



CONSTANCE LAKE  
FIRST NATION

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# UNDERSTANDING OUR 21ST CENTURY LANGUAGE NEEDS

A Report on the Survey by Reclaiming Our Language CLFN  
Winter 2020

If you are not  
increasing the  
number of speakers  
in your community,  
you are not saving it.  
You are hospicing it.  
Not death with a  
bang, but with a  
silent lonely  
whimper.

- KHELSEM, SQUAMISH LANGUAGE  
ACTIVIST

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Photo Credit: Sarah (Nastootaway) Sutherland

# INTRODUCTION

## Background on the Languages in Constance Lake First Nation

The language of the original descendants of the current community is Cree, Oji-Cree and Ojibway from the Algonquian language family. The story of the language is one of how migrating south from original homelands has moved it from a thriving language to one of being endangered.

Original descendants of today's Constance Lake First Nation (CLFN) were the 85 people who were recorded by a Canadian census in 1901 as living at English River (and nearby Mamma-matawa). Their families are those who currently reside around James and Hudson Bay including Kashechewan, Fort Albany, etc. Other families west and south of the original homeland also began to settle there in the early 1900's. This is when Cree began to be mixed with the Ojibway and Oji-Cree dialects.

When English River was first settled, the families were already introduced to the Cree syllabic writing system that spread across Canada through the churches. Prior to this time, the language was orally transmitted. For the purposes of this report, the word "language" refers to all 3 language dialects that currently exist in CLFN.



The Cree syllabic writing system was devised in 1840 by Reverend James Evans, a missionary at Norway House, Manitoba in collaboration with Cree-speaking people. Evans produced considerable printed material in syllabics, including hymns and portions of the New Testament. Over time, the Cree modified this system to adapt to local dialect variation and to increase its phonetic accuracy.

From their original homelands at English River (and nearby Mammamatawa), families moved four (4) times as follows:



The last move from Pagwa River to the current CLFN took place prior to 1945. This was when the language became under significant pressure from English (although it began in Pagwa River). It is estimated that, of the 120 years that families have been together as a community, the language has suffered a 90% loss and that currently only approximately 10% of the population are fluent speakers. Many of these speakers are over the age of 60 years. This means that, if no interventions are made now, the language will be lost within the next 5 – 10 years (from 2024 – 2029). As of the fall of 2019, there were approximately 89 remaining speakers at varying levels of fluency—an inventory of current language holders (fluent speakers) was developed in August 2019, it is available on page 50.

Currently, there are approximately 1,470 Constance Lake First Nation members overall with approximately 820 residing on-reserve. The community consists of 2 reserves, Constance Lake 92 Indian Reserve on the Kabinakagami River (current reserve) and English River 66 Indian Reserve on the Kenogami River (original reserve). The reserve is 7,686 acres in size and includes Constance Lake itself.

Opening in 2004, Mammawmatawa Holistic Education Center is a locally-owned school offering instruction from Junior Kindergarten – Grade 12 including a Day Care. Within the community, the Josie Bluff Memorial Christian School offers instruction from Junior Kindergarten – Grade 8. Both schools offer approximately 3.5 hours of Indigenous language instruction per week primarily utilizing the Cree syllabic writing system. Prior to the establishment of these schools in the community, children attended the CLFN Day School (from JK – Grade 1) and were bussed to nearby Hearst, Ontario to receive provincial public education. They also received Indigenous language instruction there in the same manner.

Although it is difficult to accurately pin-point, it is thought that some of the factors that contributed to CLFN's language shift have included:

- Moving from areas where only the Indigenous language were spoken to areas where English and French became the languages used
- Dialect differences (which encouraged the use of English as a common shared language)
- Colonization, including forced attendance at Residential and Day Schools starting in Mammamatawa in the early 1900's (the Constance Lake Day School run by the Church of England was in operation in Constance Lake First Nation from October 1, 1944 - September 1, 1993)

- Change in community values and attitudes about the language after Residential and Day schools (parents began to feel it was more important for their children to be proficient in English in order to get a good job)
- Inability to create fluent speakers during Indigenous language instruction in schools (and an accompanying sharp decline in the language not being orally transmitted in families)
- Lack of adult language programming in the community after Grade 12 (and continuing sharp decline in the language not being orally transmitted in families)
- Mass exposure to English in early education/education, throughout the community and society (TV, internet)
- Inability to return to a language homeland to learn/hear the language (community moved four times, relocating the community each time)



The Constance Lake Day School (Church of England) was in operation in Constance Lake First Nation from October 1, 1944 – September 1, 1993.

## Background on the Grassroots Group

The authors of this report are the Reclaiming our Language Constance Lake First Nation Grassroots Group (ROL-GG). The group is comprised of volunteer members of Constance Lake First Nation (CLFN) dedicated to the taking the lead on revitalization of our Indigenous language utilizing the following goals:

- 1) Establish a Constance Lake First Nation Language and Culture Authority
- 2) Take responsibility for the future of the language by promoting its resurgence and revitalization in the community by:
  - Assessing its status and the language environment
  - Preparing for the implementation of language revitalization projects
  - Working with Chief and Council, other relevant internal programs, and external organizations to develop a Community Language Plan
  - Taking short-term, immediate actions while a Community Language Plan is being developed
  - Encouraging the development of awards, recognitions and incentives to promote language learning

It formed on May 25, 2019 during the 2019 United Nations International Year for Indigenous Languages.

ROL-GG operates independently, and in a non-partisan manner, to allow for greater community ownership and continuity. It was felt that it needed to be structured in this manner so that the group, or its goals, will not have to change when the elected government changes.

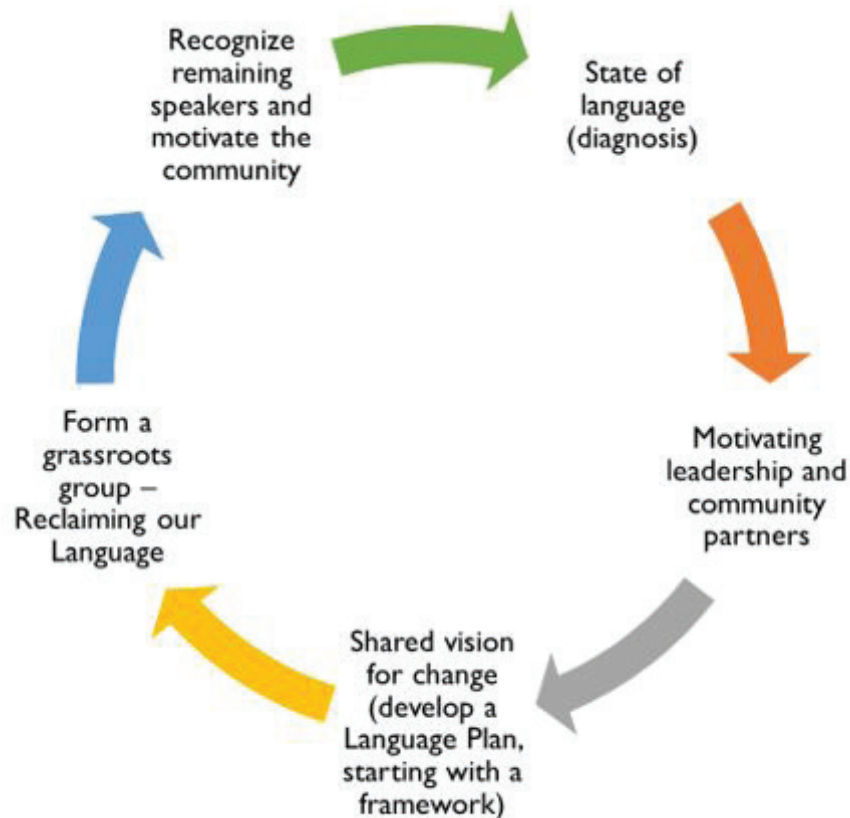


2019 | INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF  
**Indigenous Languages**



## Background on the Survey: Understanding the 21st Century Language Needs of CLFN

As part of its mobilization framework (below), the ROL-GG wanted to obtain an accurate diagnosis of the state of the language in CLFN to assist in developing a Community Language Plan and to determine other future revitalization interventions. During the months of June and July 2019, the ROL-GG took an opportunity to review a number of language revitalization survey templates and were able to develop a non-academic survey specific to CLFN adapted from Chickasaw Nation (2006), Cherokee Nation (2002), Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California (n.d.), Hinton (2001), and First Peoples Cultural Council (2013). It contained 4 sections and 39 questions. The requirements were that respondents needed to be 16 years and over and be a member of CLFN to take part.



