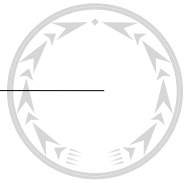


The Office of the Northwest Territories Languages Commissioner

Annual Report 2002-2003

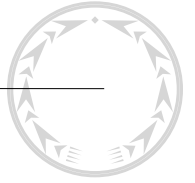


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Message from the Languages Commissioner



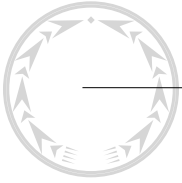
The week of February 4, 2003 was our third Advisory Board meeting with Elders and representatives of all the Official Language families of NWT. When the need for the Advisory Board was identified, there were questions as to how this could be

achieved. Our office does not have the capacity to manage the logistics for a meeting of this size. The success of these meetings has been truly a reflection of the people's commitment to culture, language and the North. One cannot thank the Aboriginal organizations and the Educational Divisional Boards enough for their contributions and constant support. I am now three years into my mandate. It is a good time to reflect on what has been accomplished and to set new goals. It has always been the belief of this office that it must represent the people. It is the people who determine the direction for this office. In the last two years, our office has accomplished this through the continued involvement of the Advisory Board.

The Advisory Board consists of committed frontline workers who have been identified by their communities and who have made language and culture their lives' work. They represent all language groups and they speak to the concerns of language and culture for the people they embody. It is through the Office of the Languages Commissioner that these concerns are delivered to the Legislative Assembly. For many of us who have been working with languages, we cannot emphasize enough the contributions of the Elders who attend these meetings, even after some 20 years. Elder Elizabeth Mackenzie once said, "Embrace language the same way you would shower yourself in laughter."

A major triumph was increasing the visibility of the office and ensuring that people knew they could seek assistance in matters relating to languages. Over the 30 years that I have worked with languages, I understand how critical it is to have an office such as this for the people of the NWT. The dangerous state of our Aboriginal languages and the need to be a constant reminder to the decision-makers illustrates the reasons why it is imperative to maintain the Office of the Languages Commissioner.

I would like to publicly acknowledge the support and encouragement from the following individuals: NWT Commissioner Glenna Hansen, Premier Stephen Kakfwi, Deputy Premier Jim Antoine, Hon. Joe Handley, President of the Dene Nation Bill Erasmus, MLA Mackenzie Delta David Krutko, and MLA Range Lake Sandy Lee.



In conclusion, I look at my own upbringing and childhood experiences. Many of us have been fortunate to have our grandparents with us as we were growing up. The Dene people are fortunate that they are able to adopt grandparents if they have none. Every Elder was referred to as a grandparent. In our household, my grandfather was my father, my mother, my friend, my teacher, and the holder of our peoples' history and experiences. He nurtured my growth, appreciated the delight of my new experiences and calmly explained through a related story the events unfolding.

Language is that. It is experiences enfolded in culture. It came from the Elders and the experiences of our people. It is experiences passed down through time and reflected in stories. It is nurtured and unfolding with much support by many. The responsibility for carrying it forward into the future rests with everyone. I find it so encouraging that our frontline language workers are so dedicated.

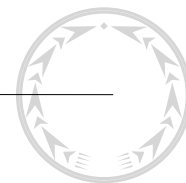
The spirit and enthusiasm of the Advisory Board delegates is echoed in the words of the late Elder Philip Crapeau who stated: "One wish was to tell everyone to try to keep your spirit strong and bravely meet the goals you set for yourselves."

Mahsi,

Fibbie Tatti

Languages Commissioner of the NWT





The purpose of Advocacy is twofold: recognize and encourage groups and/or individuals in their language work; and encourage people to claim their language rights under the *Official Languages Act*.

Community visits by the Languages Commissioner is key to ensuring that this office understands what is happening at a community level. It provides an opportunity to see and hear, firsthand, what the language instructors and Elders want with regard to language retention.

