International Year of Indigenous Languages
2019

Organizers

Main Facilitator

UNESCO

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

With support

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
IYIL2019

In collaboration with: UN Human Rights and Permanent Forum for Indigenous Languages
With UN Partners: UN DPI, UN Information Center, UN Food and Agriculture Organization, WIPO
11 Governmental Partners
22 Social - Civil society Partners
Why Indigenous Languages?

**knowledge**
Unique systems of knowledge and understanding of the world.

**peace**
Sustainable development, investment, peace building and reconciliation

**rights**
Fundamental human rights and freedoms for indigenous peoples

**inclusion**
Social inclusiveness, literacy, poverty reduction and international cooperation

**diversity**
Cultural values, diversity and heritage
Main Objectives

Focus global attention on
- the critical risks confronting indigenous languages
- their significance for sustainable development, reconciliation, good governance and peacebuilding

Target steps that will
- improve quality of life
- enhance international cooperation
- strengthen intercultural dialogue
- reaffirm cultural and linguistic continuity

Increase the capacity
of all stakeholders to take measures that will support, access and promote indigenous languages in accordance with the legitimate rights of the people who speak them
Broadband Commission Report, 2019

- The ITU estimates for each 10% increase in the penetration of digital services a country can expect 1.3% growth on GDP per capita.
- By 2022 another 1.2 billion users will be coming online.
- In Africa 60% of young people are not yet online and the least developed countries globally at least 70% of young people are not online.

Why Indigenous Languages?
Social – Civil society partner

TC - IYIL Projects

- Language Technology Development
- University Events for Indigenous Languages
- Social Media Campaign

"No language and no linguist ever left behind."
Languages of the World

Incredible diversity:
● 6500 - 7200 languages now spoken
● But half of the world’s people use only 23 of them
● The long tail: 2,000 spoken by fewer than 1,000 people
● 40% are endangered and may be gone in this century
  ○ Africa, Americas, Asia, Australia, Europe, Oceania

Digital technology: both a threat and an opportunity
Language Technology Development

Enable indigenous communities to use internet technology

- Employ modern media in their preferred languages, oral / written
- Engage speakers and especially young learners to appreciate and honor their languages and culture
- Identify technology for educating in indigenous languages
- Encourage speakers to create content and community with digital tools and standards
Creating a guide for language communities

- Evaluate their language’s situation with respect to digital support
- Suggest approaches to develop basic digital language support
- Encourage practical usage of language tools, even without formal language documentation, grammar, and educational standards
- Point indigenous communities to available tools and techniques to build digital capabilities.
- Engage community members in decisions and process
- Connect communities to standards and technology professionals
What it’s not...

- Not a set of formal requirements for documenting
- Not academic research project
- Not a complete list of what can be done
- Not a guarantee of full support for all digital tools and services

And now that you don’t have to be perfect, you can be good.

- John Steinbeck
Basics: determining status

- A flowchart of Yes / No questions for evaluating current situation
- Concrete actions for each response
- A guide to perform specific tasks
- Pointers to resources and tools
- Suggestions for next steps
Some of the questions

● Is the language currently used actively by a community of speakers?
  ○ Yes: go to IS_LANGUAGE_WRITTEN
  ○ No: go to LANGUAGE_REVITALIZATION

● IS_LANGUAGE_WRITTEN: Does your language have a written form?
  ○ Yes: go to WRITTEN_LANGUAGE
  ○ No: go to ORAL_LANGUAGE

● WRITTEN_LANGUAGE:
  ○ ...

● ORAL_LANGUAGE...
  ○ ...
Encouragement: **Use your language** in audio and video
- Employ existing platforms and social media
- Use for teaching and engaging communities
- Connect with academic linguistics departments and tech people

Guidance: **Make the resources discoverable**
- Suggest that any recordings include a language tag or code
- Allows automatic indexing to find and point to these data.
- Important: use standard language tagging schemes, e.g, [BCP-47](https://www.ioc-kc.org/about/bcp-bcp47/).
What is a writing system?
- A set of rules for using one or more scripts to write a particular language.
- Note: some use multiple scripts. Examples:
  - Serbian in both Cyrillic and Latin
  - Japanese kanji, hiragana, katakana

