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Linguapax
International

In official partnership
with UNESCO
(consultative status)

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Activity report

2021

Introduction

LINGUAPAX was founded in 1987 as an educational project of UNESCO and, since 2001, it is an independent international organization— still linked to UNESCO with a consultative status— that advocates for the promotion, preservation, and activation of linguistic diversity.

LINGUAPAX's founding mandate, aimed at fostering and developing means to express the relationship between linguistic diversity and peace, has allowed us to provide pioneering insights on what these two terms involve and the potential of their interrelation. This thematic approach to the actions of LINGUAPAX strategically ties us to the historical genesis with UNESCO and, at the same time, lets us carry out complementary actions to those of the intergovernmental organization.

In the same way, the actions made by LINGUAPAX proactively harmonize with the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes goals that make a direct reference to languages as a sustainability factor, being language (thinking, speaking and listening, signing and expressing, reading and writing and sharing knowledge) the tool that shapes one's identity and culture and explains the meaning of living in harmony with nature and others. In this sense, realizing that the current development frameworks and intervention measures tend to ignore linguistic diversity and multilingualism the United Nations declared the period between 2022 and 2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (Resolution A/RES/74/135), with the aim of urging the world community to strengthen linguistic diversity and multilingualism as a key driver of sustainable development and to work towards applying effective measures to ensure that, through their languages, indigenous peoples become active contributors and benefit from sustainable development.

LINGUAPAX has also linked its action to this purpose by being part of the Ad-hoc Group to prepare the Global Action Plan of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022-2032 and promoting activities and projects that contribute to mutual knowledge, exchanges and cooperation between the different countries, societies and cultures to preserve the linguistic and cultural diversity of the world, and the progressive construction of areas of peace and stability, of shared prosperity and dialogue between cultures and civilizations.

All of this is related to the clear vocation of LINGUAPAX to consolidate itself as a think tank specialized in linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism. With a multidisciplinary approach and networking, LINGUAPAX promotes analysis, knowledge and cooperation through the organization of events, seminars and conferences; it participates in discussions and conference cycles; it encourages and collaborates in research and linguistic revitalization projects; it publishes articles and reviews; and advises governments and organizations, together with the international network, with the aim of raising awareness about the values of linguistic and cultural diversity and offering proposals for the viability of that diversity.

LINGUAPAX's main lines of work focus on **the critical analysis of the global movement for linguistic diversity**, in order to learn about and influence the evolution of political sensitivity and sociolinguistic ideologies with regard to cultural and linguistic diversity and to link this awareness and activism campaign with others, such as protecting biodiversity (environmentalism) or emerging human rights (cultural and linguistic rights). Linguapax's work also focuses on **the culture of multilingualism**, especially on multilingual education and awareness raising, in order to introduce a contemporary version of multilingualism, linked to the concept of global citizenship that goes beyond the instrumental knowledge of different languages and incorporates recognition of the diversity of the world's linguistic and communicative ideologies.

On the basis of these premises, during this 2021 we have concentrated our efforts on two specific fields: **languages and forms of creation**, by exploring and disseminating the potential of linguistic diversity to generate new or emerging cultural forms and practices (in communicative, artistic or relational areas, among

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others) coming out of the interaction of multiple linguistic systems; and **languages, technology and digital culture**: languages facing the contemporary paradigm of communication, language evolution in the human-machine dialogue and its implications for communication settings in increasingly digitized environments.

In this report, you will find detailed information about the projects realised, their results and the impact they have had on the stated objectives.

1) Developing and disseminating the objectives of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages IDIL2022-2032

Linguapax, as a member of the ad-hoc group during the drawing up of the Global Action Plan for the design and implementation of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages IDIL2022-2023, contributed to the shaping of this Plan, attended meetings with the other members of the group in order to revise the first draft, and involved its members in its review. Through the contribution of all the actors involved, UNESCO published the [Global Action Plan](#) at the end of 2021.

In addition to the collaboration with UNESCO and the other entities involved in making the Plan, Linguapax has undertaken the dissemination of the objectives and contents of the preparatory meetings and of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages by publishing summaries in Catalan and English on its website, and making them available via social networks (Twitter and Facebook), and through the bimonthly newsletter e-Linguapax.

