

Basic principles

of the Management of Indigenous Language Revitalization Initiatives



CIRCLE of the WORD

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Members Guiding Committee

Myrna Cunningham Kain
Hussein Isack
Teresa Zapeta
Vicky Tauli - Corpuz
Rukka Sombolinggi
Melissa Nelson
Joan Carling
Gun Britt Retter
Namaka Rawlins
Danil Mamyeu

Executive Team

Carla Bush
Maria Jose Salinas
Nidia Bustillos
Emma Pineda
Edna Kaptoyo
Luchie Maranan
Juan David Burbano
Faith Saningo
Ingrid Neuque
Rubén Tituaña

Conceived by
Feeling

Editorial Design
Feeling

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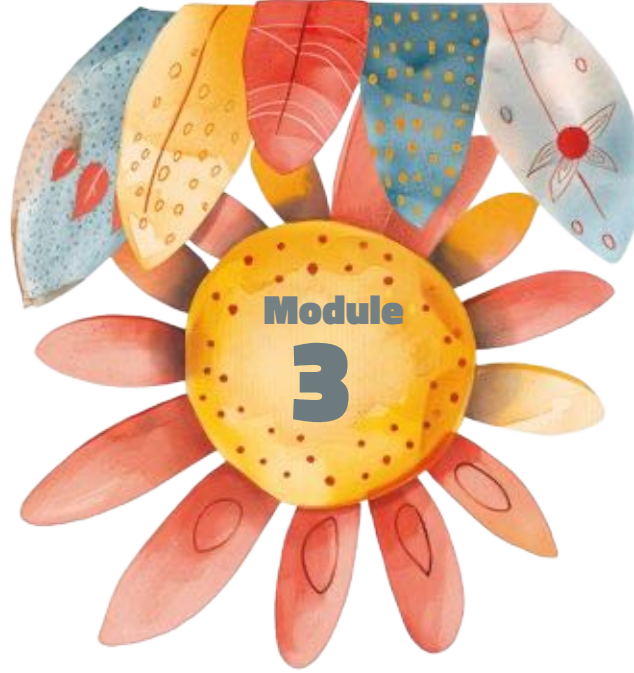


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To learn



Basic Principles of Initiative Management

1. Initiation

2. Planning

3. Execution

4. Monitoring

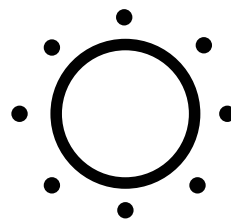
5. Closing



To make



We Plan Guide



To Learn



In this document you will
find these symbols that represent:



TIPS

Particular advice on the
subject under discussion.



REMEMBER

Key issues that need
to be remembered.



GET TO KNOW

Extra help to research and
learn more about the topic.

Basic Principles of Initiative Management

Basic Principles of Management of Initiatives



Introduction



In the struggle for the revitalization of indigenous languages, it is not only vital to understand the cultural and linguistic richness that these languages represent, but also to have the necessary tools to plan, execute and evaluate initiatives that seek their preservation and promotion. Effective initiative management thus becomes a key skill for leading successful initiatives in this field. This unit is designed to introduce participants to the fundamental principles of initiative management, adapted to the specific context of language revitalization. Through this unit, we will learn how to turn our visions and passions for preserving indigenous languages into structured and viable initiatives. We will explore the life cycle of an initiative, from conception to completion, focusing on strategic planning, resource allocation, team leadership, and evaluation of results.

Learning objectives:

- Understand the life cycle of an initiative and its critical phases.
- Identify and apply basic initiative management tools, such as work plans, budgets and timelines, adapted to the language revitalization context.
- Develop skills in initiative leadership and teamwork, with a focus on community participation and empowerment.
- Learn to conduct needs and resource assessments, essential for the design of effective language revitalization initiatives.



At the end of this unit, participants will be equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to start their own indigenous language revitalization initiatives, being able to address challenges, manage resources efficiently and make a positive impact on their communities.

Through theoretical lessons, case studies, and practical exercises, this unit promises not only to teach the theory behind initiative management, but also to inspire to apply this knowledge creatively and effectively in the preservation of indigenous languages, an essential component of global cultural and linguistic diversity.



