HOW MAJORITIES CAN SUPPORT MINORITY LANGUAGES

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Sámeğiellat
(Sami languages)

- ~9 different living languages, ranging from 2 to 20,000 speakers
- Spoken in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia
- Northern Sami is the biggest; about 90% of those who speak a Sami language speak Northern Sami
- Institutional support: Sami Parliament
Two-pronged approach

- Getting more contributors to the Northern Sami Wikipedia
- Getting more Sami content for Wikimedia projects
Partners

- National Library
- National Archive
- Mapping Authority
- Sámi University of Applied Sciences
- Sami advisory group
Challenges

- Norwegianization
- Distances
- Paying editors?
- No native speakers, we're coming in as outsiders
Takeaways

- Tap into existing structures and use your existing skillsets
- Meeting people face-to-face
- Persistence
Canada

- ~60 living indigenous languages, ranging from 2 to 35,000 speakers
- Only three have a Wikipedia: Atikamekw, Cree, Inuktitut (only Atikamekw is active)
- Most are only spoken by elders and are in danger of extinction

Wikimedia Canada’s Aboriginal Outreach Program: 
https://ca.wikimedia.org/wiki/Aboriginal_communities_outreach

Wikimedians of North American Indigenous Languages User Group: 

Map of indigenous languages families in North America
Ish ishwar, CC BY-SA 2.0
“Language is the main tool permitting to enrich the culture, to receive, share and pass on knowledge from generation. The key to identity and to conservation of the culture of a person is his ancestral language.”

- Assembly of First Nations of Canada
Wikipetcia
Atikamekw
Nehiromowin

- Created in 2013 within the Cree Wikipedia (cr.wp) as part of a pedagogic project in a high school
- Moved into Wikimedia Incubator in 2016
- Created as its own Wikipedia in 2017 (atj.wp)
“This is a way to pass on ancestral knowledge using computers and it allows to preserve traditional practices. It is an educational tool for all.”

- Nehirowisiw
What needs to be done to create a new Wikipedia

- Have an active community of contributors (minimum 3) over several months
- Have articles
- Translate most-used messages of MediaWiki on TranslateWiki
Advice

- Meet in person
- Let them lead their own projects and make their own rules
- Get support/approval from their authorities
- Be flexible
- Learn about their context/history and be respectful
Training, training, training...

In person!
Challenges

- Oral tradition
- Isolated communities
- Different dialects
- Translation of the interface
Photography contests

Nitaskinan en photos

Missatikamekw, CC BY-SA 4.0

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Latin America

- approximately 522 Indigenous Peoples
- speaking approximately 420 languages
- make up around 10% of the region’s population

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map-Latin_America2.png
There are Wikipedia projects in indigenous languages

Quechua, Aymara, Náhuatl, Guaraní, Maya, Kaqchikel, Nawat, Mapudungun, Wayuunaiki, Namtrik, Bribri, Garifuna, Kichwa, Tarahumara, Purépecha del oeste de la sierra, Seri, Paumarí, Mayo, Ñe’engatú, Guarijío, O’odham, Tupí, Popoloca, Kiliwa, Araona, Amarakaeri, Otomí, Zapoteco del istmo, Yaqui, Tseltal, Tzotzil, Quechua ancashino, Miskito, Mazahua, Ese Eje, Mixteco, Huasteco, Quechua de Margos-Yarowilca-Lauricocha
Only 4 official projects

1. Quechua
2. Aymara
3. Guaraní
4. Náhuatl
Recommendation: facilitate leadership of the projects into the hands of native-speakers
User Group Proposal in Development

Native-speakers + experienced non-native speaking Wikimedians + other allies

Complement the work being done by affiliates
Functions

- Raise Awareness (social media)
- Build community
- Training, support, and mentorship
- Opportunities for participation in wider Wikimedia movement
Wikiwuj Editathon
July 2018 in Guatemala
Thank you!
Merci !
Mikwetc !
Gittu!
Enkosi!