

<sup>15</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (2015). Available: [http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007). Available: [https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf)

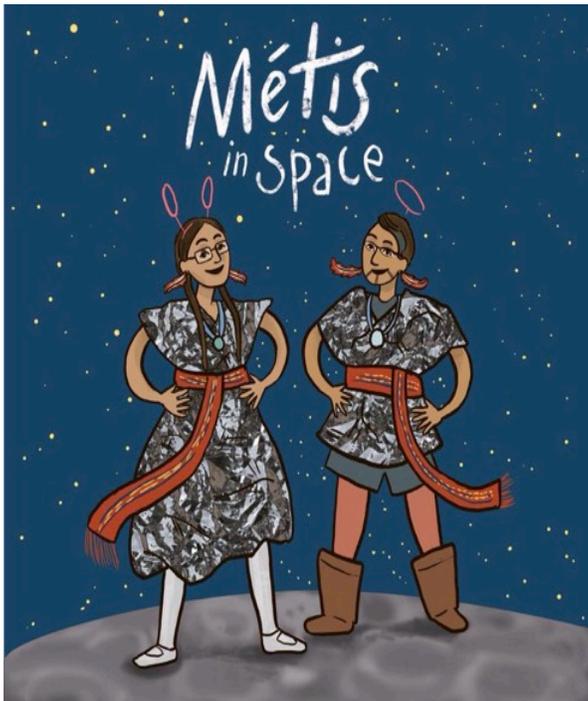
<sup>17</sup> Chandler, M. J., & Lalonde, C. (1998). Cultural continuity as a hedge against suicide in Canada's First Nations. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 35(2), 191-219.

<sup>18</sup> Hallett, D., Chandler, M.J. and Lalonde, C.E. (2007). Aboriginal language knowledge and youth suicide. *Cognitive Development*, 22: 392-399.

Language is an essential vehicle for transmitting cultural knowledge and values. Language loss has a negative impact on self-identity, self-esteem, empowerment and well-being. The First Nations Regional Health Survey (2008-2010) found that adults who use their language daily reported greater spiritual balance than those who did not.<sup>19</sup> A study with Indigenous adults at risk for type 2 diabetes found that a six-month program of culture and language teachings was more effective for reducing diabetes risk factors than conventional diet and exercise.<sup>20</sup> Finally, a study from Australia found that people reporting knowledge of Indigenous language, connection to their culture and/or living on traditional lands also reported higher levels of happiness - irrespective of other social factors such as education, income and employment.<sup>21</sup>



Courtesy of the James Bay Cree Communications Society website.



Courtesy of Metis in Space.

Over one-third of survey respondents cited significant language loss in their community. Some spoke of only a very small percentage of fluent language speakers remaining, while others referred to the recent loss of Elders and language teachers. Some were frank about the situation of their Indigenous language: "We're holding on to language by a string"; "As hard as you work, you have the sense that the canoe is sinking. You plug the holes, but the water keeps coming in, it's going down."

Many Indigenous broadcasters live language revitalization struggles and triumphs daily. Several are learning their Indigenous language alongside their audience. This can be a major challenge in urban settings and communities with few fluent speakers. Immersion is not always an option, language learning resources can be hard to come by and radio managers and hosts already find themselves stretched for time.

<sup>19</sup> National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (2016).

<sup>20</sup> McGavok, J. The link between culture and health is vital for First Nations. Toronto Star, 27 May 2016. Available: <https://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2016/05/27/the-link-between-culture-and-health-is-vital-for-first-nations.html>

<sup>21</sup> Biddle, N., & Swee, H. (2012). The relationship between well-being and Indigenous land, language and culture in Australia. *Australian Geographer*, 43(3), 215.

Community aspirations for language revitalization are increasing, despite (or perhaps due to) such challenging circumstances. These aspirations can be nurtured by bringing language teaching into the home in an accessible way through radio. Learners only need an inexpensive radio, and teachers can easily create content without overly complex tools and technical training. This accessibility enables more community people to engage in language revitalization. As one station manager explained, “it is important that people hear a language spoken daily”. Indigenous language radio programming can take full advantage of the important role that radio already plays in many Indigenous communities and for connecting urban audiences to their home communities and cultures.

Many radio show hosts and producers have a solid understanding of the strategies needed to promote and revitalize Indigenous languages in both community and urban settings. Several core strategies emerged clearly from our conversations. These strategies will need active and sustainable support if they are to ensure the vitality and survival of vulnerable and endangered Indigenous languages in Canada.

Alongside regular programming, there is potential for radio stations to partner strategically with community language revitalization projects, or to develop their own side projects focused specifically on language teaching. For example, the Moose Cree First Nation participated in a “Kitchen Table Cree” project, which promoted speaking Cree in the home with Elders and family members who knew the language. A project like this one could be reinforced by tying it to community radio programming.