The survey, made available electronically on Survey Monkey, was launched at the CLFN 12th Annual Traditional Pow Wow on August 10, 2019. Additional opportunities for one-on-one hard-copy survey completions were provided for 30 targeted Elders in August and 10 Youth in September 2019 along with other community outlets in September and October 2019. The following is a report of its results and summary of its findings. It provides the baseline to determine if future progress will be made on community-based language revitalization and normalization in the community.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



ROL-GG would like to acknowledge the contribution of the newly elected 2019-2022 Constance Lake First Nation Chief and Council as follows:

Chief Richard Allen  
Councillor Christine Stephens  
Councillor Rick Sutherland  
Councillor Beatrice Ineese  
Councillor Norman Solomon Jr.  
Councillor Samantha John-George  
Councillor Darius Ferris

Chief and Council, with the support of its members—provided the financial resources for our start-up costs, including the ability to effectively conduct this language needs survey using cloud-based software that provided data collection and analysis. CLFN Chief and Council also continues to provide support for our efforts wherever possible.

More information on Constance Lake First Nation can be obtained at:

[www.clfn.on.ca](http://www.clfn.on.ca)



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In total, 224 CLFN members (both on and off-reserve) participated in the survey. The purpose of the survey was to get a diagnosis of the language in CLFN as it was affected by the 20th century (1900's) and understand it's 21st century needs.

In summary, it determined that this time put our language in an endangered position. The community's history of moving on several occasions throughout this time also diminished the language with each move, moving it from 100% fluency to 10% fluency. It also gave a picture of the three different language dialects that exist in the community. It showed that Cree was the dominant language closely followed by Oji-Cree and that there was a smaller population of Ojibway speakers.

Many reported being "language aware" rather than fluent. Many said they were familiar with words/phrases but could not put them together in sentences and conversation (this was true of most respondents of were under the age of current fluent speakers).

Many reported not they were not learning or using the language in the home. Many said that it would be a good idea to provide classes for families on how to keep their language in use at home. Using the language at work was reported as mostly 'sometimes' to 'very little.' Many said 'no' and that they were not sure in terms of being able to attend language classes or work. Many also said that the language should be encouraged and used in workplaces. Hearing the language at school was reported as being 'never' to 'very little.'" When asked if our language should be taught in our schools, a majority (81%) agreed strongly. Many indicated that the community has experienced an inability to create fluent speakers during language instruction in schools and that the lack of language programming in the community after Grade 12 has had an effect.

The main ways the language is used in the community included being in prayers, greetings, jokes, mixed with English, etc. Many said they heard the language in community 'sometimes' and 'very little' and that it should be encouraged in community gatherings/events and at faith gatherings. Many said 'never' to 'very little' to the question about hearing the language in our First Nation's government activities and said it should be encouraged.

In terms of ability to learn the language, many indicated that they 'agreed somewhat' to the question that the language was difficult to learn. Many said they would like to learn on their own, in a school setting, in community activities and in a family setting. Some of the barriers to learning the language included schedule, other reasons, childcare, learning style, and transportation. In terms of who future language revitalization should be prioritized for, many said it should be as follows (in order of priority): children/students, families, Elders, and non-Indigenous personnel.

A majority of the people said that the language was vital to our identity and existence. Almost everybody strongly agreed that the language was worth saving showing that our language is still valued amongst all the age groups 16 years and older.

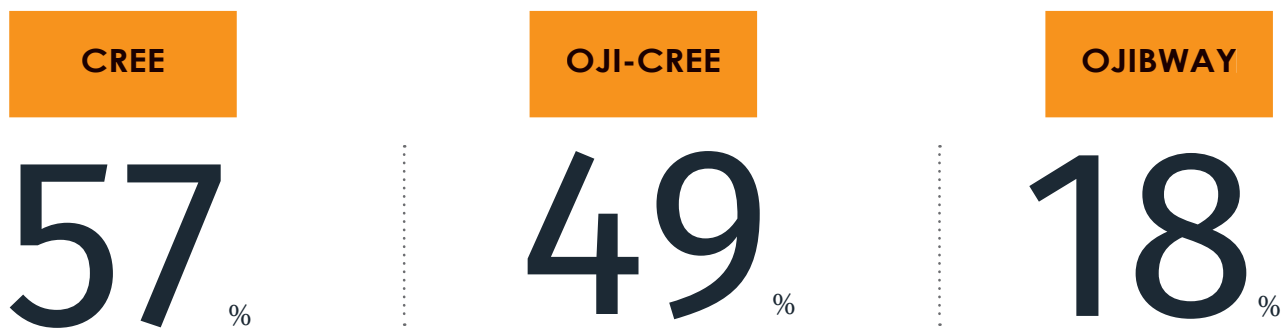
Fishman's Intergenerational Disruption Scale (1991) was used to make the determination that our language is endangered (stage 8, with a majority of only Elders speaking). This scale is used worldwide to evaluate the level of endangerment to languages.

# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

## Basic Demographic Questions

Survey results (graphs) can be found in this report on pages 14 to 16.

There were more females than males who participated in the survey. Additionally, it had representation of all the age groups in the community. In terms of composition of the language dialects, the survey determined that Cree (57%) and Oji-Cree (49%) were the dominant dialects remaining (with Cree being more prevalent) and that there was a smaller population of Ojibway speaking members (18%). It also should be noted that many respondents indicated they were a mix of the three dialects in the community.



## Degree of Knowledge and Exposure to the Language

Survey results (graphs) can be found in this report on pages 17 to 45.

In terms ability to speak the language, a majority of the respondents (37%) indicated that they knew some vocabulary but could not speak in sentences. It was noted that, of the population that indicated they were fluent—a majority of them were Elders. In terms of ability to understand the language, a majority of the respondents (48%) indicated that they could understand some words and phrases only.

A majority of the respondents (68%) indicated they were not currently learning the language. 41% of the respondents indicated that they knew 10 or more fluent speakers. A majority of the respondents (43%) indicated that they interact with a fluent speaker sometimes. In terms of usage of the language in the home by families, a majority of the respondents (37%) indicated that they used it in the home very little. In terms of usage of the language at work (including work on the land such as gathering, hunting, fishing and crafting), a majority of the respondents (27%) said that they used or heard that language in this context.

With regards to the use of the language at the school a majority of the respondents (28%) indicated that they never heard the language. The ways that respondents indicated the language was used at school included: during language and culture class, from the Cree teacher only and not otherwise used, during the national anthem, in some signage, when special guest speakers and Elders are present, amongst fluent staff communicating with their peers, when using humour and, to say one-word phrases like greetings. It was indicated that there was not too much conversations in the language otherwise.

With regards to use of the language in the community, respondents were similar in their responses between hearing the language sometimes (36%) and hearing it very little (35%).

With regards to the use of the language at church, a majority of the respondents (27%) indicated that they use or hear the language, 24% indicated that they heard it sometimes. With regards to the extent to which the language is heard or used at Constance Lake First Nation's government activities a majority of the respondents (29%) indicated that they never hear or use the language. Responses were closely followed with 'very little' at 27%.

When asked about their interest in learning the Indigenous language, 93% of respondents overwhelmingly indicated they would be interested. Respondents who replied 'not sure' or 'no' were often Elders who already spoke the language. The top three reasons why respondents were interested in learning the language included: (1) To speak the language with my children and family, (2) Learning the language is vital to my culture and identity, and (3) To speak with our Elders. Elder were more likely to say that one of top three reasons to learn the language was to keep the language and culture alive.

