



## **Geographical names supporting the international decade of indigenous languages**





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON .....3**

**MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARIAT .....5**

**Special Feature: Geographical names supporting the international decade of Indigenous languages.....8**

Argentina: Development of a Geographic Nomenclator as a contribution to the recognition of Indigenous languages. The case of Guaraní place names in Entre Ríos .....8

Nombres Geográficos De Las Lenguas Originarias De Las Naciones Indígenas Del Estado Plurinacional De Bolivia 10

Canada: Les travaux de la Commission de toponymie du Québec dans le cadre de la Décennie internationale des langues autochtones .....13

Canada : Activités de la Commission de toponymie du Canada à l'appui des langues autochtones 16

Cyprus: Geographical names supporting the international decade of indigenous languages – Village Names 19

“Geographical names supporting the International Decade of Indigenous Languages” - National Geospatial Policy and other initiatives in India.....22

Indonesia: Discovering Minority Identity Through Geographical Names: Wabo Language in Papua 25

Indonesia: Geographical Names Supporting the International Decade of Indigenous Languages: Literary Mapping 28

Preserving Indonesia's Linguistic Diversity through Digital Language Mapping 30

Netherlands (Kingdom of the): Minority toponyms on maps .....32

Restoring New Zealand’s original Māori geographic names .....33

Norway: Navigating the Indigenous toponymic terrain.....36

Norway: Researching and promoting Sámi geographical names.....39

Geographical Names in Support of Indigenous Languages in the Russian Federation 41

The International Decade of Indigenous Languages – Supporting Inuit Geographic Names 44

United Kingdom-Wales: Signs of the times: protests and policies to protect and promote Welsh place names 46

**FROM THE COUNTRIES .....48**

Geographical names in support of languages of ethnic minorities living in the Republic of Armenia 48

Activities in the Field of Standardization of Geographical Names in the Republic of Croatia in 2022 50

Mozambique: Formation of Gitonga Geographic Names.....52

Mozambique: INGEMO-IP Researches and Standardizes Geographical Names of Localities 54

“Dicinga” vs “Diciinga”: Notes for the standardization of *Lichinga* toponym, retrieving its origin and meaning 56

Encyclopedia of the land of Oman.....58

**FROM THE DIVISION .....61**

Arabic Division: Report on Jordan’s Activities in the Field of Geographical Names (2021 – 2023) 61

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

### Les noms de lieux en langues autochtones

Chers Collègues,

Conformément avec l'action 2-i-4 de notre Plan stratégique et Programme de travail, une liaison a été établie avec l'UNESCO à l'occasion de l'ouverture de la Décennie internationale des langues autochtones (DILA), en décembre 2022 à Paris (voir la photographie de groupe, où vous aurez du mal à me retrouver dans la nombreuse assistance...), et en mars 2023 avec le Groupe de travail mondial de la DILA, « afin d'établir d'éventuels domaines de coopération ».

On ne doute guère que puissent exister des « domaines de coopération » au titre de la DILA. Celle-ci a en effet pour objet d'attirer l'attention sur la situation critique de nombreuses langues autochtones et de mobiliser les acteurs et les ressources pour leur préservation, leur revitalisation et leur promotion. Nous-mêmes avons déjà appelé à transcrire les noms géographiques en langues non écrites ([1967/I/16](#), [1967/I/18](#)), à normaliser les noms en langues minoritaires ([1972/III/36](#)), à collecter, normaliser, enregistrer et promouvoir les noms en langues autochtones ([1987/III/22](#), [2002/VIII/1](#), [2007/IX/5](#), [2023/3/13](#)).

Les noms autochtones peuvent d'abord engager des enjeux d'ordre patrimonial : ils sont le plus souvent antérieurs aux noms allogènes, et peuvent être empruntés de noms encore antérieurs, même s'ils peuvent aussi en avoir évincés. Mais leur étymologie peut aussi étendre ces enjeux, par son lien avec l'environnement (voir [2021/2/R2](#)), ou par sa valeur commémorative, émotive ou spirituelle, et donc identitaire (voir [2023/3/D15](#)).

Le présent Bulletin contribue ainsi à illustrer des « domaines de coopération » qui peuvent encore être approfondis et concrétisés. C'est bien pour cela que l'Année internationale des langues autochtones de 2019 a abouti à proclamer une Décennie entière !

