“Just a few months ago, the idea of revitalizing our language seemed impossible. [...] In a short time, Wikitongues has made the difference. Because of Wikitongues, I am confident that our dream of becoming fluent speakers again is well within reach.”

— Windy Goodloe on revitalizing the Afro-Seminole Creole language in Brackettville, Texas, USA
In 2019, I visited Vilnius with my now-wife, who was searching for ancestors she barely knew. While the majority of her maternal family is from and lives in Peru, her ties to Lithuania were buried generations ago, when her father’s family emigrated to the United States. One night at the end of our trip, she waxed about her pride in having been the first in her family to visit Lithuania. She was grateful for the opportunity to have met a forgotten homeland. I was proud to share the journey with her. I have no Baltic roots, but I had found homeland in Vilnius, too.

Days earlier, we had come across a building made from patchwork layers of stone, brick and concrete. It was dressed in the black-and-white painting of a bearded old man who seemed to regard you with a half-smile. A QR code at his hip revealed the photo that inspired his likeness: a portrait from Vilnius before the Holocaust, when a thriving Jewish community lived there. The painting was part of a street art campaign called ‘Walls that Remember’, a commemoration of the city’s erased Jewish history. Today, that old man’s neighborhood is vibrant with high-end restaurants and craft beer bars in the hollowed-out bellies of old buildings. You wouldn’t know it, but at the turn of the last century it was part Jewish Lithuania, litaaim in Hebrew or lite in Yiddish.

For the uninitiated, Hebrew is the common language of all Jewish people. It was the mother tongue of our most ancient ancestors and for centuries, it has been central to our collective memory, identity and peoplehood. Yiddish, on the other hand, emerged from the convergence of Hebrew and German, and is specifically the language of Ashkenazim: descendants of Jews who migrated to Central Europe over a hundred generations ago. In fact, everywhere Jewish people have settled, Jewish languages have emerged. Ladino comes from Hebrew and Spanish. Yevanic is Hebrew and Greek. Among many more, there are Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Farsi, even Judeo-Malayalam. And yet, most of us have struggled to maintain this rich tradition. Either we learn Hebrew or we assimilate entirely, forgetting the voices of the parents and grandparents who nurtured us.

In my family, Yiddish had faded long before I was born, though lingered on as fragments in my father’s English: a stray collection words and phrases like gornisht helfen, oy vey iz mir and chazerei; and for most of my life, these remnants were all I knew. Yiddish felt more like an inside joke than it did a ‘real’ language, let alone a language that belonged to me. But there, on land that had once been home to a vibrant Ashkenazi community, my ancestral memories woke up. I realized how much a sense of intergenerational shame had undergirded my relationship with the language. Suddenly, that shame was replaced with pride about who I am and where I come from.

Wikitongues is part of a global groundswell of language activism that has quietly shaped the turn of the twenty-first century. Around the world, people have been fighting, often successfully, to keep their languages alive after centuries of conquest, forced assimilation and genocide. Right now in Louisiana, the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe are raising the first fluent Tunica speakers in 70 years. In Peru, young Andean scholars are defending their PhDs in Quechua. In New York City, I’ve watched plays in Yiddish. There’s power in embracing the voice of your ancestors. Indigenous activist Dwayne Tomah may have said it best when he first heard century-old wax recordings of his language, Passamaquoddy. “This,” he said, “is sacred work.”

In the following pages, we’ll share how Wikitongues has contributed to this movement over the past three years, making it easier for people to engage the generational process of keeping an endangered language alive. Thank you very much for being a part of our organization, either by working on your language, donating to support our work, or simply following along. A multilingual world remembers. It is more educated, patient, and kind. Language diversity matters, and I’m grateful to fight for it with you.

As my ancestors would have said in Yiddish, a sheynam dank—thank you.

