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## **ELF Awards 10 Grants in 2004**

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As in every year for the past seven years, the Endangered Language Fund has been pleased to offer researchers and community activists a chance to apply for grants to pursue their work on endangered languages. This year, as we have come to expect, there was a large crop of excellent proposals. We received 74 applications, dealing with languages in all regions of the world. From these, our hard-working selection committee made some extremely difficult decisions and narrowed the choice down to the ten best, the most that we could afford. They are briefly described here. They cover a variety of aspects of language use, revitalization and documentation, but all are outstanding projects.

Our ability to award these grants is based on the contributions we receive from our members. We are very grateful that the contributions have been significant and constant. This has allowed us to increase the average size of the grants awarded every year. With over 6,000 languages, many if not most endangered, there is still much to be done, and we are not able to make as many awards as we would like. However, the enthusiasm and support of our members gives us confidence that we will be able to continue this essential work in maintaining our human heritage. These projects, and those to come in future years, will help us continue to make a difference.

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### **April Laktonen Counciller (Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository) and Jeff Leer (Alaska Native Language Center), Kodiak Alutiiq Conversational Booklet and CD**

As part of local and regional efforts to create learning materials to help revitalize the Alutiiq language, Counciller and Leer will research, write and edit a conversational booklet and accompanying CD for second-language learners. Alutiiq is an Eskimo-Aleut language most closely related to Central Yup'ik. The Kodiak dialect of Alutiiq is highly threatened, with only 37 identified speakers, the youngest of whom is 56. In order to satisfy the community's desire to maintain the language, a conscious effort is now required. Through other funds, the Alutiiq Museum is pursuing a Master/Apprentice program, in which a speaker and a learner spend time together, conversing only in the traditional language. The present program will supplement those efforts by making the language accessible in other settings.

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### **Tiemu'er (Yugur Cultural Research Office), Eastern Yugur-Chinese Bilingual Dictionary and Cultural Materials Project**

Tiemu'er is a native speaker of Eastern Yugur, a Mongolic language spoken by about 3,000 to 5,000 people in western China. His goal is to collect as much ethnographic and linguistic material as possible during the coming year. Since the language is still used in a variety of contexts, he will collect such categories as personal narratives, oral histories, folklore, descriptions of cultural activities, and songs. Although these texts will provide the backbone for a dictionary project, they will not be sufficient. Direct work on lexical elicitation and checking will also be undertaken. The dictionary will be a bilingual one, since most Eastern Yugur speakers are also fluent in Mandarin. This will open up these texts for ethnic Yugurs who have not yet learned the language.

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### **Ardis Eschenberg (Nebraska Indian Community College), A Teaching Grammar of Umo<sup>n</sup>ho<sup>n</sup>**

Umo<sup>n</sup>ho<sup>n</sup> (Omaha), spoken in Nebraska, has received some attention from linguists over the years, but very little of that attention has been fully published. A forthcoming grammatical sketch will provide some documentation but does not serve the needs of the community's language revitalization program. As Umo<sup>n</sup>ho<sup>n</sup> is severely endangered, the task of creating such a text is urgent. Classes in the language are offered at two branches of Nebraska Indian Community College and at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. Eschenberg has served as the linguist and a language teacher for this effort and will coordinate the work on the grammar with as many elders as possible. Audio recordings will supplement what will be the first full description of the language; recordings have already been obtained for such topics as greetings, weather terms, and imperative formation. The present project will include video in new recordings, to make the material even more useful.

### **Andrew Cowell (U. Colorado), Early Arapaho Texts**

Some of the most valuable language material for current speakers was collected in the past by linguists and others, usually for their own purposes. Often, these materials contain prayers, songs and stories that are no longer completely known, if they survive at all. Having native speakers available to help with the retranscription, retranslation and re-interpretation is still vital. For Arapaho, the youngest fluent speakers are in their sixties, so now is an appropriate time to revisit some of the texts that were collected from the 1890s to the 1910s. The Arapaho community is interested in revitalizing their language and would like to see these texts in a more useable form. By tapping into the remaining specialized knowledge of the native speakers, Cowell will make these texts as useful as possible for future generations.

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**Maria Sheila B. Zamar (U. Hawaii, Manoa),  
Ayta-Sorsogon Documentation Project: Saving  
an Endangered Language, Saving a Community**

Approximately 150 languages are spoken in the Philippines, most belonging to the Western Malayo-Polynesian group of the Austronesian family. Many of the minor languages are moribund, especially the Negrito group, with Ayto-Sorsogon at the top of the list. This language is spoken by about 40 people in a remote area of Prieto Diaz, Sorsogon. Rapid urbanization in this area has forced many of the people to give up their rural life. As often happens, they have improved their economic outlook but endangered their community and language. Zamar will gather data about the linguistic situation and raise awareness of the issues involved in language loss. She will construct a multi-lingual wordlist (Ayta-Sorsogon-Filipino-English) arranged alphabetically and thematically. Recordings of traditional stories and songs will also be made.