## Language Attitudes and Community Language Goals

Survey results (graphs) can be found in this report on pages 46 to 49.

When asked if it was important for community members to know our Indigenous language, a majority of the respondents (79%) indicated they had agreed strongly. When asked if the language is vital to our identity and existence as a Peoples, a majority of the respondents (79%) agreed strongly. When asked if our language is worth saving, a majority of the respondents (92%) agreed strongly.

When asked if our language was difficult to learn, the responses were mixed—32% agreed somewhat and 27% were neutral. When asked if our community should work hard to teach the language to people who don't know it, a majority of the respondents (72%) said they agreed strongly. When asked if it would be a good idea to provide classes for families on how to keep the language in use at home, a majority of the respondents (68%) indicated that they agreed strongly.



When asked if our language should be taught in schools, a majority of the respondents (81%) indicated that they agreed strongly. Of the respondents who indicated they were either neutral or disagreed strongly that they language should be taught in schools, many were Elders who instead chose learning in a 'family setting' as their preference.



When asked if it was important that our language is encouraged and used in workplaces, a majority of respondents (60%) agreed strongly. When asked if the language should be encouraged and used in community gatherings, a majority of the respondents (74%) said they agreed strongly. When asked if it was important that our language is encouraged and used in faith gatherings (i.e. church services, etc.), a majority of the respondents (58%) agreed strongly. When asked if it was important that our language is encouraged and used in our First Nation's general gatherings/meetings, a majority of respondents (67%) agreed strongly. When asked how groups should be prioritized for learning the language, respondents said they should be prioritized as follows:

1. Children
2. Youth
3. Student
4. Families
5. Elders
6. Non-Indigenous Personnel





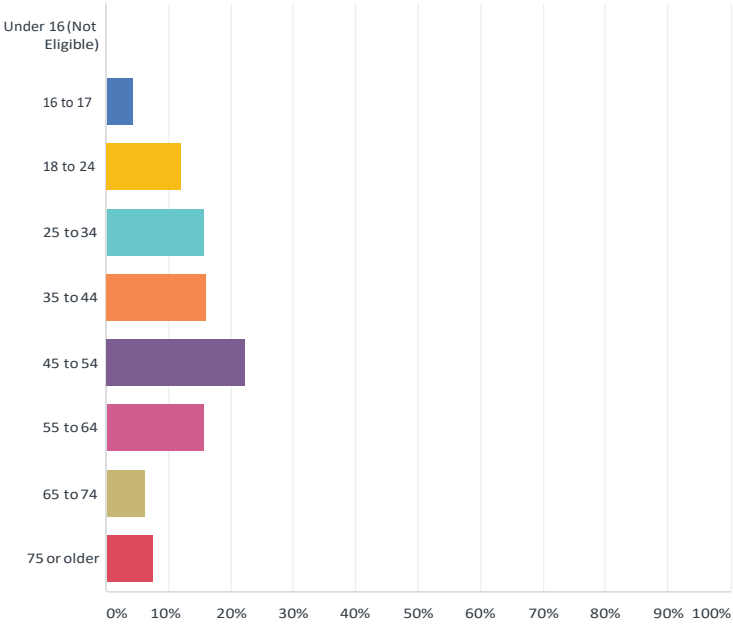
# Survey

## Basic Demographic Questions

### Q1

Q1 What is your age?

Answered: 224 Skipped: 0



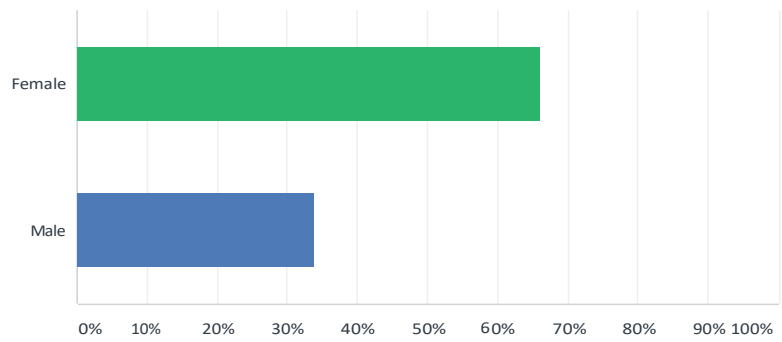
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Under 16 (Not Eligible)	0.00% 0
16 to 17	4.46% 10
18 to 24	12.05% 27
25 to 34	15.63% 35
35 to 44	16.07% 36
45 to 54	22.32% 50
55 to 64	15.63% 35
65 to 74	4.46% 10
75 or older	4.46% 10

# / Data

## Q2

### Q2 What is your gender?

Answered: 224 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Female	66.07%	148
Male	33.93%	76
TOTAL		224



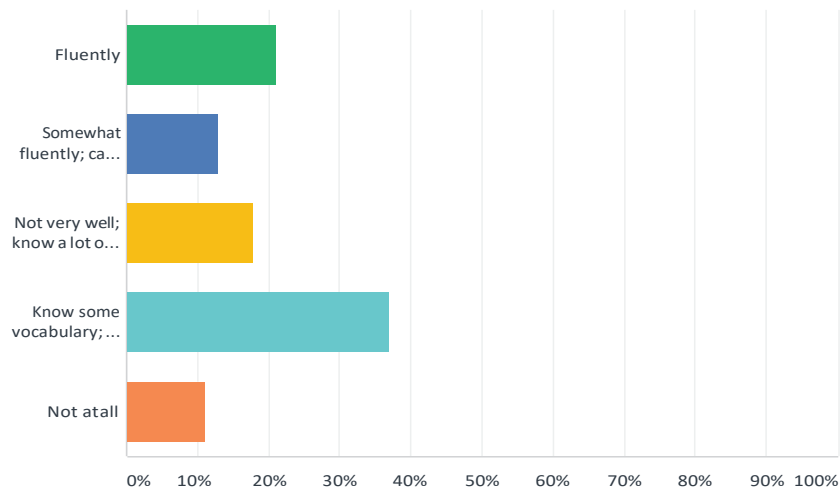
# Data

## Degree of Knowledge and Exposure to the Language

### Q5

#### Q5 How well can you speak the Indigenous language?

Answered: 208 Skipped: 16



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Fluently	21.15%	44
Somewhat fluently; can make myself understood but have some problems with it	12.98%	27
Not very well; know a lot of words and phrases but have difficulties communicating	17.79%	37
Know some vocabulary; but can't speak in sentences	37.02%	77
Not at all	11.06%	23
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>208</b>

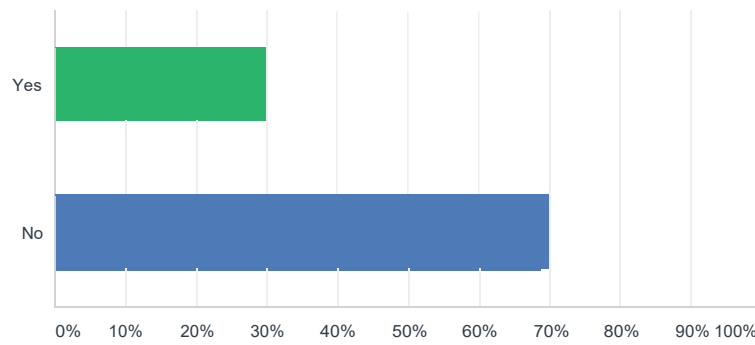


# / Data

## Q7

### Q7 Are you currently learning the Indigenous language

Answered: 208 Skipped: 16



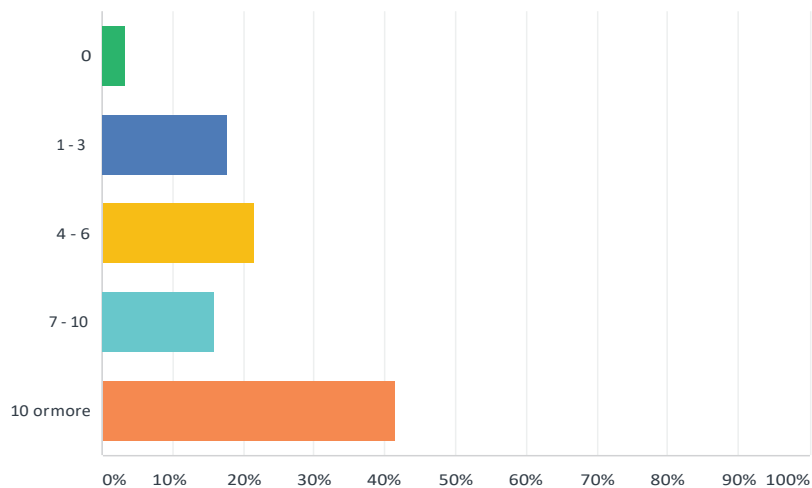
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	31.25%	65
No	68.75%	143
TOTAL		208