1. Initiation



The first phase of generating indigenous language revitalization initiatives is critical because it lays the foundation for the entire effort. It is the time to clearly define the purpose, objectives and scope of the initiative, ensuring that all stakeholders have a common understanding of what it seeks to achieve. Here, we delve into the essential aspects of this phase:

Identification of the Need

- **Recognition of the State of the Language:** Start with a diagnosis of the current state of the language: How many active speakers are there? In what contexts is the language used? What resources are already available (teaching materials, linguistic documentation, etc.)?
- **Understanding Threats:** Identify factors contributing to language decline. This may include assimilation policies, linguistic displacement by dominant languages, lack of intergenerational transmission, among others.

Definition of Objectives

- **General Objectives:** Establish broad revitalization goals. For example, increase the number of speakers of the language, promote its use in new domains (digital, educational, administrative), or strengthen cultural transmission.
- **Specific Objectives:** Detail concrete and measurable goals. For example, develop a bilingual educational program, create a digital corpus of the language, train new language teachers, etc.

Community Engagement and Support

- **Community Involvement:** Involving the community from the beginning is critical. This includes language speakers, community leaders, educators, and other stakeholders. Their participation ensures that the initiative is relevant and responds to the real needs of the community.
- **Formation of Alliances:** Establishing partnerships with local organizations, educational institutions, and other stakeholders can significantly expand the impact and resources available for the initiative.



Establishing the Scope of the Initiative

- **Clear Definition of Scope:** Determine what will and will not be included in the initiative. This helps prevent goal overflow and ensures that the initiative team focuses on priorities.
- **Flexibility:** While it is important to have a defined scope, it is also crucial to maintain some flexibility to adapt to discoveries and challenges that arise during the planning and execution phase of the initiative.

Resource Evaluation

- **Human Resources:** Identify community members who can contribute specific skills, such as teaching, language documentation, or initiative management.
- **Material and Financial Resources:** Estimate the material (e.g., recording equipment, teaching materials) and financial resources needed for the initiative. Consider available funding sources, including grants, donations, and government support.

Initial Documentation

- **Creation of an Initiative Document:** Develop a document that summarizes the need for the initiative, objectives, scope, and resources identified. This document will serve as an initial guide for the initiative and as a communication tool to engage others.

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REMEMBER

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2. Planning

The planning phase in indigenous language revitalization initiatives is where the specific steps to achieve the objectives established during initiation are detailed. It is a critical stage that requires meticulous attention to how activities will be organized and executed, how resources will be managed, and how progress will be measured. Here is a detailed guide on how to approach planning in this type of initiative.

Establishment of Detailed Goals and Objectives

- **Breakdown of Objectives:** From the general and specific objectives identified in the initiation, develop detailed and achievable goals, assigning clear indicators of success. For example, if the general objective is to increase the number of speakers, a detailed goal could be "Implement a language immersion program for 30 children in the community each year".
- **SMART:** Ensure that objectives are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

Development of Strategies and Activities

- **Revitalization Strategies:** Define the methodological strategies to be used to achieve the objectives of the initiative, such as language teaching programs, creation of didactic materials, cultural events, etc.
- **Activity Plan:** Detail the specific activities to be carried out under each strategy, assigning responsibilities, time and resources needed.

Resource Allocation

- **Humans:** Identify the initiative team, including coordinators, educators, linguists, volunteers, etc. Establish clear roles and responsibilities for each.
- **Materials:** Determine the materials needed for each activity (e.g., books, language documentation software, audio equipment).
- **Financial:** Develop a detailed budget that covers all costs of the initiative, including personnel, materials, activities and any other anticipated expenses. Identify funding sources and secure the necessary funds.



Temporary Planning

- **Schedule:** Create a detailed schedule of activities, establishing deadlines for each of the initiative's steps and tasks. Consider any seasonal or community factors that may influence scheduling.

Monitoring and Evaluation Strategies

- **Continuous Monitoring:** Establish mechanisms for monitoring the progress of the initiative, including regular team meetings, progress reports, and periodic reviews of the timeline and budget.
- **Evaluation:** Define how and when the impact of the initiative will be evaluated with respect to the stated objectives, including evaluation methods and data collection tools.

