IndyLan

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

IndyLan Newsletter – June 2020

Welcome to the second newsletter of our Erasmus+ project **Mobile Virtual Learning for Indigenous Languages** (IndyLan). The 26-month project (2019-2021) is led by Heriot-Watt University and the Coordinator is Dr Katerina Strani from the Department of Languages and Intercultural Studies.

IndyLan includes 5 partners from 4 countries (UK, Finland, Norway and Spain) and aims to develop a mobile application which will help to learn the languages and cultures associated with the following indigenous languages: **Gaelic**, **Scots**, **Cornish**, **Basque**, **Galician** and **Saami**. The project will develop an educational tool designed specifically for users to learn not only some of Europe's endangered languages but also more about the cultures of the people who speak these languages.

The partners are:

- Heriot-Watt University, UK
- Cornwall Council, UK
- Saami Council Headquarters, Norway
- Learnmera Oy, Finland
- Asociación Moviéndote por la Integración y la Participación Ciudadana, Spain

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The IndyLan application will help speakers of English, Spanish, Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish to learn **Gaelic**, **Scots, Cornish**, **Basque**, **Galician** and **Saami**, all endangered at different degrees.

The tool constitutes a gamified language-learning solution in the form of a mobile application. Smartphones have become a popular educational tool and the number of the smartphone

and tablet users of all ages is constantly growing in the EU. The application is building on a previous project, Moving Languages, with the key difference that IndyLan will produce one application for all languages, and not multiple language-specific applications as Moving Languages did. IndyLan will contain around 4,000 vocabulary items (both terms and expressions) in about 100 categories. The modes that will be available in the application are: Vocabulary; Phrases; Dialogues; Grammar; Culture; Test.

The app is scheduled to be launched at the **Final Dissemination Conference in Cornwall in September 2021.** It will be available for download globally for free in both iOS and Android. Like all language-learning apps, IndyLan is complementary to other language- and culture courses and can be considered to be part of self-study material.

Our vision is for the IndyLan app to contribute to endangered language learning and revitalisation so that these languages remain alive and relevant in contemporary societies and economies.

News and updates

Website launch

Our project website was launched in February! The website is available in 10 languages (and soon we will also have Swedish). It has a dedicated section on the languages and people of the IndyLan app, with videos and resources. On our website you can also find news and updates, as well as a list of our downloadable outputs.

Intellectual Output 1 completed

Our Intellectual Output 1: *Report on endangered indigenous languages in partner countries and mobile learning solutions* is ready and can be downloaded from our website

The report provides an overview of endangered languages in the partner countries (UK, Finland, Norway, Spain) and a review of mobile and other virtual learning tools for learning and promoting these languages. The report starts with an overview of the endangered languages in Europe, and the current EU policies concerning indigenous and minority languages. Next, it provides some figures and statistics regarding the above six indigenous and endangered languages, which are part of the IndyLan app (Basque, Cornish, Gaelic, Galician, Scots and Sámi), in the partner countries (UK, Spain, Finland, Norway). Finally, it reviews mobile learning solutions and online resources available for these endangered languages in partner countries (for Android, iOS, and Windows platforms).

Each partner researched, downloaded and tested where possible, and evaluated the available language learning applications. The search was carried out on Google, Apple and other markets, using the mobile devices and PCs. The result of this work is not only a rich collection of language learning applications described in detail, but also an important collection of suggestions and useful information for developing the IndyLan app.

Promotional Cornish video

Watch Mark Trevethan from Cornwall Council promoting the IndyLan app in Cornish !

https://youtu.be/W0dYlA_fEgI

Covid-19 impact on our project

These last few months have certainly been different and difficult for many of us. Many aspects of our work and our lives have changed as we are being affected in ways we could not imagine.
In light of the rapidly changing situation with the Coronavirus pandemic, we had to cancel our face-to-face meeting in Karasjok, Sápmi, Norway which was due to take place on 10-11 June. We met twice online instead, once in April and once in June. If circumstances allow it, we will meet in Karasjok in March 2021 at our scheduled third project meeting, otherwise we will meet in Bilbao as originally planned.