# Survey

## Q8

### Q8 How many fluent speakers do you know?

Answered: 208 Skipped: 16



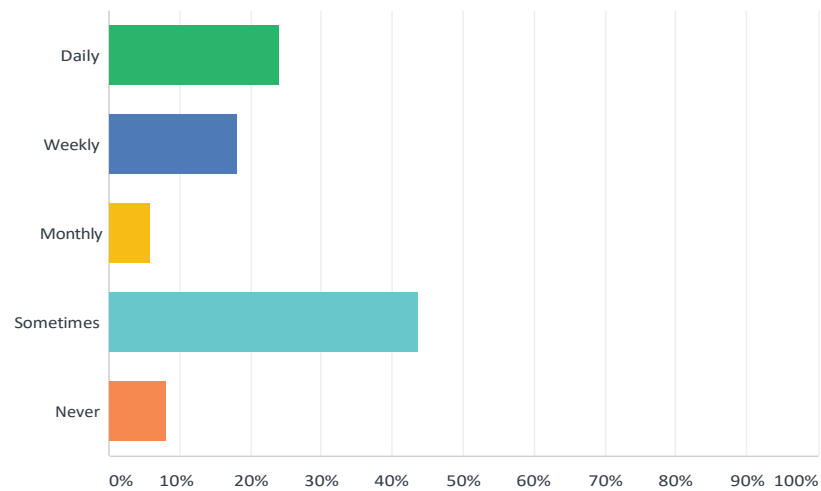
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
0	3.37% 7
1 - 3	17.79% 37
4 - 6	21.63% 45
7 - 10	15.87% 33
10 or more	41.35% 86
TOTAL	208

# / Data

## Q9

### Q9 How often do you interact with a fluent speaker?

Answered: 208 Skipped: 16



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Daily	24.04%	50
Weekly	18.27%	38
Monthly	5.77%	12
Sometimes	43.75%	91
Never	8.17%	17
TOTAL		208

# Survey

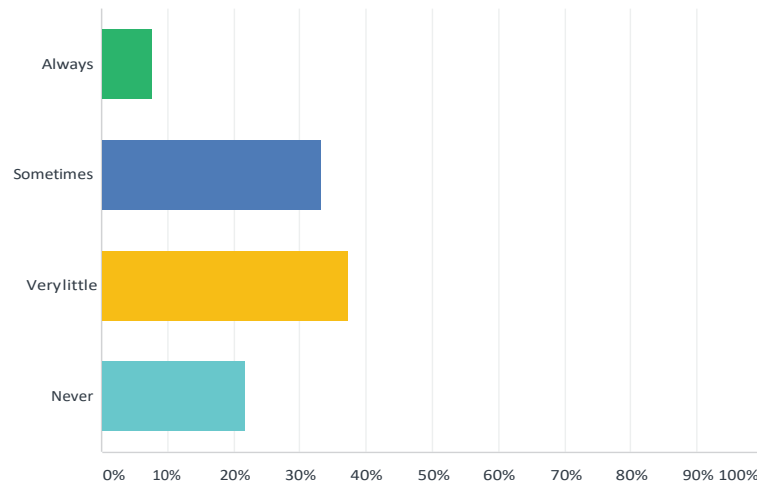
## Q10

Would you be able to identify any fluent speakers in our community?  
Please list their names. --- See list of language holders on page 50.

## Q11

Q11 How much do you and your family use the Indigenous language at home?

Answered: 207 Skipped: 17



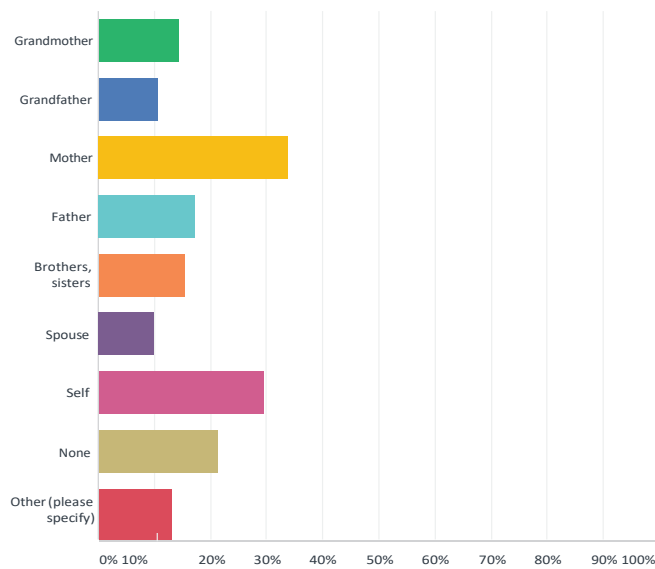
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Always	7.73%	16
Sometimes	33.33%	69
Very little	37.20%	77
Never	21.74%	45
TOTAL		207

# Data

## Q12

Q12 Who speaks the Indigenous language in your home at the present time? (select any that apply)

Answered: 207 Skipped: 17



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Grandmother	14.49%	30
Grandfather	10.63%	22
Mother	33.82%	70
Father	17.39%	36
Brothers, sisters	15.46%	32
Spouse	10.14%	21
Self	29.47%	61
None	21.26%	44
Other (please specify)	13.04%	27
Total Respondents: 207		

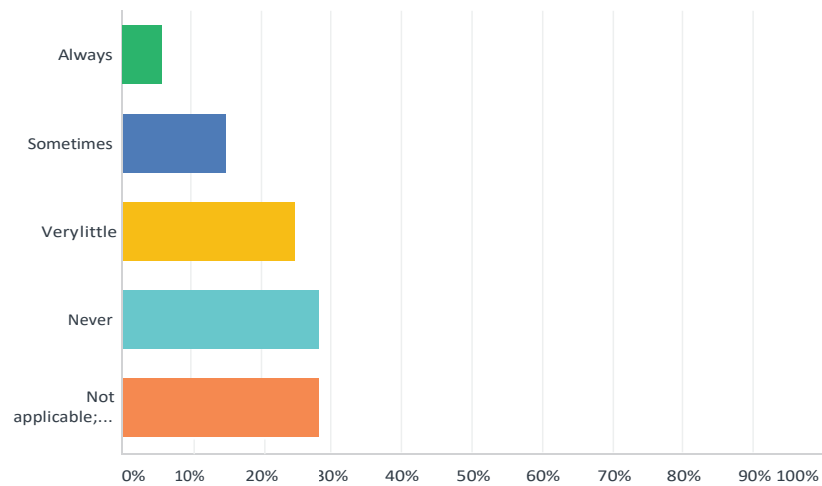


# Data

## Q14

Q14 If applicable, how often do you use or hear the Indigenous language at school at the present time?

