



Kimat Yachay

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Kimat Yachay

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“Preserving indigenous languages is not just about words; it’s about preserving identities, safeguarding heritage, and acknowledging the intrinsic value of each linguistic heritage.”
Pawanka Fund Team

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Honoring the Roots: Preserving Indigenous Languages

The origins of indigenous languages trace back to the very essence of humanity's journey.

Dear Readers,

In the vast tapestry of human communication, indigenous languages stand as ancient testimonies to the diverse cultural landscapes across the globe. Rooted in centuries-old traditions, these languages embody the histories, values, and wisdom of indigenous communities that have thrived in harmony with their environments.

The origins of indigenous languages trace back to the very essence of humanity's journey. They evolved in tandem with unique ecosystems, embodying the intimate relationships between indigenous peoples and their natural surroundings. Embedded within these languages are the stories of resilience, adaptation, and profound connections to the land, echoing the ancestral voices that have shaped indigenous cultures for millennia.

However, in the wake of modernization and globalization, these languages face an existential threat. Many are endangered, teetering on the brink of extinction. The rapid decline of indigenous languages stems from various factors—historical suppression, forced assimilation, marginalization, and the encroachment of dominant languages and cultures. Each language lost is a library of



knowledge and a repository of cultural heritage slipping away, eroding the diverse tapestry of human expression.

The significance of preserving indigenous languages goes far beyond linguistic diversity. These languages serve as conduits to understanding complex ecosystems, traditional knowledge of medicinal plants, sustainable farming techniques, and profound spiritual beliefs. They encapsulate unique worldviews,

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offering insights into alternative ways of living in harmony with nature, fostering biodiversity, and maintaining ecological balance.

As custodians of cultural heritage, we are entrusted with the responsibility to protect and revitalize indigenous languages. It's an act of respect towards the knowledge of our forebears and a tribute to the rich diversity that defines our human experience. Through concerted efforts—linguistic documentation, educational initiatives, community engagement, and policy support—we can create pathways to safeguard these linguistic treasures.

Preserving indigenous languages is not just about words; it's about preserving identities, safeguarding heritage, and acknowledging the intrinsic value of each linguistic heritage. It's a commitment to fostering cultural resilience, empowering communities, and embracing the myriad ways in which language shapes our perceptions of the world.

In this edition of our newspaper, we pay homage to the roots of indigenous languages, recognizing their significance in shaping our collective humanity. Join us in honoring and nurturing these languages as vital components of our shared heritage and as integral threads in the fabric of our cultural diversity.

preserving the oral traditions, storytelling, and intricate nuances embedded within these languages.

Furthermore, the revitalization of indigenous languages contributes to sustainable development. It enhances biodiversity conservation, promotes traditional ecological knowledge, and fosters a deeper understanding of sustainable practices. Moreover, it reinforces social cohesion, empowering indigenous communities to advocate for their rights and engage in decision-making processes that affect them.

As advocates for cultural preservation and diversity, it is our collective responsibility to support initiatives that champion the revitalization of indigenous languages. By recognizing the value of these languages, providing resources for education and documentation, and encouraging their use in various spheres of life, we can safeguard linguistic diversity and honor the invaluable contributions of indigenous cultures to our shared humanity.

Let us embrace the richness of indigenous languages, nurturing their revival as a testament to the resilience and cultural legacy of indigenous peoples across the globe.

Together, let us ensure that these languages, as vessels of wisdom and identity, continue to flourish for generations to come.

The Vitality of Indigenous Language Revitalization

Myrna Cunningham
Chairperson, Pawanka Fund



In the intricate fabric of humanity's cultural tapestry, language serves as a vibrant thread, weaving together stories, traditions, and identity. Yet, amid the diversity of tongues spoken worldwide, many indigenous languages are at risk of fading into silence. The importance of revitalizing these languages cannot be overstated, as they encapsulate the very essence of indigenous cultures.

