The First Peoples’ Cultural Foundation is grateful to have our home in the traditional unceded territory of the WSÁNEĆ Nation people in the village of W̱JOȽEȽP. Our leadership and staff are honoured to travel, conduct our work and provide support in Indigenous homelands across what is now called British Columbia and beyond.

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the First Peoples’ Cultural Foundation, it is my privilege to present the 2020/21 Annual Report.

As I write this letter, Indigenous Peoples in British Columbia are grappling with many troubling truths. I stand with Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc and other First Nations who have confirmed the existence of unmarked graves of their children at residential school sites. I stand with our relations across the province whose homes and lands have been devastated by the tangible impacts of climate change, such as wildfires. These types of realities form part of the backdrop of our work.

But at the same time, there is good reason for optimism. I am inspired by the courageous work of Indigenous people and communities who continue the quest to reclaim and revitalize our languages, arts and cultures. This is a way to honour our ancestors and the children who never had a chance to be our Elders. Revitalization is an act of healing.

Our Indigenous languages and cultures come from the land, and they hold the knowledge of how we are to exist on the land. With the support of the Foundation, Indigenous people are reclaiming this knowledge. In the past year, we provided close to $19 million in grant funding, far surpassing previous years and significantly advancing language, arts and cultural heritage work across the province. Revitalization is a way to decolonize knowledge and can shape our response to wildfires and other threats from climate change.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the creativity and resilience of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and language champions. Our work did not slow down. Thanks to programs supported by the Foundation, over 3,200 jobs in language, arts and culture were created this past year. Revitalization is a pathway to meaningful employment and economic development.

In the past year, the Foundation has recruited new board members and developed a new strategic plan and website. These actions will help serve our goals of supporting Indigenous self-determination and decolonization, and they will help us in finding new partners and funders whose values align with our own.

The unwavering commitment of Indigenous people to their languages, arts and cultures gives me hope for the future. The Foundation is proud that Dr. Ron E. Ignace of the Skeetchestn Indian Band in B.C. has been appointed as the inaugural Commissioner of Indigenous Languages, and we are excited about the UNESCO Decade of Indigenous Languages beginning in 2022. These events send a strong message to our allies in Canada and worldwide that Indigenous people can and will lead this work, and that our languages, arts and cultures will thrive. Our path forward is clear.

– Kukwstum̓ ̓ckál̓̓ap,

Dr. Lorna Wánosts’a7 Williams, Officer of the Order of Canada and Recipient of the Order of B.C. and Indspire
SHARING OUR SUCCESSES

$6.3M
B.C. Language Initiative
110 grants awarded

$1.9M
FirstVoices
45 grants awarded

$1.6M
Digitization Grant Initiative
41 grants awarded

$3.75M
Indigenous Cultural Heritage Infrastructure Grant
11 grants awarded

$967,000
Mentor-Apprentice Program
84 grants awarded

$1.1M
Language Nest Program
30 grants awarded

$243,000
Language Revitalization Planning Program
12 grants awarded

$1.6 m
Digitization Grant Initiative
41 grants awarded

$3.75M
Indigenous Cultural Heritage Infrastructure Grant
11 grants awarded
EMBRACING INDIGENOUS VALUES OF GIVING AND SHARING

Founded in 2000, the First Peoples’ Cultural Foundation is dedicated to empowering Indigenous people and communities in their journey towards revitalizing their languages, arts and cultural heritage.

The Foundation’s mandate is grounded in Indigenous worldviews that center around recognition and reciprocity. We work in partnership with Indigenous communities and organizations, as well as other allies, to achieve our collective goals. We promote and celebrate our partners’ successes.

We believe that Indigenous-led funds are essential for self-determination, and we are committed to principles of Indigenous philanthropy, which seek to decolonize wealth and advance Indigenous sovereignty. We are deliberate and responsible in our investment strategy, and our focus is to generate sustainable funding that can advance community-based revitalization initiatives for years to come.