2002-2003

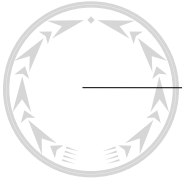
Target	Action	Location	Date
Community	Presentation to the Foreign Affairs Department	Yellowknife, NT	April 2002
	Native Women's Association of the NWT	Yellowknife, NT	October 2002
	Dene Cultural Institute	Hay River, NT	November 2002
	NWT Public Library Presentation	Yellowknife, NT	November 2002
	Treaty 8 and Treaty 11 Agreement	N'dilo, NT	November 2002
	ECE Idaa Trail Presentation	Rae-Edzo, NT	January 2003
	Aboriginal Languages Month	Yellowknife, NT	March 2003
Regional	Dehcho Regional AGM	Kakisa, NT	June 2002
	Dene Nation National AGM	Fort Simpson, NT	July 2002
	Midway Festival	Fort McPherson, NT	August 2002
	Gwich'in Tribal Council AGM	Aklavik, NT	August 2002
	Sahtu Regional Assembly	Tulita, NT	September 2002
	Dene Nation Leadership Meeting	Rae-Edzo, NT	November 2002
National	Ombudsman Conference	Regina, Saskatchewan	April 2002
	Aboriginal Languages Conference	Edmonton, Alberta	April 2002
	Languages Workshop	Edmonton Alberta	June 2002
	Ombudsman Conference	Winnipeg, Manitoba	October 2002
	Dream Catcher Youth Conference	Edmonton, Alberta	October 2002
	Ombudsman Conference	Victoria, BC	March 2003

Comments

The Languages Commissioner makes presentations to the public, various language organizations and government officials to reinforce the importance of language. Individuals were invited to speak confidentially about any concerns they may have about their language rights. The Languages Commissioner's main duty is to provide personal contact at a community level to give positive reinforcement to the communities, groups and individuals who work very hard at retaining

languages and culture. It is the intricate interweaving of these elements that makes the Office of the Languages Commissioner so important. The Office of the Languages Commissioner ensures the accountability of various funding agencies to make sure that funding is directed to the sources where they are needed.

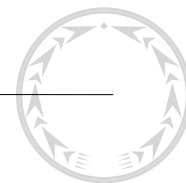
It is critical that language workers have continued support at the highest level. A good beginning would be at the Legislative Assembly. One of the



best examples of the use of languages was the recent initialing of the Agreement between the Tlicho and the Akaitcho Nations in N'dilo. Each Chief from the communities addressed the gathering in their own language. The land was able to hear again the echoing words of their ancestors. The use of one's language has a powerful impact and enables one to reach back into history.

The Office of the Languages Commissioner is still diligently trying to establish the necessary budget for interpreter/translating services. Since the demise of the Language Bureau, the Office of the Languages Commissioner has been operating without a budget for interpreting/translation (I/T) services and has been unsuccessful with special requests for I/T funding. The Office of the Languages Commissioner's business is language. It is essential that meetings, correspondence, public communications and workshops be conducted with the services of interpreters and translators.





The function of Research is to provide socio-linguistic research relevant to the Northwest Territories that monitors language trends and identifies critical success factors of language development projects. Collection of past studies in the development of official languages of the Northwest Territories provide language workers with a reference base and much needed materials for new program development.

Objective	Action	Status
Acquisition of contemporary language research on NWT languages	Works of Wendall White, Karen Rice, Ed Cook, Vic Monus, June Helm, Schott Rushforth, Robert Young, Leslie Saxon, Phil Howard, NWT Teaching and Learning Centres, GNWT Departments, and Cultural Associations	Work in progress
NWT Case Studies	Family involvement in French advocacy initiatives Dene Kede and Innukatigiit Curricula Fall Caribou Hunts and documentary by CBC Television	Work in progress Review Implementation Complete
Other Jurisdictions	Study of other jurisdictions and identification of critical success factors in language programs and legislation Study Hawaiian Language Nesting Project	Work in progress Proposed

Comments

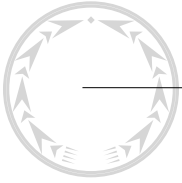
People have to ask themselves: "Is my language strong?" Individuals need to ask themselves serious questions concerning the use of their language: "Do my children speak our language at home?"