Letter from Daniel Bögre Udell
Co-founder and Executive Director
The Challenge

We’re living through an age of unprecedented loss.
7,000 languages are spoken or signed today, but 3,000 languages could vanish this century as the communities that speak them collapse.
In a few decades, centuries of cultural, historical, and ecological knowledge will be erased as the last speakers of endangered languages die.
Languages don’t just die naturally. People lose their mother tongues to economic exclusion, political oppression, or genocide.
The Solution

Wikitongues invests in language activists, accelerates endangered language revitalization projects, and defends diversity on a global scale.
With the right resources, you can learn the language of your ancestors, teach the next generation, and keep your culture alive.
Our Language Revitalization Fellowship gives annual training and grants to the leaders of new mother-tongue projects. We help you:

- Identify your community’s long-term and short-term language needs
- Build a measurable plan to meet those needs for the next generation
- Gather resources and implement that plan in your community
In parallel, our Language Archive safeguards a crowdsourced repository of linguistic resources from around the world. It includes:

- Video and audio oral histories in 720+ languages, or 10% of every language
- An index of free linguistic and cultural resources from across the Internet
- Free guides for people who want to start their own revitalization projects
We publish our work to a community of over 150,000 followers, raising awareness about the scope and value of linguistic diversity.

140,000 subscribers and 175,000 monthly views on YouTube
15,000 readers across our newsletter and social media accounts
2,000 monthly users and 9,000+ monthly views at wikitongues.org
The Results

In three years, we kickstarted 40 language revitalization projects.
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CASE STUDY

Raji language

Revitalized by Tulsi Raajbar | Raji is spoken by about 3,800 people in Uttarakhand, Northern India. It has no government support.

In 2022, we backed Tulsi’s effort to build infrastructure for mother-tongue education. In partnership with linguist Kavita Rastogi, she has:

- Organized pop-up language classes across five Raji villages
- Hosted training sessions for Raji adults to be language teachers
- Published the first-ever alphabet reader for the Indigenous Raji script
- Next, Tulsi plans to publish mother-tongue children’s books
Yucatec Mayan language

Revitalized by Hilario Poot Cahun | Yucatec Mayan is spoken by up to 800,000 people in Mexico’s Yucatán Peninsula. It has limited government support.

In 2022, backed Hilario’s effort to develop the first culturally-grounded science curriculum in Yucatec Mayan, with an ecology focus. So far, he has:

- Published the first Mayan biology textbooks since before the Spanish conquest
- Tested the curriculum with teachers and parents from five Indigenous schools
- Built partnerships between research institutions and Indigenous leaders
- Secured additional funding from National Geographic to expand his work
CASE STUDY

Igala language

Revitalized by Agnes Abah | Igala is spoken by 1.6 million people in Kogi State, Nigeria. It has no government support and is under-resourced.

To get her language online, Agnes set out to launch a mother-tongue version of Wikipedia in Igala. Since April 2023, she has:

- Published the Igala Wikipedia with 456 articles
- Organized 10 training events for Igala speakers to use Wikimedia software
- Cultivated a community of 40 volunteer editors
- In the long-term, Agnes is pursuing full recognition from the Wikimedia Foundation as a pathway to continued funding for her work

Agnes leading Wikimedia workshops for Igala speakers in Nigeria
Case Study

Kihunde language

Revitalized by Hangi Méthodes Bulebe | Kihunde spoken by about 200,000 people in North Kivu province, D.R. Congo. It has no government support.

In 2021, we helped Hangi establish a mother tongue research institute for the Kihunde language in Goma, D.R. Congo. Since then, his team has:

- Organized regular pop-up language classes for children
- Designed a curriculum for training new language teachers
- Published a comprehensive dictionary and grammar sketch
- Launched a mother tongue app for Android phones

Hangi teaching the Kihunde language at a pop-up school in Goma
CASE STUDY

Chakma language

Revitalized by Bivuti Chakma | Chakma is spoken by about 700,000 people in Bangladesh and India, but is largely excluded from the Internet.

