

The Language Sustainability Toolkit

Authors

Anna Luisa Daigneault

Program Director

Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages

Daniel Bögre Udell

Co-Founder and Executive Director

Wikitongues

Kristen Tcherneshoff

Program Director

Wikitongues

Gregory D. S. Anderson

Co-Founder and President

Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages

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This toolkit is a living document that we are frequently expanding and refining. For the most current version, please visit wikitongues.org or livingtongues.org. Please send any feedback to hello@wikitongues.org or annaluisa@livingtongues.org.

Introduction

This Language Sustainability Toolkit was created as a collaborative project between [Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages](http://LivingTonguesInstitute.org) and [Wikitongues](http://Wikitongues.org). Living Tongues Institute is one of the world's leading research organizations focused on documenting endangered languages. The Institute conducts linguistic fieldwork, releases scientific papers, runs digital training workshops to empower language activists, and collaborates with speakers to create online language learning and preservation tools such as [Talking Dictionaries](http://TalkingDictionaries.org).

Wikitongues is a global volunteer movement that expands access to language revitalization. The organization helps speakers document and promote their languages online, safeguarding them for the next generation. Contributors to Wikitongues record and caption oral histories in video, raise awareness about language sustainability in their communities, and help support special projects.

Both organizations share the goal of sustaining and revitalizing languages for future generations of speakers. With those common aspirations in mind, both organizations pooled their human resources together to create this toolkit for language sustainability. It is a roadmap that helps identify where languages are on the endangerment continuum and what strategies and approaches are available to help revitalize their languages. It also provides examples of success stories that may inspire endangered language activists around the world.

What is Language Sustainability?

In a general sense, language sustainability means that a language lives on for generations to come, through community transmission and regular use by speakers in physical spaces, and possibly in virtual spaces as well. Sustainability implies that there are long-term pathways for accessing the language and using it with other speakers. That may require the creation of tools, learning resources and media content to help preserve and elevate the language in the private and public spheres.

Sustainability may also mean taking steps towards making sure the language enjoys respect on a fundamental level, and fostering a feeling of pride and well-being associated with speaking it. Depending on its historical context and current circumstances, each language has its own challenges and hurdles in this regard. In many circumstances, it may be a case of encouraging content creators and

cultural stakeholders to take a leap away from dominant languages and create books, films, music, and other works in the language itself. In some cases it may require getting official recognition from those in power to help the language become accepted and respected.

While language sustainability may look and feel different for each community of speakers, it usually means that there is a general goal of ensuring that children, adolescents, adults, and elders are able to speak the language with some degree of fluency, and have the ability to use it on a regular basis. Having young children embracing and learning the language helps ensure the continuity of the language for years to come.

Creating access to immersive environments where people can use the language is essential for speakers of all ages to have a connection to their language and experience the cultural heritage that is interwoven with it. For example, Mrs. Dora Manchado, the last fluent speaker of Tehuelche (aonekko ‘a’ien), worked with linguistic anthropologist Javier Domingo (University of Montreal) in the final years of her life to record her knowledge of her language and culture. Upon her passing, [Domingo wrote](#), “Dora knew perfectly well that language not only means interaction, but also trust, complicity... intimacy. She proved to me that language means sharing, and company. Thanks to the recordings she made, the rest of the community members now have, if they want, the possibility of affirming their past and reconstructing their identity.”

The Language Sustainability Toolkit

Getting Started

Getting Started

Find Your Team: Identify Their Skills and Interest Level

The language revitalization steps in this toolkit can be done by individuals; however, we have found that language sustainability movements gain more momentum when a core team is in place. Working in teams increases longevity and allows for brainstorming, the creation of more ideas and increased productivity in the long run. Building a team also helps with maintaining energy and reaching a larger audience by connecting with various networks.

To build your team, you first need to locate other like-minded people who can join your language revitalization plan. Ideally, you form a core group of two to four other people to begin with, each from different age ranges and occupations. Fluency in the language is not necessarily important at the start; you are looking for people who are excited about the language in question and want to be a part of the project. It would be good, however, to have a plan to eventually connect with at least one person (if such a person exists) with an advanced level of fluency so that language learning goals can be attained in the long run. The advice that this Toolkit offers is applicable to language activists who live in close proximity to others, and also to those who live far apart but aim to connect with other like-minded people online.