Again, sufficient and sustainable support is needed to enable stations to develop such projects. The Aboriginal Languages Initiative (ALI, Department of Canadian Heritage) is notable for offering multi-year funding for such projects. However, only one radio station interviewed has made use of ALI for supplemental project-based funding.



Grand Chief Mathew Coon Come.  
Courtesy of the James Bay Cree Communications Society website.

## Language promotion and revitalization strategies

### Ensure the presence of Indigenous languages

It is essential for Indigenous language to be present in people’s daily lives and in the public spaces. Language presence on the airwaves and in digital content is one way of promoting the normalization of Indigenous languages. Several of those interviewed shared their strategies for integrating expressions of Indigenous language throughout their programming. These include greetings, opening prayers, music, call-in programs and introducing relevant Indigenous words during talk radio. Another way of normalizing the use of Indigenous language is to use words without translation. As one station director put it, “the more Indigenous language radio content is created, the more reasons people will have to continue to use and interact with their own language.”

Ensuring that Indigenous languages are being heard by non-Indigenous audiences is another way of reaffirming the intrinsic value of Indigenous languages. Several station managers mentioned receiving positive feedback on language programming from non-Indigenous audiences. Ensuring space for their language in the public realm can be seen as an important and symbolic first step to reconciliation and a reaffirmation of Indigenous rights in Canada.

## Make Indigenous language accessible using a casual, informal approach



Puts'lhtn hosts the “Acwsalctimutlih ala mntalh ts” show on Nuxalk Radio alongside his son SK'iinwas (Cloud) who is reciting the Nuxalk language alphabet on-air. Courtesy Nuxalk Radio.

The casual use of Indigenous language is an important way to break down barriers experienced by potential language learners. Many feel intimidated by the prospect of trying to speak their Indigenous language. They point to fear of making mistakes, anxiety about accent, and shame of being non-speakers. Radio programs often aim to minimize these anxieties by integrating Indigenous language in a fun, contemporary, accessible way.

One program host said, “it’s important to create a space that allows learners to start somewhere – dropping a word here and there, putting together a sentence and exploring how to use Indigenous language to address contemporary concepts and ideas”. Repeated use of a word to encourage retention is another common strategy. Several stations and programs successfully use “word of the day” or “word of the week” strategies. Such programming has been made interactive using social media, call-in radio and complimentary learning materials made available to listeners.

This casual, fun approach to language is critical for encouraging young people to learn and speak their Indigenous languages. This is especially important with endangered languages that are almost exclusively spoken by the older generations. Many radio managers and hosts understand they need to reach out to youth “where they are” – by using music, social media, podcasting, video games. This often means harnessing the digital media that are complementary to traditional broadcast radio.

### Connect Elders with audiences

Along with harnessing the power and potential of new technologies, strategies are needed to enable Elders to help promote language vitality through traditional broadcast radio. Many stations and programs include conversational segments with Elders, which range from informal chats in the Indigenous language to more structured language teaching modules. However, Elders who are the traditional language teachers and knowledge keepers, are not always comfortable going on air live or able to come into the studio. Some stations have trouble finding Elders willing and able to participate. Stations have strategies to tackle this challenge, including pre-recording shows with Elders and partnering with classroom-based language teachers to record or call in to language classes. Adequate equipment and facilities are necessary to accommodate such strategies (e.g. a dedicated, accessible recording studio).

### 5.2. Capacity building and youth

*We have a big concern to try to get young people interested in this business, to make them realize that they can have a real impact through radio broadcasting.*

- Station manager

Capacity building is vital to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of Indigenous radio. Radio stations and programs require well-trained staff and volunteers. Building capacity also extends to training and professional development opportunities for Indigenous people, especially youth.

Many stations and programs offer mentoring and training opportunities for Indigenous youth, including school groups, at-risk youth and young people looking to build radio and journalism skills. In many cases, young people trained at Indigenous community stations and programs have gone on to successfully pursue careers in media. Stations and programs are proud of the impact they have. However, they remain short-staffed as successful trainees move on to paid or better-paid opportunities. Offering workshops and overseeing trainees often means more work for already overworked radio staff. In cases where radio staff are aging, it is imperative to train a new generation of radio hosts, technicians and DJs to ensure the continued existence of Indigenous radio.

**“It is a symbiotic relationship: as more young people learn the language and can participate, more Indigenous language speakers will be heard on the airwaves.”**

Capacity building can contribute in an important way to Indigenous language vitality. As one program host pointed out, “it is a symbiotic relationship: as more young people learn the language and can participate, more Indigenous language speakers will be heard on the airwaves. In turn, more people will be interested and excited to learn their language, leading to higher demand for language learning programs.”