Follow-up questions:
Does the language use at least one writing system in a consistent way, including spelling?
- Yes: go to CONSISTENT
- No: go to NOT_CONSISTENT

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Writing_system#/media/File:Writing_Systems_Template_Image.svg
Practical advice and references

Tools for using language online:
● Fonts
● Keyboards
● Webfont technology

Pointers to tools to implement:
● Free font editors
● *How-to-use* mobile fonts
● Keyboard development tools
● *How-to* guides for language-friendly sites
How to standardize

- Language tags - don’t guess
  - Tags and standard practices, e.g., BCP-47

- Unicode support: [unicode.org/](http://unicode.org/)
  - Unicode probably supports writing already
  - Otherwise, create a proposal for Unicode standardization

- Common Locale Data Repository (CLDR)
  - How-to for adding a language and resources
  - [http://cldr.unicode.org/](http://cldr.unicode.org/)
Examples of communities doing the work

- **Cherokee (United States)**
  - Standardized script; Unicode and CLDR; artists created many Unicode fonts
  - Coordinating with tech companies on keyboards, translations, etc.
  - Immersion schools, high school curriculum, remote learning

- **Fulfulde / Pulaar in Adlam script (African Sahel)**
  - Two brothers built a phonetic script, fonts for publishing books, newspapers, texts
  - Unicode (2017); coordinating with tech on keyboard, fonts, mobile devices
  - Adlam Conferences promoting literacy across 24 countries of the Sahel

- **Chakma (Bangladesh, India)**
  - Script in Unicode (2012), Unicode fonts, and keyboard on mobile devices
  - Training to write in Chakma & creating content with books, social media, schools
  - Politically complicated
Additional language support

These require updated applications and libraries:
- Breaking between characters, words, sentences, lines
- Language detection: analyzing text to figure out the language tag
- Dictionaries for word processing
- Translated user interfaces
- Labeling the language of audio or video content

Some need language-specific data, e.g., CLDR
- Using non-ASCII digits for dates/times, numeric output, e.g., “Eastern” Arabic (١٣٢٤٩٧٨٩)
- RTL or vertical text direction
- Names and formats for days, months, countries, units, etc.
Advanced language technology: harder still

- Optical character recognition (OCR) for paper documents
- Speech <-> Text
- Automated transcription of recorded data
- Machine translation / automated speech recognition

The good news: publicly available tools for these tasks are now appearing, available to tech-savvy language enthusiasts.

DIY language is becoming a reality!
What Translation Commons is doing today

- The team: passionate volunteers and professionals
- The document:
  - “Indigenous Languages: Zero to Digital”
  - translationcommons.org

Next:
- Our request for feedback on the guide
- Help us connect to indigenous communities
Language Technology

Your language on the internet may be closer than it may appear.
University Events

We have asked universities around the world to host classroom presentations, lectures, workshops and conferences during Fall 2019 to discuss cultural diversity, focusing on indigenous languages.

Create awareness through university events and further outreach
University Events - Project Stages

- Gathering information
- Campaign creation
- Pilot
- Campaign Launch
University Events - Gathering Information

**Internship:**
Translation Commons and MasterWord partnered with the Village School, a Nord Anglia School

- 6 Students
- Benefits
- Take away and feedback
University Events - Gathering Information

659 Under & Post Graduate Intern countries of origin
University Events - Gathering Information

Guidelines

IYIL 2019 University Events

- Why are as many as half of all languages considered to be endangered languages, at risk of extinction by the end of the century?
- Why is there a global counter current that is causing a resurgence of interest in indigenous and linguistic minority cultures on every continent, especially in their languages and writing systems?
- What is the relationship between language and identity? Language and the spread of technology, especially digital technologies? Language and human rights? Language and art? And above all...
- Why do indigenous languages matter to everyone?

As you can see, these are not simply language or linguistics issues: a thoughtful multi-disciplinary discussion of the Year of Indigenous Languages touches on the entire range of the humanities, and even business and information technology. Our hope is to inspire informed, campus-wide discussion - to start a fermentation of ideas that your own faculty can continue to feed both in and out of the classroom.