How can you find potential collaborators?

- Searching for other speakers on Facebook, WhatsApp, and WeChat groups.
- Search via hashtags on Twitter and Instagram.
- Reach out to teachers at local schools involved in the teaching of your language.
- Find related cultural organizations.
- Contact local universities for students to collaborate. Having a varied age range within your core team is also helpful for ensuring longevity in the project by training a younger steward. Keep in mind in some locations, there might be a disconnect between local university researchers and community activism.
- Contact Living Tongues Institute and Wikitongues to see if they have any contacts for language activists who are working on revitalizing your language.

When you have created your initial team, you should then:

- Determine amongst the team the best way for communication; can you all easily access Facebook, do you prefer Slack, would WhatsApp be the most accessible?
- Plan regular weekly or monthly meetings to share ideas and keep each other updated on progress. Having meetings on your calendar keeps momentum flowing.
- Delegate organizational tasks to team members (see step 2 for inspiration).
- Establish what resource materials exist in your language (see step 3).
- Decide what goals you want to tackle in the short-term and long-term (see step 4).

Getting Started

Identifying Challenges And Solutions

Every language has profound cultural value to its community of speakers. It is an emblem of ethnic identity and a storehouse of community history. Every language represents a unique way of interpreting and conveying the human experience in its own specific cultural and environmental context. Your language is important and worthy of passing down to future generations.

Language endangerment is related to the loss of ancestral identity, resulting from the long-term impacts of colonization, systematic oppression, and cultural assimilation by dominant groups. A language becomes endangered when speakers stop speaking it, and “shift” toward using other dominant languages (such as English, Spanish, Russian, Mandarin, Arabic, and many others) in their everyday life. Language shift is a complex process that plays out differently depending on history, geography, and socioeconomics, so each community will face different challenges when it comes to the revitalization of a language.

Some of the common roadblocks that you might be facing are listed here with potential solutions and examples. This list is not comprehensive; there might be other roadblocks and solutions that impact your community.

Speaker demographics

Problem. There are very few fluent speakers of your language left, and many of them may be elderly and need assistance to record and transmit the language.

Potential solution. You can interview and record elders and other fluent speakers and then post the content online and share it with your network. That act alone may inspire others to join you, as well as provide content for future generations of speakers to keep revitalizing the language. You can start your own video channel on the platform that works best for your community.

Example. [Wikitongues' Youtube channel](#) is an excellent source of inspiration.

Internalized shame

Problem. People resist or refuse to speak your language because they feel embarrassed about it. They may feel discriminated against because of the history of oppression and government policies aiming to erase the language.

Potential solution. Have private conversations with like-minded individuals to determine safe spaces where the language might be used, where speakers can restore a sense of pride in using it.

Example. [West Frisian activists](#) in Leeuwarden, Netherlands led community language flash mobs, social media campaigns with local celebrities, and encouraged stores to give discounts for people who came in speaking West Frisian to build community pride in using the language.

Distance

Problem. You are not in close proximity to any other fluent (or semi-fluent) speakers.

Potential solution. As suggested earlier in step 1, use the power of the Internet to connect with other learners like yourself and find out what revitalization initiatives might exist that you can contribute to.

Example. Users of Black American Sign Language (BASL), geographically located far from each other, use a private Facebook group for discussing their language, speaking with each other, and creating new signs.

Funding

Problem. There is very little public support for your language, and you have trouble finding other funding sources that might help sustain documentation, archiving, and language programming. You may not yet know what grants are available in your region for your particular language.

Potential solution. See the last step in this document for a list of funding agencies and foundations that may be able to assist you financially. Note: You may (or may not) need to team up with a scholar, a non-profit organization, a federally recognized tribe or another entity to be eligible for certain grant applications. We recommend looking closely at many different grant guidelines and seeing what is the right fit for you.

Orthography

Problem. For some languages, there might not be a standard writing system yet. There might also be technical issues involving certain special characters that aren't easy to use on computers or mobile devices yet (see step 4's "Digital Technology" section for a longer discussion on that topic). For some languages, there may even be multiple competing orthographies.