Communication Plan

- **Internal Communication:** Determine how the initiative team will communicate with each other, including meeting frequency, communication tools and reporting protocols.
- **External Communication:** Plan how the community and other stakeholders will be informed about the progress of the initiative, including newsletters, social media, and public events.

Risk Management

- **Risk Identification:** Recognize potential risks that could affect the initiative, such as changes in funding, community resistance or logistical challenges.
- **Mitigation Plans:** Develop strategies to minimize or address identified risks, ensuring the resilience of the initiatives.

The planning phase is critical in structuring how indigenous language revitalization will be carried out, transforming the initial vision and objectives into a concrete and detailed plan of action. Effective planning ensures that all aspects of the initiative are considered and organized in a way that maximizes the likelihood of success and minimizes risks.



REMEMBER

Ensure that the objectives are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.



3. Execution



Start of execution

- **Launch of the Initiative:** Organize a launch event to mark the official start of the initiative. This can help generate enthusiasm and commitment among the community and stakeholders.
- **Revision of the Plan:** Before beginning, conduct a final review of the initiative plan with the team to ensure that everyone understands their roles, responsibilities, and the timeline of activities.

Resource Mobilization

- **Human Resources:** Confirm the commitments of the initiative team and volunteers. Organize training sessions if necessary to ensure that everyone has the skills required for their tasks.
- **Material and Financial Resources:** Procure and distribute materials needed for planned activities. Ensure that funds are available and that financial management procedures are in place.

Implementation of Activities

- **Education and Training:** Implement educational programs, workshops, and other language teaching activities as planned. Adapt teaching methods to students' needs and cultural contexts.
- **Linguistic Documentation:** Perform documentation activities, such as native speaker recordings, development of teaching materials, and compilation of dictionaries or grammars.
- **Promotion and Awareness:** Conduct events and campaigns to promote the use of the language in the community and beyond. This may include cultural festivals, radio programs, and social media presence.
- **Monitoring:** Implement the established monitoring plan, collecting data and observations that will be useful to evaluate progress and make adjustments..



Management and Communication

- **Team Management:** Maintain fluid communication with the initiative team, resolving conflicts and ensuring the motivation and commitment of all members..
- **Communication with the Community:** Keep the community informed about the progress of the initiative, seeking their feedback and encouraging their continued participation.
- **Adjustments and Troubleshooting:** Be prepared to make adjustments to the plan and solve problems as they arise. This may require flexibility and quick decision-making to keep the initiative on track.

Documentation

- **Registration of the Initiative:** Maintain detailed documentation of all activities, decisions, and changes in the initiative. This is crucial not only for the final evaluation, but also as a resource for future language revitalization initiatives.

Celebration of Achievements

- **Success Recognition:** Celebrate the achievements and milestones reached during the implementation of the initiative. Recognizing the work and contribution of all involved strengthens the sense of community and commitment to language revitalization.

Implementation is a vibrant and active phase of the initiative, where planning is translated into concrete actions. Through effective management, constant communication, and deep engagement with the community, challenges can be overcome and progress can be made towards the effective revitalization of indigenous languages.

Explore this guide to documentation of initiatives



4. Monitoring



The monitoring phase of an indigenous language revitalization initiative is essential to ensure that it remains on track toward its objectives and to identify areas where adjustments or improvements are needed. This stage allows for the evaluation of progress, the effectiveness of the strategies implemented and the overall impact of the initiative.

Below, we detail how to effectively approach monitoring in these initiatives.

Establishment of Monitoring Mechanisms

- **Performance Indicators:** Define clear and measurable indicators based on the specific objectives of the initiative. These may include the number of new speakers or learners of the language, the frequency of language use in community contexts, or the production and distribution of teaching materials.
- **Data Collection Tools:** Select or develop appropriate data collection tools, such as surveys, interviews, direct observations, and media and social media content analysis.

Implementation of the Monitoring Plan

- **Regular Data Collection:** Establish a schedule for regular data collection to track progress on an ongoing basis. This may include monthly, quarterly or semi-annual evaluations, depending on the scope and duration of the initiative.
- **Continuous Review:** Assign specific responsibilities within the initiative team for ongoing review of the information collected. This ensures that monitoring is effectively integrated into the daily operations of the initiative.