We invite you to join us. Your donation to the Foundation is an act of reconciliation. Give today at fpcf.ca.

ADVANCING DECOLONIZATION

For hundreds of years and into the present, colonial structures have perpetrated genocidal systems that disconnect Indigenous children from their families, identities and communities. The residential school system is one example of colonial efforts to intentionally separate Indigenous people from their cultures. The recent discoveries of unmarked graves at residential schools across the country brings to light the ways colonization has dehumanized Indigenous Peoples.

Addressing cultural genocide involves restoring what was taken. As an Indigenous-led organization, the Foundation knows that colonial threats to our ways of being and knowing can be combatted by reclaiming and rebuilding our cultural systems. We raise our hands to the Knowledge Keepers and language champions leading this important work.

The Foundation understands the deep and intricate connections that Indigenous languages, arts and cultures have with all facets of life and society. We recognize that by supporting communities in their revitalization efforts, we are countering the impacts of genocide and fostering healing for all.
OUR VISION

Indigenous languages, arts and cultural heritage are strong, supported and being passed on from generation to generation.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide funding and support for the vitality of indigenous languages, arts and cultural heritage.

OUR VALUES

As a Foundation, our individual and collective values connect us to our sacred responsibilities. These values guide our work and it is our role to uphold them in all that we do.

• **Indigenous-led**: We are an Indigenous organization working with Indigenous people
• **Knowledge**: We draw on and share knowledge with communities and partners
• **Resilience**: We focus on and honour the strengths of Indigenous people
• **Helping one another**: We take care of each other through providing resources and funding
• **Responsibility**: We act with respect and thoughtfulness towards all living and nonliving relatives to do our work in a good way, as all things are connected
• **Cultural continuity**: We give thanks as we learn from past generations and share with future generations

OUR PARTNERS

The Foundation is proud to partner with organizations whose values align with our own, and who support Indigenous rights to self-determination and empowerment. We work in tandem with the First Peoples’ Cultural Council (FPCC) to provide language, arts and cultural heritage programming and resources for Indigenous communities in B.C. Other current partners include:

• The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
• Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR)
• The Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH)
• Heritage Branch (FLNRORD)
• BC Arts Council (BCAC)
• The Royal British Columbia Museum (RBCM)
• University of Victoria (UVic)

OUR INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Foundation has incorporated strategies of sustainability with an investment portfolio that can withstand changes to the global economy. The Foundation is invested in a diversified portfolio with trusted companies within diverse sectors from around the world. We are confident that the portfolio is positioned well to generate future income and growth.

Hiʔliqilaʔgelis Natasha Green, and her students at the Kwanwatsi Language Nest, Tiksukw qwalayu genganenem, Campbell River B.C.
PERSEVERING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated Indigenous communities’ unwavering commitments to the revitalization of their languages, arts and cultures. When the pandemic struck, community programs were thriving, thanks to communities’ dedicated focus to grow capacity for language, arts and cultural heritage work. By being flexible and responsive, the Foundation helped empower communities to pivot quickly to alternate modes of programming such as virtual gatherings and webinars. We funded FPCC to provide guidelines and one-on-one support to help communities adapt their programming to run safely.

Our investments in digital technologies like FirstVoices helped pave the way so that communities could continue their work and not lose valuable time. Using digital technologies to deliver virtual programming opened new doors for communities to share and collaborate, and for people living away from their home communities to access learning opportunities.

The Foundation is helping support Indigenous communities to rebuild and recover from the pandemic. Our programs create new opportunities that foster economic growth and meaningful employment. We celebrate Indigenous innovation, and we promote the revitalization of Indigenous languages, arts and cultures as a pathway to Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination.

“Putting the program on hold has never crossed my mind. The question was how do we keep going? We have now grown and evolved in ways that we wouldn’t have and now our reach is so much greater.”