**Pierre Jaillard** (France)

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## Place names in indigenous languages

Dear Colleagues,

In accordance with action 2-i-4 of our Strategic Plan and Programme of Work, liaison has been established with UNESCO on the occasion of the opening of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL), in December 2022 in Paris (see the group photograph, where you will have trouble finding me in the large audience...), and in March 2023 with the Global Task Force of IDIL "to establish possible areas of cooperation".

There is little doubt that there could be "areas of cooperation" under the DILA. The purpose of the DILA is to draw attention to the critical situation of many indigenous languages and to mobilize stakeholders and resources for their preservation, revitalization and promotion. We ourselves have already called for recording geographical names from unwritten languages ([1967/I/16](#), [1967/I/18](#)), the standardization of names in minority languages ([1972/III/36](#)), and the collection, standardization, recording and promotion of names in indigenous languages ([1987/III/22](#), [2002/VIII/1](#), [2007/IX/5](#), [2023/3/13](#)).

First and foremost, indigenous names can involve heritage issues: they usually predate non-indigenous names, and are sometimes borrowed from even earlier names, even though they have sometimes supplanted them. But their etymology can also extend these issues, through its link with the environment (see [2021/2/R2](#)), or through its commemorative, emotional or spiritual value, and therefore identity (see [2023/3/D15](#)).

This Bulletin thus helps to illustrate "areas of cooperation" that can be further developed and put into practice. This is why the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages has led to the proclamation of an entire Decade!

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## MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Dear UNGEGN Experts,

**A**t the time of writing this article, we are just about three weeks away from the start of 2024. I therefore take this opportunity to thank you, our UNGEGN readers and experts for your interest and contributions to each issue of the bulletin. I also extend appreciation to the UNGEGN Bureau, working group convenors, divisional chairs and secretaries, our liaison members and all our members, for their work in advancing the standardization of geographical names within their spheres of influence, nationally, regionally, and globally throughout 2023. We all know that a standardized geographical name is intrinsic to humanitarian aid, economic development, and the preservation of cultural identity. It is the last benefit – the preservation of cultural identity - that supports the featured theme of this the 66th issue of the Bulletin, ***Geographical Names supporting the international decade of indigenous languages.***

### Featured Theme

The United Nations General Assembly (Resolution A/RES/74/135) proclaimed the period between 2022 and 2032 as the **International Decade of Indigenous Languages** (IDIL 2022-2032), to draw global attention on the critical situation of many indigenous languages and to mobilize stakeholders and resources for their preservation, revitalization, and promotion. The proclamation of an International Decade is a key outcome of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages, for which the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) leads global efforts.

The International Decade aims at ensuring indigenous peoples' right to preserve, revitalize and promote their languages, and mainstreaming linguistic diversity and multilingualism aspects into the sustainable development efforts. It offers a unique opportunity to collaborate in the areas of policy development and stimulate a global dialogue in a true spirit of multi-stakeholder engagement, and to take necessary for the usage, preservation, revitalization, and promotion of indigenous languages around the world.

In recognition of the featured theme, 11 Member States: Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Cyprus, India, Indonesia, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Norway, the Russian Federation, United Kingdom-Wales and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, submitted a total of 16 very interesting articles, which shared the projects and programmes being implemented to preserve, revitalize and promote indigenous languages. Given the significant number of articles, I will not venture to provide summaries of each, but to let you know that this issue of the Bulletin is a must read. The articles are chock full of imaginative, appealing, innovative and practical language preservation approaches. Some of these were, the use of artificial intelligence to translate between languages, the promulgation of policies and legislation, storytelling, creation of databases and interactive dashboards with audio files, public exhibitions, virtual field trips and literary mapping.

This collection of featured themed articles certainly delivers on the request made of Member States in clause 25 of Resolution A/RES/74/135: *'Invites Member States to consider establishing national mechanisms with adequate funding for the successful implementation of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages in partnership with indigenous peoples, and invites indigenous peoples, as custodians of their own languages, to initiate and develop appropriate measures for the implementation of the International Decade;'*

Experts, I wish to also bring to your attention that UNGEGN's work in the areas of unwritten languages began as early as 1967, at its first conference, with the adoption of [resolution I/16](#) which recommended the methods to be employed to record names of unwritten languages. This has been followed with other supporting resolutions, (some of which are shown below), in addition to the subjects' inclusion in the [UNEGN Strategic Plan 2021-2029](#), under strategy 2. Relationships, links and connections, action item 2-i-4.