Analysis and Evaluation

Data Analysis: Process and analyze data collected to assess progress toward objectives. Identify trends, patterns and areas of success, as well as challenges and obstacles.

Evaluation of Strategies: Use the results of the analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies and activities implemented. Consider whether they are contributing as intended to the initiative's objectives and where modification might be needed.



Monitoring-Based Adjustments

- **Making Adjustments:** Use monitoring findings to make informed adjustments to the initiative. This may include reallocating resources, modifying activities or strategies, or reinforcing successful areas.
- **Communication of Changes:** Inform the initiative team and stakeholders about monitoring results and planned adjustments. Ensure that all stakeholders understand the reasons for changes and how these are intended to improve impact.

Documentation and Reporting

- **Detailed Documentation:** Maintain detailed records of monitoring processes, including methodologies, data collected, analyses performed and decisions made based on findings..
- **Progress Reports:** Prepare periodic progress reports that summarize monitoring findings, achievements, and adjustments made. These reports are critical for transparency and can be useful for communicating with funders, participants and other stakeholders..

Effective monitoring is an ongoing process that provides vital feedback for the management of the initiative. It allows us to celebrate successes, learn from challenges and constantly improve language revitalization strategies to maximize their impact and sustainability.



5. Closing



The closing phase in an indigenous language revitalization initiative is a critical step that marks the formal conclusion. This stage involves not only the completion of planned activities but also the evaluation of the initiative as a whole, recognition of achievements and reflection on lessons learned. How to effectively manage the closure of these initiatives is detailed below.

Conclusion of Activities

- **Task Completion:** Ensure that all initiative activities, including language documentation, educational programs, and promotional events, are complete. This also includes completion of final reports and delivery of any outstanding deliverables.
- **Financial Review:** Conduct a final review of the initiative's finances, including total spending compared to the original budget. Close all initiative accounts and complete financial reports required by funders.

Evaluation of the Initiative

- **Impact Assessment:** Conduct a final evaluation to measure the impact of the initiative on indigenous language revitalization. This may include analysis of the indicators of success defined during planning and monitoring, as well as qualitative assessments of the impact on the community.
- **Feedback Collection:** Obtain feedback from initiative participants, collaborators, and other stakeholders. This can be done through surveys, interviews, or focus group meetings.



Documentation and Dissemination

- **Final Report:** Prepare a final report detailing the activities carried out, results achieved, lessons learned, and recommendations for future initiatives. This report should be accessible to funders, initiative participants, and the community at large.
- **Learning Sharing:** Organize dissemination sessions or publish findings and lessons learned so that they can be useful for other communities and language revitalization initiatives.

Recognition and Celebration

- **Recognition of Contributions:** Thank everyone who contributed to the initiative, including the team, volunteers, the community, and funders. This may include thank you events, certificates of appreciation, or mentions in communications about the initiative.
- **Celebration of Achievements:** Organize a closing event to celebrate the initiative's accomplishments with the community. This not only recognizes the collective effort but can also reinforce the ongoing commitment to language revitalization.

Planning for the Future

- **Sustainability and Continuity:** Reflect on ways to sustain and expand revitalization efforts after the formal closure of the initiative. This may include planning for subsequent phases, seeking additional funding, or integrating revitalization activities into other community initiatives.
- **Knowledge Transfer:** Ensure that any resources, teaching materials, or tools developed during the initiative are made available to the community and other stakeholders. This facilitates continuity and builds on the achievements..

The closing is an opportunity to reflect on the initiative's journey, celebrate successes, learn from challenges, and lay the groundwork for continued language revitalization efforts. This phase not only concludes the current initiative in an organized and reflective manner but also paves the way for future indigenous language preservation and promotion initiatives.



Example

Traveling through
indigenous Oceania:

Revitalization efforts to maintain our mother tongue

Pacific Indigenous Women's Network

Initiative supported by Pawanka Fund

This project presents a collaboration between five Pacific peoples for indigenous language revitalization efforts. The partners are Guahan (Guam), Hawaii, Aotearoa, the Remethau community (Sea Peoples) and the Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands. These partners were specifically identified because they represent indigenous Pacific communities whose experience with colonization has posed a threat to the survival of their indigenous languages. The Remethau community self-identify as Sea Peoples, who are traditional celestial navigators originating from the outer islands of the Federated States of Micronesia who have migrated through the Micronesian region to the rest of the Blue Continent (Pacific Ocean).