'Children's Language' is one of the simplest, yet effective, ways to review a language's growth or decline. There are many 'statistical tools' that can be used to study a language's growth or decline but, as we know here in the North, we are now looking at the very survival of our languages. Funding for massive surveys are not necessary at this stage and will only divert critical resources from where it is needed most, at the community level. Ask yourself this simple question: "What language do my children mainly use in the home and within their community?"

If the answer is 'not their Mother tongue', then your community is at risk of losing their language.

Aboriginal Head Start Programs are the best place to start a 'Children's Language Program'. It is from this basic platform that a concentrated effort to save a language can be launched. Research in the areas of language retention and language growth can be initiated from the Aboriginal Head Start Program. Later, using the Fishmann Model, one could identify language resources in the North. There are many types of immersion programs that are available to use. Finding out which ones would best suit specific community needs does not require a great deal of research. Language workers within the communities could assess the types of programs most needed within their community.

Beyond these Aboriginal Head Start Programs, we teach our children to read and write, but we need the resources (books, CDs) written in our language. We also need more advanced learning materials.



How can we expect children to continue with their language development if there is nothing for them to read or listen to that is in their language? What reasons can we give them to continue their language development?

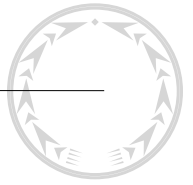
The Government of the Northwest Territories is currently reviewing how it operates as a government and what changes or adaptations the government may have to make with the settlement of land claims and the various First Nation self-government structures that will be created through this process. Language should be at the forefront of this government restructuring. How is the GNWT going to adapt to the notion that the language of governance of these newly developed self-government structures may be an Aboriginal language? Nunavut has the goal of 2020 as the year that the language of governance will be Inuktitut for this newest territory. What are the language goals within the NWT?

The current precarious nature of our languages in the North leaves us with very definite steps that need to be taken immediately. However, the demand must come from community members who currently do not feel comfortable speaking their Mother tongue and from individuals who wish to save their language from extinction.

This effort must be a unified one. Each community is at a different language stage. Funding and resource materials must be shared and allotted fairly to recognize these disparities. The goal of saving our languages from extinction should be the concern of every community regardless of the language they speak in their community.



Monitoring



The function of Monitoring is to provide accountability for language funding.

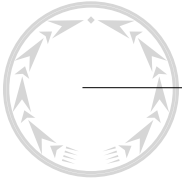
Objective	Action	Status
Monitor Canada-NWT Agreement for Languages Agreement	Identify allocation of funds, purpose of funds, whether objectives were met and whether departments conducted evaluation	Work in progress
Monitor Vote 1 (GNWT) Language Funding	Identify allocation of funds, purpose of funds, whether objectives were met and whether departments conducted evaluation	Work in progress
Public Satisfaction Surveys	Language services in health care	Work in progress
Translation in GNWT Advertising	Track GNWT advertising (ads published in English should also be made available in the other official languages)	On-going

Comments

Allocations for Vote 1 and Vote 4 Language Funding can be found in Appendix Two. The office is committed to ongoing monitoring of activities to ensure that this funding is used for its designated purpose.

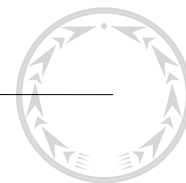
The NWT *Official Languages Act* stipulates that all northern official languages have equality of status and rights. This means the public has a right to communicate with and receive services from institutions of the Government of the NWT in any of the official languages.

Government of the NWT newspaper advertisements were tracked between January and April 2003. Results indicate that a majority of these advertisements were only produced in English. It is part of our mandate to encourage the government to produce more advertisements in other official languages to ensure that language rights are upheld.