Potential solution. Resolving the issue of standardizing the orthography should come from within the community and may take patience and negotiation. It may be the case that various orthographies co-exist and are used in all the language resources to be fair to people's preferences.

Example. In the Sora language (India), there are five competing writing systems. They may be associated with different religious or political factions.

Dialectical variation

Some languages have many dialects. The best course of action is to examine dialects from an early stage in your revitalization project. Which dialect do you want to focus on? It might be the case that two or more dialects can all be subsumed under one project, or it might be the case that each dialect requires the development of its own resources.

Example. Catalan has two standard variants (Catalan and Valencian), each with its own vocabulary and grammatical nuance.

Example. The Yanesha' language (spoken in the Peruvian Amazon) has two dialects, upriver and downriver. Yanesha' speakers have decided that the two dialects are similar enough that they can all share the same educational resources such as dictionaries. Dialectical differences are identified in the materials. Alternatively, the ishir language (spoken in Paraguay) has two dialects: awoso and ebitoso. They are different enough that the community decided to keep documentation resources separate for each dialect.

Bilingual education

It is difficult to find any educational resources in your language such as curricula, ABC readers, storybooks, dictionaries, grammars and other important materials.

Potential solution. Work with local artists and educators to create building blocks for learning materials. Organizations like [Nabu](#) help boost children's literacy by creating books in many mother tongues from around the world. Example: in the Democratic Republic of Congo, [Kihunde language activist Hangi Bulebe](#) rallied his community to introduce Kihunde in primary schools despite the absence of government recognition for the language (in the D.R.C., the official languages are French, Lingala, Kikongo, Swahili and Tshiluba).

Recognition

It may be the case that there is little to no official recognition of your language by local or state authorities. Potential solution: this is a really tough one since solving it might entail extensive legal and logistical work, which is of course very expensive and time-consuming. Contact a local law professional who might be able to give you an outline of the petitions you need to apply for to get your language recognized. Some of this legal work may be available pro bono too. It does not hurt to ask.

Depending on your specific context, some or all of these factors listed above may be contributing to why the language is fading away. It would be difficult for a single individual to be able to resolve many of these longstanding issues in one lifetime. That's where your team comes in. By working together, you can identify where your strengths are, and what angle each person might be able to focus on. That is how you develop the resilience and strength that can fuel a long-term community effort. Language survival therefore means facing and deconstructing some of the difficult issues that caused the language to be abandoned in the first place. It is necessary to confront these challenges in a meaningful way in order to restore the use and transmission of the language.

Talking about these issues with your core group or community might be the first way to find a breakthrough and make a small difference. Can your language be seen or heard in the streets, or in online spaces? Remember that you might be the first ones to bring the language back into the public eye, and future generations of speakers will be grateful for the difficult groundwork that you and your team might accomplish in this realm.

Getting Started

Understanding Language Health

If you are spearheading a language revitalization program for your community, it is worth it to reflect on the topic of language health at an early stage in your strategizing. For languages where there are very few speakers left, and very little documentation, remember that it is important to prioritize the creation and preservation of audio and video recordings so that future speakers may use those materials to reawaken the language at a later time. In cases such as Tutelo-Saponi, Cornish, Tunica-Biloxi, and Wendat, speakers have relied on legacy recordings to revive their languages from (near) dormancy.

The general degrees of language health / endangerment are:

Healthy > Threatened > Endangered > Highly Endangered > Moribund > Dormant > Extinct

In the table below, various states of language health and endangerment are briefly explained. Remember that these categories are merely constructs that help us understand what is happening over time to the language on the ground. Languages can easily shift from one category to another in the space of one generation. We believe there is potential to reverse the tide of endangerment with the right groundwork and community support in place. We stand committed to helping communities access the funding and resources they need to reverse the tide.

Healthy / Thriving

There is a stable or growing community with speakers of all generations. This means the language is being used by the youngest members of a community.

Threatened

There is a small but semi-stable community of speakers. This category is also known as “demographically threatened” since the population is small. There are still younger people learning the language. Note also that a language can be socio-politically threatened even if it has a large speaker community.

Endangered

No children speak the language at all. That means that they are learning a different language when they begin to speak.