For this project, each partner will design and implement its own language revitalization activities based on the specific needs of its community.



The current situation of indigenous languages worldwide is best described as a CRISIS, and the mass extinction of languages is a real threat. Statistics indicate that one language becomes extinct every two weeks. According to Mona Rishmawi, Chief of the Rule of Law, Equality and Non-Discrimination Branch of the UN Human Rights, "losing these languages means losing a large part of our human heritage, because languages are much more than spoken or written words and phrases: they are also the medium through which cultures, knowledge and traditions are preserved and transmitted between generations." Oceania is no different. For Chamorros living in Guahan and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, for example, a study published by the Department of Chamorro Affairs in 2005 reported significant language loss that threatens the survival of the Chamorro language. Researchers indicated that the highest scores in CHamoru language speech were found in the 50+ age group. This finding was coupled with the lower ability to speak the language in the young: those between the ages of eight and 39. This is of great concern because the inability of the young to speak their indigenous languages will lead to the extinction of Pacific languages with the death of the older generation. The CHamoru experience is a phenomenon that is repeated throughout Oceania, especially among those who have experienced colonization and those who continue to experience it today.

This project aims to influence Indigenous Peoples throughout the Pacific by carrying out a series of activities in five Pacific countries to revitalize indigenous languages. Country-specific activities include the production of videos, recordings of interviews with mother tongue speakers, workshops, community public events, compositions of songs and chants in indigenous languages, and written documents for wide dissemination. Some project products will be stored in digital repositories for easy access and use. Dissemination of these various language initiatives will also take place through social media: FaceBook, Instagram, Twitter and Tiktok for PIWN to disseminate content across the Pacific through its participants in the various countries. In addition, the five partners will converge on an Indigenous Language Summit to be held in Guahan in early 2023. In the latter case, traditional media such as radio, print and television will be used.



The Pacific Indigenous Women's Network (PIWN), Inc. was incorporated in 2019 on the island of Guahan (Guam) with representation from Hawaii, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guahan, and Australia. The mission of the PIWN is to protect and advance the human rights of indigenous women, their families and communities in the Pacific Region through the formation of strategic alliances with other indigenous women and their regional associations. We aim to protect, defend and advance the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Pacific indigenous women and children. The purposes of the PIWN includes the implementation of projects that promote the human rights of Pacific indigenous women that address cultural preservation, poverty alleviation, education, social development, justice, knowledge systems, self-determination, human security, capacity building, and other human rights related undertakings. The PIWN is a regional organization that has delivered interventions on climate change, militarization, domestic violence, and decolonization before the UNPFII in NYC and the CEDAW and EMRIP in Geneva.



This PIWN project will be carried out in partnership with five entities across the Pacific to include: Kanaeokana Komike Anahulu Olelo Hawai'i (Hawai'i), Te Whare Wananga o Waikato (University of Waikato, Aotearoa), the Weriyeeng School of Traditional Navigation (Remethau), Fino' Haya Working Group (Guahan), and Cultural Icon Tun Donald Mendiola (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands). The PIWN is currently funded by FIMI's ANYI Fund, being able to access the resources that FIMI provides its participants. Lastly, the PIWN has members from all countries throughout the Pacific and can call upon members for gathering and sharing information and support.



Preservation and transcription of Akha Sacred Oral Texts

Initiative supported by Pawanka Fund

In Thailand, the Naqkaw Aqkaq Dzoeqkawq Armavq (NADA) (Mekong Akha Network for Peace and Sustainability, or MAPS) will complete its project "Preservation and Transcription of Akha Sacred Oral Texts" in a few months.

As a Tibeto-Burman speaking people with no writing of their own in their history, the Akha people have created and accumulated very rich oral traditions, among which the Akha Sacred Oral Texts (ASOTs) or Pirma Tordawq in Akha, are the most important for maintaining the Akha way of life. ASOTs include soul-calling texts, rituals for restoring the power of a family or even a village, and migratory epics recited for a funeral, whereby the Pirma will help the spirit of the deceased to travel back to the homeland of their ancestors.

