

*An interdisciplinary research program,  
examining issues in minoritized language  
revitalization and maintenance.*

# SMiLE

Sustaining Minoritized Languages in Europe

 Smithsonian

SMiLE Community Impact Report 2016-2020

CENTER FOR FOLKLIFE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE



# SMiLE Research Communities

▷ **76** Research Questions

▷ **18** Months

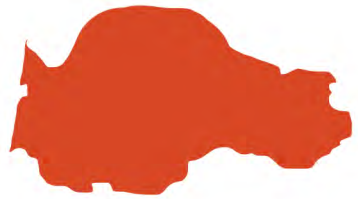
▷ **8** Regions in **5** Countries

▷ **6** Research Teams



## Irish (Gaelic)

The Oidhreacht Corca  
Dhuibhne Organization  
Western County Kerry



## Occitan (Italic)

Toulouse and Environs, Occitania



## Galician (Italic)

Semente organization  
Santiago de Compostela, Galicia



## Griko & Greko (Grecian)

Grecìa Salentina & Calabria



## North Frisian (Germanic)

Islands and Nordfriesland,  
Schleswig-Holstein



## Upper & Lower Sorbian (Slavic)

Lusatia, Saxony & Brandenburg

Outcome  
1

# Critical Understanding

*Nicole Dołowy-Rybińska and Cordula Ratajczak at the Jolka festival in the Upper Sorbian village of Nuknica, near Budyšin.*

Photo by Maćij Bulank

outcome

1

# Critical Understanding

*Assessing existing approaches,  
identifying needs and new directions*

- ▷ The Oidhreacht Corca Dhuibhne organization in the Irish community identified program strengths and gaps in their use of technology
- ▷ The Occitan community workshop L'éducation, la transmission et l'avenir des langues minoritaires discussed areas for improving the scope of Occitan language education
- ▷ Galician parents at the Semente school reflected on dynamics of family language policy for community members
- ▷ Upper and Lower Sorbians discussed problems and ineffectiveness in their language education

assessment

outcome

1

# Critical Understanding

*Assessing existing approaches,  
identifying needs and new directions*

- ▷ Include more cultural and historical context in Occitan language learning, need for more social spaces outside of the classrooms to use Occitan
- ▷ Lower Sorbian language space is needed, especially for new speakers
- ▷ Semente parents invited SMiLE team to hold interactive workshop on dynamics and challenges of minority language displacement during teenage years
- ▷ Based on community feedback, Irish researchers plan language initiative focused on teens' use of Irish

findings &  
new directions

outcome

2

# Connecting People & Communities

*Children show off artwork created at Casadh na Gráige.*

Photo courtesy of OChD



outcome

2

# Connecting People & Communities

*within, across, beyond*

*Creating opportunities to use language  
and learn from one another*

- ▷ Two-day workshop for Lower Sorbians
- ▷ Support for activities at the Grika Milume association to engage and connect youth in the Griko language
- ▷ Semente leaders reflected on their journeys and expertise with the wider Galician society at EDiSO
- ▷ North Frisian monster-themed writing workshop and publication for youth

outcome

2

# Connecting People & Communities

*within, across, beyond*

*Creating opportunities to use language  
and learn from one another*

- ▷ Greko and Griko language communities met, exchanged opportunities, community video projects, and created a bilingual version of the newspaper Spitta
- ▷ Semente instructors and researchers presented their approaches and SMiLE research results for Greko and Sorbian language communities
- ▷ Greko presentation of research results for Lower Sorbian learners
- ▷ The Irish Oidhreacht Corca Dhuibhne program, Tús Maith, developed own YouTube channel inspired by the Semente language programs' channel



outcome

2

# Connecting People & Communities

*within, across, beyond*

*Creating opportunities to use language  
and learn from one another*

- ▷ Manx, Scottish Gaelic, and Basque organizations interested in the Irish Oidhreacht Corca Dhuibhne family support programs
- ▷ Galician and Lower Sorbian community members attended HELISET TFE SKÁL – 'Let the Languages Live' international conference in BC, Canada, June 2019
- ▷ University of Flensburg North Frisian studied connection with the Sámi language community through SMiLE Advisory Board member

outcome  
3

# Educational Opportunities

*Nils Langer speaks with students in Fohr, Germany,  
about studying North Frisian.*

Photo courtesy of Nils Langer

outcome

3

## Educational Opportunities

*To grow and share new knowledge*

- ▷ Occitan community workshop L'éducation, la transmission et l'avenir des langues minoritaires gave Occitan students opportunity to engage their community and academics in discussions of Occitan language education and to present results of their master's fieldwork
- ▷ Sorbian community members were trained to conduct interviews and do transcription, they gained experience organizing community language events and giving public presentations at conferences
- ▷ Members of the Irish Corca Dhuibhne community received linguistic and ethnographic training, encouraging some community members to consider continued involvement in academic language work





outcome

3

## Educational Opportunities

*To grow and share new knowledge*

- ▷ North Frisian transcribing and translation training for students and community members. Linguistic data from SMiLE related transcriptions used in master's thesis
- ▷ Ethnographic fieldwork experience, network opportunities, skills and resources gained from working on the SMiLE project used in the completion of Galician student's PhD



Outcome

# 4 Public Awareness

*Greko poetry reading in Bova, Calabria*

Photo by Mary Linn

outcome

# 4 Public Awareness

*Increasing general awareness  
and raising interest*

- ▷ Raised prestige of Occitan through foreign researcher and the Smithsonian's enhanced media attention
- ▷ Inspiration to continue the Griko newspaper Spitta and include articles in Greko as well
- ▷ Independent newspaper articles, television and radio programs, interviews and blog posts covering SMiLE projects, events and language learning courses





outcome

# 4 Public Awareness

*Increasing general awareness  
and raising interest*

- ▷ Blogs from each community on Smithsonian Folklife Magazine and shared on social media
- ▷ Irish translated version of blog Language as a Story: Learning Irish in Corca Dhuibhne
- ▷ International projection of Semente increased attention from public institutions in Galicia

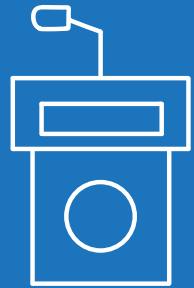


# Output in numbers

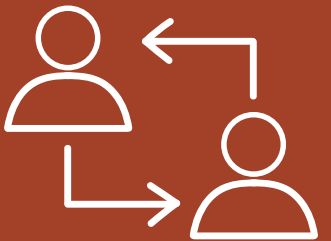
40 MEDIA STORIES



54 CONFERENCES  
& INVITED TALKS



17 COMMUNITY/  
COLLABORATIONS



23 PUBLICATIONS



28 COLLABORATIONS



3 SMITHSONIAN  
INTERNSHIPS



3 THESES/  
DISSERTATIONS



6 CASE STUDIES



11 WEBSITES/  
DIGITAL CONTENT



# impact on field

*Community-engaged research  
works to level inequalities*



74%  
Female  
Participants



68%  
Student  
Participants



67%  
Female-led  
Research Teams



45%  
Community  
Members



# SMiLE

Research & Fellowships  
are sponsored by



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Visit the **SMiLE** website  
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or contact Program Director,  
Mary S. Linn at [LinnM@si.edu](mailto:LinnM@si.edu)