Jessica Couzelis, Language Coordinator for the Pacific Association of First Nations Women (PAFNW) and FPCC language program participant
Indigenous communities need cultural spaces that reflect connections to the land and inspire gathering and sharing. The Indigenous Cultural Heritage Infrastructure Grant (ICHIG) recognizes this need, and supports communities in the conservation of their structures, heritage sites, landscapes, trails and archives.

Thanks to **$4 million in support** from the Province of B.C.’s Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program (CERIP), the Foundation has **awarded grants to 11 Indigenous communities** to create, conserve and restore cultural infrastructure. This funding speaks to a growing recognition of the need to protect Indigenous cultural heritage, which has historically received much less government recognition and funding than settler heritage.

The ICHIG has funded a variety of projects to date, including the construction of traditional structures, facilities to house archives and artifacts, outdoor gathering spaces for the transmission of traditional knowledge, and accessibility infrastructure for remote cultural spaces.

This grant program is an important means of economic recovery, having generated **135 jobs** and close to **90 professional development opportunities**, particularly for Indigenous youth. It also provides more than just financial support. The First Peoples’ Cultural Council is administering the grant and has been supporting recipients with project management, planning skills, work plan creation and knowledge transfer.

The Foundation is confident that the ICHIG will have lasting impacts on Indigenous communities as they work to repatriate and reconnect with their cultural heritage.

Leona Clow and Sarah Stevenson from Haida Gwaii at a 2020 Language Gathering and Sharing Event in Prince Rupert B.C.
Repatriated artifacts will soon have a new home in the Ucluelet First Nation. With the support of the Foundation through the ICHIG, this community is constructing a mini bighouse to house and display invaluable cultural heritage materials that have been recently returned to their rightful owners. Sustainably built according to principles of Coast Salish architecture, the bighouse will feature a front design created by community members. An open call for designers is mobilizing community interest and engaging emerging artists.

The Kunsoot Wellness Society is building a land-based healing centre at a sacred and remote location in their territories. Informed by the vision of Heiltsuk matriarchs, youth and other Knowledge Keepers, the centre will be an inclusive, accessible and safe space for land-based healing and learning. Thanks to support from the Foundation through the ICHIG, the Kunsoot Wellness Society is constructing critical infrastructure to allow year-round access to the centre, including a ramp, dock and float. These structures will ensure that Elders and community members of all abilities will benefit from the nurturing atmosphere of the centre.

The Haida Gwaii Museum at Kay Llnagaay uses its breathtaking waterfront locale to create holistic and inspiring learning experiences for the community and other guests. Executive Director Jisgang Nika Collison notes, “The ICHIG grant will allow us to make critical upgrades to our museum and provide local employment in the process, which strengthens our ability to safeguard, revitalize and celebrate our Haida heritage. Indigenous languages, art and cultures are crucial contributors to the social, environmental, spiritual and economic health of all people.”
FirstVoices is an award-winning digital resource that supports Indigenous communities to document, learn and share their languages. Launched in 2003, FirstVoices is the Foundation’s flagship initiative and through community input and engagement, it continues to grow and evolve.

In 2020/21, 10 new communities established FirstVoices language sites, allowing them to upload valuable recordings of words, phrases, stories and songs. This brings the total number of community language sites to 85. These archives are not only critical for preserving languages for future generations, but they are also a key part of current-language revitalization strategies. FirstVoices is widely used by teachers and learners to develop lessons, practice exercises and play language games.

The Foundation supports FPCC to work in collaboration with communities to continually advance the FirstVoices technology. Our FirstVoices grant program provides funding, skills development and technical support. In 2020/21, the Foundation delivered close to $1.9 million in funding through the FirstVoices grant program. This more than doubles the amount of funding we have delivered in a single year, and it speaks to the innovative spirit of Indigenous communities and their drive to embrace technology to document and revitalize their languages.