The project focuses on preserving and writing a series of Akha Sacred Oral Texts (ASOT) or Pirma Tordawq in Akha recited by traditional Akha religious scholars called Pirmas. This project realizes one of the ultimate goals of NADA, which is to preserve and transmit the entire body of traditional Akha knowledge and wisdom to the coming generations in their own mother tongue, the Akha language.



So far, a total of 31 Akha pirmas based in Thailand have been found, and one of them passed away in October 2023. Only eight of them can recite the ASOT, while the rest can no longer do so due to their conversion to Christianity. Most of the living pirmas between 60 and 80 years old are not in good health.

They were classified according to their knowledge and then a Network of Akha Pirmas in Thailand (NAPT) was formed and encountered a problem, as Christian Akha generally refuse to join the network. The partner organization developed a set of standardized criteria to classify the pirmas and those selected recorded their sacred oral texts. Audio and video recordings were also made of the ASOTs. (Currently, the ongoing language projects are initiatives that provide a dynamic environment for community members, especially youth, to actively engage with their native languages.

Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN) in Indonesia is currently in the initial phase of its documentation of an indigenous language and is preparing to establish an indigenous school in a community in the country. Language revitalization is a cornerstone in the preservation of cultural identity. Women Empowerment Nepal (WEN) is at the forefront of revitalizing indigenous Newar language and culture and countering the government's single language policy, which poses a threat and cultural imposition on all indigenous languages.



Basic Principles of Initiative Management

Financing

of an initiative to revitalize
indigenous
languages



Funding an indigenous language revitalization initiative can be challenging, but there are a variety of strategies and funding sources that can support these valuable efforts. Here is a guide on how to approach funding such initiatives:

1. Government Funds

Many governments have specific programs aimed at preserving and promoting indigenous languages. These funds may be available at the national, regional or local level. It is crucial:

- **Research available programs:** Search for programs that align with the initiative's objectives and understand the eligibility criteria and application requirements.
- **Prepare sound proposals:** Develop detailed proposals that highlight the cultural, educational, and social importance of the initiative, emphasizing how it contributes to the government's language and cultural policy objectives.

2. Grants from Foundations and NGOs

There are numerous non-governmental organizations and private foundations that support cultural and linguistic diversity initiatives. To access these funds you need:

Identify compatible foundations: Research foundations that focus on education, culture, human rights, or indigenous preservation.

Establish contacts and alliances: Often, personal and professional relationships can open doors to funding opportunities. Attending related events and conferences can be helpful.



3. International Programs

International organizations such as UNESCO, the World Bank and other multilateral entities offer funding programs for initiatives that promote cultural diversity and the preservation of minority languages. To access these funds:

Understand the specific requirements: Each program has its own criteria and priorities. Make sure your initiative meets these requirements before applying.

Submit international proposals: Prepare proposals that not only highlight the local importance of the initiative, but also its relevance in a global context.

4. Crowdfunding and Community Support

Crowdfunding is a powerful strategy for initiatives with strong community support. Platforms such as Kickstarter, GoFundMe, or Indiegogo can be used to:

Fundraising campaigns: Launch online campaigns that allow individuals around the world to contribute financially.

Community mobilization: In addition to the financial aspect, these campaigns can raise awareness and support for the cause.



To Make



Guide We Plan

Guide We plan

1 Initiative Title

2 Purpose
What is the purpose of the initiative?
Why is this initiative important and for whom is it important?

3 Who are at the forefront of the initiative?
Directora

4 What are the main tasks in our initiative?

5 What are the deliverables of your initiative?

1

Title of the Initiative

Choose a memorable name for your initiative

2

Purpose

What is the objective of the initiative?
Why is this initiative important and to whom is it important?

3

Who is in front of the initiative?

Who are the people who make up the team that will lead the initiative?

4

What are the main tasks in your initiative?