Answered: 205 Skipped: 19



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Always	5.85%	12
Sometimes	15.12%	31
Very little	24.88%	51
Never	28.29%	58
Not applicable; don't know	25.85%	53
TOTAL		205

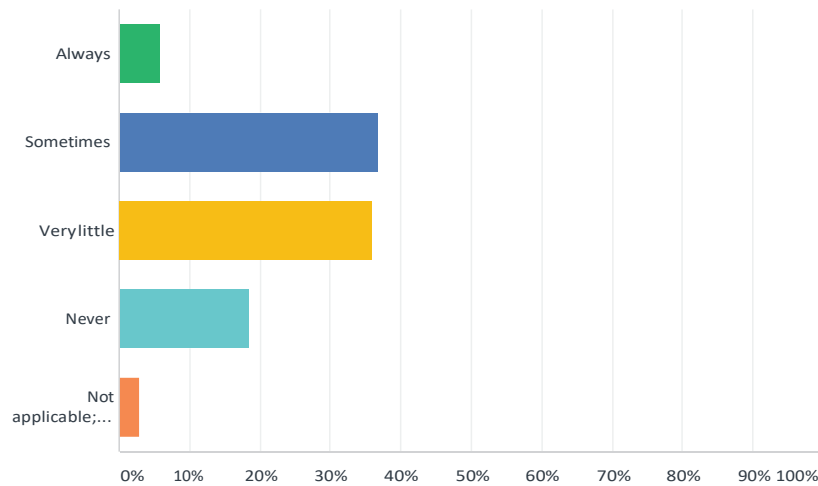


# / Data

## Q16

Q16 To what extent do you use or hear the Indigenous language in the community (e.g., sporting events, gatherings, workshops/conferences and community meetings) at the present time?

Answered: 206 Skipped: 18



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Always	5.83%	12
Sometimes	36.89%	76
Very little	35.92%	74
Never	18.45%	38
Not applicable; don't know	2.91%	6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>206</b>

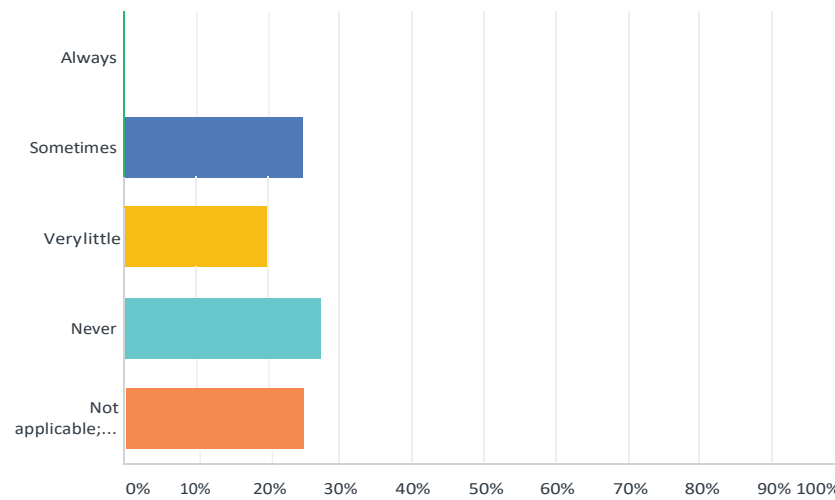


# Data

## Q18

Q18 To what extent do you use or hear the Indigenous language at church at the present time, if applicable?

Answered: 205 Skipped: 19



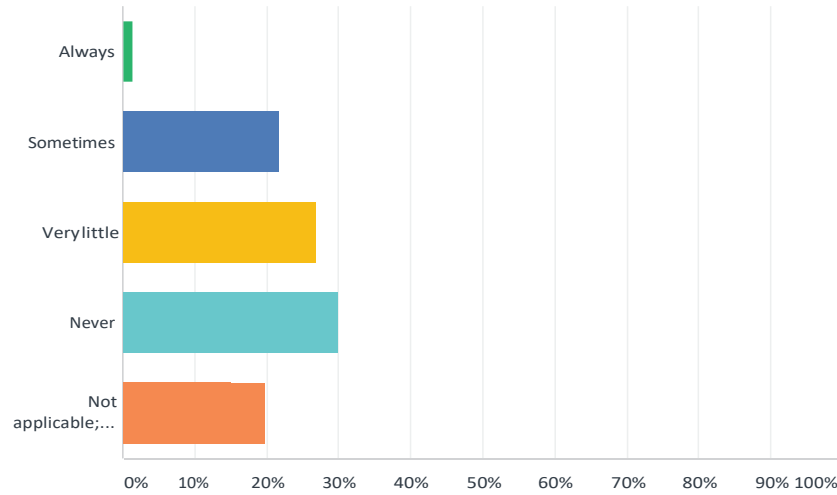
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Always	2.44%	5
Sometimes	24.88%	51
Very little	20.98%	43
Never	27.32%	56
Not applicable; don't know	24.39%	50
TOTAL		205

# Survey

## Q19

Q19 To what extent do you use or hear the Indigenous language at our First Nation's government activities at the present time, if applicable?

Answered: 207 Skipped: 17



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Always	1.45%	3
Sometimes	21.74%	45
Very little	27.05%	56
Never	29.95%	62
Not applicable; don't know	19.81%	41
TOTAL		207

# Data

## Q20

Related to the previous question, how do you use or hear the Indigenous language used at our First Nation's government activities, if applicable? (for example - is it used at certain times, or in certain spaces?)

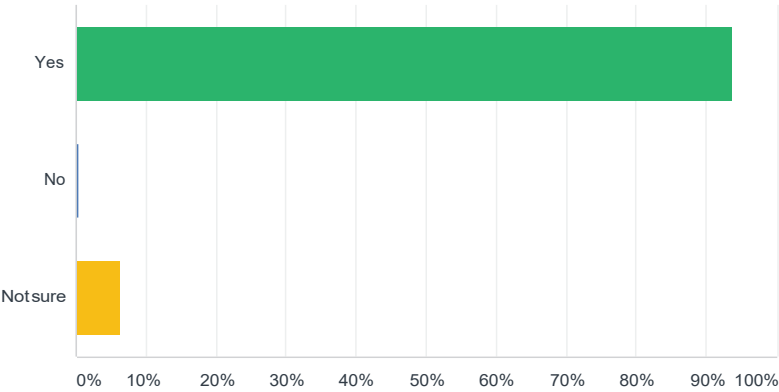
- Some people speak in short phrases but not fully
- Just in general meeting when an Elder wants to speak
- In prayers, questions from the floor
- Ceremonies, gatherings, feasts, funerals
- Personal conversations
- When I attend certain education functions
- In passing conversation
- Only when certain people talk fluently and besides them in court or council meetings
- To purposely stress a point (that we do not use our language)
- I don't hear the language
- This is needed, space spaces need to be created
- NAN meetings, Mushkegowuk Council meetings
- Hear some words at sporting activities
- Hardly hear in church
- When you feel good and depending on who's around

# Survey

## Q21

Q21 Would you be interested in learning the Indigenous language?

