

5 Getting Funding and Support

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In the course of developing an endangered language revitalization project, one must eventually face the most basic of logistical problems: how to pay for it? The costs associated with language revitalization projects vary greatly depending on their size, duration, goals, and products. Some involve the creation and publication of dictionaries, educational materials, or websites, while others require expensive technical equipment. Salaries for community language experts, travel budgets, and space rentals (or even the construction of a language center) can also be important investments.

As the field of language revitalization has become increasingly visible over the last couple of decades, new avenues of funding have emerged to meet these costs. However, the demand for funding has grown just as quickly as the supply, and the competition remains stiff. Long-term funding remains difficult to secure. Furthermore, while the process of applying for academic research grants regarding endangered languages is, by now, relatively formalized and streamlined, funding for community-based work often comes from a wide variety of places and can be difficult to identify.

This chapter offers some practical guidance for funding language revitalization projects. Consistent with the handbook's orientation, this chapter focuses on support for the work of language activists and community members. However, since language revitalization efforts are often closely related to language documentation, these two fields are considered together where appropriate. This chapter is divided into two parts: (1) identifying sources of funding and (2) how to write an effective proposal.

Identifying Sources of Funding

Many language revitalization programs are sustained by a mix of funding sources. This is because the available funds tend to be small, and because they are usually limited in duration. For language revitalization, which is a long-term process that takes place over generations, the short-term nature of most grants and fellowships presents a particular problem. Some funding sources are limited to citizens of particular countries or members of

particular tribes or ethnic groups, others are open to students or members of academic institutions, and a few have no eligibility restrictions at all. In cases where language documentation and revitalization efforts are linked, it can be helpful to consider how to make academic research funding work in the service of language revitalization. For instance, some major research funders in Europe and the USA inquire about a project's 'broader impacts', defined by the National Science Foundation (US) as 'the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes'.¹ Language revitalization certainly qualifies as one such broader impact in many academic projects (though, despite these stated goals, some funders limit the amount of money that can actually be used to support revitalization efforts). Alliances with universities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and businesses can also be fruitful, while in other cases, informal fundraising through games and contests (e.g. raffles and bingo) and online crowd funding has proven effective. A good place to start in the search for potential funding sources is to research or contact other successful language revitalization programs, and to learn about how they acquired their funding.

To begin with, a handful of funding organizations specifically devoted to endangered languages have been established in recent decades. While some of these organizations only support language documentation, the Endangered Language Fund (ELF) and the Foundation for Endangered Languages (FEL) also accept proposals for language revitalization projects. The first organization is particularly committed to funding collaborations between communities and university researchers. However, these organizations make small grants (~\$2,000–\$4,000 for ELF, ~\$1,000 for FEL), and even these can be quite competitive. ELF also offers larger scholarships for members of some US tribes seeking academic training in linguistics, which is another important mode of community–university partnership.

Some government bodies offer larger grants for language revitalization, though these are more common in the USA and Canada than in other countries. For instance, the Administration for Native Americans, part of the US federal government, supports 'the planning, designing, restoration, and implementing of native language curriculum and education projects to support a community's language preservation goals'.² Similarly Canada's Aboriginal People's Program offers one funding program for 'the preservation and revitalization of Indigenous languages through community-based projects and activities', and another for 'the

¹ www.nsf.gov/pubs/2016/nsf16617/nsf16617.htm

² <https://ami.grantsolutions.gov/index.cfm?switch=foa&fon=HHS-2018-ACF-ANA-NL-1342>

production and distribution of Indigenous audio and video content'.³ One benefit of these funding sources is that they offer larger quantities of money than the small NGOs mentioned above. More specific opportunities are offered by other institutions, such as the Smithsonian's Recovering Voices Community Research Program, which funds visits by community members to 'examine cultural objects, biological specimens, and archival documents related to their heritage language and knowledge systems, and engage in a dialogue with each other and with Smithsonian staff, as part of a process to revitalize their language and knowledge'.

Moving beyond funding sources that are explicitly designated for language revitalization, communities and activists need to be creative. Local, national, and international NGOs that might be receptive to the issue, but had not considered it before, are a good possibility. Communities can create their own NGOs, which can be an important step in applying for funding. Tribal funds often support language revitalization programs in the USA. Collaborations with educational institutions can be helpful as well. For instance, an innovative partnership between the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma and Miami University operates a successful program to 'assist tribal educational initiatives aimed at the preservation of language and culture' while 'expos[ing] undergraduate and graduate students at Miami University to tribal efforts in language and cultural revitalization'.⁴ In some cases, speakers and language activists have gotten grants and fellowships to study and support their languages within academic institutions. Other communities might benefit from local trust funds, or companies with funds for local initiatives.