Resolution I/16	Recording geographical names from unwritten languages
Resolution I/18	Writing of African geographical names
Resolution I/20	Revision of recommendation VII of the Group of Experts on Geographical Names
Resolution V/22	Aboriginal/native geographical names
Resolution VIII/1	Promotion of minority group and indigenous geographical names
Resolution IX/5	Promotion of the recording and use of indigenous, minority, and regional language group geographical names.
E/2019/75 Decision 1/201911	Welcomed the initiative from the Coordinator of the Task Team for Africa on creating an ad hoc group on non-written language transcription systems.

In the Strategic Plan, Action item 2-i-4 calls for cooperation in recognizing the IDIL 2022-2032. This shows the high level of importance accorded to the subject by the Group of Experts.

No.	Action items	Actors/responsibility	Output and time frame
2-i-4	Further explore links with UNESCO to: a. Find a path to recognition of geographical names as a part of intangible cultural heritage of Member States. b. Cooperate in recognition of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL), 2022-2032.	Bureau, WG GNCH, Member States.	a. Develop practical links with UNESCO regarding intangible cultural heritage by 2025. b. Liaise with the Global Task Force of IDIL to establish possible areas of cooperation by 2023.

May I suggest that the Group of Experts consider the implementation of the following action items, in fulfilment of action item 2-i-4.

1. Identifying a liaison officer to report between the two groups;
2. Individual countries could network between their UNGEGN representative and the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) representative from their own country, as this would create or strengthen understanding between the two groups;
3. Identify if there are any time slots in the UNPFII calendar of activities when UNGEGN experts might participate. The same applies for UNPFII participants.
4. Investigate the possibility of a joint project on collecting, creating a database and dashboard for managing, storing, and making accessible for discovery and use indigenous groups and their languages.

### Other Stories

Also included in this issue are contributions from the Arabic Division and four countries. The objective of the Bulletin is to keep you informed on the work of the Group of Experts. We therefore kindly ask you to help us to achieve this by completing the following contact information form. [The UNGEGN contact information for national geographical names authorities](#). The information collected from this form will be used to update the Group of Experts contact database. We thank all our contributors to this issue, and to Andreas Hadjiraftis of Cyprus for designing the front page. Your comments on this issue and contribution to the next Bulletin, number 67, to be circulated in May 2024 under the theme *‘Good practices emerging from relations between National Mapping/Geospatial Data Management Agencies and Geographical Names Authorities’* are welcomed.

### 2023 UNGEGN Session Evaluation

This serves as a further appeal to delegates who attended the 2023 session. You are kindly invited to complete the online session evaluation survey if you have not already done so. Please click here for the survey [UNEGGN Session EVALUATION \(google.com\)](#). The information collected from this survey will be used to improve the work of the Group of Experts.

Regarding action items post the 2023 Session, please note that work is proceeding on the following items:



- The [UNGEKN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029](#), is now available in Russian, the plan and booklet versions have been updated as per the amendments in [decision 3/2023/5](#). Further, Member States are encouraged to align their standardization activities to the Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021–2029 and to also become members of working groups to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan.
- The Bureau and Chairs of the Linguistic/Geographical Divisions held their fourth meeting on the 14 November 2023. The documents including presentations on the work of the Divisions are accessible on the [divisional webpage](#).
- The following are changes to the Working Groups post the 2023 session:
  - o The Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation has been disbanded.
  - o Four functions remain with the coordinator for Evaluation and Implementation.
  - o The funding function is now with the WG on Training Courses.
  - o For the Working Group on Evaluation, Implementation and Publicity:
    - Sungjae Choo, Republic of Korea, was appointed as Co-Coordinator with responsibility for Implementation and Evaluation and
    - Alison Dollimore, United Kingdom, was appointed as Co-Coordinator with responsibility for publicity.
- A new UNGEKN infographic was prepared for the [ECOSOC 2024 Coordination Segment](#) to be convened from 31 January to 1 February 2024. The infographic is accessible on the [ECOSOC website](#) and the booklet can be downloaded.

Please circulate the bulletin among your colleagues and other toponymic enthusiasts. To receive issues of the Bulletin you may register at <https://rb.gy/pgnvog>. Remember to tweet your geographical names activities @UNSD\_GEGN.