Building Indigenous language capacity among existing radio station staff is another way to ensure language vitality, yet only one station reported having secured funding specifically for language capacity building. They were able to hire language teachers who helped radio hosts improve their use of the Indigenous language on the air through lessons and feedback.

Technical capacity building is also a crucial contributor to Indigenous radio sustainability. What is often missing is technical training and digital equipment. Learning to use software, databases and broadcasting equipment is critical. Digital literacy training is integral to making the best use of online tools. This includes social media and podcasting which taps into new audiences and ensures reach beyond the physical confines of the radio frequency.

### 5.3. Adopting new tools

The explosion of new communications technologies and especially the ubiquity of online platforms is changing the way audiences relate to radio broadcasting. This change tends to exclude the older generations, for whom traditional community radio has always been a part of everyday life. Radio remains a primary means of communication especially for remote Indigenous communities, for everything from sending greetings to family, warning of bad weather and providing a space for Elders to share stories, advice and wisdom with the community through call-in radio. One of the northern radio stations interviewed remains on air 24 hours a day when a search and rescue is underway.



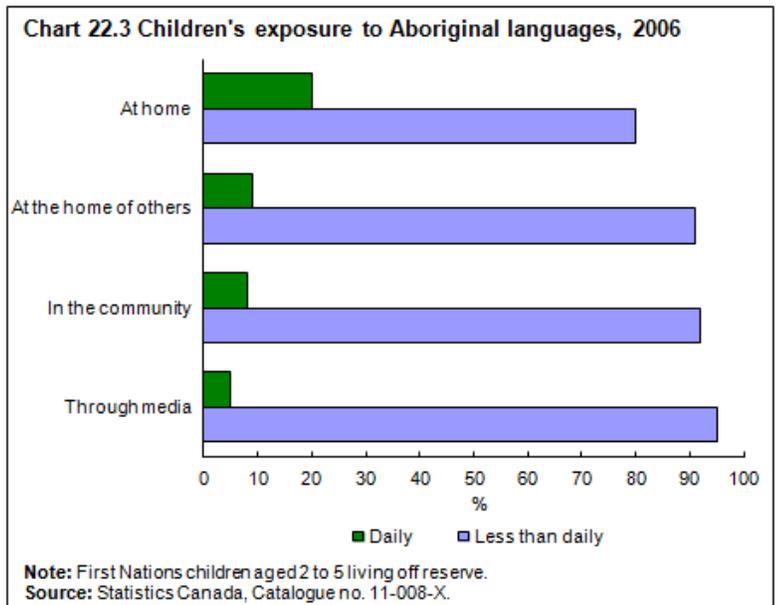
David Kawapit Jr. (Nishiyu Walker) courtesy of the James Bay Cree Communications Society website.

For many Indigenous communities in Canada, radio remains an essential service, a service which requires updated funding and policies to ensure its capacity to adapt to changing technological realities and its sustainability into the future. Only one Indigenous space, the newly created Indigital Cultures Gathering Place ([indigitalcultures.ca](http://indigitalcultures.ca)) has been created to address the role of digital media in today's reality.

Despite the changing broadcasting landscape brought about by the Internet, the CRTC Native Broadcasting Policy has not been updated since its publication in 1990.<sup>22</sup> Indigenous communities must be consulted in the creation of an Indigenous broadcasting policy which compares to the standard that is enjoyed by non-Indigenous Canadians.

The rapid growth in communication technologies offers important potential by expanding reach to new audiences, keeping them engaged, documenting and sharing information and knowledge, and imagining new ways of supporting language and cultural revitalization. Among younger audiences, Indigenous radio coexists with an explosion of social media that is dominated by giants like Facebook and Youtube.

Language revitalization through radio appears to be at a disadvantage in competing for the attention of youth. English is the dominant language of the internet, causing a significant risk of the younger generations losing their Indigenous language as they spend less time with Elders and family and more time online. Indigenous radio broadcasters need to go to the youth and take their content to online platforms such as podcasts and social media.



Courtesy of StatsCan <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-402-x/2011000/chap/lang/lang02-eng.htm>



Barriere Lake Drummers.  
Photo Courtesy of Sonny Papatie.

In Barriere Lake, an Algonquin community just northeast of Ottawa, language retention was 85% prior to the advent of the internet. Since internet came to the community the last two generations have lost Algonquin as their first language. Retention is down to 65-70%. Efforts are now being made through school programs to help the young ones learn.

