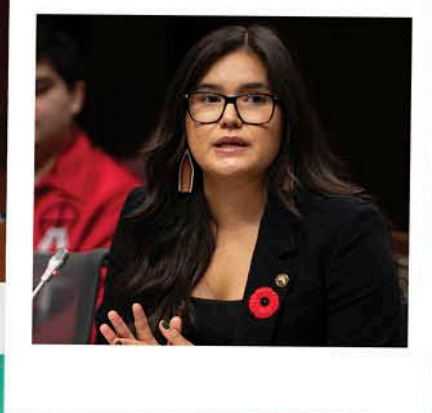
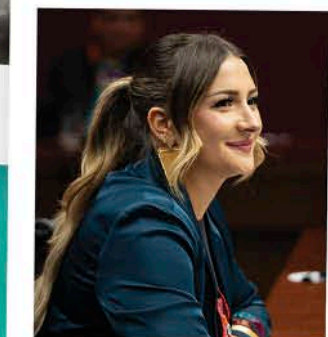




SENATE
SÉNAT
CANADA

DECEMBER 2025



VOICES | 聲音

of Youth Indigenous Leaders

Interim report of the Standing Senate Committee
on Indigenous Peoples

The Honourable Michèle Audette, Chair
The Honourable Margo Greenwood, Deputy Chair



For more information, please contact us by:

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| The Committee Membership..... | 4 |
| Order of Reference | 6 |
| Introduction | 7 |
| The Priorities of Indigenous Youth | 10 |
| Indigenous Identity, Languages and Cultures..... | 10 |
| Early Learning, Education and Indigenous Representation..... | 13 |
| Land and Sustainability | 16 |
| Conclusion..... | 18 |
| Appendix A – Biographies of Youth Indigenous Leaders..... | 20 |
| Appendix B – List of Written Submissions | 24 |



The Committee Membership



The Honourable
Michèle Audette
Chair



The Honourable
Margo Greenwood
Deputy Chair

The Honourable Senators



Bernadette
Clement



Brian Francis



Nancy Karetak-
Lindell



Mary Jane
McCallum



Marilou
McPhedran



Kim Pate



Paul (PJ) Prosper



Karen Sorensen



Scott Tannas



Judy A. White



Ex officio members of the committee:

The Honourable Pierre Moreau (or Patti LaBoucane-Benson)
The Honourable Leo Housakos (or Yonah Martin)
The Honourable Raymonde Saint-Germain (or Bernadette Clement)
The Honourable Scott Tannas (or Rebecca Patterson)
The Honourable Brian Francis (or Judy A. White)

Other senators who have participated in the study:

The Honourable David M. Arnot
The Honourable Wanda Thomas Bernard
The Honourable Gwen Boniface (retired since November 2025)
The Honourable Mary Coyle
The Honourable Nancy J. Hartling (retired since February 2025)
The Honourable Yonah Martin

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Sébastien Payet, Committee Clerk
Andrea Mugny, Committee Clerk (until September 2024)
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Debbie Larocque, Administrative Assistant (until June 2025)
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Jérémie Spadafora, Communications Advisor
Chelsea DeFazio, Communications Officer



Order of Reference

Extract from the *Journals of the Senate* of Tuesday, October 7, 2025:

The Honourable Senator Greenwood moved, for the Honourable Senator Audette, seconded by the Honourable Senator Loffreda:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples be authorized to examine and report on the Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders events;

That the papers and evidence received and taken and work accomplished by the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples as part of its study on the federal government's constitutional, treaty, political and legal responsibilities to First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and any other subject concerning Indigenous Peoples during the First Session of the Forty-fourth Parliament be referred to the committee;

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than December 31, 2027, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report; and

That the committee be permitted, notwithstanding usual practices, to deposit its reports on this study with the Clerk of the Senate if the Senate is not then sitting, and that the reports be deemed to have been tabled in the Senate.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

Shaila Anwar

Clerk of the Senate



Introduction

I am proud to come from this community and of what I have learned and what I've struggled with. – Justin Langan

Since 2016, the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples (the committee) has held an annual event for Indigenous youth originally called Youth Indigenize the Senate and later in 2022 renamed to Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders.¹ Indigenous youth leaders apply to travel to Ottawa and appear as witnesses before the committee. Last year, the Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders event was held in the Senate of Canada on October 30, 2024.