Some language revitalization projects do not require large budgets for their operations. In these cases, communities might be able to cover their costs through crowd funding. For instance, a group of students at SOAS raised more than £2,000 for a storybook in the Sylheti language (spoken in Bangladesh and India, as well as in European cities), an illustrated version of a children's story told by Sylheti speakers in London. In another case, at the time of writing, members of the Okanagan Salish language revitalization program had raised a few thousand dollars for the construction of a small, new modular building on the website www.gofundme.com. Some efforts, such as community conversation clubs or master-apprentice programs, may require no more than a bit of funding for administrative time to match lists of potential participants. Fundraising efforts need not be digital – some revitalization programs are supported by the kinds of games

³ www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/aboriginal-peoples.html

⁴ <https://miamioh.edu/myaamia-center>

and contests mentioned above. These modes of fundraising have the additional benefits of raising awareness of the language revitalization program and involving the wider community. Some communities have also generated revenue by offering language courses and extended visits to non-community members.

Writing a Good Proposal

The procedures for acquiring language revitalization funding are as diverse as the sources themselves. Some of the funding sources described above require detailed proposals, while others just involve informal coordination among a few community members. This section considers the requirements of funding institutions that review formal proposals. These tend to be organized around a few common elements. First, reviewers must determine whether the project is likely to have a significant impact, whether it is more important and urgent than the many other proposals they're considering, and whether it is well designed and ethical. Second, they need to know about the applicant(s) and their relationship to the community, and whether they have the experience, personal and institutional contacts, permissions, approvals, and other bureaucratic prerequisites that are necessary to complete the project as it is described. Third, they will examine the budget and determine whether it is appropriate, and if so, whether it is a 'good deal' in light of the anticipated outcomes of the project. Finally, they will consider whether your project furthers the specific goals of the funding institution, which vary greatly from one to the next.

Given the demanding and highly competitive nature of this process, applying for funding can feel like entering a hopeless bureaucratic labyrinth. However, one point of consolation is that there is not, in fact, much difference between preparing an effective project and preparing an effective funding application. If your project is worthwhile, carefully planned, and consistent with the goals of the funding institution, and if it enjoys the support of the community, all that remains is to convey these facts through clear writing. Conversely, a funding application can be a helpful tool for thinking through the practical aspects of your project. Just as importantly, some funders provide reviewers' feedback to the applicants, whether or not the application is approved. Receiving the thorough and candid assessment of a panel of experts is a rare and precious opportunity (even if it can sting a bit). If you receive feedback, you should use it to help improve your project.

Funding applications vary greatly in their details, particularly in a field like language revitalization that draws in money from a range of sources. However, applications tend to ask for a few general types of information,

along the lines of what is mentioned above. I now take a closer look at three of these: the value and design of the project, the applicant's connection to the work, and the adequacy of the budget.

Is This a Good Project?

If a funding institution accepts formal proposals and consults reviewers, the first question that a reviewer will need to consider is whether the project itself is worth funding: is it important, feasible, ethical, and likely to generate valuable outcomes and impacts?

To begin with, how important or urgent are the outcomes that the proposal promises? For example, a language revitalization project might have an impact on a critical situation of language endangerment, or its value might lie more in developing new methods or technologies, or in moving the broader field forward in some other way (such as an attitude study). Institutions that fund language documentation efforts sometimes try to prioritize work on the most critically endangered languages, particularly in cases where little high-quality documentation already exists. Your proposal should have some substantive and clearly defined practical outcome, and you should explain it in as few words as possible at the beginning of the project description. Identifying the planned outcomes requires a good sense of the situation on the ground, and it is also helpful to demonstrate knowledge of how language revitalization projects have worked in other places and how these might be relevant to your project. In the case of a project with an academic dimension, it is important to demonstrate a strong command of the relevant scholarly literature.

Once you have identified a clear and substantive goal, reviewers will want to see that you have thought through what is required to achieve it: your methodology. What kind of work will need to be done, and who will do it? For a language revitalization project, what kind of activities will you engage in (e.g. training workshops, the development of educational materials or a website), and what kinds of technical considerations will they require? If the project involves documentation, what kinds of data will you collect, and how do these data relate to your aims? Will you make audio or video recordings? Of what, and how many? How will you select the participants? How will you obtain their informed consent? How will you process the material, and with what kinds of software? What other practical considerations might be relevant? Do the planned activities fulfill your desired outcomes? Is your timeline feasible? In all cases, the methodologies that you propose must be tightly connected to the goals.