Our 2nd project meeting took place online due to Covid-19 restrictions

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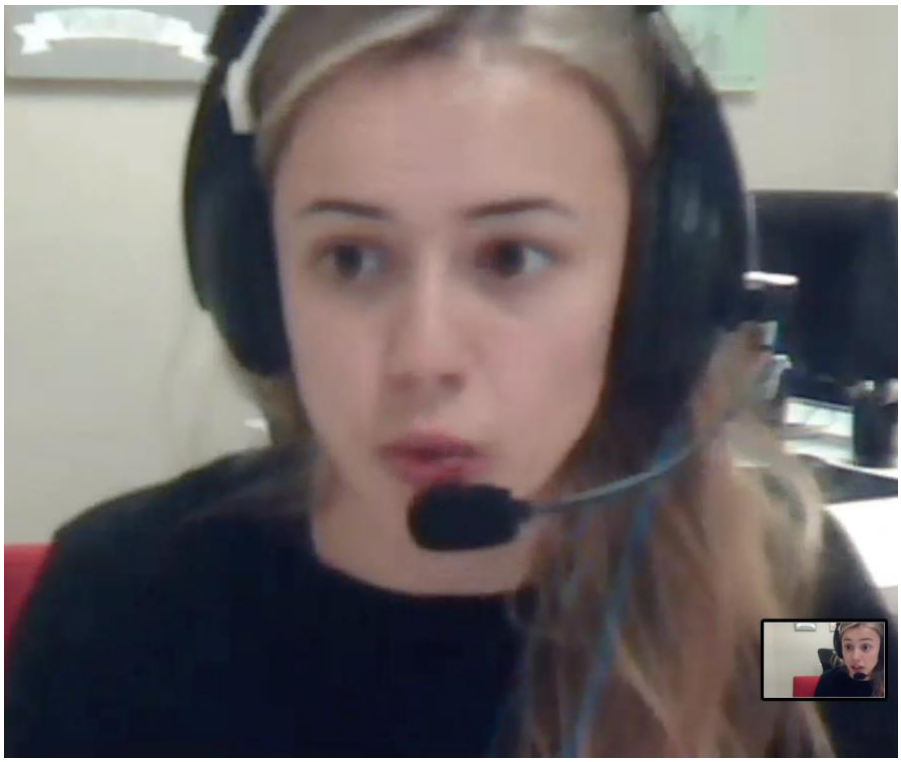
Katerina (coordinator, HWU) dialling in from her home in Edinburgh

Steve (Scots researcher, HWU), joining from his home outside Edinburgh

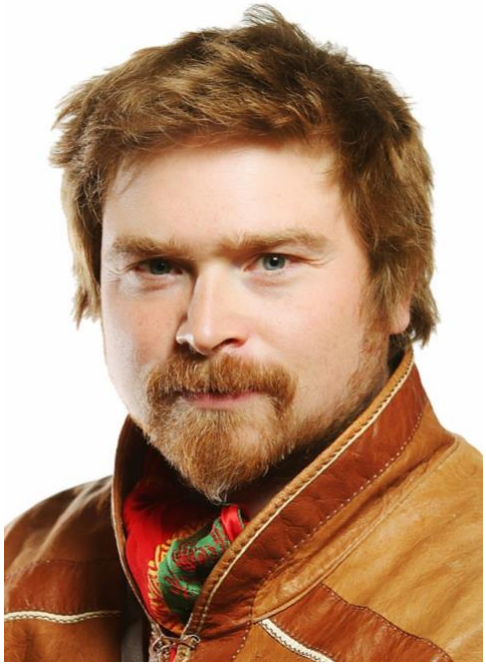
Veronica (Learnmera) in lockdown in Portugal, looking very happy indeed!

Mark (Cornwall Council) joined from his home in Cornwall



Garazi (Moviéndote) joined from her office in Bilbao, where the lockdown had just been lifted

Áile (Saami Council) from her office in Karasjok, where the lockdown had just been lifted



Beaska Niilas (Saami Council, Sámi researcher) also dialled in from Karasjok.

With the help of technology, we were able to hold an online partners' meeting on the 10th of June instead of our planned one in Karasjok. We had already held a catch-up meeting in April online, where we discussed the current and next stages of the project and made sure that everyone is all right and coping with the situation at the moment. In these two meetings we discussed the project's progress, dissemination, internal and external reviewing procedures, and Covid-19 contingency planning. The full agenda of the meeting can be found here.