The committee received 78 applications from Indigenous youth and was impressed with the achievements of every person who applied. For the first time, applicants had the choice to submit their application in writing or another format. Submissions of the participating youth leaders can be found on the committee's website.

The committee wishes to thank the Indigenous youth who applied and participated in this year's event for sharing their stories, experiences, priorities and hopes for the future. Notably, committee members are impressed by the strength and achievements of Indigenous youth. The committee also wishes to highlight that the perspectives and thoughtful recommendations shared by the Indigenous youth will contribute to the committee's ongoing work. Unfortunately, exceptional circumstances prevented the committee from hearing from Inuit youth during last year's event.

Previous iterations of the Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders event had a specific theme. In 2022, the committee heard youth perspectives on truth and reconciliation, and in 2023, on education. This year, the committee chose instead to hear about the priorities of Indigenous youth. As a result, it heard testimony on an array of topics.

The following report discusses the priorities identified by Indigenous youth leaders during two meetings, both held on October 30, 2024. The report is divided in three sections. The first section explores Indigenous identity, languages and cultures through the eyes of Indigenous youth leaders. The next section examines early learning, education and representation and the report concludes by considering land and sustainability.

¹ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024.



The following eight Indigenous youth leaders were selected by the committee to participate in this year's event:

- Bradley Bacon, Innu, Unamen Shipu (Quebec)
- Justin Langan, Métis, Swan River (Manitoba)
- Crystal Starr Lewis, Squamish, Vancouver (British Columbia)
- Breane Mahlitz, Métis, Amiskwaciwâskahikan [Edmonton] (Alberta)
- Faithe McGuire, Metis, Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement (Saskatchewan)
- Reanna Merasty (McKay), Nîhithaw [Cree], Barren Lands First Nation (Manitoba)
- Ethan Paul, Mi'kmaw, Membertou First Nation (Nova Scotia)
- Brett Recollet, Anishinaabe, Whitefish River First Nation (Ontario)



Inuk Elder Ruth Kadlutsiak lights a qulliq in the Senate Chamber as part of the Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders opening ceremony, among Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders participants, senators, Senate staff and other guests.



Figure 1: Communities of Participating Indigenous Youth Leaders



Sources: Map prepared in 2024 by the Library of Parliament.



The Priorities of Indigenous Youth

Indigenous Identity, Languages and Cultures

The themes of Indigenous identity, languages and cultures were raised by all the Indigenous youth leaders. Justin Langan, Métis from Swan River, emphasized that Métis culture, identity and languages are linked and are a part of “finding out who you are and what you are capable of.”²

The Indigenous youth leaders who appeared before the committee described the importance of their work on Indigenous language education, retention and revitalization. Ethan Paul, Mi'kmaw from Membertou First Nation, explained that “[a] lot of our culture is based around language and without it [...] what is a [Mi'kmaw]? Because it is so ingrained into our daily lives.”³ Ethan Paul argued that advances in technology contribute to language loss because they make English omnipresent; consequently, more Mi'kmaw-language media would be useful to counter this dynamic.⁴ Crystal Starr Lewis, a member of the Squamish Nation, is learning to speak the Skwxwú7mesh language at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver as there are “no original speakers of the language left.”⁵ For her, learning her language was “a moral obligation, doing what is right, not just for you, but for your community, and taking the initiative to learn that language, to keep it alive for future generations.”⁶ In contrast, the relative isolation of where Bradley Bacon, Innu from Unamen Shipu, lives, has protected the strength of the Innu language.⁷

The youth explained to the committee that their languages and cultures are inextricably tied to their self-esteem and their sense of belonging. Brett Recollet, Anishinaabe from Whitefish River First Nation, connected learning about his culture directly to his self-confidence, “it wasn’t until — believe it or not — university that I actually started learning about my culture and my history, and it is amazing what can happen to a person when they are equipped with that.”⁸ Reanna Merasty, Nihithaw from Barren Lands First Nation, suggested that a greater representation of Indigenous cultures and languages in buildings and place names would create a greater sense of belonging for Indigenous Peoples.⁹

² APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Justin Langan).

³ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Ethan Paul).

⁴ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Ethan Paul).

⁵ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Crystal Starr Lewis).

⁶ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Crystal Starr Lewis).

⁷ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Bradley Bacon).

⁸ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Brett Recollet).

⁹ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Reanna Merasty).

Overall, Indigenous youth leaders maintained that the strength of their culture was a key factor in the overall well-being of the community. Justin Langan told the committee that the local friendship centre was key for him to learn about his culture and language.¹⁰ For Breane Mahlitz, Métis from Amiskwaciwâskahikan [Edmonton], “when Métis culture is celebrated and youth are empowered, our communities thrive.”¹¹ Drawing from her experience as a filmmaker, Faithe McGuire, Metis from Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement, indicated that in her view, “storytelling is vital to all Indigenous cultures because that’s how we pass it all on.”¹² As a tribute to Mi’kmaq culture, Ethan Paul is authoring a seafood cookbook including traditional recipes from Unama’ki [Cape Breton].¹³ Since Indigenous values are not broadly integrated in architecture, Reanna Merasty designed and edited a book, *Voices of the Land: Design and Planning from the Prairies*, to showcase Indigenous perspectives on design and planning and to represent Indigenous stories in architectural projects.¹⁴



Crystal Starr Lewis, from Vancouver and the Squamish First Nation, testifies before the Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples on October 30, 2024.



Brett Recollet, Anishinaabe from Whitefish River First Nation on Manitoulin Island, testifies before the Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples on October 30, 2024.

The Indigenous youth leaders also discussed the challenges they face in retaining their cultures and languages, including the erosion of community values, experiences of racism, shame and a lack of pride in being Indigenous. Bradley Bacon, for example, regretted that the community values which used to characterize his community are eroding, “I remember my great-grandmother telling us that this individualism would come and that we would need to stand firm. However, I didn’t realize that this would be happening today, in the 21st century.”¹⁵ Leaving her

¹⁰ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Justin Langan).

¹¹ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Breane Mahlitz).

¹² APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Faithe McGuire).

¹³ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Ethan Paul).

¹⁴ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Reanna Merasty).

¹⁵ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Bradley Bacon).



isolated community of Barren Land First Nation to attend secondary school was challenging for Reanna Merasty. She explained, “I was put in a predominantly White neighbourhood and school. I dealt with racism within my high school education, and at times it felt very isolating, polarizing or alienating because of the environment that I was put in.” She said that this experience left her feeling shame and guilt about her Indigenous identity.¹⁶ Brett Recollet shared a similar story, “it took me until my early adult years to accept who I was and to even be proud to speak my own language, which I’m still learning.”¹⁷

Some of the Indigenous youth talked about the mental health struggles they had faced. The youth stressed that mental health programs and resources for Indigenous youth are essential. Justin Langan told the committee that mental health support offered by universities and post-secondary institutions is key.¹⁸

Health and well-being were also raised by witnesses as important issues for their communities. Access to culturally safe health services is also important. Breane Mahlitz argued that health services accessible to Métis are not only insufficient, but also not adapted to Métis culture. She pointed out that, “current data systems really aren’t able to identify Métis people,” which makes it difficult to justify the need for a culturally sensitive Métis healthcare. In her view, steps forward would include implementing the [Métis Vision for Health](#) and including Métis individuals in the Non-Insured Health Benefits program administered by Indigenous Services Canada.¹⁹ Ethan Paul also raised health as an important issue and launched a monthly book club to raise awareness among Mi’kmaw youth of sexual and reproductive health entitled, “Books and *P’tewei*.”²⁰

Self-determination was seen by the youth leaders as a way to strengthen Indigenous communities. Youth leaders showed that they could contribute to Indigenous self-determination; Breane Mahlitz pointed out that, “Louis Riel was 25 when he began the Red River Resistance.”²¹ Bradley Bacon commented, “When I grew up, I had to advocate on behalf of my community. I didn’t just mean my community, but the entire Innu Nation of Quebec.”²²

Consultation was another common issue raised by Indigenous youth.²³ According to Breane Mahlitz, when the Government of Canada consults Indigenous Peoples, it

¹⁶ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Reanna Merasty).