One of the most common problems with funding applications is that they often promise too much. Reviewers want to know that you are motivated

and ambitious, but that you are realistic about the logistical constraints of the work. For instance, don't assume that you will be able to implement a large and well-functioning revitalization program right away (see Chapter 4 on planning a revitalization project). Nor, in a documentation project, are you likely to arrive somewhere you've never been before, encounter a language for the first time, and return home after a few months with a large corpus (body) of data and a sophisticated grasp of the language. The best way to develop a feasible agenda is to approach it step by step, with an exploratory or pilot first phase, and elaborating or expanding the work over longer periods. This will reassure reviewers that you know what you are getting yourself into.

Projects that involve scholarly research with living humans, and that are conducted under the auspices of an educational institution, usually require the approval of an ethical review board before you can begin the work (see Chapter 3 on ethical considerations). Projects through NGOs or communities generally do not require such approval, but it is still important to think through how you will conduct your project ethically. If your project is subject to an ethical review board, you will need to explain how you will go about getting informed consent from anyone you record or video, protecting their anonymity, and storing the data. These must be developed in close coordination with community members, and must be responsive to local expectations about privacy and research ethics. These procedures can take some time, so be sure to get started early.

Finally, reviewers will want to know what the products and outcomes of the project will be. Will you publish educational materials, or will a training program for community language workers be established? Will you organize a radio program, or add to the community's digital presence in the language? If you conduct academic research, some funding institutions require that you deposit the products of your research with them, including recordings and field notes. It is also good practice to make those products available to the community, for instance at a local library, school, or community center. Some funders may ask you to adhere to Open Access archiving standards, by which data must be publicly available on the Internet (a requirement that must be made clear to the participants before the project begins). Demonstrate that you are aware of such policies, and that you are prepared to abide by them in a way that is consistent with your plan for ethical research.

What Is the Applicant's Relationship to the Project and the Community?

Once a reviewer has considered the value of the proposed project, they must next consider the applicant. Applicants who are community members

themselves have a clear connection to the work, as well as a personal investment, base of knowledge, and network of contacts that will help the project succeed. Meanwhile scholars who are not part of the community will have to demonstrate that they have the support and approval of the community, the relevant academic training, official government permissions, and ethical approval, and that all manner of other practical aspects of the work are in place.

Many applicants for language revitalization and documentation grants are affiliated with local NGOs, tribal governments, or language support groups; some are simply individual community members. Others are affiliated with universities, particularly as MA or PhD students. In all of these cases, it is important to demonstrate one's preparation for the project at hand, whatever that might be. If the application requires letters of recommendation, these will attest to this sort of preparation. It may also be helpful to demonstrate your personal experience with the cultural, scholarly, and methodological issues at stake. Have you worked with the revitalization program already, and in what capacity? What kinds of work have already been carried out in the community, and how does this project build on them?

For noncommunity members, a crucial part of preparing for some field-work projects is attaining the kinds of local permissions necessary for the research. For instance, nontribal members who work on a Native North American language usually need an official invitation from a tribal government, and failing to follow the proper procedures on such matters can derail the project. In some places in the world, e.g. Vanuatu, you might also need a visa or other sort of permission from an embassy or a local government. Some grants also require affiliation with a local university or other institutions. To avoid complications down the road, some funding agencies require that you submit copies of some types of permissions with your application.

Does the Budget Look Right?

Every proposal requires a budget, in which you give a detailed itemization and justification of your expenses. Some funding institutions give small grants to cover a plane ticket or the printing of education materials; others give huge grants that pay the costs of graduate school or the salaries of several people for years. The parts of the budget relating to the work itself are a concrete expression of your methodology, so you should make sure that the expenditures you list (equipment, personnel, etc.) are closely connected to the activities you describe in the proposal. Most funders

provide information about what they expect to see in their budget categories. It can also be helpful to use a colleague's successful grant application as a guide as you draw up your budget.

Funding institutions categorize expenses in different ways, but there tend to be some general similarities. In the box below are some of the most common categories, with brief explanations of each.

Common Budget Categories

TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE:	How will the project participants get around? For people who live locally, this might include bus fare, gas, or buying a bicycle. For people who do not live locally, it might involve plane or bus fare, as well as expenses for meals and lodging. For some grants, this category also includes day-to-day living expenses throughout the period of the grant.
PERSONNEL:	Who will be paid a wage, stipend, or salary during the project? This category will likely include compensation for community language experts, research assistants, and, if there is an academic researcher involved, perhaps stipends or money for teaching replacement. Technology consultants like app developers might be compensated as well. You will need to find out an appropriate rate for each such recipient and calculate how much time they will be paid for.
EQUIPMENT:	Revitalization and documentation projects often require new equipment, including recording devices, microphones, computers, software, hard drives, solar panels, and the like. Refer to the funder's guidelines about what kinds of expenses are allowed and consult with colleagues about what kinds of equipment they recommend.
CONSUMABLES:	These are disposable supplies and day-to-day expenses such as batteries, fuel, data cards, Internet and phone usage, notebooks, etc.