2) International Linguapax Award

The **Linguapax International Award** is the annual award given in recognition of the merit of linguists, researchers, teachers and members of civil society who have excelled, around the world, in promoting linguistic diversity or multilingual education. It was established in 2002 and has been consolidated over the years as a prestigious reference and recognition in this area at an international level.

The 2021 award was given to the Pakistani organization **Idara Baraye Taleem-o-Taraqi**, also called IBT, a Torwali organization in the Swat district of Pakistan, which has the task of driving the transformation of the marginalized linguistic and cultural groups living in northwestern Pakistan into empowered and sustainable communities, through the active involvement of the whole community, without gender, racial, or religious discrimination (more info [here](#)).

The award was officially presented on 21 December 2021 in a hybrid public event that took place at the headquarters of the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans* in Barcelona. The ceremony was opened by the President of Linguapax, Monica Pereña and the Minister for Foreign Action of the Catalan Government, Victoria Alsina. Hamza Ali Rajà, cultural mediator of the Barcelona City Council, portrayed the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the Pakistani community of Catalonia. Maya Khemlani David, professor at the University of Malaysia and member of the Linguapax Advisory Board, explained the reason why she suggested IBT's nomination for the Linguapax Award.

Zubair Torwali and Aftab Ahmad, co-founders of IBT, explained their projects and their organization's mission and discussed the promotion of local languages and multilingualism with the other presenters and

participants. The recording of the event can be seen on Linguapax's Youtube channel (see [here](#) for more information).

3) Online course «Linguistic diversity, what for?»

Another activity linked to the International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022-2032 was the launching and monitoring of the massive open online course (MOOC) "[Linguistic diversity, what for?](#)", developed in collaboration with the Autonomous University of Barcelona, and available on the Coursera platform since 24 January 2021 for free (only to be paid if requesting an official Coursera certificate).

Apart from providing information and reflections on different aspects of linguistic diversity, the course is designed as a tool of dialogue between all participants, teachers and students, that enriches the content of the course and makes it possible to identify successful practices and actions in this area and people who, due to their professional experience or their activity in defense of linguistic and cultural diversity, may become referents for Linguapax and join its international network. Indeed, in addition to the course teachers who are already members of the Advisory Board and the international delegations of Linguapax, other teachers of the MOOC have been closely linked with the organisation (as is the case of Eddie Avila, Subhashish Panigrahi, Kola Tubosun or Sonia Antinori) and even joined the most important organs (Josep Cru joined the Executive Board, Kit Woolart and Alícia Fuentes-Calle joined the Advisory Board and Maria Lara Millapán joined the Latin American delegation).

The course also serves as a platform for identifying, assessing and disseminating cases and experiences of defense and promotion of linguistic diversity, linguistic rights and multilingualism in different fields (linguistic ideologies and policies, traditions of multilingualism, education, translation, rights, international organisations, arts, entrepreneurship, digital world...).

The course was officially launched on 24 January 2021 through an [article and a promotional video](#) broadcasted on digital media by Linguapax and other contributing organisations, international delegations, members of Linguapax and also by teachers of the MOOC themselves. In 2021, more than seven thousand people from around the world visited the course and read its description, and more than one thousand and three hundred people and organisations enrolled in it.

4) Projects of the Linguapax International Delegations

The headquarters of Linguapax continue to support its network of International Delegations. The impact of the pandemic affected most of the delegations and by 2021 they had not yet recovered their normal activity. For this reason, Linguapax prioritized the promotion and economic support of the activities of the Latin American delegation, which thanks to its long experience, roots in its territory and linkage to important local and national organisations, was able to develop numerous activities despite the pandemic.

In Latin America, Linguapax kept contributing to the project "*Revitalización, Mantenimiento y Desarrollo Lingüístico y Cultural*", which investigates processes of linguistic displacement and resistance and seeks to develop strategies for revitalising the endangered languages of Mexico. With the collaboration of the **CIESAS-Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Ciencias Sociales, CONNECTYT – Consejo**

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Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología, both from Mexico, and the publishers *ERA* and *Del Lirio*, our organisation contributed to edit and publish multilingual books in indigenous languages, some of them with augmented reality, as well as music records and children's games, contributing to enriching the revitalising corpus of Linguapax Latin America. Likewise, we gave support to the production of the book "*Sumak Kichw wawa*", in Quechua and English, with the *Kichwawa* (tales from Quechua) project in Ecuador. The book contains a tale created by teachers and students of Chiriguasa, and it features augmented reality.