Highly Endangered	The youngest speakers are over the age of 40.
Moribund	The youngest speakers are over the age of 60.
Dormant / Awakening	There are no more fluent living speakers left, but some social uses of the language still remain, or there is a heritage identity associated with the use of the language. Some communities prefer the term “awakening” when there are efforts in place to bring back the language.
Extinct	There are no more fluent living speakers left, no remnants of the language are being used at all, and there remains no sense of heritage identity associated with the language. For example: Sumerian is an extinct language.

The Language Sustainability Toolkit

Documenting Your Language

Documenting Your Language

Gathering Materials: What Is Already Available?

The next step is to find out what materials already exist in your language. Then you can download them, bookmark them all in one folder, or make a folder in cloud storage (for example on Dropbox or Google Drive) so that everyone on your team can access them. Through this process, you will see what has been done, and what remains to be done. If you need assistance with this “gathering materials” step, one way you can seek help is to ask educators in your region to see if there is anyone who can collaborate with you in this process.

Types of language documentation

It is important to determine what is already available in your language, so that you can continue sharing and building upon existing material. Looking for resources also creates an opportunity for potential collaboration with other speakers and activists, and is a source of inspiration for new materials you might want to create in the future. Here is a short list of materials and tools that can help you sustain your language. When researching what is available, work through this list, noting where resources are lacking.

- Print dictionary
- Online [Talking Dictionary](#)
- Educational grammar used to make curriculums
- Audio recordings of words, phrases, natural conversation, and interviews
- Video recordings of oral histories, daily activities, interviews with fluent speakers
- Musical recordings with lyrics
- Educational materials for K-12
- Stories (recorded and written in text, when available)
- An ISO code (for digitization and browser recognition)
- Glottocode (for academic/archival recognition)
- UNICODE recognition (for digitization)
- Fonts for your language’s script, if your language uses a script
- Access to a keyboard in your language
- Advanced Digital Tools such as spellchecker and predictive text
- Comprehensive grammar (optional)

Where to look

Here is a short list of free websites that you can use to get started on your journey to downloading free language resources:

- [ELCat](#) (Endangered Languages Catalog)
- [Glottolog](#)
- [OLAC](#)
- [Wikitongues](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [PARADISEC](#)
- [ELAR](#)
- [DoBeS](#)
- [First Languages Australia](#)
- [AILLA](#)
- [Living Tongues Educational Resource Page](#)

Documenting Your Language

Recording Oral Histories

In addition to creating a lexicon, recording an oral history is also a core component of what we might call ‘early stage’ language documentation, because it presents a raw example of the language as it is candidly spoken. Those looking to research the features of a language and those seeking to learn it can find immense value in a well-documented oral history. Perhaps most importantly, oral histories can offer a window into the life of a speaker or a speech community.

Technical and Aesthetic Considerations

Whether you’re using a professional camera and audio recorder, or just a smartphone, consider the following:

- Clean audio is essential. It’s important to record your interview with minimal background noise and audio interference. Avoid crowded hallways, busy streets, or background music.
- Stick to landscape dimensions. Though it is common for people to use portrait ratios when recording with smartphones, it is better to film with landscape dimensions; that is, with your phone horizontal rather than vertical. This better optimizes your video for online media players. The video should be framed to the upper body of the speaker(s).
- Smartphones make great audio recorders. If you have access to a professional grade camera, but lack comparable audio equipment, your phone can be leveraged to record external audio. For iOS devices, we recommend iTalk. For Android, we recommend Audio Recorder.

What to Discuss in an Oral History

We believe that videos should attempt to be as natural as possible; commonly, people will get nervous in front of a camera or feel uncomfortable to start speaking, this often goes away after the first couple of minutes. To help with nerves, it is good to chat with the interviewee beforehand (if this is available to you) about their interests, their language, their culture.

We do not provide questions for the interviews, as we want the narrative to be reflective of them and their lives. If they are having trouble thinking of something to say, or get stumped during the recording, you can always help encourage them and suggest topics; for example, a language consultant could speak about their language and their relationship with it, their hopes for the future of their language, their favorite foods from their community’s cuisine, or anything else of interest to them!

Documenting your language

Transcribing and Translating Oral Histories

Transcription versus Translation

Transcript refers to the text of your interview in the native language or languages spoken, while a translation is a literal translation of the video transcript. If you can, secure both a transcript and translation into an international language. You can do this in person after recording the video or by follow-up via email or phone.