The pandemic inspired the Lilwat Culture Heritage Language Authority to develop new strategies for recording materials to upload to their Stát’ícmects language site on FirstVoices.com. This shift in process did not hold them back: they uploaded 4,000 words and phrases and 12 stories this past year. An unexpected benefit was an increased interest amongst Elders and Knowledge Keepers to learn new technical skills for sharing their knowledge. Now the Elders are learning how to use iPads to participate in virtual meetings and contribute to language documentation in new and creative ways.
SUPPORTING PROVEN STRATEGIES FOR LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

Over the past 20 years, the Foundation has invested in the research and development of successful language revitalization programs. In 2020/21, the Foundation delivered a record $15 million in grant funding for FPCC to deliver language programs that reached thousands of participants in all areas of the province.

- The **Mentor-Apprentice Program** pairs a fluent speaker with an adult learner for 300 hours of one-on-one immersion. An advantage of this program is that it offers flexible, real-world learning opportunities that can be carried out anywhere the duo wants to meet – including virtual spaces.

- The **Language Nest Program** creates language immersion opportunities for preschool-aged children in a nurturing home-like environment. Young children are a critical demographic for language revitalization, as their brains are still developing and this gives them a strong advantage in acquiring language and becoming fluent speakers.

- The **Digitization Grant Initiative** provides technical skills development, equipment and troubleshooting support for communities to digitize language materials created using now-obsolete devices. This ensures irreplaceable language recordings are safeguarded for future generations.

- The **B.C. Language Initiative** is a flexible program that supports a diversity of projects. Communities know best what they need to revitalize their languages, and this program supports their own unique approaches.

This year marked the third year of a three-year provincial investment of $50 million for Indigenous languages. Thanks to this historic investment, communities have been able to train and employ more people in language revitalization than ever before. With this surge in capacity, many communities are ready to expand their programs to ensure strong networks of speakers and learners can carry their languages forward to future generations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has inspired new strategies that are strengthening language programs. With restrictions on in-person gatherings, communities embraced technology to document words and stories, develop resources, and create online spaces for learning and sharing. More so than ever before, Indigenous people living away from their home communities have opportunities to learn their languages and to connect with other speakers and learners. We are proud to be part of this momentum.

“It’s this really deep, profound journey to myself, learning the language. This is a journey of many emotions. It’s a connection back to my identity and it’s a connection to my grandpa, to my ancestors — I really feel them holding me up as I’m speaking.”

Sofia Terbasket-Funmaker, Nsylílxc̱n learner and FPCC language program participant*

*quoted in Auger, Odette. 2021 May. “All that we know grows from the words of our ancestors.” IndigiNews.
PLANNING FOR NEW GENERATIONS OF SPEAKERS

The Foundation’s investments and community efforts in language revitalization are paying off: language programs are flourishing, and the number of learners is growing. Many communities are now ready to develop long-term and comprehensive language revitalization plans that harmonize with their larger goals.

The Foundation has responded by funding FPCC to support communities through the Language Revitalization Planning Program. In addition to grant funding, the program offers coaching, technical skills development and resources for language planning.

In response to the pandemic, the FPCC language coaches piloted a new version of the program that featured monthly virtual gatherings with the participating communities. The gatherings proved to be important venues for knowledge sharing and peer-to-peer learning. Given their success at bringing communities together, virtual gatherings will be an important part of the Language Revitalization Planning Program going forward.

REAWAKENING A LANGUAGE

The Qualicum First Nation has begun the journey of awakening the Pentlatch language, which has not been spoken for over 80 years. With funding and support through the Language Revitalization Planning Program, the Nation hired multiple staff who engaged with the community through virtual information sessions, language surveys and public outreach. Although revitalization is in the very early stages, the project team has already made history: Pentlatch phrases were heard for the first time on CBC radio and in the BC Legislature in 2021. The ripple effects of this incredible work have been profound and will surely continue to gain momentum.

Image Credit: Ryan Dickie, Winter Hawk Studios Photography
The Foundation is proud to honour the legacy of the late Tlat’lukul Dr. Trish Rosborough by contributing to a Memorial Scholarship in her name.