<sup>22</sup> Szwarc, J. (2018) Indigenous Broadcasting and the CRTC: Lessons from the Licensing of Native Type B Radio. Available: <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/acrtc/prx/2018szwarc.htm>

Digital technologies can complement traditional radio enabling production of new forms of content which bring Indigenous culture and language to audiences in innovative ways. Increasingly affordable mobile technology makes it easier for Indigenous content creators to go out into the community, whether to broadcast live over Facebook or to create podcasts and pre-recorded radio shows.

Online platforms such as SoundCloud offer listeners access to Indigenous language content at their convenience, increasing the potential of radio stations to reach audiences. Online live streaming is used by virtually all radio stations that were interviewed, except for those in the far north. Streaming allows community members who are out of range of a radio's signal, or who live away from the community, to stay connected to their home, their culture and their language.

Innovative uses for mobile technologies and online platforms are being adopted by radio program producers and hosts: one would like to stream live from the pow-wow trail, while another has harnessed a video streaming platform to video-record his live studio shows and make them available on YouTube. Another ensures that all her podcasts can not only be streamed but also downloaded, so they remain accessible to listeners in communities with low broadband speeds.

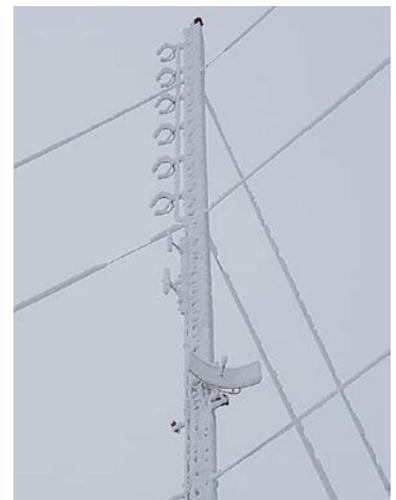
She points out that podcasting is an important new medium for attracting youth to Indigenous radio. In urban settings, listeners can download and listen to podcasts regardless of where they are or what they are doing. For aspiring content creators, podcasting is at both easy to learn and has low start-up costs. Radio and podcasting can not only be complementary, but interest in one can lead to interest in the other, serving to multiply the Indigenous voices creating content.

#### 5.4. Networks

A recurring aspiration is to see the creation of an Indigenous radio network. The challenges and isolation in which many operate prompt a need for a dedicated space for Indigenous radio to connect, build solidarity, support one another, share information and advocate for their common interests. Although some stations are members of the National Campus and Community Radio Association (NCCRA), this organization does not fulfill the needs of Indigenous radio. For example, the Indigenous radio stations with Native B licenses are not eligible for funding through the NCCRA and there are no real benefits in Indigenous radio stations becoming a member. There is a marked interest amongst all Indigenous broadcasters for a dedicated network.

Facilitating connections between Indigenous radio initiatives could help individual stations address challenges such as finding funding and navigating applications and broadcasting policies. Once radio stations and programs connect, they can support each other in gaining technical knowledge and necessary equipment. They can collaborate in training, site visits and equipment donations from established stations. Networked stations can share programming, music, expertise, cultural promotion, and best practices.

Most see this network as operating on an online platform, while many consider that online networking should be complemented by opportunities to meet in person, through an Indigenous radio conference. One podcast host would like to see an Indigenous podcasting conference, and points to the importance of forming in-person relationships. She believes that annual or twice-annual conferences are



Courtesy of 95.3 Creek FM.

necessary to build strong networks. Not only are in-person meetings most likely to lead to joint projects and partnerships but relationship building is the foundation of Indigenous paradigms.

However, despite the benefits of in-person networking, broadcasters are working with stretched budgets and would find it difficult to travel. Government support would be necessary to enable the formation and maintenance of such networks and to facilitate opportunities to gather.

### 5.5. Funding



Throughout our discussions with Indigenous broadcasters, insufficient funding emerged as a consistent and cross-cutting theme with impacts on virtually every aspect of radio station and program functioning. Language revitalization including programming, training, youth mentoring, adoption of new technologies and station-to-station networking are all limited by stretched budgets and the precarity that comes with limited, unstable and short term, project-based funding.

Respondents revealed the extent to which they rely on the passionate energy and good will of volunteers, who “wear many hats”, mentor youth, train staff, research and prepare programs, interview language and culture experts, share news and information, and keep people and communities in touch. Out-of-pocket spending, donations and small operating budgets hardly guarantee the continuity, let alone the growth and development of these activities.

Courtesy Nuxalk Radio.

Limited time and human resources lead to a self-perpetuating cycle. The cycle begins with difficulty finding time to research new funding sources, then, complete complex funding applications which leads to fewer successful grants and less cash flow for hiring more staff or training skilled volunteers. Often incorporation is required to obtain funding as a non-profit organization which causes yet another level of bureaucracy and insurmountable obstacles for the Indigenous stations.