Month	Type of Advertisement			Total Number of Ads	Number of Ads in English	Number of Ads in French	Number of Ads in Aboriginal	% of Ads in English
	Job	Tender	RFP					
January	38	31	13	82	82	0	0	100%
February	26	15	20	61	61	0	0	100%
March	32	30	8	70	70	0	0	100%
April	2	5	2	9	9	0	0	100%

Complaints



The function of the Office of the Languages Commissioner in resolving complaints regarding the *Official Languages Act* is to ensure peoples' language rights are upheld under the Act. In addition, investigating complaints provides an insight into whether problems are localized or system-wide. This type of information allows the office to identify the best corrective measures to take in resolving complaints.

Objective	Action	Status
Simplify Complaint Process Inform Public of a Complaint Process	Community Visits	Ongoing/ completed
	Regional Visits	Ongoing
Receive Complaints	Resolve Complaints	Ongoing
Maintain Membership with Canadian Ombudsman Association (COA)	Attend COA Annual Meetings	Ongoing

Comments

Complaints: A total of five complaints were received during 2002-2003. Complaints encompass any of the eleven official languages – primarily French and Dene languages. Time taken to resolve complaints ranged from under one month to more than one year, depending on the complexity of the investigation.

Interpreting/Translation Services

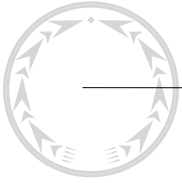
Our investigations brought us to meetings and discussions with Deputy Ministers and Heads of Institutions revealing concerns surrounding Interpreting and Translation (I/T) Services.

Aurora College officials advised there was very low response to a call for students to take I/T courses. Aurora College officials say low interest can be directly attributed to lack of I/T employment opportunities. This was collaborated by interviews with Health officials who advised they have high need for I/Ts but insufficient funds to hire additional full-time I/Ts.

Community language workers attribute the low interest in I/T training to students' preference to take courses in their home communities where resources are readily at hand. Specifically, Elders are a critical language resource and students can train in an authentic language setting. Some community language workers have requested I/T training

courses be delivered in their regions, and Aurora College officials say they would deliver community-based I/T programs but require much more than the \$50,000 currently allocated for I/T program delivery.

The root problem is that I/T employment opportunities are limited. And if employment opportunities are limited, why should a community language worker seek training? Ultimately, this means that I/T services are minimal at best. Further, unlike their French counterparts whose training is recognized through certification, Aboriginal language interpreters cannot command as high a rate of pay. Also, without certification, it is very difficult for Aboriginal interpreters to set terms of service. For example, French interpreters are able to stipulate that more than one interpreter must be hired for lengthy interpreting contracts, recognizing that simultaneous interpreting is very demanding work. Lack of I/T certification puts Aboriginal language interpreters at a great disadvantage and compromises their ability to make a livelihood from I/T work alone. The result is that a number of interpreters must rely on other employment so they can carry out I/T work as a source of secondary work. This limits the availability and quality of service, which in turn limits I/Ts from developing their services into viable businesses.



Given these problems, we must ask whether the GNWT is providing adequate official language services to NWT citizens. Is the spirit and intent of the Act compromised? Are we safeguarding the very people who hold the gift of our official languages?

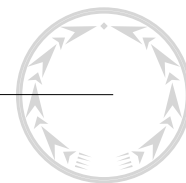
With the problems surrounding I/Ts, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive strategy that will specifically target improving the current unacceptable situation.

The dramatic decrease in complaints can be attributed to the development of the Advisory Board. It is an excellent means to inform communities, through the Board members, of many aspects concerning language, the Act, one's language rights and what the role is of the Office of the Languages Commissioner.

From April 1, 2002 to April 1, 2003 the office received 38 invitations and 203 inquiries. Many inquiries that are handled by this office cannot easily be dealt with by a GNWT department. In many cases they do not have the personnel to deal with these language and cultural inquiries. The Office of the Languages Commissioner has become known for its depth of knowledge and ability to answer most inquiries by internal research in a quick, accurate, professional and efficient manner. This is due largely to the Language Advisory Board members and the many community language workers who lend their help and support.