Language is more than a means of communication; it embodies the wisdom, history, and worldview of a community. For indigenous peoples, language is a repository of ancestral knowledge, passed down through generations, holding the key to traditional practices, ecological wisdom, and cultural heritage.

The erosion of indigenous languages poses a significant threat not only to linguistic diversity but also to the survival of unique cultural identities. When a language disappears, a profound wealth of knowledge, perspectives, and ways of life vanishes with it, impacting

the community's sense of self, connection to the land, and intergenerational bonds.

Revitalizing indigenous languages is an act of empowerment and cultural resurgence. It's a means of reclaiming heritage, restoring pride, and strengthening community ties. Efforts toward language revitalization involve engaging elders, teaching the youth, and fostering intergenerational dialogue. It's about

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Webinar: Insights Reflections from "Language Exchange"

In our recent webinar, "Language Exchange," held on October 21st, our esteemed panelists illuminated the significance of linguistic diversity and the pivotal role it plays in preserving cultural he-

ritage. The event witnessed a vibrant exchange of ideas, experiences, and insights from experts deeply rooted in the world of indigenous languages. We're thrilled to invite our readers to relive these

thought-provoking discussions and gain valuable perspectives by watching the full webinar on our YouTube channel: Pawanka Fund.



Lia Kame

Lia Kame, Mexico

I am proudly Mazua and Lia Kame's project came to light thanks to Pawanka Fund, which is such a real organization, made up of indigenous people, and only true Indigenous People can understand our problems and think like us and thus improve our towns.

Mr. Sunny Zorvah

African Indigenous Foundation for Energy and Sustainable Development (AIFES), Nigeria

Our initiative aimed to document and teach Yiakunte language, history, and indigenous knowledge in Mukogodo Forest, Kenya, fostering self-determination and identity through print media and language booklets.

Dev Sunuwar

Chairperson, Indigenous Media Foundation (IMF) Nepal

Indigenous-led Radio and community television are the best means to document, archive, preserve, promote, and revitalize Indigenous languages.

Hing Bunnath

Organization for the Promotion of Kui Culture (OPKC) Cambodia

We organize volunteer teams to teach Kui language to children and youth; develop community multilingual curriculum in native, national and foreign languages.

Dune Lankard

Native Conservancy (Eyak) - Alaska

With language you can again remember where you came from, where you are now and where you need to go in the future and so, these words are more than words.

Jennifer Koinante

Yiaku Laikipia Trust, Kenya

We have been articulating the rights of minority groups in international for a specially for our minority community. Our main concern being the preservation of the Yakunte language and Mukogodo forest.

Bessie Walker

Hipéexnu' kii'u núun wisíix

Our project has 11 educational levels that must cover the language in terms of speaking, writing, listening and reading.

Samira Bendriouich

Amazigh Girls Matters - Morocco

Our initiative seeks to train girls in their mother tongue language 'Tamazight' which is the main feature of the Amazigh identity via inciting and writing.

Lisa Natividad

Pacific Indigenous Women's Network-Guam

One of the most important processes for the revitalization of indigenous languages has to do with the incorporation of children from an early age in the practice of languages.

Carolina Santos Seguntos

Rocio Becerril Cruz

Carmen Sanchez Reyes

Empoderamiento Mazaha, Mexico

We have included workshops on sensitivity against discrimination, so that children learn to cope with these moments and begin to take pride in using their language

Empowering Indigenous Voices:

Revitalizing Language and philanthropy Support

Revitalizing indigenous languages is a collective endeavor that demands dedication, collaboration, and sustained efforts.

Pawanka Fund Team

Indigenous languages are the beating hearts of cultures, encapsulating millennia of wisdom, tradition, and identity. Yet, these invaluable linguistic legacies face a precarious future. The task of revitalizing endangered indigenous languages is not only a cultural imperative but a vital step towards preserving the rich tapestry of humanity.

Here are five pivotal ways in which philanthropy can champion the revitalization of indigenous languages:



1 Community Engagement and Empowerment:

Philanthropy can initiate community-led language revitalization programs, fostering pride and ownership among indigenous communities. By involving community members, especially elders and youth, in language documentation, preservation, and transmission efforts, these organizations amplify the value and importance of their native tongues.