Progress

- We received a **very positive review** of our Intellectual Output 1 and of the progress of our project so far by the external evaluator, Dr Philip McDermott, Senior Lecturer, School of Applied Social and Policy Sciences, University of Ulster.
- We submitted a **progress report** to our funder, Erasmus + UK, and we are awaiting results and any recommendations.
- **Intellectual Output 2** is the application itself, which will be ready in beta version by April 2021. Partners have completed the translation of about 4,000 vocabulary items for each language, which was no easy task, as there were many untranslatable terms (there are no words for yes or no in Cornish), terms with complicated translations ('to own something' in Gaelic) and other terms with more than one translations (see snow terminology in Sámi).
- Partners are now in the process of translating phrases and dialogues, developing the grammar tabs and the culture tabs. After this, we will be producing audio files for all these terms and phrases!
- The **developers** will have the app backend ready soon, so the app will start taking shape.
- **Intellectual Output 3** will be the pilot testing of the app which will be carried out by remote users as well as participants in our multiplier events in all partner countries in the summer of 2021.
- The app is scheduled to be launched at the Final Dissemination Conference in Cornwall in September 2021.

Next project meetings

→ September 2020 (online)

→ December 2020 (online)

→ March 2021: Bilbao or Karasjok – to be confirmed!

Will the March 2021 meeting take place in Karasjok?

Or in Bilbao?

If you are an educator, the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe- has just opened a call for **#AdultLearning** community to share their stories.

Why not share yours at https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/community-stories-initiative ?

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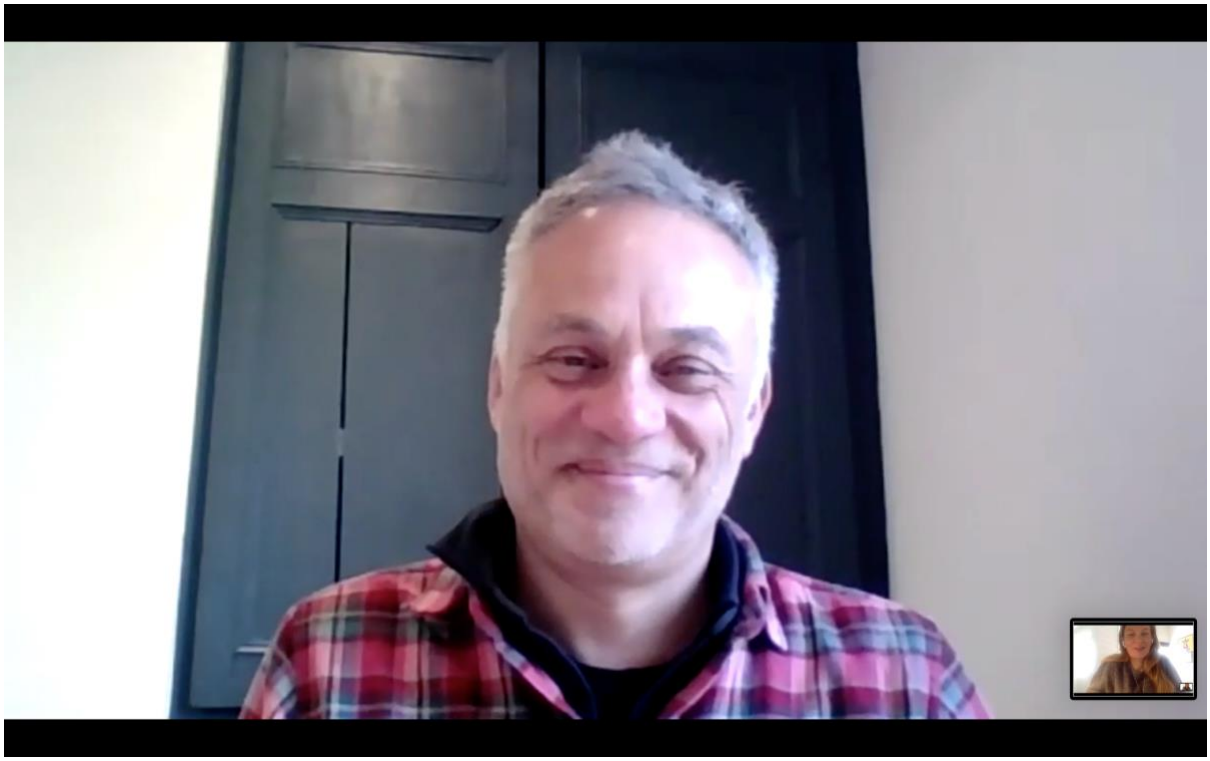