Part of preparing a feasible project is requesting enough money to cover all of the relevant costs. For this reason, you shouldn't cut corners or compromise on important expenses. However, keep in mind that funding is tight, so unnecessary costs might take away from someone else's project, and will likely be noticed during the review process.

FURTHER READING

Endangered Language Fund General Resources, www.endangeredlanguagefund.org/general-resources.html.

First Peoples' Cultural Council (no date) *Grant Writing Toolkit*, www.fpcc.ca/language/toolkit/GrantWritingToolkit.aspx.

Foundation for Endangered Languages (FEL) (small grants), www.ogmios.org/home.htm.

Zepeda, O. and Penfield, S. (2008). *Grant Writing for Indigenous Languages*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona. <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/jar/GrantWriting.pdf>.

5.1 Attitudes of NGOs in Guatemala toward the Inclusion of Indigenous Languages in the Workplace

Ebany Dohle

In 2012, I conducted a survey to investigate the role of NGOs and international organizations in the preservation of Indigenous, minority, and endangered languages. Individual representatives of the organizations that participated in the study were, at the time, key figures involved in the language revitalization movement in Guatemala, as they pushed for the inclusion of Indigenous languages in the workplace.

The Republic of Guatemala has a population of approximately 12,710,000, of whom 55 percent are Indian [Indigenous], and 45 percent *Mestizo*.⁵ Linguists such as Charles Hoffling and Valentin Tavico agree that the total number of languages spoken in Guatemala is twenty-five, including Spanish. These languages belong to four language families: Indo-European, Mayan, Lenca, and Arawakan. Spanish is the national language and the one, which carries the most prestige, being the language of wider communication. It is closely followed by the four *mayoritarios*, or 'major ones': K'iche, Kaqchikel, Q'eqchi', and Mam. These four languages have the largest number of speakers and are the languages, which are regarded as having the most vitality in Guatemala, with over 100,000 speakers each.

Not unsurprisingly, the survey found that both NGOs and international organizations whose targeted communities did not include Indigenous people, were not interested in discussing language issues and did not respond to the open call for participation. Those who did respond were organizations with an interest in working and collaborating with Indigenous people. These organizations can be divided into two groups: local and international.

⁵ The term *mestizo* refers to non-Indigenous communities, although in recent years the term has been adopted by Indigenous people who have rejected their language, culture, and heritage, choosing to become part of the mainstream Latin culture who speak Spanish instead. It is worth noting that although the term 'Indian' does not have negative connotations in English, the Spanish translation *indio* is often used in a derogatory manner. Indigenous communities therefore prefer the Spanish term *indígena*, one which I will be using throughout this work. Similarly the term *mestizo* is not commonly used. Instead it is often replaced by the term *ladino(s)*, which generally refers to mixed race or 'Westernized' communities.

The survey found that although international organizations whose headquarters were based in a different country were sympathetic to the promotion of Indigenous languages and were willing to promote their use via national policy change or education, they were not enthused by the idea of incorporating their use in the day-to-day workplace. Some of the reasons given for this were that too many languages would lead to confusion, a lack of transparency, and difficulties in communicating with headquarters back in their home countries. In contrast, it was found that despite the more limited reach and influence on a national level of local NGOs with headquarters within the country, these were more open and willing to consider and encourage the use of Indigenous languages in the workplace. This was especially the case with those organizations that sought to establish and strengthen strong and stable relationships with an established community. The NGO Wuqu' Kawoq, for example, saw a need to provide better quality healthcare in the town of Santiago Sacatepequez in Guatemala, where the predominant language is Kaqchikel Maya. To improve access to rural healthcare amongst Maya communities, the healthcare NGO was founded with the provision of services in local languages at its core.

I have since observed a similar tendency in neighboring El Salvador. Local organizations and institutions with a vested interest in local people were more likely and willing to interact with, participate in, and support language revitalization movements. Despite limited funds, local institutions like universities, museums, language schools, and even banks were willing to provide some sort of support. Universities and their students can be key allies in the creation of a public voice. A museum might provide an exhibition hall and printing services in which to hold a public event to raise awareness. Banks and other companies with a local interest often have a corporate policy to have a 'social impact' and have specific funds allocated for projects that may help achieve this. While it is unlikely that a bank may support an entire language revitalization initiative, such a funding opportunity might be useful for the printing of a book or the creation of a podcast series that can result in better outreach and new funding possibilities. In an environment where support is likely to be limited, thinking creatively and developing a varied network of interested individuals and institutions is key to making progress with the revitalization initiative. Finally, understanding what motivates individuals, organizations, or institutions to engage with local languages and cultures is beneficial to understanding how to approach and engage with a wider network.