Many Indigenous stations operate in rural and remote areas, where local economies do not support the generation of meaningful revenue through advertising. Indigenous programs broadcasting on non-Indigenous community and campus stations have little incentive to seek out advertisers, as all funds raised are directed to the host radio station. For this reason, access to adequate, stable government funding is needed for Indigenous broadcasters to carry out their mandates and ensure the presence of Indigenous voices and languages on the airwaves.

To further complicate matters, one of the major sources of federal funding for Indigenous broadcasting activities excludes Indigenous communities that are not located in Canada’s “north.” The Northern Aboriginal Broadcasting fund (Department of Canadian Heritage) only provides support to communities that broadcast above the 55<sup>th</sup> parallel, or Hamelin Line. No equivalent fund is available for Indigenous radio stations located below the Hamelin Line.



Courtesy of 95.3 Creek FM.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls on the Canadian government to ensure adequate federal funding for Indigenous language initiatives, specifically for language revitalization and preservation.<sup>23</sup> The demand for adequate public funding of Indigenous radio should be seen in the context of both reconciliation and of a rights-based approach to protecting, promoting and revitalizing Indigenous languages.



Courtesy of IsumaTV.

The TRC has called on the federal government to increase funding to its public broadcaster, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC/Radio-Canada), in order to enhance its Indigenous programming and Indigenous language content.<sup>24</sup> It is not a great leap from this Call to Action to the acknowledgement that independent Indigenous radio broadcasters cannot thrive without the state, along with other actors at the provincial, territorial, and local levels, taking financial responsibility for enabling Indigenous self-representation.

The CRTC Native Broadcasting Policy recognizes the essential role of Indigenous radio and compares it to that of the publicly-mandated CBC. Indigenous broadcasters deliver an Indigenous language service which would be unavailable otherwise.

At the same time, the Policy acknowledges that Indigenous radio stations suffer from unstable funding and vulnerability to federal funding cuts. This vulnerability can result in difficulty maintaining full compliance with the Promises of Performance filed when applying for a new license. The Native Broadcasting Policy affirms that *it is essential that aboriginal broadcasters receive sufficient funds to enable them to fulfill their responsibilities*.<sup>25</sup> This affirmation, along with the recognition of the essential service provided by Indigenous broadcasters, would amount to recognition of State responsibility to ensure adequate funding for Indigenous stations that are granted Native B licenses.

Despite this recognition, unstable and inadequate funding has direct consequences on Indigenous radio stations' access to the airwaves under CRTC licensing policy, and consequently, on the ability of these stations to provide Indigenous language programming.

In 2015, the CRTC revoked the broadcasting licenses of Aboriginal Voices Radio (AVR), a network serving urban communities in Toronto, Vancouver, Ottawa, Calgary and Edmonton. The network was found to be non-compliant with its licensing obligations.<sup>26</sup> As a result, the CRTC made the vacated frequencies available for applications by other broadcasters, prioritizing those providing services "by, for and about" these urban Indigenous communities.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Call to Action #14 (iii), Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (2015). Available: [http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Call to Action #84, *idem*.

<sup>25</sup> CRTC (1990). Public Notice CRTC 1990-89, Native Broadcasting Policy. Available: <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/1990/PB90-89.htm>

<sup>26</sup> Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2015-282 (2015). Available: <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2015/2015-282.htm>

<sup>27</sup> CRTC acts to ensure that Aboriginal radio listeners in several urban communities are better served (2015). Available: <https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2015/06/crtc-acts-ensure-that-aboriginal-radio-listeners-several-urban-communities-are-better-served.html>

The CRTC received applications for the newly available frequencies in Ottawa and Toronto from Wawatay Native Communications Society and First People's Radio Inc. (FPR). Wawatay is a community-based network in Ottawa that was supported in its application by Indigenous community leaders and representatives from across the province. Wawatay has a clear mandate to promote Indigenous language, committing to a minimum of 42 hours a week. First Nations Radio is a newly-formed subsidiary of Winnipeg-based APTN, whose proposal committed to a minimum of only nine hours a week of Indigenous language programming. The CRTC granted licensing in both cities to FPR, based solely on the consideration of financial viability. Wawatay is reliant on grants and subsidies and was therefore deemed to be un-self-sustainable.<sup>28</sup>



Courtesy Aboriginal Voices Radio.

### 5.6. Broadcasting policy

The majority of community-based Indigenous radio stations interviewed operate with a Native Type B radio license from the CRTC. Urban-based Indigenous radio programs broadcast on non-Indigenous community radio stations licensed under the CRTC Campus and Community Radio Policy.