In 2023, we worked with Bivuti to launch an online language school for his mother tongue, the under-resourced Chakma language. So far, he has:

- Secured Unicode recognition of his language’s Indigenous writing system
- Contributed to the development of web fonts for Chakma to be used online
- Built the first-ever Chakma keyboard for computers and smartphones
- Offline, Bivuti is organizing in-person language classes in Rangamati City

Bivuti digitizing his language and promoting mother-tongue Chakma tools
CASE STUDY

Kouri-Vini language

Revitalized by Jonathan Mayers | Kouri-Vini is spoken by 10,000 people in the U.S. state of Louisiana, where it is official but otherwise unsupported.

In 2022, we helped Jonathan launch Chinbo, a platform for people reclaiming the Kouri-Vini language, or Louisiana Creole. Since then, his team has:

- Published a compilation of Kouri-Vini poetry, the first-ever in the language
- Published *Latær lèv*, a children's book in Kouri-Vini
- Maintained a recurring series of language immersion workshops
- Further expanded Chinbo with new resources

Jonathan works closely with a team of other Louisiana Creoles, including Dr. Christophe Landry, Adrien Guillory-Chatman, and Clif St. Laurent.
CASE STUDY

Angika language

Revitalized by Amrit Sufi | Angika is spoken by 15 million people in parts of India and Nepal, where it has limited recognition and few learning resources.

In 2023, we accelerated Amrit’s effort to digitize cultural knowledge in the Angika language of Eastern India. In one year, she has:

- Recorded 85 Angika folksongs, one phrasebook, and one oral history
- Amplified these materials through Wikimedia Commons and Wikisource
- Trained a core volunteer team to continue documenting the language
- Secured more funding to expand, using Wikitongues as her fiscal sponsor
CASE STUDY

Nalu language

Revitalized by Bintou Camara | Nalu is spoken by about 20,000 people in Guinea and Guinea-Bissau. It has little government support in either country.

In 2021, we supported Bintou's effort to build a cultural campus where the Nalu people could study their language and traditional knowledge. So far, she has:

- Secured local funding to acquire land for her initiative
- Built two centers for language learning and traditional botanical knowledge
- Produced a 500-word Nalu dictionary with English and French translations
- Partnered with Harvard Divinity School to promote the study of Nalu spirituality

Bintou (center) with Nalu community members at a language school opening
CASE STUDY

Banjar language

Revitalized by Muhammad Faisal Ansari | Banjar is spoken by 4 million people in Indonesia. It has limited recognition but lacks digital resources.

In 2023, we accelerated Faisal's effort to build an open-source corpus for the Banjar language using the Wikidata platform. So far, he has:

- Digitized over 1,700 lexemes, words and phrases
- Organized seven workshops to help Banjar speakers use Wiki tools
- Cultivated a community of 25 volunteers
- After digitizing 3,000 lexemes, Muhammad plans to raise awareness about the need for linguistic documentation in other Indonesian language communities
CASE STUDY

Khwedam language

Revitalized by Moshe Kxoegoe Maghundu | Khwedam is spoken by 8,000 people in Southern Africa, where it is unrecognized and under-resourced.

Moshe leads the Southern African San Development Organization, which supports Indigenous peoples in Southern Africa. He partnered with Wikitongues to:

- Compile accessible Khwedam dictionaries for early childhood education
- Publish the first-ever children's books in the Khwedam language
- Host community language workshops in South Africa, Namibia, and Botswana
- In the long-term, Moshe plans to build a cultural museum for his community

Moshe leading community language workshops in Botswana and Namibia
The Team

We have decades of combined experience leading global nonprofits.
THE CHALLENGE

THE SOLUTION

THE RESULTS

THE TEAM

THE FINANCIALS

THE VISION

Daniel Bögre Udell
Executive Director
Jersey City, United States

Daniel is a cofounder at Wikitongues, which he started as a personal project in 2014. He holds an MA in History and a BFA in Design and Technology from the New School in New York. He speaks English, Spanish, Catalan, and Portuguese.