Format

The ideal format for submitting transcripts and translations are .SRT files because they sync automatically with most media players to create subtitles. Thankfully, .SRT files are easy to make. To create one, open your preferred text editor and divide your transcript or translation by the lines they would appear as subtitles.

For example, “Hello, my name is Joana. I am from Tarragona and Catalan is my mother tongue...” becomes:

```
1
00:00:01,00 --> 00:00:03,00
Hello, my name is Joana.

2
00:00:03,03 --> 00:00:11,00
I am from Tarragona
And Catalan is my mother tongue.
```

The above format adheres to the following two rules:

- Each subtitle is formatted with 1) The numerical sequence counter; 2) The opening and closing time markers (Hours:Minutes:Seconds:Milliseconds), joined by -->; and 3) The raw text of the subtitle.
- Subtitles should contain fewer than 40 characters per line of text. You can use websites such as <https://wordcounter.net> to double check your lines.

When you’re done creating your .SRT file, save it with the file extension .srt.

Non-Latin Characters

.SRT files support any character set supported by unicode, so whether your transcript or translation uses the Cyrillic alphabet, Arabic script, or any other writing system, it will work with .srt formatting.

Documenting your language

Creating a Lexicon

For many under-documented languages around the globe, there is little to no documentation available. Some languages only have a few short wordlists or sets of phrases that have been written down. If that is the case for the language you are focusing on, then there is an urgent need to create a lexicon (a vocabulary of a language). You, or a member of your core team, can begin this process by eliciting words and phrases, which means creating a systematic set of written vocabulary and phrases that can later be used to create a dictionary and other learning materials.

How to begin? See [Living Tongues' Master Elicitation List](#) as a way to get started; it contains thousands of prompts that you can use when recording words and phrases in your language. Feel free to add to this list as you use it, and ask us questions via email about how to proceed.

The Language Sustainability Toolkit

Promoting
Your Language

Promoting your language

Determine Your Language-Related Goals

Community Goals

Take a moment to answer the following questions regarding your language revitalization project. This can be done individually or with your core team:

- What kind of events could be good settings for the language to be used?
- Does your community want to produce new speakers? How many?
- Can you use the Internet to locate other speakers of your language? Would using a radio station to make a call-out be a better option, depending on your location?
- Can you and your team find ways to organize immersion events in person or using social media? Example: Cornish activists used Facebook groups to organize in-person events at local pubs and restaurants.

Cultural and Linguistic Media

Media are a great tool for promoting your language, teaching your language and sharing your language. If your language lacks media, take a moment to consider which channels and platforms are most relevant to your community. What do people like, and what do they have easy access to?

Examples of media include:

- **Recorded music.** The Peruvian rapper [Liberato Kani](#) produces music in his ancestral language, Quechua, rather than Spanish.
- **Radio shows and podcasts.** [Indigenous Media Foundation](#) in Nepal broadcasts in 20+ Indigenous languages of Nepal. Nick Wapachee launched a [Cree-only podcast](#) for his community.
- **Online language-learning platforms.** Many of the world's indigenous, small, under-resourced and/or endangered languages do not yet have a significant presence online or sufficient language content available to create online courses, flashcards or games. There are, however, a number of medium-sized indigenous languages such as Maori, Scots Gaelic, Hawaiian, Quechua, Navajo and Lakota that are making their way into well-known educational platforms, presumably because there is a ready and willing audience that inspired the platform to invest energy into developing content in those languages. There are many existing opportunities that could be harnessed for teaching and learning indigenous languages. Read more here: [A Guide To Learning Indigenous and Under-Resourced Minority Languages](#) by Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages.