2 Educational Initiatives:

Philanthropy plays a pivotal role in developing educational resources tailored to indigenous languages. Supporting schools, creating language learning materials, and integrating indigenous languages into formal education curricula ensures their continuation and revitalization among younger generations.

3 Digital Technology and Multimedia Platforms:

Leveraging digital tools, Philanthropy can create digital archives, language apps, and online resources that facilitate language learning and preservation. Platforms that feature audio recordings, interactive lessons, and storytelling in indigenous languages help widen access and engagement.

4 Cultural Events and Celebrations:

Hosting cultural festivals, language workshops, and community events dedicated to indigenous languages fosters a sense of belonging and appreciation for linguistic heritage. These gatherings not only celebrate languages but also serve as platforms for language revitalization efforts.

5 Advocacy and Policy Support:

Philanthropy plays a crucial role in advocating for policies that recognize and support indigenous languages at local, national, and international levels. Lobbying for the inclusion of indigenous languages in official documents, public signage, and legal frameworks safeguards their status and fosters linguistic rights.

Revitalizing indigenous languages is a collective endeavor that demands dedication, collaboration, and sustained efforts. Philanthropy, through their commitment and innovative approaches, serve as catalysts in preserving linguistic diversity, empowering indigenous communities, and ensuring that these invaluable languages thrive for generations to come.

As advocates for cultural heritage and linguistic diversity, let us rally together to amplify the voices of indigenous languages, weaving their narratives into the global mosaic of humanity.

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The Language of the Sons and Daughters of the Earth



Oscar Montero

Indigenous leader of the Kankuamo People, Colombia. PhD student in Education, Interculturality and Territory

The earth, the wind, the fire and the water speak to us

There is such a wealth of languages in the 115 Indigenous Peoples of Colombia, where their strength is in the spiritual language. That where the sons and daughters of the Earth have the ability to see the past and the future in dreams, in the signals of our body and in what we see, understand and feel with and from the heart.

Our language is a ritual language where the singing of birds, the vitality of plants, the movements of dance, the changes of the moon, the movements of the earth, weaving, food, body painting, our clothing, the expression of each of the 65 languages in Colombia, deciphering the truth that the ayu (coca leaf), tobacco and chirrinchi show us, takes us and brings us to the depth of our existence.

The earth, the wind, the fire and the water speak to us, today there are few in our towns who still have the gift of words and vision to understand what our spiritual fathers and mothers communicate to us.

Boys, girls, grandparents, in the life cycle of beginning and transcending to other spiritual worlds are the ones who still have that ability to speak and communicate with our ancestors. They are the expression of indigenous wisdom.

Today we are called to revitalize the body, the spirit, the thought and the territory as we



House of Thought and Spirituality in the Amazon Jungle. Oscar Montero (2023)

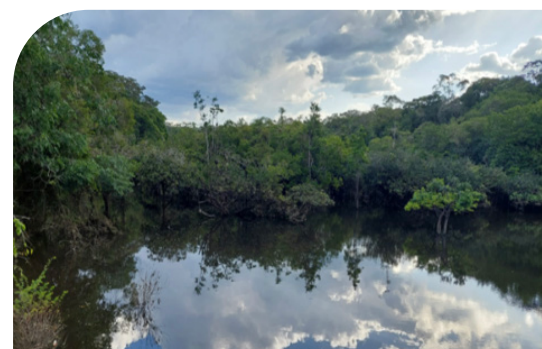
“ Colombia recognizes the languages of the Indigenous Peoples; article 10 of the 1991 Political Constitution stipulates this.”

were taught before dawn to continue understanding the language of the earth, in order to continue maintaining the harmony and balance of the worlds. Doing so is Returning to our Origin.