Tlat’lukul was a true language champion, who advanced Indigenous language revitalization in British Columbia and worldwide through research, education, mentorship, advocacy and her own language learning journey. She believed strongly in community-based initiatives and supported FPCC as a participant in the Mentor-Apprentice Program and as a board member.

The Tlat’lukul Dr. Trish Rosborough Memorial Scholarship in Indigenous Language Revitalization was established by the Foundation and other partners to carry Tlat’lukul’s vision and dedication forward. In 2020, the Foundation contributed $50,000 to the scholarship fund, and in spring 2021, the first scholarship recipient was announced as Keisha Everson, a former student of Tlat’lukul who is drawing inspiration from her late professor’s work in her own research on Kwak’wala language and song.

Through the Foundation’s endowment to the Tlat’lukul Dr. Trish Rosborough Memorial Scholarship in Indigenous Language Revitalization, we are helping create a lineage of experts in language revitalization and we are investing in the next generation of language champions.

“For me, this scholarship shows that FPCF and UVic value Indigenous language revitalization and the legacy Trish has inspired. While I only worked with Trish for a few years, she has had a profound impact on my understanding of Kwak’wala and language revitalization. I hear her voice when I explain the breakdown of words into their component parts or learn a new beautiful word.”

Keisha Everson, inaugural recipient of the Tlat’lukul Dr. Trish Rosborough Memorial Scholarship in Indigenous Language Revitalization
LOOKING AHEAD

We are excited and inspired by the resiliency and creativity that we witnessed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. In the face of abrupt changes to established programming, Indigenous communities adapted quickly to continue their urgent work. This gives us hope for a future in which Indigenous languages, arts and cultures are thriving and recognized as vital for wellness, prosperity and self-determination.

Indigenous people are the only ones who can lead this work. However, support from governments and other allies is needed, and is a critical part of reconciliation. The Foundation will continue to grow our partnerships and increase investments to ensure a lasting future for Indigenous languages, arts and cultures.

B.C. is home to the greatest diversity of Indigenous languages and cultures in Canada. Different communities are at different stages in their revitalization journeys, and there is no single strategy that works for everyone. Communities need to develop their own unique and comprehensive plans, which requires a significant and sustained investment with multi-year funding agreements for each community.

The Foundation is committed to advocating for continued support, and in the coming year we are focusing on building new partnerships to expand our funding base. We are honoured to be involved in the UNESCO International Decade of Indigenous Languages beginning in 2022. This initiative will raise global awareness of Indigenous language rights and how we can work together to uphold them.

The Foundation is grateful to receive $800,000 in COVID relief funding for 2021/22 through the BC Arts Council, which will assist Indigenous artists and arts professionals whose livelihoods were disrupted by the pandemic. Funding of this type acknowledges that the path to economic recovery includes creating meaningful employment for Indigenous people.

The Foundation will continue to advocate for support that generates professional development and employment in language, arts and culture. Sustainable long-term investments will yield immeasurable benefits – in terms of economic development, self-determination, health and wellness, and environmental protection.

Together let’s envision a future in which Indigenous languages, arts and cultures are thriving and fully realizing their promise to improve our lives, communities and society. Donate today at fpf.ca.
## STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS 2020/21

### REVENUES

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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<td>Donations</td>
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<td>Interest, Investment &amp; Other Income</td>
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### EXPENDITURES

#### GRANTS AWARDED

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<tr>
<td>FPCF Indigenous Cultural Heritage Infrastructure Program</td>
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<td>FirstVoices Program</td>
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<td>Mentor-Apprentice Program</td>
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#### PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

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**Total** $19,251,543

### NET EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES

$22,527

### NET ASSET - BEGINNING OF YEAR

$2,069,132

### NET ASSET - END OF YEAR

$2,091,659

*Image Credit: Ryan Dickie, Winter Hawk Studios Photography*
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