- **Television, animation and movies.** Members of the Haida language movement produced a feature film entirely in their language: SĠaawaay K'ũuna, or “Edge of the Knife”. Also, check out the [Amazonimations series](#): a collaborative research project that brings together anthropologists, animators, artists and indigenous people who speak various languages.
- **Online videos.** In addition to editing Wikipedia in Basque, Aiora Probatxoa manages a [Basque-language YouTube channel](#) to engage younger speakers of their language. See our section on recording your own oral history.
- **Only text feeds.** Telegram and Twitter feeds are easy ways to publish in your language on a daily basis. For example, [L'Office du Jèrriais](#) uses Twitter to promote the Jèrriais language online by posting memes, language facts and other engaging content. With about 1500 followers, almost a third of the entire Jèrriais speaking world is online.
- **Wikipedia.** In 2001, Catalan activists became the first to publish on Wikipedia into a language other than English. In 2020, the Nyoongar language activist Ingrid Cumming is translating Wikipedia so that young people in the community can read entries and learn in their own language, rather than English.
- **Interactive websites.** [This website](#) teaches vocabulary in the Marra language.
- **Video games.** [Mushroom 11](#) allows people to play in Algonquin, Inuktitut, and Anishinaabemowin. Singuistics is a singing game that released a [Gwich'in edition](#). [Aboriginal Territories in Cyberspace](#) is an Aboriginality determined research-creation network in Canada whose goal is to ensure Indigenous presence in the web pages, online environments, video games, and virtual worlds that comprise cyberspace.
- **Books and poetry.** [WriteOurWorld](#) encourages kids to publish e-books in their language. [Nabu](#) builds cultural bridges, one mother tongue storybook at a time.
- **Comic books and graphic novels.** Far Lombard are translating and publishing graphic novels in their language rather than Italian. [Kiyindou Yamakasi](#) created a comic book in Nigerian Pidgin, exploring Yoruba mythology.
- **Performance art and dance.** The Xakas language theater performances in Khakassia (Russia) are some of the only sanctioned ways that local people could engage with their native language. Another great example is the popularity of the [Haka dance](#): it is a type of ancient Māori war dance traditionally used to showcase pride, strength and unity. Another great example of learning traditional dance online is: [Pow Wow Sweat](#).
- **Traditional Sports.** Many indigenous sports are making a resurgence in the public eye. Learning terminology related to the sport, or traditional game, may be a great way to access the languages. An example of this is the [World Indigenous Games](#).

Promoting your language

Digital Technology

Note: This section is about the necessary first steps for expanding digital technology to support your language. If you're interested in creating media for popular use, see the cultural and linguistic media section above.

Are you able to easily use your language online or on your devices? Here is a preliminary set of questions to help you identify steps to advance your language's digital self-determination.

Does your language have an ISO 639-3 code?

The UN-affiliated International Standards Organization maintains three-letter codes for over seven-thousand languages. Web and software developers use these codes to teach computers and other devices to recognize different languages. Search the [ISO 639-3 code](#) set for your language. If your language doesn't have an ISO 639-3 code, apply for recognition [here](#).

Why does this matter? If your community is digitally active, it is important to have the ability to use your language on your devices. Without an ISO code, it is impossible to translate operating systems and software interfaces, or even get support for tools like Google Translate. An ISO code creates the opportunities to achieve this support.

Is a Unicode-supported font available in your language?

Even if your computer doesn't have your language's writing system pre-installed, it is possible that there are fonts for your language. Start by searching for your language on [Google Noto](#), a multilingual font supporting more than 500 writing systems. If Unicode fonts are not available, you can work with font designers and people within the technical industry to create font(s) to support text using the script(s). Desktops and laptops allow installation of downloadable fonts. Note that many mobile devices may not directly support font installation or download.

Why does this matter? A supported font is required to render characters on screens. Using Unicode fonts further ensures that you have support for languages that have extended character sets.

Is it easy to type in your language?

[Google Virtual Keyboard](#) has over 100 keyboards for 70 different languages to use on your computer with the Chrome browser. If your language does not have a standardized font, consider contacting [Debbie Anderson at the Script Encoding Initiative](#) for help getting started.

Why does this matter? When people are unable to type in their language, it is common for them to slowly shift to another language. For example, in Ethiopia, most devices don't come with the Ge'ez script pre-installed. As a result, there has been a slow shift toward using the Roman alphabet online, which, among young people, has caused a language shift toward English. The ability to type and text in your language is central to keeping it alive in the digital age.

Are keyboards with autocorrect available on your phone?

Many smartphones have a certain amount of languages which you can install to your keyboard within the settings. For keyboards not already included with your phone, visit [Gboard](#), the Google Keyboard for mobile. It has support for many languages on both iOS and Android.