Answered: 204 Skipped: 20



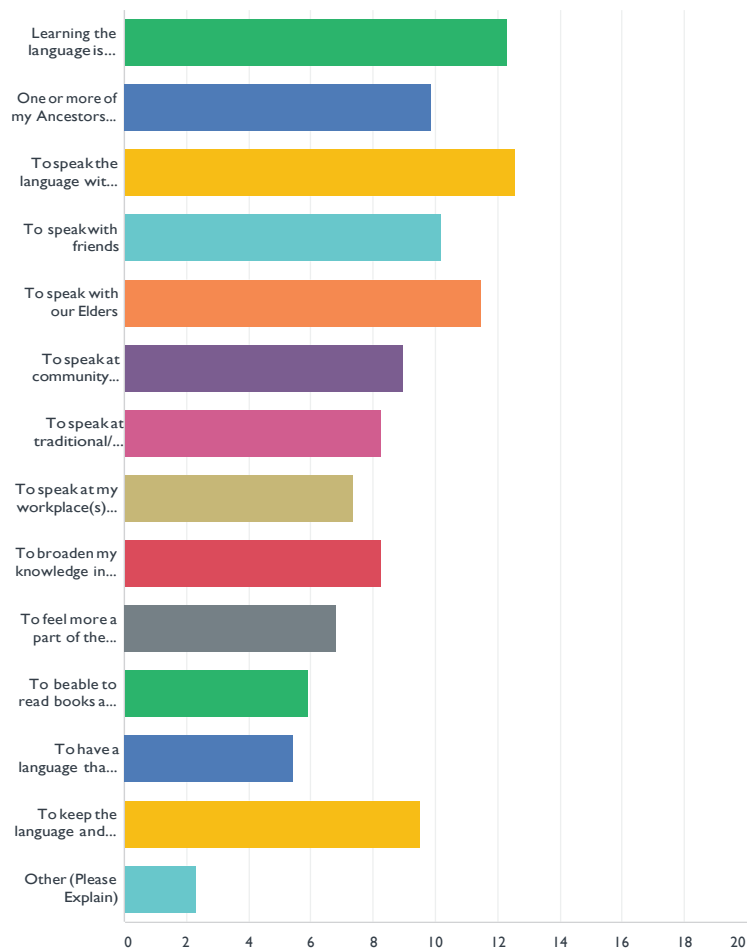
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	93.63% 191
No	0.49% 1
Not sure	6.37% 13
Total Respondents: 204	

# Data

## Q22

Q22 If you are interested in learning the Indigenous language, please rank your top three reasons for learning the language.

Answered: 192 Skipped: 32



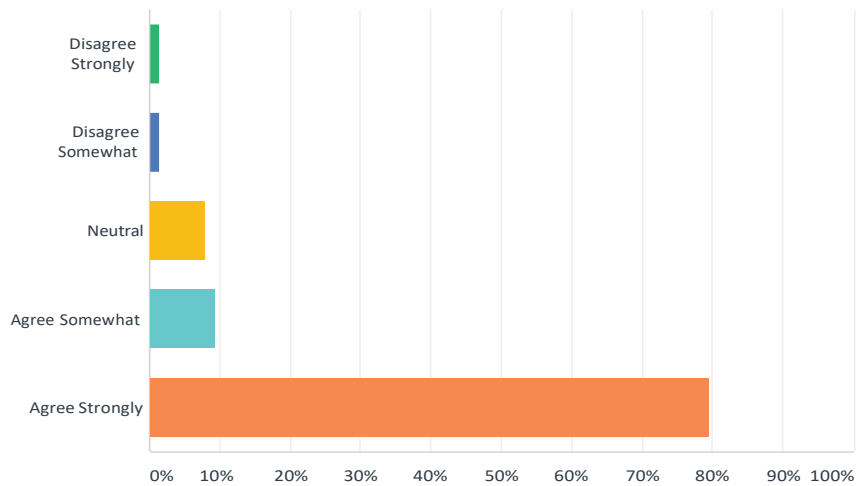


# / Data

## Q24

Q24 Our Indigenous language is vital to our identity and existence as a people:

Answered: 200 Skipped: 24



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Disagree Strongly	1.50%	3
Disagree Somewhat	1.50%	3
Neutral	8.00%	16
Agree Somewhat	9.50%	19
Agree Strongly	79.50%	159
TOTAL		200

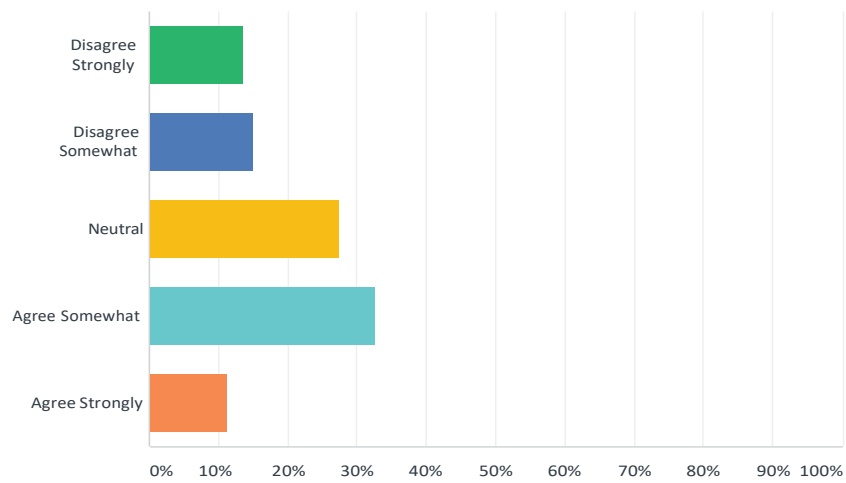


# Data

## Q26

### Q26 Our Indigenous language is difficult to learn:

Answered: 205 Skipped: 19



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Disagree Strongly	13.66% 28
Disagree Somewhat	15.12% 31
Neutral	27.32% 56
Agree Somewhat	32.68% 67
Agree Strongly	11.22% 23
TOTAL	205

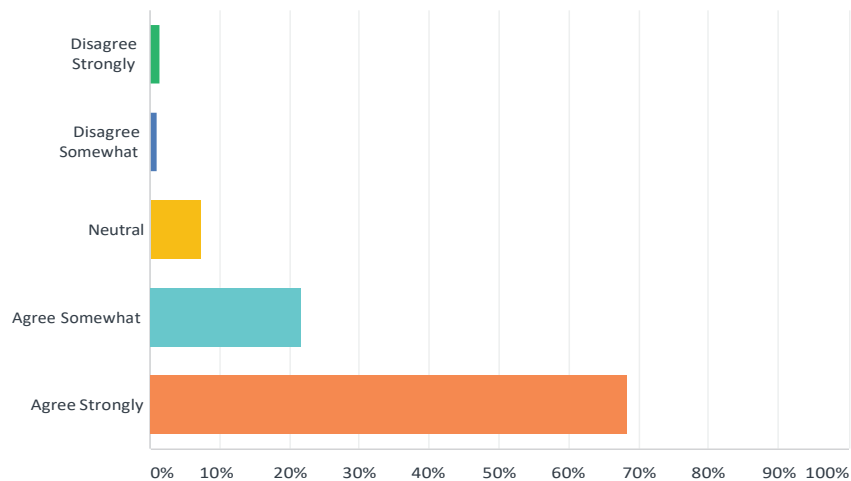


# / Data

## Q28

Q28 It would be a good idea to provide classes for families on how to keep their Indigenous language in use at home:

Answered: 206 Skipped: 18



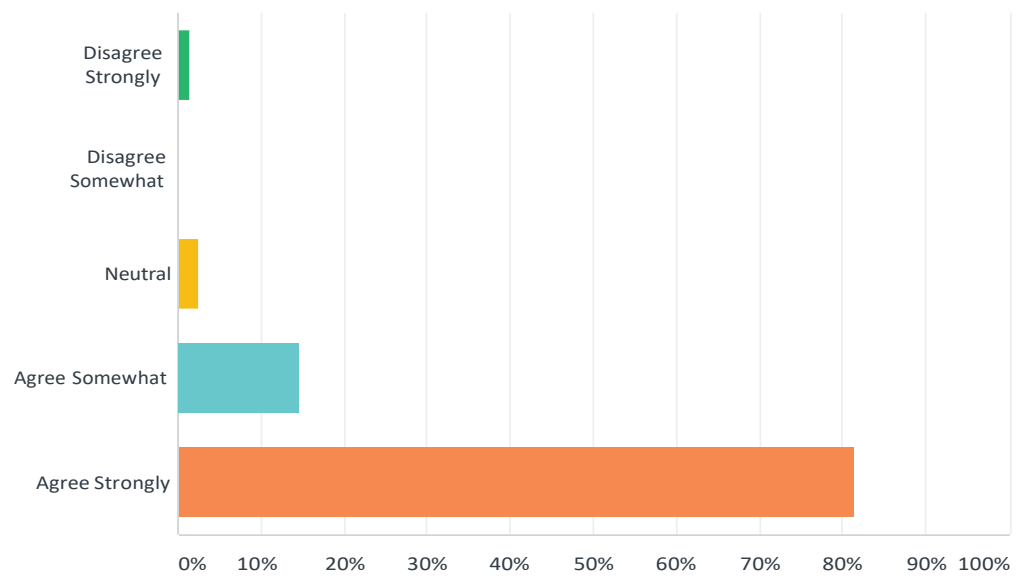
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Disagree Strongly	1.46%	3
Disagree Somewhat	0.97%	2
Neutral	7.28%	15
Agree Somewhat	21.84%	45
Agree Strongly	68.45%	141
TOTAL		206