¹⁷ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Brett Recollet).

¹⁸ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Justin Langan).

¹⁹ Métis Nation, [Métis Vision for Health](#), 2022 and APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Breane Mahlitz).

²⁰ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Ethan Paul).

²¹ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Breane Mahlitz).

²² APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Bradley Bacon).

²³ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Breane Mahlitz).

should hand, “that responsibility over to the community and [have] the community do that consultation.”²⁴ Reanna Merasty shared her frustrations about inadequate consultation, explaining:

[t]here are so many other projects that I have dealt with, within Indigenous architecture, where people want to slap on a Medicine Wheel and call it a day -- it’s so true -- or a feather or something. It is very frustrating because it is about taking the time to build that relationship and to understand what a community wants.²⁵



Ethan Paul, Mi'kmaw from Membertou First Nation, testifies before the Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples on October 30, 2024.



From left to right: Senators Karen Sorensen, Judy A. White, and Mary Coyle smile during Ethan Paul's testimony at a Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples meeting on October 30, 2024.

Early Learning, Education and Indigenous Representation

The youth told the committee how important education has been in their lives. Faithe McGuire participated in the Empowered Filmmaker Masterclass, following which she won the Visionary Storytelling Award for the film she made with Marie Jo Badger, entitled *Askiy*. She also completed Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak Reach for the Skies leadership training, in addition to Indigenous Studies courses at the University of Alberta and the University of Athabasca.²⁶ Brett Recollet holds a college diploma in Social Service Work from Georgian College and is in his final semester of an undergraduate degree in Indigenous Social Work at Laurentian

²⁴ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Breane Mahlitz).

²⁵ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Reanna Merasty).

²⁶ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Faithe McGuire).



University. He shared his plans to complete a master's degree focusing on cultural safety within Indigenous education.²⁷

The land can also be fertile ground for learnings. Land-based learning was raised by Indigenous youth as a powerful way to connect with their cultures. Crystal Starr Lewis argued that more land-based education is needed.²⁸ She developed a community development project focused on ancestral knowledge and sustainability, in which youth and Elders were taught about Indigenous plants and medicine.²⁹ A significant portion of the curriculum of Nova Scotia Community College's Mi'kmaw Early Childhood Education that Ethan Paul undertook drew on land-based education. Ethan Paul also noted the important role that Elders play in the education system and recommended that Elders and Knowledge Keepers should be playing a central role in education so that youth can learn traditional practices, languages and stories.³⁰

Educational programming such as immersion in Indigenous languages was seen as an important factor to increase language fluency and to strengthen identity and self-esteem. For example, Ethan Paul described a language nest program in New Zealand at an early childhood education centre which could be an inspiration for similar centres in Canada. Non-Indigenous teachers at the centre took lessons in the Maori language.³¹ Ethan Paul also pointed out that Eskasoni Mi'kmaw Nation is the only community that has a complete Mi'kmaw Immersion School and recommended that it could be a model for other communities.³² To better support education for Indigenous youth, Justin Langan called for, "sustained investment in education that honours our languages and cultures."³³

Brett Recollet argued that Western and Indigenous knowledge should both have a place in school curricula and should also be taught to teachers as a part of their professional development.³⁴ He shared his professional perspective from the education system, explaining:

Many students I have worked with come from foster care systems and the child welfare system, and they don't know where they come from. Those systems aren't even Indigenous-led. They are Western-led. How do we expect our Indigenous students to be successful in an education system

²⁷ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Brett Recollet).

²⁸ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Crystal Starr Lewis).

²⁹ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Crystal Starr Lewis).