We also supported the project "Production of materials in native languages and training of community actors" of the *Acervo Digital de Lenguas Indígenas* —ADLI— of CIESAS, co-financed by the Direct Aid Program of the Australian Embassy in Mexico. Within the framework of this project, we produced multimodal didactic materials with audio and augmented reality in languages with little or no access to educational materials, which were edited, published and presented to the public in virtual sessions.

Another action carried out was the revision and translation into English of the *Guía de revitalización lingüística, para una gestión formada e informada* by José Antonio Flores Farfán (coordinator of Linguapax Latin America), Lorraine Córdova Hernández and Josep Cru (member of Linguapax Europa and the organisation's executive board). A guide that was very well received and had a great impact on the Spanish-speaking community and which, with its English version, will be of use not only to the other Linguapax delegations but to the entire international community interested in promoting and revitalizing linguistic diversity. Currently, the document with the title: *Language Revitalization: A Guide For A Well-Formed And Informed Deployment*, translated by Aarón Hernán Flores Suárez, is in the editing phase.

The GALA-LINGUAPAX project "For a trained and informed language policy in Mexico" continued during 2021. It intends to contribute to the reorientation of this public policy through a participatory diagnosis that allows a greater and better institutional functioning in favor of languages; democratizing decision-making structures and making them more participatory; integrating the isolated efforts of the institutions to generate a synergy that optimizes resources in favor of endangered languages, fosters a new relationship between the academy and indigenous peoples and develops a scientific activity committed to the stabilization and harmonization of endangered languages and cultures.

In addition to the projects promoted and coordinated from the main headquarters in Mexico City, the Delegation extended its geographic scope with the creation of an antenna in Peru, led by teacher Miryam Yataco, and another one in Chile, by Lara Millapán, teacher of MOOC "Linguistic diversity, what for?".

Furthermore, a university degree focused on linguistic revitalization is being promoted, in collaboration with different institutions from different countries in Latin America.

As far as the other delegations are concerned, the health situation exacerbated the already existing logistical difficulties, which is why the activity decreased considerably. The annual Symposium about multilingualism organized by the Linguapax Asia delegation, with the cooperation of different institutions in the region, had to be postponed. However, the *International Conference "Literature in Language Teaching"* JALT did take place virtually. It had the participation of the Asia Delegation, which, this year, has to concentrate its efforts on the production of materials focused on dissemination and the recognition of Asian languages.

5) Disclosure of the contents and projects of Linguapax's International Network

The activities and contents handled by the headquarters of Linguapax in Barcelona and the international delegations and also by the network of people and collaborating organisations around the world have been disseminated mainly through two types of action:

1) Publication on the website and dissemination through the e-Linguapax newsletter and social media about the projects developed and the activities carried out by the headquarters of Barcelona and by the international network, as well as the content that the delegations worked on. To make this possible, time and resources have been devoted not only to the production, editing and translation of digital content but also to the maintenance and improvement of the website and social media presence.

In this regard, it is worth noting that the e-Linguapax electronic newsletter doubled the number of subscribers since 2021, reaching the figure of 803 subscribers.

The Twitter account, @InfoLinguapax had almost 500 monthly visits on average and the number of people following our publications increased by almost 200 units.

The Facebook page has lost importance in the European context, but it maintains and even increases the number of people linked to it (friends and followers), especially in Latin America.

6) Digital Languages

Linguapax supports the inclusion of all languages in the digital domain. In particular, during 2021, we collaborated with the project to create a digital toolbox for linguistic activism (see: <https://rising.globalvoices.org/language/toolkit/partners/>), led by Rising Voices, a longtime partner of Linguapax, and UNESCO, also a partner of our organisation. During the last months of 2021, six pilot workshops were released to test the tool in Central America, South America, West Africa, South Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia and Oceania. Linguapax tracked the project's progress and spread it through the e-Linguapax newsletter, the website and social media.

7) Linguapax Review

Like every year, Linguapax produced, published and publicly presented its annual Report "**Linguapax Review**", which in 2021 focused on the theme "**Language Technologies and Language Diversity**", exploring the relationship between languages and new technologies.

Maite Melero, PhD in Computational Linguistics and expert in Automatic Translation, senior researcher at the Barcelona Supercomputing Centre (BSC) and member of the Linguapax executive board, coordinated the journal, which contains articles by the following authors: Daniel Pimienta, Edward Avila, Juan Carlos Moreno, Steven Bird, Andras Kornai, Roland Kuhn, Subhashish Panigrahi and Tunde Aedgola.