Communications

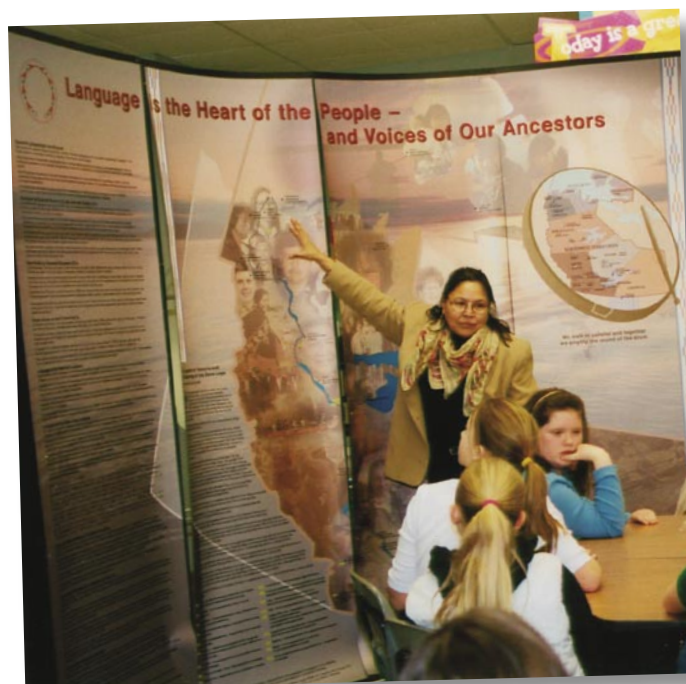


The function of Communications is to stimulate public awareness of official languages, language development initiatives in the NWT, understanding of public rights under the Act, the office's roles and responsibilities, and to respond to inquiries made to the office.

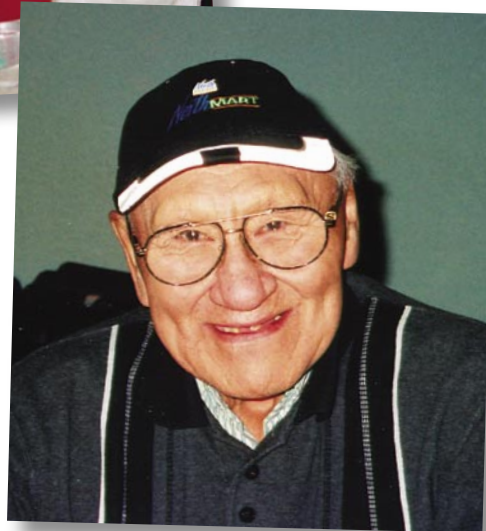
Objective	Action	Status
Receive Inquiries	Resolve inquiries	Ongoing
Web Site	Redesign web site	Work in progress
Quarterly Newsletter	Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer 2002/03 newsletter circulated to 550 organizations and individuals	Complete
Aboriginal Languages Month	NWT-wide TV ads in all official languages during March	Complete
	Newspaper promotional advertisements promoting official languages	Complete
	Information display, Centre Square Mall, Yellowknife	Complete
	Storytelling (Dene stories and legends) with students of Range Lake North Elementary School	Complete
	Storytelling (Dene stories and legends) with elementary students in École Allain St-Cyr	Complete
Language Interviews	CBC interviews conducted in an Aboriginal language	On-going

Comments

The Office of the Languages Commissioner received positive feedback from community members regarding the newsletter. In fact, there were requests for additional copies. The Newsletter has had an impact. It keeps the communities informed of regional language activities, pays tribute to the Elders for their contributions to language initiatives and acknowledges major contributions to languages. In addition, information on all major conferences, nationally and internationally, is provided in our newsletters.