³⁰ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Ethan Paul).

³¹ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Ethan Paul).

³² APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Ethan Paul).

³³ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Justin Langan).

³⁴ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Brett Recollet).



when there are so many more important issues that they are facing themselves at an individual level?³⁵

In addition, he stressed the importance of Call to Action Number 62 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, which calls upon federal, provincial and territorial governments to create mandatory, age-appropriate curricula on residential schools, treaties and Indigenous rights.³⁶

A common challenge cited by the Indigenous youth was the distance between their Indigenous communities and secondary and post-secondary education or employment opportunities. For example, Reanna Merasty told the committee that her family moved from the Barren Lands First Nation to Brandon when she was younger in order for her to attend a better high school, as it is difficult “to receive anything greater than an eighth-grade education [in a remote First Nation community].”³⁷ Similarly, Ethan Paul described how many Mi’kmaw had to leave Cape Breton to study or find work.³⁸ To help Indigenous youth with these challenges, Justin Langan created the Dreamweavers program under the umbrella of O’Kanata, an organization he founded. The Dreamweavers program provides support to youth transitioning from rural to urban living for their education and connects Indigenous youth to employers after their studies.³⁹

Youth leaders shared first-hand experiences of the benefits of having Indigenous educators and knowledge at the centre of their education. For example, responding to a real need to reduce Indigenous Peoples’ vulnerabilities to human trafficking, Crystal Starr Lewis co-founded an agency that focuses on anti-human trafficking and prevention training in Indigenous communities.⁴⁰ The Mi’kmaw Early Childhood Education program was raised as another a promising example by Ethan Paul because “all our teachers in the program, the academic chair and the curriculum [were] all created by Mi’kmaw people.”⁴¹

Reanna Merasty stated that the Indigenous Design and Planning Student Association she helped to create was part of the reason why some Indigenous youth studied architecture at the University of Manitoba.⁴² Reflecting on her experience as an architecture student, she emphasized, “the importance of representation that is authentic and Indigenous led,” which is lacking in architecture.⁴³ Ethan Paul argued

³⁵ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Brett Recollet).

³⁶ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Brett Recollet).

³⁷ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Reanna Merasty).

³⁸ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Ethan Paul).

³⁹ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Justin Langan).

⁴⁰ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Crystal Starr Lewis).

⁴¹ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Ethan Paul).

⁴² APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Reanna Merasty).

⁴³ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Reanna Merasty).

that Indigenous youth need widespread representation; for example, youth should be involved in decision-making bodies and boards, not only on youth councils.⁴⁴

Bradley Bacon told the committee that his father, who was the former Chief of Unamen Shipu, brought him to Parliament as a child to educate him about politics. He is doing the same with his own daughter, Elaya-Utshimashkuess, who accompanied him to the committee's meeting.⁴⁵



Faithe McGuire, from Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement, next to First Nations Knowledge Keeper Fred McGregor, testifies before the Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples on October 30, 2024.



Reanna Merasty (McKay), from Barren Lands First Nation, testifies before the Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples on October 30, 2024.

Land and Sustainability

Land was connected to a sense of family and Indigenous identity by several of the youth in their testimony. Faithe McGuire explained how the Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement is central to her Métis identity:

I believe this land base has protected and preserved our Métis identity, as we are the people of the land. To have this land base to return to has given me a place in the world.⁴⁶

Reanna Merasty reminisced about playing on islands in Reindeer Lake, in northern Manitoba. She noted that watching and learning from her grandfather about how to build log cabins on their lands informed her later interest in the field of architecture:

It is all knowledge he gained from his family, so when I was young, I witnessed all of those processes of carpentry, building and construction from my grandfather himself. I would even help him. From there, I was interested

⁴⁴ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Ethan Paul).

⁴⁵ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Bradley Bacon).