Colombia recognizes the languages of the Indigenous Peoples; article 10 of the 1991 Political Constitution stipulates this. Today, it is the Indigenous Peoples in the country who mostly contribute to the linguistic wealth in the national territory with 65 of the 70 that are recognized in Colombia. Today ratified through Law 1381 of 2010, which aims to safeguard, strengthen and revitalize the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Nation. Indigenous languages or languages are only one way of communicating; they are part of the heart of our culture, where Colombia's national language plan must guarantee its physical and cultural survival.

Today in Colombia they continue to kill our bodies and our territory, with bullets and words, the armed conflict continues to be a reality and with racism they continue to consolidate the physical and cultural genocide throughout the national territory.

Even when we die and when we are killed, we continue to communicate. Not even evil death can break our spiritual connection and language!



Water Mirrors in the Thick Forest of Vaupés. Oscar Montero (2022)



Harmonization Ritual of the Saga Woman of the Wiwa People to the Kankuama and Nasa Girl in the Sierra Nevada, Colombia. Oscar Montero (2023)



Sacred Site of the creator father Kubai in Mitú, Vaupés. Oscar Montero (2022)

Celebrating Indigenous Leadership:

Vicky Tauli-Corpuz's Nobel Peace Prize Nomination

The significance of her Nobel Peace Prize nomination extends beyond individual recognition; it is a beacon illuminating the indomitable spirit and enduring contributions of indigenous leaders on the world stage



Vicky Tauli Corpuz

Nominated for the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize



The prestigious nomination of Vicky Tauli-Corpuz for the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize is a testament to the remarkable strides taken by indigenous leaders in shaping a more equitable world. As an esteemed member of Pawanka Fund's Guiding Committee, Tauli-Corpuz embodies a profound commitment to indigenous rights, environmental sustainability, and global peace.

Hailing from the Kankanaey community in the Philippines, Tauli-Corpuz's relentless dedication to advancing the rights of indigenous peoples is unparalleled. Her tenure as the former UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples underscores her

unwavering advocacy for justice, land preservation, and the cultural heritage of indigenous communities.

The significance of her Nobel Peace Prize nomination extends beyond individual recognition; it is a beacon illuminating the indomitable spirit and enduring contributions of indigenous leaders on the world stage. Tauli-Corpuz's nomination emphasizes the crucial role indigenous wisdom plays in addressing pressing global challenges, emphasizing the urgency of inclusivity, equity, and sustainable development.

This nomination resonates deeply within Pawanka Fund's ethos, celebrating and hono-

ring indigenous leadership in nurturing a harmonious relationship between humanity and the planet. Tauli-Corpuz's nomination reflects the invaluable insights and dedication that she brings to our Guiding Committee, guiding our mission to preserve cultural heritage, advocate for indigenous rights, and promote environmental stewardship.

As we applaud Vicky Tauli-Corpuz's Nobel Peace Prize nomination, let us reaffirm our commitment to amplifying indigenous voices, recognizing their invaluable contributions, and championing a world where indigenous knowledge is respected and celebrated.

Partner's initiatives

Tara Bandu, a Tradition of Sustainability



The opening ceremony had village chiefs, local authorities, forestry officers, and community leaders in attendance. The highest clan "Rai Oan" or Son of the Land led the ritual, assisted by "Uma Dato" or House of the Leader who implements the customary law, and "Lia Na'in" or Owner of the Words who, as a judicial body, maintains justice.

Mr. Filomino, the sub-district administrator was accompanied by elders and chief of villages in receiving a sacred hammer with which he rang the sacred bell to signify the opening of the ritual at the sacred place, the center of "sadanlulik." This is open only to the Rai Oan Clan during the ritual and taking video and photos is not allowed.

After the ritual, the community leaders signed the Tara Bandu regulations to legalize these. It was the community's first time to discuss the first written community regulations before adoption. The Makle'at or Forest man nominated six people to represent each village. He is tasked to look after the needs of the community and to report any violation to the Lia Na'in Clan elders who lead the process of investigation and mete out penalty or sanction to the violator.