# Survey

## Q29

### Q29 Our Indigenous language should be taught in school

Answered: 205 Skipped: 19



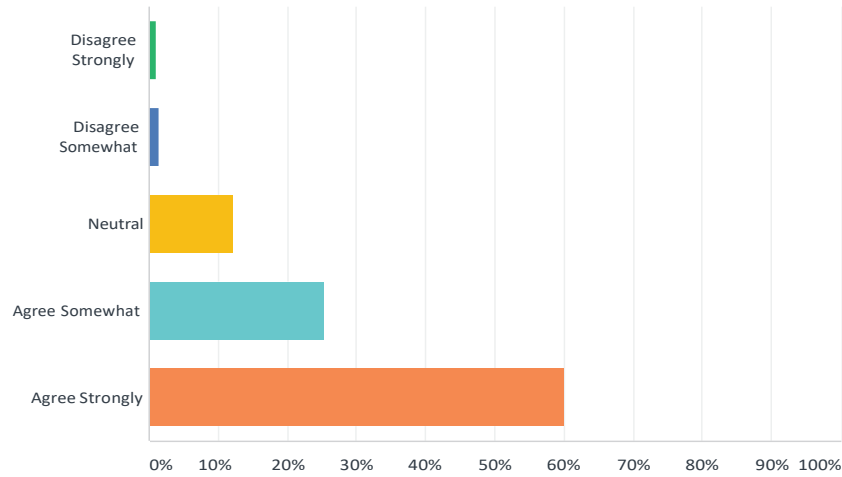
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Disagree Strongly	1.46%
Disagree Somewhat	0.00%
Neutral	2.44%
Agree Somewhat	14.63%
Agree Strongly	81.46%
TOTAL	

# Data

## Q30

Q30 It is important that our Indigenous language is encouraged and used in workplaces:

Answered: 205 Skipped: 19



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Disagree Strongly	0.98% 2
Disagree Somewhat	1.46% 3
Neutral	12.20% 25
Agree Somewhat	25.37% 52
Agree Strongly	60.00% 123
TOTAL	205

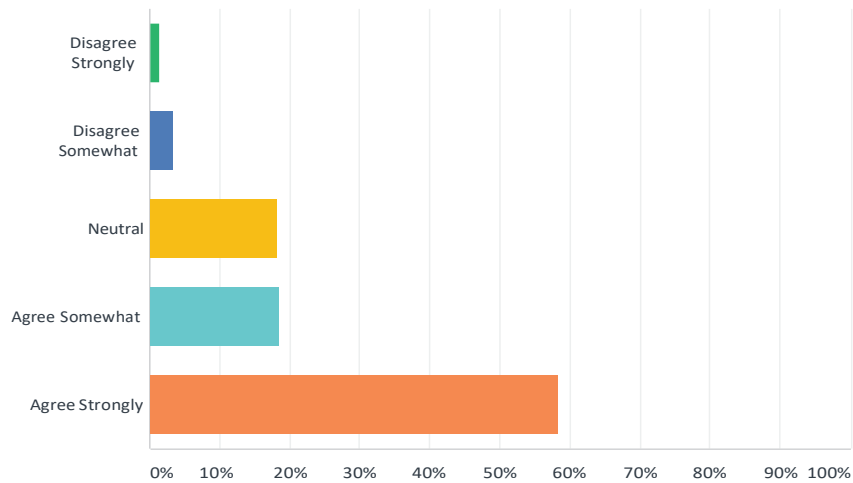


# Data

## Q32

Q32 It is important that our Indigenous language is encouraged and used in faith gatherings (ie. church services, etc.):

Answered: 204 Skipped: 20



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Disagree Strongly	1.47%	3
Disagree Somewhat	3.43%	7
Neutral	18.14%	37
Agree Somewhat	18.63%	38
Agree Strongly	58.33%	119
TOTAL		204

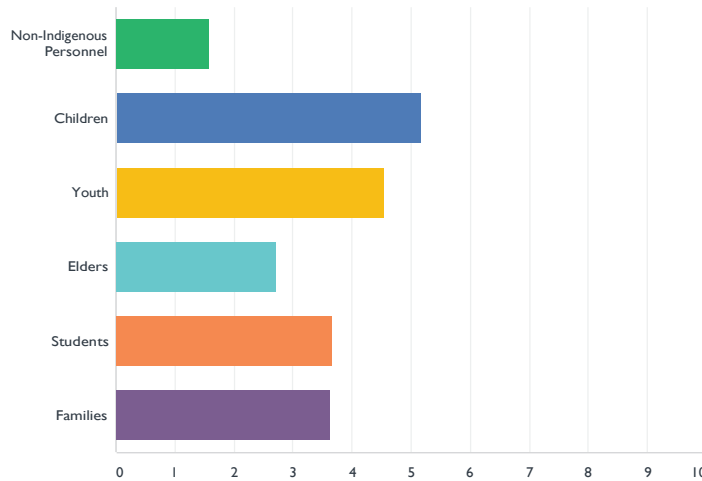


# Data

## Q34

Q34 Please rank the following groups in terms of the priority for providing opportunities to learn the Indigenous language: (1 meaning first priority and 6 meaning lowest priority)

Answered: 190 Skipped: 34



	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL	SCORE
Non-Indigenous Personnel	6.36% 11	1.16% 2	2.89% 5	2.89% 5	6.94% 12	79.77% 138	173	1.58
Children	51.38% 93	24.31% 44	16.02% 29	6.63% 12	1.10% 2	0.55% 1	181	5.17
Youth	13.41% 24	48.04% 86	24.02% 43	10.06% 18	3.35% 6	1.12% 2	179	4.55
Elders	5.81% 10	6.40% 11	14.53% 25	13.37% 23	46.51% 80	13.37% 23	172	2.72
Students	5.23% 9	14.53% 25	37.21% 64	27.91% 48	15.12% 26	0.00% 0	172	3.67
Families	22.16% 39	7.95% 14	9.09% 16	34.66% 61	23.30% 41	2.84% 5	176	3.63

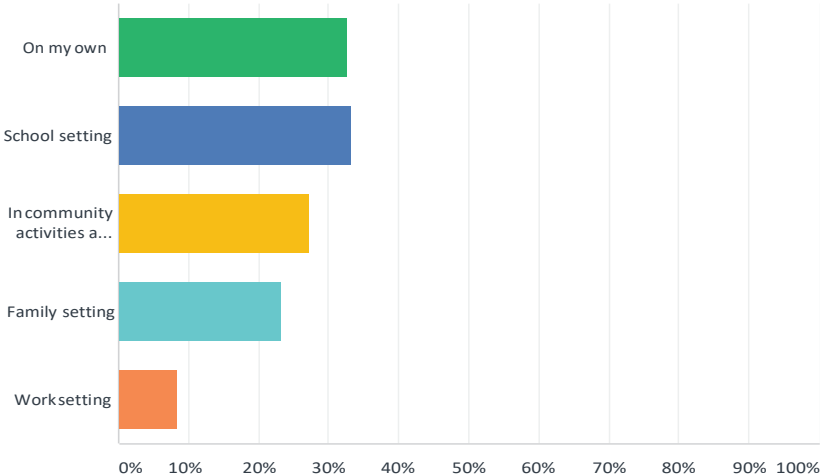


# Data

## Q36

Q36 If you are interested in learning or studying the Indigenous language, where would you like to learn it?