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# Special Feature: Geographical names supporting the international decade of Indigenous languages

## Argentina: Development of a Geographic Nomenclator as a contribution to the recognition of Indigenous languages. The case of Guaraní place names in Entre Ríos

The Guaraní are a group of South American peoples who inhabit the northeast of the country in the provinces of Corrientes, Misiones, Entre Ríos and part of the provinces of Chaco and Formosa, also the south and southwest of Brazil, most of Paraguay and southeastern Bolivia.

In the case of the province of Entre Ríos, 90% of the place names have their origin in the indigenous Guaraní language, which demonstrates the importance of this language in the region. The original ethnic self-denomination of those today called “Guaraní” is “ava”, which means “man”; and the name “guaraníes” would have been given to them by the Spanish when they heard the war cry of this people: gurá-ny (fight-them). Although the Guaraní language is ancient and complex, it has a vitality that is reflected in its almost 10 million current speakers, websites, linguistic studies and scholars of its culture both inside and outside the American continent.

The Entre Ríos toponymic nomenclature has multiple names of native plants and animals derived from Guaraní that were transferred to the place names that we know today. However, they were not immune to the changes and the multiple variants, resulting from the need to assign a spelling. This has been the case since colonial times, due to the bureaucratic issues of the conquest, evangelization and other later technological causes, such as the use of the telegraph. The Guaraní alphabet surpasses the Spanish one with multiple sounds. Its twelve diverse vowels and consonants explain the variants in the writing of place names. By ignoring the rules for transcribing Guaraní phonemes, they recorded them as similar to the Spanish language; which is why the true root of some names cannot be assured, taking into account that Guaraní was an oral language, without written documents.

Indigenous toponymy is not only important from a linguistic point of view, but also from a cultural perspective and preservation of heritage and identity, so much so that

in Argentina, this is what both the National Constitution and, in this case, the Provincial Constitution refer to.

Within the framework of the Argentine National Constitution, article 75 paragraph 17 states that it is up to the National Congress to *“Recognize the ethnic and cultural pre-existence of the Argentine indigenous peoples. Guarantee respect for their identity and the right to bilingual and intercultural education, recognize the legal status of their communities and the community possession and ownership of the lands they traditionally occupy; and regulate the delivery of others suitable and sufficient for human development; None of them will be alienable, transferable or susceptible to liens or seizures. Ensure their participation in the management of their natural resources and other interests that affect them. The provinces can concurrently exercise these powers.”*

Particularly, in the Constitution of the province of Entre Ríos, article 33 recognizes *“the ethnic and cultural preexistence of its native peoples. It ensures respect for their identity, the recovery and conservation of their heritage and cultural heritage, the personhood of their communities and immediate community ownership of the land they traditionally occupy.”*

In this sense, some examples of Entre Ríos place names are Paraná and Paranacito.

- **Paraná**
  - Pronunciation: Para'na
  - Use of the toponym
    - Border river between the provinces of Entre Ríos and Santa Fe (it originates in Brazil and flows into the Río de la Plata)
    - Department of the province of Entre Ríos
    - Capital of province and head of department of the same name
  - Etymology: from Guaraní it means *relative of the sea*, it has some nuances



- The expression may derive from the Tupi-Guaraní language *pará* = "sea" + *ná* (from *aná* an "a" is deleted for euphony) = "relative" or "similar." Paraná is, then, "relative of the sea", in relation to its size.
- It can also be "related to the sea", due to the geographical observation carried out by the indigenous people after having navigated its entire length.
- **Paranacito**
  - Pronunciation: Parana'sito
  - Use of the toponym
    - Paraná Arm in the Diamante River Delta
    - Tributary of the Paraná River / Victoria
    - Riacho joined to Ibicuy and Uruguay
    - Human settlement
  - Etymology: Guaraní – Spanish – Paraná Chico

According to UNGEGN guidelines, the adoption of Indigenous names on official maps and geographical documents contributes to the visibility and recognition of Indigenous communities in the international arena. In line with this, the National Geographic Institute (IGN) is developing a Web Geographic Nomenclator that allows the visualization of different geographical and historical aspects of Argentine toponymy.



Visualization of the IGN Geographic Nomenclator

Through this nomenclator you can register the languages that give rise to place names, their meaning, you can make queries, download tables with toponymic information and in this way contribute to the study of geographic names, both in the province of Entre Ríos and in other sectors of Argentina. Persons are now able to contribute to the recognition and respect of the value of the Guaraní language as a source of cultural identity and heritage. In addition to, contributing to the equality of peoples and supporting the revitalization and preservation of Indigenous languages of regional minority groups.

