

Linguapax International NIF G62644232
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Linguapax
International
In official partnership
with UNESCO
(consultative status)

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ACTIVITY REPORT

2020

UNESCO AND THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES 2022-2032

The UN has entrusted UNESCO with drawing up the Action Plan for the Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032) during the years 2020 and 2021. Linguapax International, as an organization in Special Consultative status with the UN, collaborates actively as a member of the *ad-hoc* group to prepare the Global Action Plan for the activities of the Decade, while also being a permanent observer.

With this goal in mind, during the whole 2020, and despite the difficulties originated by the pandemic, we mobilized the association's network in a coordinated way, to identify the most effective goals and strategies to bring awareness to the values of linguistic and cultural diversity in the local contexts where each delegation works. We also worked in Catalonia, in order to highlight the language of the country as a common and reference language for all people who live here, in the increasingly diverse and multicultural framework of the global society we live in.

The activities developed in 2020 were carried out in collaboration with organizations and institutions that conduct similar activities, like universities, research centres, organizations that defend the linguistic rights and the UNESCO Chair in Linguistic and Cultural Diversity of the Institute of Catalan Studies. Catalan specialists and other experts from all over the world came together to approach the management of linguistic and cultural diversity, suggesting solutions to apply in our country as well as internationally.

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF ENDANGERED LANGUAGES AND UNESCO EVENT

As a closing act of the International Year of Indigenous Languages 2019 and in the occasion of the launching of the Decade of Indigenous Languages organized by UNESCO, the National Institute of Indigenous Languages and the Cultural Department of Mexico organized the **International Congress of Endangered Languages**. From 25 to 28 February, 2020, more than 400 participants from all over the world got together with the intention to "Make a decade of action in favour of the indigenous languages 2022-2023" with the motto "everything for everyone", which encourages to fight against the linguistic discrimination that is still prevailing in the sociocultural, economic and political life of the global society.

The official languages of the Congress were Spanish, English and Nahuatl, the historical language of the valley region of Mexico.

The structure of the Congress included two days of presentations of experiences in favour of global linguistic diversity and two days dedicated to the UNESCO event, considered "high level" and called *Making a decade of action for indigenous languages*, which ended with the

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Los Pinos Declaration, a draft based on the comments and suggestions of the participant community, which is the starting point for the Global Action Plan for the Decade of Indigenous Languages that will be elaborated during 2021 and 2022.

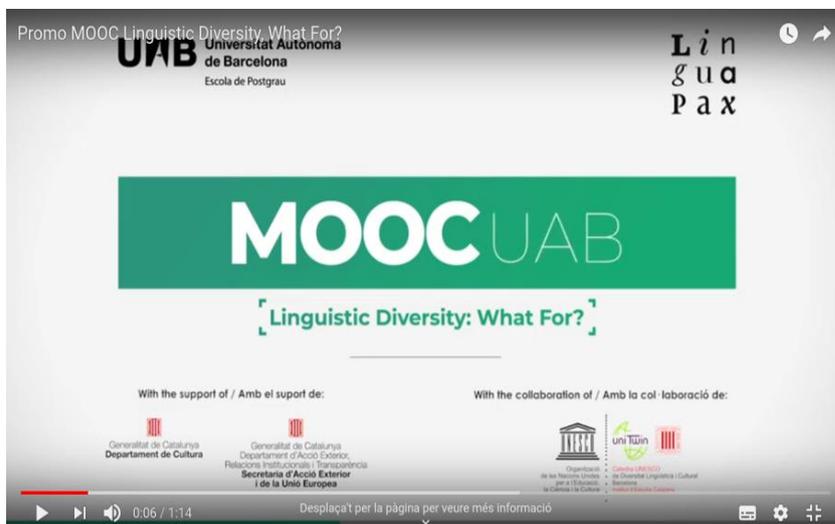
The exposition *Voices of the earth* also took place, a display of the global linguistic diversity and the weakness of the resources available for its development and strengthening.

Linguapax participated in the international panel of endangered languages and linguistic politics, where Mònica Pereña, current president of the organization, spoke about linguistic diversity in Europe. The Latin America delegation coordinator participated in one of the sessions, introducing the Group of Facilitation for Endangered Languages (GALA, Spanish initials), which advocates for a radical change in linguistic politics through a revitalisation project developed in Mexico.

The high-level event, where the decisions on the Decade are taken, was organized in two days, February 27 and 28. On the first day several presentations highlighted strategic actions for the Decade of Indigenous Languages based on the experience of the International Year of Indigenous Languages 2019. During the second day discussion forums took place and included subjects, such as the proposal of creation of a Global Atlas of Languages, which is one of the Decade goals, or the strategies to build peace in the framework of appreciating, celebrating and developing linguistic diversity and its multiple implications in the social and educational aspects, which are some of the purposes of the UN through UNESCO, as a part of the goals for sustainable development traced by the UN and debated in the Congress.