If there is not a phone keyboard available for your language, consider working with people in the technical industry to develop a keyboard or input method. Here are resources to help you begin: [Keyman](#), [Microsoft Keyboard Builder](#), and [SIL Ukelele](#). Note that installing a keyboard or another input method from the internet may introduce security risks.

Why does this matter? The ability to text and use social media in your language is important for digital longevity. Autocorrect is helpful for daily use and a useful tool for those learning the language.

If your language already has an ISO code, fonts, and a keyboard available, advanced language technologies are available to further digitize your language: speech-to-text, text-to-speech, and machine translation. For further information, visit the [Language Digitization Initiative](#).

Further Reading: <https://openlt.org/> is a manifesto for open language technology; it's a great place to learn about advocating for your language's inclusion in digital technology.

Promoting your language

Immersion Techniques

Immersive environments are an excellent way for speakers of all levels to connect to each other and to the language. You don't need to be 100% fluent to start an immersion group; lack of fluency sometimes stops people from creating a small program that can help young learners learn basic vocabulary, but it doesn't need to! Here are some options for ways to immerse yourself and members of your community:

Individual or Small Group Immersion

- Listen to legacy audio and video recordings of speech
- Connect with another speaker in person or online
- Online teaching opportunities
- Sign up to teach/share your language. Websites such as [iTalki](#) and [Verbling](#) support language tutors.
- Locate or create a master-apprentice program
- Increase your literacy skills in your language
- Send text messages and emails in your language; for example, you can use WhatsApp, Telegram, WeChat groups to share your language
- [Smileys India](#) sent a different sign in Indian Sign Language (IPSL) every day for a year over WhatsApp to grow awareness of IPSL
- Explore Living Tongues' report: [Learning Languages Online: A Guide to Studying Endangered, Under-resourced and Minority Languages](#) to see if your language has any online learning courses available.

Community Immersion

- Language nests for toddlers: recruit someone with teaching skills to help facilitate. Language nests were originally developed in New Zealand. Traditionally they are run by community members who provide care for children while speaking their language throughout the day. The goal of language nest programs is to provide a language and cultural immersion for preschool age children, while they are still young enough to acquire native fluency. Learn about language nest [teaching tools](#) on the First Peoples' Cultural Council website. For an example of a successful language nest, read more about [Kielipezä](#).
- Language programs for families
- Active immersion through weekly informal meet-ups
- Learn about Dr. Greymorning's [Accelerated Second Language Acquisition \(ASLA\)](#)
- Language, poetry, and music contests for people of all ages

- Watching films in the language - or creating one!
- Listening to albums in the language - or recording one!
- Culinary usage of language: discussing and making food in your language.

Signage, Media and Promotion of the Language

- Radio shows can help disseminate content your language
- Podcasts can store and promote stories and discussions in your language
- Tools for mobile and social media
- Street signs can help reveal elements of the original linguistic landscape of a place. Street signs also ensure your language is visible in public eyes. The [Welsh Language Society](#) campaigned for years for signs in Wales to be bilingual.
- Maps in local languages can reinforce their relationship with the homeland
- Fashion shows can showcase local talent
- Memes can promote humor and cultural-specific jokes, while proliferating social media usage. For meme inspiration, explore [#MemeML](#), the annual online event encouraging people to create memes in their mother tongue.
- YouTube channels can help elevate your language online
- Facebook groups can connect speakers in a private setting
- Is there a “Twitter community” for your language? If not, create a Twitter account, start tweeting in your language, and add a hashtag with the name of your language!
- Are there any Wikipedia pages in your language? Wikipedia advances learning in your language and sets the stage for its use in academic and non-fiction literature

Economic opportunities associated with heritage language proficiency

- Tourism and cultural experiences
- Participating in digital development of the language (apps, games, websites, etc)
- Translation (in the health, legal and educational fields)
- Publishing books; ebook opportunities
- Releasing music, TV, film with transferable tech skills

Promoting your language

Funding Sources

Many endangered language communities need resources to get their programs off the ground and stay sustainable. We put together a handy list of organizations and foundations that offer grants for language documentation and revitalization: we will continually update [this page](#).