APPENDIX ONE
Transcript of 2001
Advisory Board Meeting and Workshop



APPENDIX TWO
Summary of Vote 1 and Vote 4 Allocations
2001-2002

Total GNWT Official Languages Funding for 2001-2002 (Votes 1 and 4)

Aboriginal Languages		Vote 4	Vote 1
Teaching and Learning Centres Total		\$ 475,000	\$ 0
Beaufort-Delta DEC	\$ 91,641		
Deh Cho DEC	\$ 91,874		
Dogrib DEC	\$ 78,505		
Sahtu DEC	\$ 68,751		
South Slave DEC	\$ 67,155		
YK 1 DEA	\$ 39,130		
YK 2 DEA	\$ 38,010		
Aboriginal Language and Cultural Instructor Program		\$ 200,000	\$ 0
Aboriginal Language Broadcasting		\$ 175,000	\$ 170,000
Interpreter/Translator Training Program		\$ 30,000	\$ 0
Language Planning		\$ 30,000	\$ 0
Language Promotion		\$ 25,000	\$ 0
Language Resource Development		\$ 5,000	\$ 0
Geographic Place Names		\$ 15,000	\$ 0
Terminology Development/ Language Workshop (H&SS)		\$ 45,000	\$ 0
Language Communities Total	\$ 1,343,000	\$ 900,000	\$ 443,000
Chipewyan	\$ 193,000		
Cree	\$ 107,000		
Dogrib	\$ 339,500		
Gwich'in	\$ 162,000		
Inuvialuktun	\$ 267,500		
North Slavey	\$ 214,000		
South Slavey	\$ 224,500		
Other	\$ 60,500		
Special Project: Special Committee to Review OLA		\$ 100,000	
Literacy – Official Languages (from 2.4M Literacy Initiative)		\$ 0	\$ 300,000
Cultural Projects		\$ 0	\$ 66,000
Language Services Section – Admin.		\$ 0	\$ 280,000
Aboriginal Language School Programs Total		\$ 5,835,711	\$ 0
Beaufort-Delta DEC	\$ 1,536,324		
Deh Cho DEC	\$ 779,689		
Dogrib DEC	\$ 889,861		
Sahtu DEC	\$ 738,368		
South Slave DEC	\$ 1,150,783		
YK 1 DEA	\$ 376,673		
YK 2 DEA	\$ 330,297		
Conseil scolaire francophone	\$ 33,716		
Total for Aboriginal Languages		\$ 2,300,000	\$ 7,095,000

Information provided by ECE

Total GNWT Official Languages Funding for 2001-2002 (Vote 4)

French Language		Vote 4 only	(no Vote 1)
Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement for French and Aboriginal Languages			
ECE	GNWT French Translation Services	\$ 320,000	
	Services to the Public	\$ 60,000	
	Policy and Coordination	\$ 135,000	
	Language Promotion	\$ 25,000	
	Community Funding (PDCC)	\$ 145,000	\$ 685,000
Justice	Legal Translation Services	\$ 425,000	
	Services to the Public	\$ 32,000	\$ 457,000
H&SS	Policy and Coordination	\$ 40,000	
	Services to the Public	\$ 27,000	
	Services to the Public (Health Boards)	\$ 178,000	\$ 245,000
Executive	Services to the Public		\$ 10,000
Finance	Services to the Public		\$ 3,000
FMBS	Services to the Public		\$ 4,000
Legislative Assembly	Services to the Public		\$ 20,000
MACA	Services to the Public		\$ 12,000
NWT Housing corporation	Services to the Public		\$ 11,000
Public Works and Services	Services to the Public/Office Space		\$ 86,000
RWED	Services to the Public		\$ 35,000
Transportation	Services to the Public		\$ 17,000
Workers' Compensation Board	Services to the Public		\$ 14,000
NWT Power Corporation	Services to the Public		\$ 1,000
Special Project: Special Committee to Review OLA			\$ 50,000
Total			\$ 1,650,000
Canada-NWT Agreement for French Language Education			\$ 1,161,000
Total Funding for French			\$ 2,811,000

Information provided by ECE