#### **Many communities feel the license is an imposition of federal jurisdiction on reserve.**

Many communities feel that the licenses are an imposition of federal jurisdiction on reserve. Those stations without a license who were interviewed stated they felt they would be giving up their rights if they submitted to the acquisition of a license. The licensing process is supposed to enable stations to obtain funding, however, there is no specific mechanism for these stations to acquire it. They are encouraged to request social benefit funding from neighbouring urban stations, but the urban stations need not comply. The National Campus and Community Radio Association has funding for community radio stations, however, those stations licensed under the Native policy are ineligible.

For aspiring community-based stations, the complexity of the CRTC application process coupled with insufficient access to information can pose an obstacle. A consultant helping establish a new Native Type B radio station told of a previous attempt by the community to create a station, which fell through because those involved felt overwhelmed and intimidated by the CRTC and Industry Canada application forms.<sup>29</sup>

Once established, community-based Indigenous radio stations find their ability to carry out their mandate threatened by competition from surrounding stations. Native Type A license-exempt stations pointed to competition from non-local stations that have recently expanded into their area. A Native Type A license does not stop a neighbouring signal from overlapping their frequency and drowning out their broadcast.

<sup>28</sup> Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2017-198 (2017). Available: <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2017/2017-198.htm>

<sup>29</sup> Government of Canada, Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, & Crtc. (2015, June 11). Application to Obtain a Broadcasting Licence to Operate a Type B Native Radio Undertaking (including low-power) - Form 103. Retrieved from <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/forms/efiles/f103s.htm>

A Native Type B licensed station spoke of a need to expand their geographically limited signal, but fears both the associated costs and the regulatory process that would be triggered if this expansion is contested by another station. For those stations operating in densely populated areas, they must compete for access to broadcast frequencies.<sup>30</sup>

The low-power nature of transmitters used by some Native Type B stations renders them vulnerable to such competition. The underfunded station CKHQ, Kanesatake United Voices Radio was forced off the air due to substandard conditions in their studio. The community then discovered that a proposed Christian music radio station in a nearby non-Indigenous town applied for access to their frequency. Kanesatake believes that signal interference from the other more powerful transmitter would leave the community without access to the airwaves.

Low-power broadcasting licenses are unprotected. As explained by broadcasting consultant Michel Mathieu, “if the competing station is granted its license by the CRTC, CKHQ will have only two choices: find a new frequency or stop transmitting. With the community so close to a major urban centre, finding an unused frequency of acceptable quality poses a significant challenge”.<sup>31,32</sup>



Josephine Delorimier-Gabriel courtesy of CBC News.

In today’s context of reconciliation, it is telling that an Indigenous community radio station finds its access to the airwaves threatened by a Christian music station. Indigenous language rights are likewise undermined in this case. Kanien’kehá:ka teacher Josephine Delorimier-Gabriel told the CBC that she used the station’s Mohawk language broadcasts as a teaching tool and has witnessed young people in the community speaking Kanien’keha after listening to the shows.<sup>33</sup> Without protected access to the airwaves, the right of Indigenous peoples to establish their own media in Indigenous languages is threatened.<sup>34</sup>

Some Indigenous radio broadcasters point to barriers to self-representation and to Indigenous self-development and nationhood in current broadcasting policy. Some highlight the mandate of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) includes the creation of Indigenous culture and language content, or as the CBC itself states, “sharing Indigenous stories.”<sup>35</sup>

While recognition of the Indigenous presence in Canada is certainly important, some question whether this mandate contradicts the aspirations of Indigenous nations. When finite resources are channeled to CBC to do the work of representing Indigenous realities, Indigenous community media are left battling for what funds are left. This leaves them in an environment of scarcity when trying to tell their own stories, in their own voices. Limited funds for community stations keep them in a precarious condition, often compelling Indigenous radio hosts and creators to turn to non-Indigenous media institutions for stable employment, thus further marginalizing the work done by community stations.

<sup>30</sup> Szwarc, J. (2018) Indigenous Broadcasting and the CRTC: Lessons from the Licensing of Native Type B Radio.

<https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/acrtc/prx/2018szwarc.htm>

<sup>31</sup> Kanesatake community fights to keep its place on the radio dial, Matt D'Amours, CBC. Available:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/kanesatake-community-fights-to-keep-its-place-on-the-radio-dial-1.4656023>

<sup>32</sup> First Nations TV. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BGh6WTsZiQ>

<sup>33</sup> Kanesatake community fights to keep its place on the radio dial, Matt D'Amours, CBC. Available:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/kanesatake-community-fights-to-keep-its-place-on-the-radio-dial-1.4656023>

<sup>34</sup> Article 16, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), 2007. Available:

[https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/cbcradio-canada-celebrates-national-aboriginal-day-and-remains-committed-to-sharing-indigenous-stories-583820051.html>

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #14 states that *the preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.*<sup>36</sup> Indigenous radio broadcasters feel that regulatory standards need significant improvement especially in the context of the recognition of Indigenous language, cultural and political rights - including self-representation and self-governance. Indigenous broadcasters also feel a new relationship based on mutual respect and trust is due considering the Canadian state has politically obligated itself to a trust-building mandate through the process of reconciliation.