Class Event (50 - 90 minutes)

You can choose to dedicate one of your regular classes during October 2019 by creating activities to present IYIL2019. Normally
University Events - Gathering Information

Resources

- Videos
- Articles
- Blogs
- Websites
- Visuals

Video and Audio Materials

1. [Online Indigenous Film Festival](#)(Multilingual Playlist)
2. Video/audio: [Rare audio of Indigenous languages saved a century later](#)
3. [Indigenous Australian languages are dying; sleeping languages; new language is arising; wellbeing and identity - article with good videos](#)
4. [Dimas speaking Osing](#)
5. [Chippis speaking Tatar](#)
6. [A Catalog of Every Language in the World](#)
7. [Global News Canada: Indigenous Languages; articles and videos](#)

This section contains resources that can be used in preparation for the event. Feel free to use them as well as to research on your own!

If you know of other resources, please [let us know](#) so we can add them to our list.
University Events - Gathering Information

Examples

- 50 or 90 min class
- 3 h workshop
- conference

Class Event Example (90 minutes)

Theme: Cultural heritage and diplomacy

Outcomes: after the event, the participants will demonstrate:
- understanding of the concept of equality of languages
- cultural identity imbued in languages

Objectives:
- familiarize participants with the concept of equality of languages
- learn about cultural identity imbued in languages

Please note that the suggested timing should be set at the instructor’s discretion.

Pre-class activities: assign all your students to read selected articles and watch videos on indigenous languages. Assign a group of students to prepare a presentation.
Support

● Before
● During
● After
● Social Media

Navigating through the logistics of creating events is not easy and we have several volunteers willing to help you. Even if you don't need help with organizing the event, feel free to contact our support volunteers. They can help by adding your information in all relevant websites and ensure social media exposure. They can also help you record by setting up a streaming video on the TC youtube channel. Just ask and we will find solutions for you.

Before the Event

Let us know of what you plan to do and when:

● Glanina Jaramillo: gjaramillo@translationcommons.org for events administration
University Events - Campaign Creation

Audience:

- Pilot: 60 professors
- Main campaign: 650 universities

Campaign Elements:

- Newsletters
- Social media

Organize a Classroom Event
and let us know by filling this form
University Events - Campaign Launch

- Events added to the UNESCO IYIL site
University Events - Next Steps

● Ongoing campaign until end of 2019
● UNESCO meeting with Professors, November 26 and 27
● Best Practices and Knowledge Sharing
Indigenous Languages in Social Media

1. Campaign overview
2. Findings and implications for the language industry
3. Indigenous speakers as an emerging market

Hashtags: #Indigenouslanguages, #WeAreIndigenous, #IYIL2019, #Universities4IYIL
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<th>United States</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>Europe</th>
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<tr>
<td>Johanna Behm</td>
<td>Coralie Morin</td>
<td>Tanbir Johal</td>
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<td>Marketing Lead</td>
<td>Campaign Director, Social Media &amp; University Events</td>
<td>Social Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Silvia Pinheiro</td>
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<td>Adriana Barolet Capdevilla</td>
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<td>Paid Ads &amp; Social Media</td>
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**Campaign Results**

- +200K reach
- 6%-10% engagement
- Top locations: USA, Saudi-Arabia, Egypt, UK, Bangladesh

No formal budget; all time, effort, and ad spend were donated.
Content Strategy - “Sharing inspiration”

- Helping indigenous groups to inspire each other
  - Language education
  - Leveraging modern technology
  - Cultural pride and resilience

- Inspiring the audience to see the potential of indigenous speakers
  - Entrepreneurship and innovation
  - Indigenous knowledge (sciences, historical knowledge)
  - Successful language revitalization projects

“Is anyone interested?”
Cherokee Nation language technology specialist Wade Blevins youtu.be/YBtBUdjxKaA via @CherokeeNation #Indigenouslanguages #WeAreIndigenous #IYIL2019 #Universities4IYIL #I10n #i18n