⁴⁶ APPA, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024 (Faithe McGuire).

in carpentry, of course, and woodworking, but then also architecture because it seemed like something that was even larger. It was something with more impact that I could give to my people.⁴⁷

Additionally, with the conservation organization Ocean Wise, Ethan Paul developed a project called Esmut Apuknajit to introduce Mi'kmaw youth to traditional adult eel-harvesting practices which are:

grounded in the Mi'kmaw principle of Netukulimk, a way of sustainable living. We gathered for a youth Mawio'mi, ending with an offering to Apuknajit, our winter spirit, deepening our connection to land and community.⁴⁸

Crystal Starr Lewis stressed that sustainability was a central issue for youth. It interconnects with land, wellness and identity.⁴⁹



Breane Mahlitz, health policy advisor for the Métis National Council, testifies before the Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples on October 30, 2024.

⁴⁷ APPA, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024 (Reanna Merasty).

⁴⁸ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Ethan Paul).

⁴⁹ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Crystal Starr Lewis).

Conclusion

The committee is grateful to have had the opportunity to hear from Indigenous youth leaders who shared their realities, ideas and recommendations. The committee believes that the Voices of Indigenous Youth Leaders event is a unique opportunity to make Indigenous youth voices heard and to amplify the importance of their knowledge and experiences within Parliament.

Breane Mahlitz stated that, “we are done with listening to empty promises. We need action, not words.”⁵⁰ Eight years after the Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders event was first held, the committee observes that there are still gaps in the resources available to support Indigenous youth. The committee was thoroughly impressed by the individual initiatives it learned about and the positive impacts they have had. The Indigenous youth leaders who appeared before the committee this year show how youth engagement can contribute to positive change in Indigenous communities.



From left to right: Breane Mahlitz, Senator Brian Francis and Reanna Merasty (McKay), chat after a Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples meeting. Bacon, Faithe McGuire, Breane Mahlitz, Crystal Starr Lewis, Reanna Merasty, Brett Recollet and Ethan Paul.

⁵⁰ APPA, [Evidence](#), October 30, 2024 (Breane Mahlitz).



Métis Elder Reta Gordon recites a traditional prayer during the Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders opening ceremony in the Senate Chamber, next to Senator Michèle Audette and surrounded by Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders participants, senators, Senate staff and other guests.



Bradley Bacon, Innu from the community of Unamen-Shipu, Quebec, talks with his daughter, Elaya-Utshimashkuess and Senator Michèle Audette.



Participants of Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders and senators pose in the Senate of Canada Building. Back row, from left, senators Paul J. Prosper, John M. McNair, Marilou McPhedran, Yonah Martin, Brian Francis, Mary Coyle, Judy A. White, former senator Nancy J. Hartling, and senators Kim Pate and David M. Arnot. Front row, from left, Bradley and Elaya-Utshimashkuess Bacon, Faithe McGuire, Breane Mahlitz, Crystal Starr Lewis, Reanna Merasty, Brett Recollet and Ethan Paul.

Appendix A – Biographies of Youth Indigenous Leaders



Breane Mahlitz (Alberta)

Breane Mahlitz is a health policy advisor at the Métis National Council. She is committed to transforming health outcomes for her people. Her community ties fuel her passion to closing health gaps and creating culturally safe, distinctions-based care for Otipemisiwak (Métis people). She is dedicated to advancing transformative solutions that bring about real change. She is currently undertaking an Indigenous Public Health graduate program to strengthen this vital work.



Bradley Bacon (Quebec)

Bradley Bacon works as an Innu translator and interpreter in his community of Unamen Shipu, Quebec. He started getting involved in his community when he was 16 years old, first assisting with mass and then interpreting for the priest. He was elected board chair of the community radio station and then selected to participate in Quebec's youth parliament. He is the owner of a consulting company that provides different services to members of his community. Bradley says he is inspired by his father, who was a band leader, and he hopes to inspire young people to get more involved.



Faithe McGuire (Alberta)

Faithe McGuire is a documentary filmmaker from Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement who creates films about her people and what it means to identify as Metis. The Metis were long referred to as the “forgotten people,” a label that Faithe says has impacted the youth in her community and how they value themselves. She uses photography and film to tell her people’s stories, and she hopes that more education can help Metis youth become passionate about their history.



