

## Reconciling Cultural Continuity and Self-Determination in Indigenous Language Education

Governance: Indigenous Perspectives

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Cultural continuity and self-determination are two social determinants of health that have positive impacts on Indigenous people. Cultural continuity is defined as “the traditional intergenerational connectedness, which is maintained through intact families and the engagement of elders, who pass traditions to subsequent generations” (Loppie Reading & Wien, 2013, p. 18). Self-determination is defined as the collective capability of a people to:

establish institutional mechanisms of collective deliberation and decision making that reflect one’s own identity, language, and cultural norms; and...the freedom to make decisions that best reflect the values and priorities of the members of one’s community in the absence of external interference or domination” (Murphy, 2014, p. 35).

Indigenous Language Education (ILE) is largely a community-based effort assisted by western academic institutions to maintain and revitalize Indigenous languages, however, as a result of Euro-Canadian hegemony in ILE, there is a loss of spirituality and exclusion of traditional Indigenous knowledge keepers in ILE. ILE, as it is currently practiced, is thus a paradigm that minimizes both cultural continuity and self-determination. Notwithstanding, Indigenous resilience and innovation is actively altering this ILE paradigm in order to maximize cultural continuity and self-determination. As a result, the intergovernmental policies for ILE will need to reflect how cultural continuity and self-determination are being strengthened in Indigenous communities.