**Kirk Miller (U. California, Santa Barbara),  
Documenting Hadza, an Endangered Language  
Isolate of Tanzania**

Hadza is an isolate, that is, a language that is not obviously related to any nearby (or even not so nearby) languages. It is spoken by several hundred of the thousand or so Hadzabe, the last functioning hunter-gatherers in Africa. It is spoken in two minority communities, one on either side of the intermittent salt lake Eyasi in central Tanzania. While it is not known whether the two have different dialects, it is only known in one that the language is still being learned by children. Miller plans an eight-month trip to establish a working relationship with the Hadza community and Tanzanian officials, to become conversant with the Hadza language (apparently the first linguist who will do so), and to collect and gloss conversational texts. He will record and transcribe narratives and spontaneous conversation from a range of adults and children in a range of settings. Very little work has been done on acquisition of languages with extensive click systems, so access to the children will be of great intellectual value. The community has expressed interest in having primary edu-

cation in their own language; having a full description of the language is an important step for making that happen. If relearning the language later becomes necessary, it will be of great importance to have texts of all types available, especially those that involve everyday communication (which is often lacking in traditional anthropological and linguistic work).

**Rosemary G. Beam de Azcona (U. California, Berkeley),  
Continued Emergency Documentation of San Agustín Mixtepec and Coatlan  
Loxicha Zapotec.**

This award continues one given in 2003 to work on a language with only two elderly speakers of San Agustín Mixtepec remaining; one of these passed away this year, making the work that much more urgent. The work done in the previous year could only begin to scratch the surface, so further funding was necessary. Beam de Azcona will spend further time with the remaining speaker, expanding a dictionary from its current base of 300 words. The Coatlan Loxicha dictionary currently totals 4762 words, with many more to come. Texts have also been recorded, and a grammar based on this material will form the basis of Beam de Azcona's dissertation. She hopes to be able to do ethnobotanical fieldwork as well. Some of the results can be seen at: <http://www.linguistics.berkeley.edu/~rosemary/samz.htm>  
**Zvezdana Vrzic (New York U.), Text Collection and Digital Archiving of Istro-Romanian**

Istro-Romanian is a severely endangered language spoken on the peninsula of Istria in northwest Croatia. The majority of the 200 or so speakers are middle-aged and elderly; many use the language only sporadically, and few children are learning it. Many of the remaining speakers have emigrated outside Croatia. In this project, a large collection of texts from the 1930s will be digitized, and new texts will be collected from speakers currently living in New York City. The printed texts will be challenging since they are not translated, but they are an irreplaceable resource. The new texts will be collected on whatever stories or conversations can be obtained. All these materials will be made available to the Istro-Romanian Cultural Center in Zhejane, Croatia.

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**Ibrahima Ouattara (U. Ougadougou), Save the Tiefo Language**

The last remaining village where Tiefo is spoken is Daramandougou in western Burkina Faso. Present plans entail moving all residents due to a mining project, which will scatter the speakers throughout the country. This will probably result in the language truly being lost; indeed, it has sometimes been proclaimed extinct already by linguists who could not find current speakers. Ouattara, a partial speaker of Tiefo, will document the language as well as possible before the relocation efforts begin. This will include a start on a language survey, collections of texts, and a more public discussion of the fate of the language.

**Ilse Lehiste (Ohio State U.) and Karl Pajusalu (U. Tartu), Livonian Prosody**

Livonian is one of the Baltic-Finnic languages, closely related to Estonian and Finnish. It was the first language the western crusaders came in con-

tact with at the turn of the 12/13 centuries. The Livonians gave their name to the land called Livland in German and the Province of Livland in the Russian empire. There is a single elderly speaker remaining who learned Livonian as his first language; the exact number of Livonian-Latvian bilinguals is not known, but it is unlikely to exceed a dozen or two. The present project examines the prosody of Livonian, which differs from other Finno-Ugric languages by including contrastive tone; it is assumed that Livonian has become a tone language due to contact with the tonal (but completely unrelated) Latvian. The study concentrates on a comparison of the realization of tones in the Livonian-Latvian bilinguals' two languages with that of the surrounding Latvian. The methodology involves recording and analysis of specially prepared test materials, similar to those used successfully in a study of Erzya, another related language. With this, it may be possible to recover a bit of the unique history of this Baltic area.