(Photo credit: Gin Ouskun)

Reanna Merasty (McKay) (Manitoba)

Reanna Merasty (McKay), B.Env.D, M.Arch, MRAIC, is a Nîhithaw artist, writer and advocate from Barren Lands First Nation and an architectural intern with Number TEN Architectural Group. She has dedicated her career to amplifying Indigenous voices, knowledge systems and sustainability in architecture, which is inspired by her upbringing in northern Manitoba. Reanna furthers this dedication to her community as the Manitoba director with the Royal Architecture Institute of Canada Board and as a member of the University of Manitoba Board of Governors.



Ethan Paul (Nova Scotia)

Ethan Paul is Mi'kmaw from Membertou First Nation who serves on the Students on Ice Alumni Council and the Canadian Youth Road Safety Council. Ethan leads community projects, including a sexual health book club called Books + Pitewey, the Shaylene Paul Memorial Regalia Lending Library and a Mi'kmaq seafood cookbook. Ethan is inspired by his late grandparents Ma'kit and Melvin, Uncle Danny and cousin Shaylene. Ethan hopes to inspire cultural pride in L'nu youth, contributing to a safer, stronger and culturally rich future for the community.



Crystal Starr Lewis (British Columbia)

Crystal Starr Lewis comes from Vancouver and the Squamish Nation. She is a British Columbia Assembly of First Nations Youth Representative and a new first-generation speaker of her language. Crystal lives by the sayings, "Be the change you want to see, lead by example and take action." She has worked with various levels of government and helped create an impact on a provincial, national and international scale, and more.



(Photo credit: House of Commons)

Justin Langan (Manitoba)

Justin Langan is a Métis youth advocate from Swan River, Manitoba, dedicated to empowering Indigenous communities through education, sustainability, and cultural preservation. Currently leading O'KANATA, a non-profit organization focused on supporting Indigenous youth, Justin draws inspiration from his community's resilience and the teachings of his Elders. He aims to amplify Indigenous voices, promote sustainable development and create opportunities for future generations to thrive while preserving their cultural heritage.



Brett Recollet (Ontario)

Brett Recollet is Anishinaabe from the Whitefish River First Nation on Manitoulin Island. As an Indigenous support worker for a school board, he advocates for Indigenous students through the western education system. He has a college diploma in social service work from Georgian College, and he is working on an Indigenous social work degree at Laurentian University, with plans to pursue graduate studies focusing on cultural safety in Indigenous education. He has sat on various councils and committees at a community, provincial and national level. His mother inspired him to be a leader for his community.