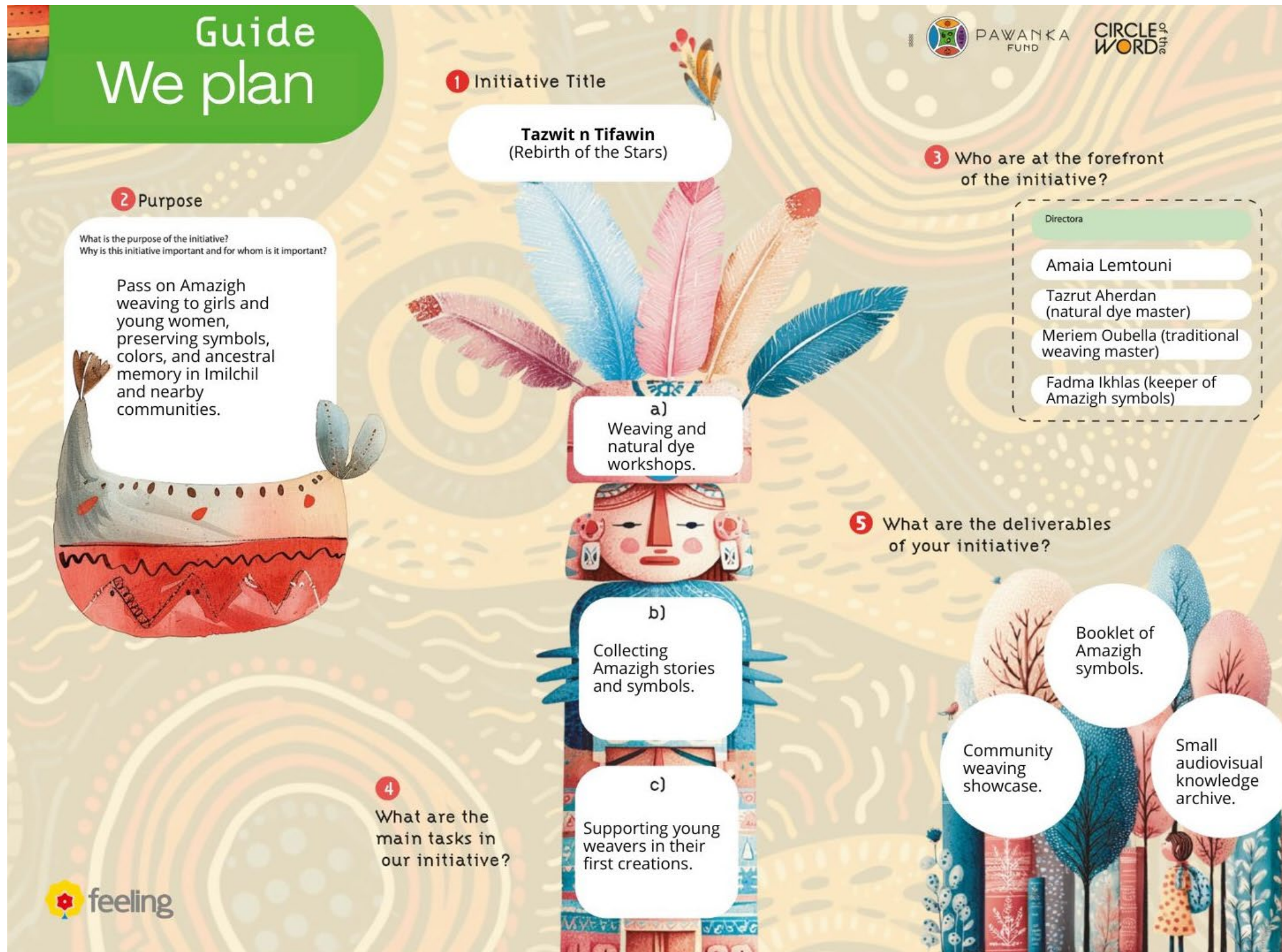
List 3 tasks that are important to the success of your initiative.

5

What are the deliverables of your initiative??

What results do you expect to achieve with your initiative?

Example



Guide We plan



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CIRCLE
of the
WORD

1 Initiative Title

2 Purpose

What is the purpose of the initiative?
Why is this initiative important and for whom is it important?



a)

b)

c)

3 Who are at the forefront of the initiative?

Directora

5 What are the deliverables of your initiative?

4

What are the main tasks in our initiative?



Thank you for completing Module 3!

Don't forget to upload your completed guide to our Facebook group: "Circle of the Word - Círculo de la Palabra."



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