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mete out penalty or sanction to the violator. The next generation's voices are to be heard, such as Armando's who said, "As the young generation, we are now aware that we do have our own traditions that can be used to manage our resources without intervention from outsiders or government. The presence of state regulation is just to strengthen our tradition and government officials should recognize and involve existing traditional governance system for the same purpose." The

Forestry officer acknowledged the clan's role when he said that "...every clan has a clear role and responsibility in carrying out and ensuring implementation of Tara Bandu regulation. This indicates the existence of traditional government system and sense of ownership for their own benefits." The elders' views were expressed by Raimundo who stated that, "We have an obligation to share our culture and practices to the young generation although most young people are not really keen to know such traditions. We have the video documentation as an alternative to share these to them."

The rains, distance, and bad road condition may have prevented other communities from attending, but they know they have the Tara Bandu tradition to hold onto for the protection of their resources.

Know our partner's initiatives around the world

The Pacific

Te Puna Marama Voyaging Foundation

IRIIRI KAPUA NO RUNGA ITE TUKU KAVEINGA MAORI ATE UI TUPUNA (Workshop Series: How our ancestors navigated)

Workshops run by Te Puna Marama Voyaging Foundation specifically to discuss, collect and document Indigenous Cook Islands Star Names/Celestial names, voyaging, meteorological, scientific terms. Findings will be published on the Te Puna Marama website and archived with the Ministry of Culture To enable Cook Islandersto learn more about ancient navigation traditions specific to the Cook Islands.



North America

Stqeeye' Learning Society

Hwial'asmut tu tumuhw (Taking Care of the Earth)

Stqeeye' Learning Society seeks to develop a land and sea based educational program that has two ultimate goals: 1) to strengthen climate resiliency of Indigenous youth, their families and communities through the reconnection with the rich cultural knowledge, practices and traditions carried by Quw'utsun Elders and knowledge keepers; 2) Identify and develop a collective of land and water guardian leaders who will work with other Quw'utsun communities to identify and lead the restoration of coastal and marine ecosystems.



Africa

BiftuGafarsa Fodder SHG

Revitalizing indigenous knowledge and traditional management of shallow wells of the Chari Ecosystem, Isiolo County

The project aims to map traditional hand excavated shallow wells in Chari grazing zone in Isiolo County. It will in addition document indigenous knowledge related to underground water detection, excavation methods and water management. These includes audio-visual recording of skills, rituals and songs related to the practice of locating, excavation, watering of livestock, sharing and management of water use by domestic animals, people and wildlife in the area. The purpose is to revitalize the knowledge and practice, to honor pastoralists who utilize it as a source of livelihoods and natural resource management process and to pass the technology to the younger generation.



Asia

Rekam Nusantara Foundation

Documenting the Adaptation and Mitigation of the Indigenous Peoples toward Climate Change in Harukul Island

By exploring the indigenous knowledge and identity, we can gain lessons-learned and build trust; along with a wider network, to enhance mutual understanding and goals for the sustainability of our future. Especially in Haruku Island, Central Maluku, we believe that Eliza Marthen Kissya widely known as "OmEli", an inspiring eco-leader, trailblazer, yet a poem writer and occasional singer, can develop and further generate public awareness and interests toward ethnic-conservation and recently his role in fighting high tides as negative impact of climate change. We are thus committed to cover its finding and information that ensure high-quality insight throughout capacity development programs and documentary film production.



The Arctic

Saami Council

Wetlands Sápmi-Indigenous uses and stewardship of Wetlands ecosystems

The project goal is to enhance both social and ecosystem resilience. The project will throw interviews, questionnaires, and land use mapping in two reindeer husbandry communities in Swedish Sápmi improve knowledge of indigenous wetlands uses and approaches to stewardship. It will synthesize knowledge across natural and social sciences and indigenous knowledge, and strengthen links between knowledge holders, policymakers, and practitioners. It will be a pilot project developing co-production of knowledge methodology in an Arctic Council context. The Project is part of a larger consortium, the PAWANKA fund would support the local partners contribution through a local workshop and field work.