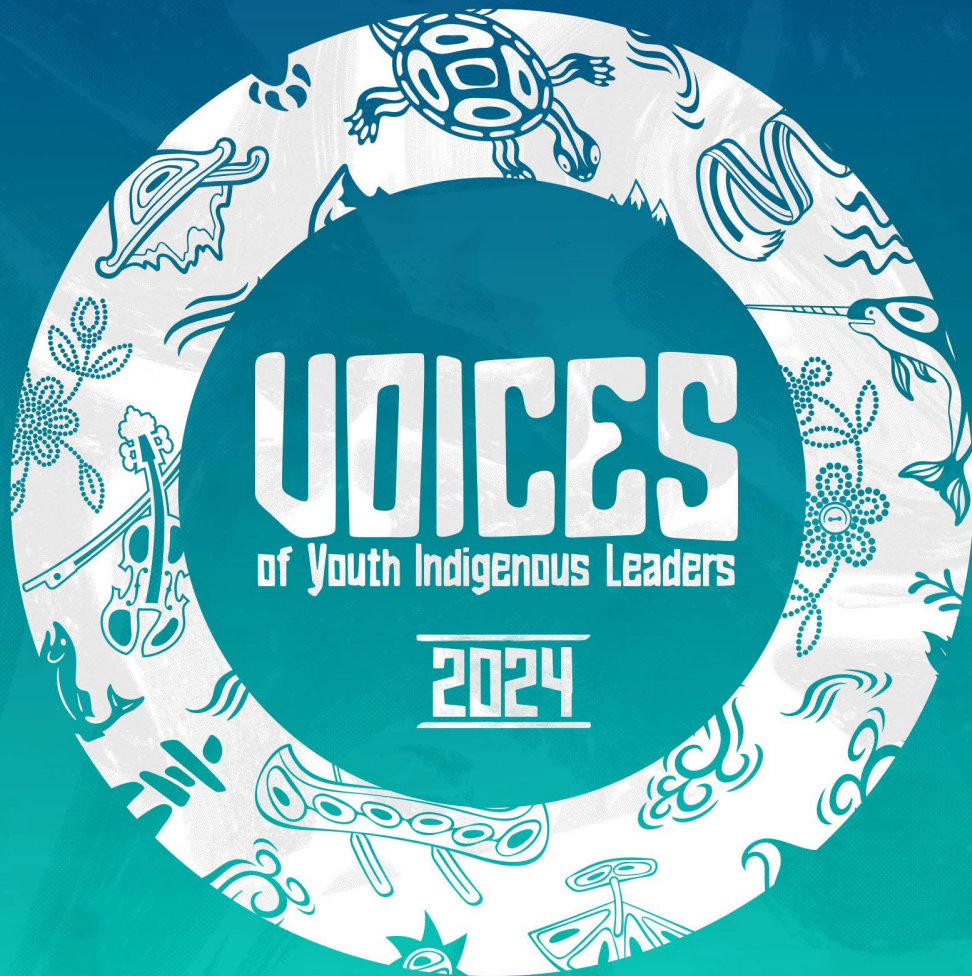
Appendix B – List of Written Submissions

The following Indigenous youth agreed to have their submissions shared publicly as a brief on the committee's website:

- Cameron Adams
- Bradley Bacon
- Kalyne Beaudry
- Isaiah Bernard
- Kaitlin Bird
- Makadae-Makoons Boissoneau
- Cadena Brazeau
- Tréchelle Bunn
- Anonda Canadien
- Seneca Chartrand
- Aaron Chonkolay
- Autumn Cooper
- Alicia Corbiere
- Casandra Curl
- Kaelei Daniels
- Amari Dion-Hart
- Santana Dreaver
- Skw'akw'as Dunstan-Moore
- Harmony Eshkawkogan
- Kevin Good
- Buffy Googoo
- Kathleen Googoo
- Siera Hancharyk
- Emerald Hay-Jenkins
- Dean Hill
- Samantha Jack
- Fialka Osean Jack-Flesh
- Walter Jacque
- Stephanie Jebb
- Andrew Karesa
- Jesse Lafontaine
- Justin Langan
- Crystal Starr Lewis
- Jessica Madiratta
- Breane Mahlitz
- Makayla Mantla
- Mckenzie Marchand
- Nicole Maxwell



- Faithe McGuire
- Jady McLean
- Kiana Meness
- Reanna Merasty
- Jessica Michaud-Fortin
- Bianca Miron
- Mohammad Sadieq Muqtasid
- Gabrielle Nash
- Samantha Newman
- Hunter Nippi-Thirsk
- Justice Noon
- Anthony Owl
- Ethan Paul
- Lauren Petersen
- Dylan Peyachew
- Sarah Prosper
- Zoe Quill
- Brett Recollet
- Faithlynn Robinson
- Audrey-Lise Rock-Hervieux
- Tanaysha Sack
- Marika Schalla
- Blake Sheppard-Pardy
- Aurora Spence-Montour
- Chelsey Stonestand
- Madison Sutherland
- Olivia Thomas
- Keaton Thomas-Sinclair
- Tamara Voudrach
- Bailey Waukey
- Matthew Winters
- George Wrigley
- Carley Wysote
- Maria Yo



This image represents the annual *Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders* event, with a circular shape revolving around the name 'Voices.' A bright gradient of orange, blue, and teal honours First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities while symbolizing movement toward the future. Hand-crafted typography and illustrations incorporate a broad range of symbols to reflect the diversity and vibrancy of Indigenous cultures across Canada.



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