Answered: 202 Skipped: 22



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
On my own	32.67% 66
School setting	33.17% 67
In community activities and events	27.23% 55
Family setting	23.27% 47
Work setting	8.42% 17
Total Respondents: 202	

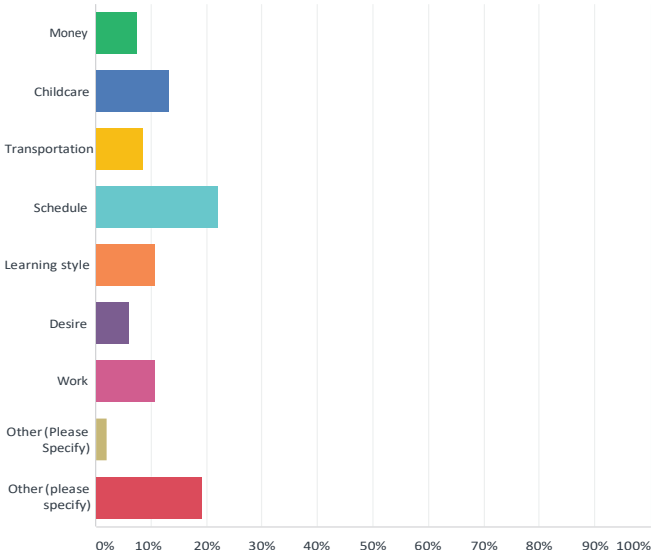


# Data

## Q38

### Q38 What obstacles or barriers do you experience in attending Indigenous language classes?

Answered: 198 Skipped: 26



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Money	7.58%	15
Childcare	13.13%	26
Transportation	8.59%	17
Schedule	22.22%	44
Learning style	10.61%	21
Desire	6.06%	12
Work	10.61%	21
Other (Please Specify)	2.02%	4
Other (please specify)	19.19%	38
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>198</b>



Note: This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of the list that is being compiled by the Reclaiming Our Language Constance Lake First Nation – it will continue to be updated – last updated August 31, 2019

**Fluent Speakers** (Cree/Oji-Cree/Ojibway are their first language and/or can hold a conversation in one of these languages at varying levels)

1. Christine Achneepineskum	25. Barbara Ferris	49. Minnie Moore	73. Marilyn Sutherland
2. Jordan Achneepineskum	26. Beatrice Ferris	50. Nelson Nakogee	74. Ramona Sutherland
3. Margaret Achneepineskum	27. James Ferris	51. Charlotte Neotapin	75. Willy Sutherland
4. Gordon Achneepineskum	28. Ken Ferris	52. Edith Neotapin	76. Audrey Taylor
5. Mary Achneepineskum	29. Laura Ferris	53. Beulah Neegan	77. Ernest Taylor
6. John Achneepineskum	30. Mark Ferris	54. Lucy Okitchquo	78. Evelyn Taylor
7. Susan Baillargeon	31. Rennison Ferris	55. Evelyn Peunish	79. Francis Taylor
8. Charles Baxter	32. Richard Ferris	56. Ruby Roy	80. George Taylor
9. Daisy Baxter	33. William Ferris	57. Susan Sandau	81. Dorothy VanVolkingburgh
10. Jemima Baxter	34. Susan Ferris	58. Fred Sackaney	82. Caroline Wesley
11. Hanna Bear	35. Gladys Gillis	59. Lorna Sackaney	83. Dorcas Wesley
12. Ida Bedwash	36. Leroy Ineese	60. Agnes Shaganash	84. Irene Wesley
13. Helen Bird	37. Linda Ineese	61. Barbara Shaganash	85. Laura Wesley
14. Madeline Bird	38. Emily John-George	62. Kathleen Shaganash	86. Mary Wesley
15. Una Bluff	39. Lydia Lennox	63. Mary Solomon	87. Robert Wesley
16. Bentley Cheechoo	40. Lucy Louttit	64. Charlie Spence	88. Sidney Wesley
17. Jane Cheechoo	41. Flora Martin	65. Jackie Spence	89. Marlene White
18. Dorcas Coaster	42. Roderick Martin	66. Jenny Spence	
19. Jeffrey Coaster	43. Rita Mattinas	67. Mary Spence	
20. Sidosis Coaster	44. Rosemary Moonias	68. Peter Spence	
21. Gloria Champagne	45. Theresa Moonias	69. Joe Spence	
22. Isabelle Dube	46. Arthur Moore	70. Christine Stephens	
23. Marlene Esquimaux	47. Angela Moore	71. Stanley Stephens	
24. Allen Ferris	48. Nora Moore	72. Florrie Sutherland	

# CONCLUSION

It is no secret that Canada's destructive policies and aggressive assimilation plan throughout the 20th century have profoundly affected our community and our language. Unfortunately, instead of our language being a tool to communicate, in the 21st century, it has become a reminder of our heritage and identity. It could be said that the community has become passive about the language because teaching/learning, for the most part, became institutionalized and does not bring families and generations together. It has also been subject to limited time and attention, and controlled by standards not of our creation or by our value system.

The alarm bell on the potential loss of our language has not been rung in CLFN until recently. Efforts to recognize that our language is in danger of being lost is only just beginning in the community while other First Nations have been responding to this threat for the past 20 years. Their best practices can be examined and this survey can be used as a tool for developing a 5-Year Community Language Plan with the community and key stakeholders. The survey gave us a glimpse of what how the current approach to language transmission in the community needs to be re-examined and how new approaches need to be responsive to addressing the barriers that currently exist. This is our challenge for the 21st century.

Ultimately, the survey affirmed that our language can no longer be taken for granted and that language revitalization needs to be a priority at all levels and adequately resourced if it is to move out of endangered status and survive. It needs to start now as time is not on our side and we have no other fluent speakers to learn from other than our own families.

# RESOURCES

A Guide to an Act Respecting Indigenous Languages – A Toolkit for First Nations Language Revitalization (Assembly of First Nations)

[https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Respecting\\_Languages\\_Report\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Respecting_Languages_Report_ENG.pdf)

Deshkan Ziibiing Anishinaabemowin Reclamation Strategy (Chippewa of the Thames)

<http://chippewalanguage.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2019-09-05-COTTFN-Language-Strategy-Final.pdf>

Mohawk Council of Akwesasne Language Strategic Plan

<http://www.akwesasne.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/MCA-MOHAWK-LANGUAGE-STRATEGIC-PLAN-March-15-2017-FINAL.pdf>

Scottish Government Gaelic Language Plan 2015-2021

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-gaelic-language-plan-2016-2021/pages/4/>

Skátne – A 5 Year Language Plan in Kahnawà:ke, 2018-2022

[https://skatneenionkwaiotenorg.files.wordpress.com/2018/04/skaten\\_enionkwaioten-final\\_english](https://skatneenionkwaiotenorg.files.wordpress.com/2018/04/skaten_enionkwaioten-final_english)

**CHALLENGE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

Get the people ready | Get the programs/curriculum ready | Start creating NEW fluent speakers for the first time since moving from Pagwa River



## Why Speak Your Language At Home?

### *Language is used for everyday situations.*

- It requires learning and using Indigenous languages for real-life situations.
- The home is the main space for learning and speaking a language.

### *Language and culture are shared across generations.*

- The language is spoken between adults (parents or caregivers) and children, which is also known as intergenerational language transmission.
- Language and culture are connected, and families draw strength from their culture.

### *Language builds strong Indigenous identities.*

- Language supports a strong Indigenous identity for both children and adults.

### *Language fluency is increased among children (and adults).*

- Children are more likely to be successful learning their Indigenous language in school if they also use it in the home and community.
- Children learn a language better when they are supported by parents and other family members.

### *Languages are used more regularly.*

- Regularly speaking Indigenous languages in the home will help make using the language in other areas of life easier.

### *Language is healing.*

- Speaking Indigenous languages in the home is a journey to reverse trauma from language loss.
- Speaking Indigenous languages at home gives children access to their language and culture.
- Speaking Indigenous languages supports individual and community well-being.