MOOC “LANGUAGE DIVERSITY, WHAT FOR?”

During 2020 we finished the contents for the MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) “Language diversity, what for?”, which offers a panoramic and introductory vision of linguistic diversity, distributed in five blocks: 1) Introduction and transversal perspectives, 2) Languages and territories of origin, 3) Languages and people movement, 4) Linguistic revitalisation and 5) Languages, creativity, innovation, and social transformation.



The goal of this project is to connect people, organizations and institutions from all over the world interested in linguistic and cultural diversity so that we can share knowledge, exchange experiences and encourage the development of joint projects.

The course content was elaborated by experts from the Linguapax international network, members of universities, organizations, and institutions from all over the world, and is presented in different languages (often, the teachers' native languages), with subtitles in Catalan and English. We elaborated debate forums and evaluation tools, and all of this was validated and approved by the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and the international platform Coursera, which hosts and distributes the course.

During the last term of the year, we prepared the dissemination plan and the launching of the course, planned for 24 January 2021.

2020 LINGUAPAX AWARD

The winner of 2020 Linguapax International Award was Marja-Liisa Olthuis, for her work in the revitalisation of the Sami language and culture.

In August 2009, Olthuis created, along with the university, an Inari Sami education centre and Inari Sami associations, an unique education program, which included an intensive one-year Inari Sami language course. The participants were rigorously selected based on the Sami community needs. In two years, Finland had already financed the project completely.



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The course was free for the participants, who received the same salary that they had been earning from their previous jobs.

The course and its results were described in detail, together with the people who collaborated, in her book “Revitalising Indigenous Languages. How to Recreate a Lost Generation (2013)”.

Without her, Inari Sami would have no children or adult speakers in a few decades. Currently, there are dozens of children who have Inari Sami as their first or second language, and there are 450 speakers in total. Progressively, a process of awareness on the importance of language revitalisation is being created. Inari Sami is now living a process of full transformation.

Due to the pandemic, the award ceremony that was supposed to take place in Barcelona was cancelled. However, we wanted to have media coverage of the award and to disseminate the work of the winner, so we took advantage of the commemorative event of the International Mother Language Day (see below) to publicize the name of the winner. We disseminated her work extensively via the Linguapax website and social media, as well as the electronic newsletter e-Linguapax.

PUBLIC EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY

In collaboration with the UNESCO Chair of Linguistic and Cultural Diversity and the Catalan Studies Institute, Linguapax commemorated the International Mother Language Day, which is celebrated on 21 February.



The event took place in the Espai Vilaweb. We presented the 2019 Linguapax Review, “Old Kava in new pumpkins: linguistic revitalisation and education in Hawaii” and we publicized the name of the 2020 Linguapax Award winner (see above). Rubèn Fernández, coordinator of the report, and Màrius Serra, philologist, writer, and author of the book *Res és perfecte a Hawaii* (Nothing is perfect in Hawaii) participated in the celebration. The presentation is available on our Youtube channel.

EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES 2020

Linguapax joined the European Day of Languages celebration (26 September) participating in the 2020 Jewish Cinema Festival of the Filmoteca de Catalunya.

On Friday, 25 September, in the Chomón Room of Filmoteca de Catalunya, Emili Boix, professor in Sociolinguistics at the University of Barcelona and member of the Linguapax board, presented the films *Yiddish* and *In Search of Ladino*, which are about Yiddish poetry and the Ladino language and culture. He also spoke with the philosopher and journalist Paula Kuffer.



MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION OF LINGUAPAX INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

Since 2006, Linguapax coordinates an international network of experts and entities that share the goal to strengthen peoples' identities, especially through their languages and cultures, as a path to intercultural understanding and peace. The main actions developed by the Linguapax International Delegations in 2020 were the following:

LINGUAPAX EUROPE

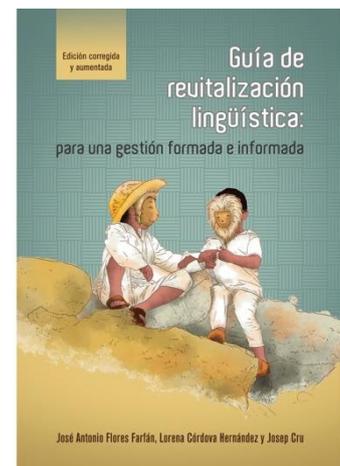
“ARE EUROPEAN LANGUAGES INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES?” report

In addition to the contribution with qualitative documentation, some members of the Linguapax-Europe delegation started working on a document which describes the situation of danger of the European non-official languages. In this way, these languages can be object of attention and support in the framework of the action designed for the International Decade of Indigenous Languages. The coordination difficulties caused by the pandemic have postponed the completion of this report. However, we hope that the report will be available during 2021.