Kristen Tcherneshoff
Programs Director
Helsinki, Finland

Before Wikitongues, Kristen worked in law and disability rights, cultivating an interest in language activism and Sign linguistics. She holds an MA in African Studies & Linguistics from Helsinki University. She speaks English and Finnish.

Tochi Precious
Wikimedian-in-Residence
Abuja, Nigeria

Tochi is a long-term contributor to the Wikimedia movement and a member of the Wikimedia Foundation’s Language Committee, which approves new language versions of Wikipedia. She speaks Igbo, English, French and German.

Frederico Andrade
Chair of the Board of Directors
Mainz, Germany

Frederico is a cofounder at Wikitongues, where he leads the Board of Directors, all volunteers. Outside Wikitongues, he is a 3X Y-Combinator product leader. He speaks Portuguese, English, French, Spanish, Japanese, and Italian.
**The Challenge**

**The Solution**

**The Results**

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**The Financials**

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**Kamal El-Wattar**
Board of Directors
San Francisco, United States

*Kamal has nearly two decades’ experience adapting software into 100+ languages for HP, Microsoft, and other major tech firms. Today, he is a philanthropist and cofounder at Earthcodes.org. He speaks English, French, and Chinese.*

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**Aleksandra Przegalinska**
Board of Directors
Boston, United States

*Aleksandra is a published author and VP of Kozminski University in Poland, where she works on International Relations, Early Stage Research, and AI. She is also a Senior Research Associate at Harvard. She speaks Polish, English, and German.*

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**Darío Maestro**
Board of Directors
New York City, United States

*Darío is a NYC and Madrid dual-qualified lawyer who handles antitrust, human rights, and privacy disputes. He holds degrees from the University of Michigan and Charles III University of Madrid. He speaks Spanish, English, and French.*

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**Advisors and Volunteers**

*In addition to our Board of Directors and staff, subject experts contribute to Wikitongues programs and strategic planning as reviewers, advisors, and volunteers. They represent linguistics, translation/interpretation, archiving, library science, law, philanthropy, design, technology, and more.*

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Wikitongues
We work with the American Folklife Center at the U.S. Library of Congress to preserve language resources.

We make it easier for communities to add their languages to the Wikimedia Commons and Wikipedia.

Together, Wikitongues and Living Tongues publish free resources for language revitalization.

Wikitongues and 7000 Languages work together to support mother-tongue education projects.

We’re working together to preserve and promote endangered languages from the Jewish diaspora.

Each semester, linguistics students from the University of Pittsburgh join Wikitongues as for-credit interns.

Major Partners

Major Funders

1,000+ donors
The Financials

From 2021-2023, we maintained a high average program expense ratio and grew our impact 4X faster than our budget.
### THE CHALLENGE

- Three-year spend: $537,236

### THE SOLUTION

- 80% Programs
- 13% Admin
- 7% Development

### THE RESULTS

- Three-year revenue: $606,002 ($69,766 surplus)

### THE FINANCIALS

- 94% Grants and contributions
- 13% Programs revenue

### THE VISION

- 80% — Programs
- 94% — Grants and contributions
The Vision: 2025-2035

We're building global infrastructure for cultural and linguistic diversity.
In three years, Wikitongues helped reawaken 40 endangered languages, standardizing an open approach to language revitalization.
Now, we’re ready to refine and rapidly scale our model, enough to support revitalization for a third of endangered languages by 2035.
We’ll achieve this growth on a systems level, targeting the barriers to language revitalization and the root causes of language extinction.

- Scale the fellowship up to 10X, seeding 100+ revitalization projects per year
- Build a language rights pipeline, pairing activists with pro-bono legal support
- Fast-track revitalization projects that get more languages online (including AI)
Protecting language diversity will benefit all of us by strengthening childhood education, environmental efforts, and the economy.
Join Us.

We’re seeking funders, board members, advisors, and volunteers.

Get in touch

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youtube/instagram/facebook: @wikitongues
wikitongues.org
In 7,000 languages, thank you.

Wikitongues is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization based on Lenape land in New York City, USA.