Courtesy of Nipivut.

Significantly, the CRTC Native Broadcasting Policy has not been subject of thorough review since its creation in 1990. It has only been updated once, in 2001, following a request for written comments regarding specific questions around Canadian content and advertising requirements. In comparison, the CRTC has held at least 17 public consultations on commercial and non-commercial radio policy since 1990, which led to 27 policy updates.<sup>37</sup> A new Indigenous radio policy framework needs to be created *in partnership with* Indigenous radio broadcasters, to reflect a new era in the relationship between Canada and Indigenous nations.

## 6. Critical Action Steps

The following critical action steps have emerged from the documentary review, analysis of current Canadian broadcasting policies and in-depth interviews with Indigenous radio stations and programs across the country. It is fervently hoped *Spoken from the Heart* will offer information for the elaboration and updating of policy, as well as funding proposals to governmental partners, foundations and corporations.

### Language promotion and revitalization

1. The Canadian government explicitly recognizes Indigenous language rights as an integral element of Indigenous rights, as laid out in the 13<sup>th</sup> Call to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and that the vitality of Indigenous languages plays an indispensable role in healing and well-being among Indigenous peoples recovering from the traumas of colonization.
2. Sufficient funding needs to be allocated for language promotion and revitalization work by Indigenous radio broadcasters, recognizing that for many Indigenous communities, language loss has reached critical levels.

<sup>36</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (2015). Available: [http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> Szwarc, J. (2018) Indigenous Broadcasting and the CRTC: Lessons from the Licensing of Native Type B Radio. Available: <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/acrtc/prx/2018szwarc.htm>.

This could be accomplished through such strategies as:

- a. Creating a dedicated fund to support Indigenous language radio programming in a sustainable fashion;
- b. Making funding available for Indigenous radio broadcasters to hire Indigenous language speakers and language teachers.
- c. Offering funding for Indigenous radio broadcasters to develop innovative language teaching tools and resources.
- d. Supporting national gatherings for Indigenous knowledge and resource sharing to support strategies in language revitalization.

**Create a dedicated fund to support Indigenous language radio programming in a sustainable fashion.**

3. Indigenous languages be granted a status that would guarantee their recognition alongside settler languages and ensure that public airwaves are representative of Indigenous linguistic diversity in Canada. This would be an important and symbolic step toward reconciliation and a reaffirmation of Indigenous rights in Canada.

4. Any policy development related to Indigenous language revitalization follow from meaningful consultation with Indigenous stakeholders and respect Indigenous decision making and language sharing protocols, and community authority over the creation of language resources and teaching strategies.

#### **Capacity building and youth**

5. Support youth mentoring and capacity building efforts carried out by Indigenous radio broadcasters. This could be accomplished by earmarking funding incentives to mentor, train and hire Indigenous youth.

6. Facilitate funding for Indigenous language capacity building programs for producers, program hosts and other radio staff.

#### **Adopting new tools**

7. Funding for Indigenous radio broadcasters adopting complementary digital technologies and strategies to widen the reach and impact of their mandate, especially in relation to Indigenous language promotion and revitalization.

Funds should be provided for the following activities:

- a. Studying and evaluating options provided by digital technologies, media and platforms, including knowledge sharing visits or exchanges with other Indigenous radio broadcasters or content creators;
- b. Training staff in the use of new technologies, media production techniques and online platforms;
- c. Involving youth in the above processes, including hiring youth as content creators.

8. A comprehensive review and update to the Native Broadcasting Policy in light of the importance of online platforms and new digital technologies, and consequently, the diversification of strategies employed by Indigenous radio broadcasters to create content and reach audiences.

9. Stable and continued support for traditional FM Indigenous broadcast as an essential service that radio provides to remote Indigenous communities across the country, while facilitating the necessary support for stations to modernize their broadcasting systems as internet becomes more reliable in the north.

**Traditional FM Indigenous broadcast is an essential service to remote Indigenous communities across the country**

### Networks

10. Support for the creation of a Canada-wide network of Indigenous radio broadcasters.

This can be accomplished by:

- a. Providing funding for the establishment and maintenance of an online platform that facilitates communication and exchanges among Indigenous radio broadcasters;
- b. Providing funding for an annual Indigenous radio conference, including grants to help Indigenous radio representatives cover travel costs.

### Funding

11. Increase the availability of accessible core, multi-year funding to Indigenous radio stations and reduce administrative barriers and precarity.