LINGUAPAX EUROPE/LATIN AMERICA

Linguistic revitalization guide: for an educated and informed management

In collaboration with the European and Latin American delegations we published a more extensive and correct version of this linguistic revitalization guide. The main goal of the book is to offer different strategies to initiate linguistic revitalization projects. It is a work about applied sociolinguistics that goes beyond the description and theorization about linguistic movement processes. The book, which includes practical exercises with examples of different parts of the world, can be used as a course manual and it is also accessible for a non-academic public. Due to the success of the publication, it is expected to be turned into a living project and to be enriched with experiences from different parts of the world, and translated into English and Russian (since there has been a lot of interest from communities that work in Arctic languages).



LINGUAPAX LATIN AMERICA

Throughout 2020, the Linguapax Latin America delegation, led by Dr. José Antonio Flores, coordinated the actions of the Accompanying Group for Endangered Languages (GALA, *Grupo de Acompañamiento de Lenguas Amenazadas*), a Mexican collective that currently gathers more than 300 members from different sectors: academics, professors, native speakers of minority languages and people interested in the preservation of cultural and linguistic heritage. The main goals of the group are: a) make an impact in government linguistic policies, and b) strengthen the cooperative relationships between speakers of minority languages and the rest of the society, to promote and consolidate multilingualism.



After the success of the actions carried out and with the intention to design projects that are a part of the development of the Global Action Plan for the Decade of Indigenous Languages, the GALA platform decided to widen its

action area and promote actions in other linguistic communities, such as Quechuan and
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Aymaran. The platform also started collaborating with experts and activists from Peru, Ecuador and Brazil. In addition, this delegation produced a series of materials in Nahuatl, Mixtec and Popoluca to maintain the education in these languages among the children of these communities.

LINGUAPAX ASIA

The Asian International Linguapax delegation, led by Dr. Jelisava Sethna, made possible the following projects:



JAPAN ETHNOLINGUISTIC ATLAS

Mapping of the languages spoken in Japan. The purpose is to create a map that reflects the indigenous communities (Miyako, Okinawa), the ethnic communities that speak other languages (Vietnamese, Nepalese, etc.) and the communities of deaf people that speak sign language in Japan; all of this based on the observation, on previously published data and urban distribution of non-Japanese population (Koreatown, Chinatown, Braziltown). There was no visual atlas in Japan where ethnic and minority languages were shown.

MIYAKOAN KARUTA PROVERB

Educational card game to learn the Miyakoan language, a Japanese endangered language. The possibility of having attractive educational materials is fundamental for the survival of languages. The purpose of this project is to document old Miyakoan proverbs in Miyakoan, Japanese and English, as a multilingual resource for primary and high school education. Its publication has been postponed due to the pandemic, but we hope to see it finished in 2021.

CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY 2020

In the framework of this celebration, a group of exchange students at Tsukuba University carried out lectures, as well as video and poster presentations to reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of their environment.

JAPAN ASSOCIATION OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Linguapax Asia also participated in the Japan Association of Language Teachers (JALT) annual conference 2020, which was online due to the pandemic. The subject of the conference was “Online Communities of Teachers and Learners” and Linguapax Asia was present through its head of Education, Dr Sachiyo Fujita-Round.

In the academic aspect, Linguapax Asia had to postpone the “Linguapax Asia Symposium: Learning and Teaching Languages of the World, Sharing Common Values, Goals and Challenges” that was supposed to be celebrated in June, due to the pandemic.

DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

LINGUAPAX REVIEW 2020

Linguapax Review 2020, the annual publication of the association is called “Translating diversity”. Throughout this publication we reflect on the natural act of translation from English and different practices, and we write about its specificities, advantages, and dangers.



The magazine has seven articles from international, literary, advertisement, automatic, legal, and audio-visual translation professionals, as well as linguistic mediation professionals.

The magazine is disseminated in Catalan and English through the association’s website, through Scientific Committee members and through social networks.

The magazine was presented publicly on December 10 in an online open access event. About sixty people interested in translation and management of linguistic diversity attended the event, which is already [available on our website in Catalan and English](#).

In addition to the presentation of the articles by the authors, there also were interventions from three members from the Linguapax international scientific committee. The scientists, [Anvita Abbi](#), [José Antonio Flores Farfán](#) and [Dónall Ó Riagáin](#), offered a detailed analysis of some of the articles. The videos are available on our Youtube channel.

WEBSITE AND DISSEMINATION NETWORKS



Preparations for the Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032) have begun



During 2020 we amplified our dissemination capacity for the Linguapax actions with the creation of an online newsletter – **e-Linguapax**, through which we offer the news about our activities, delegations and those that are more relevant and could be of interest for our public. The newsletter, which is distributed in Catalan and English, has approximately 250 followers (Catalan version) and 130 (English version).

We also posted news, publications and events through our social media, such as Twitter (a thousand followers) and Facebook (250 followers).