The report, published in a digital form in Catalan, Spanish and English, was officially presented in a virtual event in early 2022 and featured the participation of the coordinator and the authors. The recording of the event can be seen on [Linguapax' YouTube Channel](#).

8) Multilingual Education

One of Linguapax's historical areas of work is multilingual education. In this field, a collaboration aimed at improving global education was initiated between Linguapax, its Latin American delegation and the PAL-Peoples Action for Learning Network. Linguapax provides its expertise for improving children's language skills in minority or endangered languages, helping to identify verbal art resources in indigenous languages (idioms, riddles, tongue twisters, etc.) that stimulate logical reasoning and inference (basic skills in which a deficit was detected especially among children belonging to indigenous communities in different parts of the world), to incorporate them as pedagogical tools into intensive courses promoted and performed by the PAL Network.

9) Activities in Catalonia

As a Catalan entity, Linguapax works locally to promote local languages and to raise public awareness about the importance and the need to protect and promote linguistic diversity.

Materials to raise awareness about the importance of linguistic diversity

Based on the content of previous studies and a joint reflection between associates and collaborators of Linguapax, we produced audiovisual materials where different people, speakers of different languages and carriers of different perspectives and experiences, have shared information about their languages, their visions on what language is, the way they live among various languages, the emotions and experiences they associate to one language or another, and the activities they carry out to protect and promote linguistic diversity and linguistic rights. Thanks to their artistic approach, videos manage to transmit in a few minutes emotions, messages and suggestions that facilitate public empathy towards the people interviewed, favoring the understanding and reflection on the content.

"Opposing or Converging?" colloquia series

Linguapax organized a series of colloquia with the title "Opposing or Converging?" on factors that may appear as threats but may also represent opportunities for defending endangered languages and linguistic diversity:

- Conference-colloquium "Cinema and endangered languages", with the director and screenwriter Fredo Valla, the professor of the University of Barcelona Emili Boix, and Olga Cebada, member of the AlterNativa and organizer of the International Festival of Indigenous Cinema of Barcelona.
- Colloquium "Promotion of Local Languages and Multilingualism", within the framework of the award ceremony of the International Linguapax Award to the IBT association of Pakistan, with the awarded Zubair Torwali and Aftab Ahmad, the Professor of the University of Malaysia Maya Khemlani David, Hamza Ali Rajà, intercultural mediator, and Enric Serra, professor at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The event was hybrid and simultaneously translated into Catalan and English, favoring the exchange between the Catalan—or residing in Catalonia—public present in the room and the international public connected via zoom.

Activities to raise awareness about linguistic diversity

"Worlds with Words" meeting, took place within the framework of the Faberllull Residence on Linguistic Rights, leaded by playwright, theatre director and translator Sonia Antinori, with the participation of residents of the Faberllull Residence of Olot and students and teachers of the Girona CPNL, among others.

"Grieving the Loss of my Language": poetry recitation in different languages and conversation about the experiences that inspired them; conducted by Yael Peled and Mariona Miret, in collaboration with the Faberllull Residence of Olot and *Chambra d'Òc*.

10) Linguapax Structure

As for the Linguapax International Network, during 2021 we worked to establish and consolidate relations with several individuals and organizations that, although not formally adhered to the association, collaborate with us on a regular basis: international organisations with common goals, such as ELEN- European Language Equality Network and the Mercator Research Center, teachers and students of the online course "Linguistic diversity, what for?", contributors to various projects (Faberllull Residence from Olot, MALTE - Música Arte Letteratura Teatro Ecc. – Italy, Sens-Interdits Festival – France, The Boat People Project Göttingen – Germany, Association Djarama Ndayane – Senegal; PAL- Peoples Action for Learning; Rising Voices; etc.).

The Advisory Board incorporated Alícia Fuentes-Calle, former director of Linguapax and current associated researcher in the Department of Sociology of the University of York. We also made steps for the incorporation of Kit Woolard, professor emeritus in the Department of Sociology of the University of California San Diego and teacher of the Linguapax and UAB course "Linguistic diversity, what for?", and Marja-Liisa Olthuis, academic, activist, writer and translator, winner of the 2020 Linguapax Award and also a teacher of the online course "Linguistic diversity, what for?".