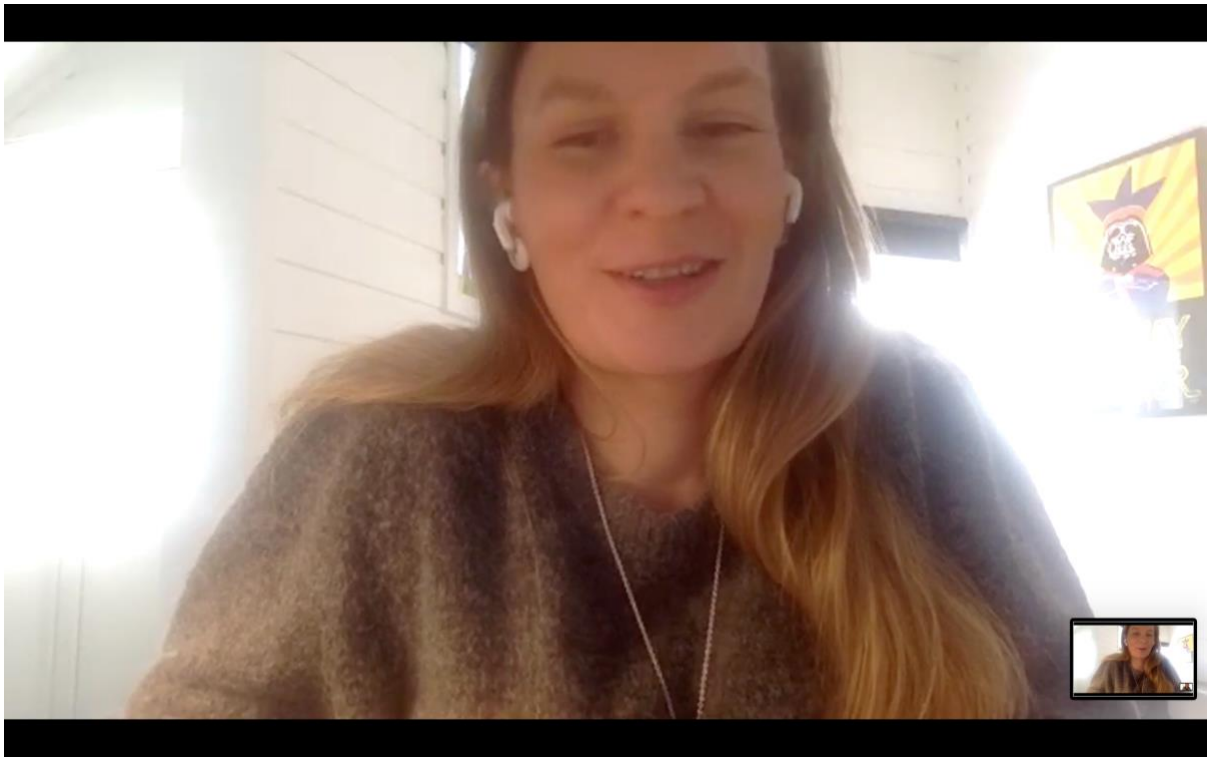

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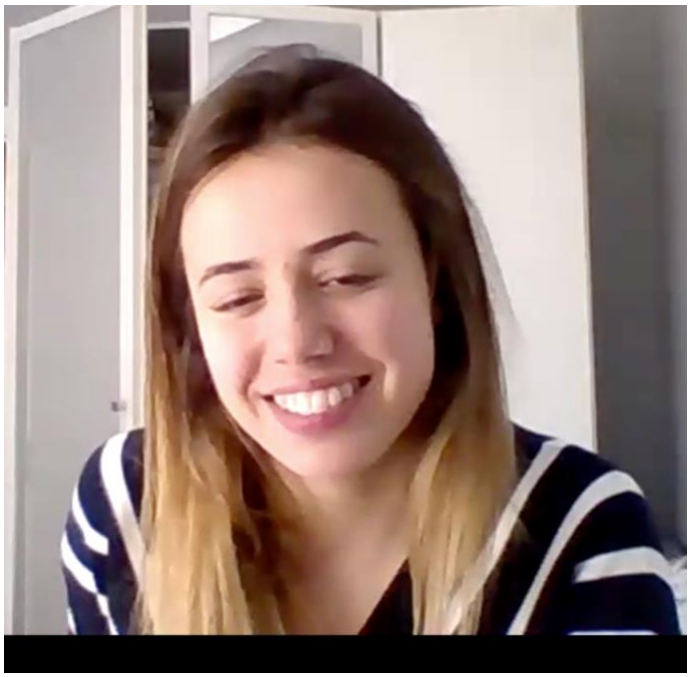

Stay safe, everyone !

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