The Diversity of Languages and Knowledge
More than half of the world’s languages are endangered. Without immediate action, they could go silent by the year 2100.

Every language is a window into the human mind. It is a record of the knowledge that societies have gained over generations of successful adaptation.

Language and knowledge vitality is critical to:

- Community well-being
- Science’s ability to understand the world
- Our ability to address global, societal, and environmental priorities

Recovering Voices
Fosters partnerships with communities around the world that are key to revitalizing and sustaining languages and knowledge.

Capitalizes on the collections and research strengths of the Smithsonian Institution to this end.

Seeks to understand the decline in linguistic diversity and develop effective responses to it.

Research Opportunities
Community Research. Apply to our Community Research Program and access our collections and archives to support the revitalization of your local language and knowledge.

Training. Get involved in our workshops and institutes, and our academic internships and fellowships.

Contact us to discuss specific funding or research opportunities.

EMAIL: recoveringvoices@si.edu
FACEBOOK: Facebook.com/recoveringvoices
TWITTER: @recovervoices
PHONE: 202.633.5039

GET INVOLVED
Support
Funding. Your financial support will allow us to fund community research on Smithsonian Collections, expand our digitization efforts so our archives and collections are more accessible, and broaden the scope of research carried out by Recovering Voices.

www.recoveringvoices.si.edu

Resilient futures built on diversity of languages and knowledge

Smithsonian Institution
National Museum of Natural History

ARCHIVES
RESEARCH
COMMUNITIES
COLLECTIONS
Now, more than ever, communities around the world are active in revitalizing their languages and knowledge. Community members are the primary drivers of revitalization and are in the best position to effect change. Recovering Voices recognizes this in its model of collaborative community-based research.

Sharing Collections
Access to collections is central to the recovery and regeneration of knowledge. Cultural artifacts embody knowledge of natural resources, the environment, history, social structures, and collective memory. Natural specimens provide insights into former environments and elicit contemporary conversations. The National Museum of Natural History alone holds 145 million biological and mineral specimens and cultural artifacts.

Opening Archives
Archival holdings range from the finest detail of a language to the history of a people. The National Anthropological Archives holds documentation on languages and cultures from six of the world’s continents. Recovering Voices connects community researchers with Smithsonian archives both through on-site visits and through digitization of materials.

BREATH OF LIFE
Since 2011, through the National Breath of Life Archival Institute for Indigenous Languages, the National Anthropological Archives has offered a wealth of resources to researchers from more than 50 Native American language communities. The archives hold historical records critical to the revitalization of language, culture, and knowledge. http://nationalbreathoflife.org

WAUJA
The Wauja Tribe of Brazil is addressing the loss of traditional knowledge and local biodiversity. At the Smithsonian, Wauja leaders researched historic films and natural history specimens to develop tangible and concrete approaches to address the cultural and ecological changes taking place in their community.

BINNIZÁ
In collaboration with knowledge bearers from the community of La Ventosa in Oaxaca, Mexico, Smithsonian scientists conducted comprehensive research on the local flora. This research produced botanical samples, photos, audio recordings, and educational materials for the community. The work also motivated the start of language workshops for children, which are the first concerted revitalization efforts in La Ventosa. http://neho.si.edu

Leading Research
Recovering Voices researchers contribute towards the sustainability of languages and knowledge through documentation and rigorous study. Our research is global and is carried out both in the museum as well as with communities. Our extensive research has gained international recognition. Recovering Voices researchers participate in international panels convened by UNESCO and hold strategic partnerships with institutions around the world.

ANISHNAABE
Following research in the Smithsonian collections, Anishnaabe researchers from Ontario, Canada produced videos with an elder as he collected and processed sap into maple syrup. These videos support the teaching of the language and traditional ecological knowledge to Anishnaabe youth.

http://nationalbreathoflife.org

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