9:26 AM · Sep 12, 2019 · TweetDeck

1 Retweet 1 Like

Replying to @TranslationCom1 and @CherokeeNation
Would love to see involvement from the Cherokee Nation in more open source projects like Firefox!
"Empoderar a las lenguas indígenas mejora el intercambio universal de conocimientos". Translation Commons es una ONG cuyo lema es "Ningún idioma ni ningún lingüista se queda atrás". Este año, TC colabora con la UNESCO para celebrar el Año Internacional de las Lenguas Indígenas e invita a todas las universidades a organizar eventos para crear conciencia sobre la importancia de estas lenguas. Háganos saber acerca de su próximo evento completando el siguiente formulario (en inglés) al menos dos semanas antes del evento: https://sites.google.com/.../Univ.../october.2019.events... Una vez que nos haya informado, nos aseguraremos de que su evento se publique en el sitio web oficial de la UNESCO IYL2019 y en el sitio web de CT. Nuestro equipo estará encantado de ayudarlo con las redes sociales y el marketing.

"Empowering indigenous languages improves the universal exchange of knowledge". Translation Commons is an NGO whose motto is "no language or any linguist is left behind". This year, TC collaborates with UNESCO to celebrate the international year of indigenous languages. And invites all universities to organize events to raise awareness about the importance of these languages. Let us know about your next event by completing the following form (in English) at least two weeks...

See more

- Hide original - Rate this translation

40,159 People Reached

3,469 Reactions, comments & shares

2,693 Like
2,616 On post
77 On shares

206 Love
195 On post
11 On shares

19 Haha
18 On post
1 On shares

8 Wow
8 On post
0 On shares

3 Sad
3 On post
0 On shares

2 Angry
2 On post
0 On shares

43 Comments
36 On Post
7 On Shares

495 Shares
494 On Post
1 On Shares

321 Post Clicks
128 Photo views
34 Link clicks
159 Other Clicks

NEGATIVE FEEDBACK
1 Hide post
0 Hide all posts
0 Report as spam
0 Unlike Page

Insights activity is reported in the Pacific time zone. Ad activity is reported in the time zone of your ad account.
Few words about the audience

- **Twitter followers**: 43% male, 57% female,
  - Top three locations: **Saudi-Arabia**, USA, UK
- **Facebook followers**: 35% male, 64% female
  - Top four locations: **Egypt**, USA, **Bangladesh**, UK
- **LinkedIn followers**: Media and Communication, Information Technology
  - Top three locations: USA, Spain, UK
- **Social listening project**: Internet conversation is already active
What is next?

UNESCO:

- Outcome Report
- Action Plan 2020-2021

Our task has just started
Indigenous Languages as an Emerging Market

India

- +176 million smartphone users in next 5 yrs
- 97% access internet via mobile (one of the devices)
- 4 keyboards per user
- 35% internet user growth over past year
- Nearly 900 million people still offline
  - English as a main UI language is hindering the growth
  - Local providers are creating operating systems in multiple Indian languages and winning the emerging market
  - Accessibility in local languages is a key differentiator between providers
Indigenous Languages as an Emerging Market

Africa

- Fastest growing mobile economy with CAGR 4.6%
- +167 million mobile users by 2025
  - Only half of the population (600 million) will be online
- Mobile is the primary way of getting online
- Internet adoption lagging behind due to language barrier (Internet Society)
  - High linguistic diversity, ~2000 spoken languages
  - 460 million people covered by mobile broadband don’t use it
  - Internet is about to add $300 billion growth in Africa’s GDP within next decade (McKinsey)
What would the world look like if we were all online?

UNICEF’s GIGA Project, Broadband Commission and Corporations are working towards 100% connectivity.

We asked them: In what language?

They heard us and want to know more! In the next 6 months we will be meeting with all agencies and organizations ensuring that digital language support will be a priority and our community is involved.
Enable indigenous communities to use internet technology

- Employ modern media in their preferred languages, oral / written
- Engage speakers and especially young learners in appreciating and honoring their languages and culture
- Identify technology for educating in indigenous languages
- Encourage speakers to create content and community through digital tools and standards
- Provide sustainable job opportunities and training through language translation
Join us for a world where all people have equal opportunities in their own language by enabling communities in emerging countries to use and benefit from internet technology.