To implement this initiative, governments, foundations, corporations, and other partners might consider:

- a. Expanding the options for support of operational, infrastructural and equipment expenses, recognizing that often, Indigenous stations are housed in substandard or temporary conditions and require updates to their equipment in order to keep up with rapidly changing technologies;
- b. Increasing existing resources available to Indigenous radio stations in an equitable manner and in proportion to the growing number of stations applying;
- c. Expanding the Northern Aboriginal Broadcasting Fund to include funding for Indigenous radio stations located south of the 55<sup>th</sup> parallel.

### Broadcasting policy

12. Ensure the presence of Indigenous voices and languages on the air waves by, among other things, developing policy to protect the frequencies of both Native Type A & B radio broadcasters. This will help support Indigenous self-representation and language rights in the context of reconciliation.

13. Adopt policy mechanisms to require all broadcasters in Canada to carry Indigenous-made programming. This would be consistent with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call for dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians to promote reconciliation.

14. Simplify application processes for both funding and licensing applications and renewals. Make information on licensing procedures and available funding more accessible.



Courtesy of SOCAM.

15. Revise and update the Native Broadcasting Policy and other applicable policies through meaningful consultation with Indigenous radio broadcasters and relevant Indigenous stakeholders. All subsequent revisions to this policy or others should uphold the duty to consult in good faith with Indigenous Peoples.

## Conclusion

Spoken from the Heart reached out to Indigenous broadcasters across Canada and asked them to tell their stories. What emerged were the struggles of language retention, funding, maintaining stable staff and attempts to engage with a difficult licensing bureaucracy.

What also emerged were stories of community, of family, and of struggles, overcome and triumph. Indigenous broadcasters are the last barricade or the best hope against the loss of culture and language. They send messages of pride and strength. They bring the Indigenous people back to where they began and where they can begin to build. Regardless of where they are, or who they are, or what language they know, Indigenous broadcasters shed light on the issues faced by all Indigenous communities. They tell of life lived and words spoken from the heart.

# Annex 1: Indigenous radio survey

## 1. STARTING UP

What is the official name of your radio station?

Tell us your story of how you set up and how you run the radio station.

## 2. GENERAL INFORMATION

Did your community decide to apply for a CRTC license?

Call Sign

Operation Hours - When do you broadcast?

Does your station re-broadcast and what stations?

## 3. CONTACT PERSON – Confidential

Can we contact you for more information prior to finalizing the report?

The summary with recommendations will be sent out on Dec 1.

## CULTURE AND LANGUAGE AT YOUR STATION

### 4. VALUES

What is the purpose of your radio station? (community news, local music, language?)

How do you promote it on air and in the community?

### 5. PROGRAMMING

Describe your programming to us.

What sort of content do you broadcast? For example, music, interviews, language, ads?

What are your priorities especially around languages?

Where do you get your content?

### 6. REVITALISATION OF YOUR LANGUAGE(S)

What languages do you broadcast in?

Do you think that your radio station has an impact on the revitalization of your language(s)?

What resources would you need to do this work better (equipment, training, staff with language skills?)

### 7. AUDIENCE AND VOLUNTEERS

Who listens to your station? (gender, nations, age etc.)

Do you use volunteers, do they broadcast their own shows, raise funds, gather news, report on events etc.?

Are you trying to engage more diversity in your station, or in your audience (e.g. gender, age, nations, languages)?

## **8. LISTENER FEEDBACK**

Do you run surveys or use call in radio?

What is the most common feedback you get, especially related to languages used on the radio?

Are there one or more categories of listeners that you are aiming for and do not reach?

If yes, which ones and why do you want to reach out to them?

How does the community participate?

Does the Band Council/Hamlet support the station either financially or through participation?

## **9. FUNDING THE STATION**

How do you run the station financially?

Do you receive government funding?

Do you offer advertising?

What general costs do you have? Just general...we don't need specific figures unless you're happy to give them to us.

Have you had a funding source that you no longer receive?

Do you have plans to seek more funding in the future?

## **CHALLENGES AND HOPES FOR THE FUTURE**

### **10. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED**

What problems have you faced in setting up and running the radio?

What types of challenges are you facing in supporting languages?

What changes would help you deal with these difficulties?

Have you taken any specific actions to help address these issues, either in your community or with other stations?

### **11. RECOMMENDATIONS**

How do you see the development of independent Indigenous radio? How would you see that happening?

Do you have any recommendations, suggestions and advice that may assist in improving funding models, access, language and cultural revitalization?

What sort of experiences would you like to share with other stations?

### **12. LAST QUESTIONS**

Are there any online images we could use of your radio station? If so, please attach.

Any comments or question we haven't talked about?