### Bibliography:

“Aboriginal toponymy of Entre Ríos.” 1966, Josefa Luisa Buffa. Institute of Philology – Faculty of Humanities and Educational Sciences – National University of La Plata

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## Nombres Geográficos De Las Lenguas Originarias De Las Naciones Indígenas Del Estado Plurinacional De Bolivia

A partir del año 2006 Bolivia propone la reivindicación y defensa de los pueblos y naciones indígenas que habitan y se encuentra en el estado y hacerlas conocer al mundo, posterior a un proceso de acercamiento y participación entre los involucrados que duro varios años donde existieron constantes reuniones, el 18 de marzo de 2009 bajo Decreto Supremo N.º 48 cambia el nombre de “Republica de Bolivia” a “Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia” reconociendo así el pluralismo respetando la preexistencia de diferentes naciones indígenas que pertenecen y habitan dentro el territorio nacional. La Constitución Política del Estado reconoce la existencia de 36 diferentes naciones o pueblos indígenas originarios y campesinos repartidas a lo largo y ancho de la extensión del territorio boliviano y cada uno de ellos tiene diferentes lenguas nativas representativas. Actualmente Bolivia es el país latinoamericano con mayor presencia de población indígena.

### Lenguas indígenas u originarias de Bolivia

Al existir una gran cantidad de naciones indígenas en Bolivia también los idiomas son variados es así que la Constitución Política del Estado establece y reconoce a varios idiomas oficiales a parte del idioma español a los 36 idiomas de las naciones o pueblos indígenas de nuestro estado. Aún existen estudios en diferentes sitios de Bolivia donde se encuentran los pobladores indígenas, pero hasta la fecha los idiomas originarios estudiados y de mayor representatividad son el idioma nativo Quechua, que es usado por 28 por ciento de la población cuya mayor representatividad se encuentra en los valles, el idioma nativo Aymará que sirve para comunicarse en un 18 por ciento de los habitantes cuya presencia es representativa en el altiplano y el idioma nativo guaraní presente solo en el 1 por ciento de los



*Cultura Naciones Indigenas Foto Tomada Por Pedro Laguna*

ciudadanos bolivianos (esto según fuentes del Instituto Nacional de Estadística).

Los otros 33 idiomas nativos reconocidos en Bolivia son los siguientes: araona, baure, bésiro, canichana, cavineño, cayubaba, chácobo, chimán, ese ejja, guarasuagwe, guarayu, itonama, leco, machajuyai-kallawaya, machineri, maropa, mojeño-trinitario, mojeño-ignaciano, moré, mosetén, movima, pacawara, puquina, sirionó, tacana, tapiete, toromona, uruchipaya, weenhayek, yaminawa, yuki, yuracaré y zamuco que no son menos importantes que los anteriormente nombrados solo que estos son más utilizados por los nativos del lugar.

### Nombres geográficos (toponimia) de Bolivia

Bolivia está dividida en la región andina, región sub andina y región de los llanos orientales, cuenta con diferentes zonas geográficas ya que su peculiaridad y ubicación en Sudamérica hacen de ella muy diversa, representada por la cordillera de los Andes, el altiplano y la llanura amazónica. Como podemos evidenciar existen una gran cantidad de paisajes por la biodiversidad tanto en flora y fauna como también variedad de relieves geográficos tanto naturales como artificiales esto gracias a la variedad de ecosistemas presentes en la región. Es así que los elementos geográficos son de gran variedad y no son constantes como en otros países por las características ya mencionadas, los cuales llevan diferentes nombres geográficos y estos están en diferentes lenguas o idiomas nativos por lo cual lo cual hace que la toponimia en Bolivia sea variada.



*Uru Chipaya Bolivia Foto Tomada Por Gabriela Villanueva*

Los nombres geográficos son una fuente de identidad de las indígenas ya que aun se conservan toponimias propias de los lugares nativos dentro la cartografía oficial de



Bolivia. Tenemos los siguientes ejemplos de nombres geográficos:

## Toponimia de Departamentos.

1. Departamento de COCHABAMBA: El nombre proviene y de origina de los vocablos quechuas: q'ucha que es lago y panpa que es llano o planicie. Al paso del tiempo se cambió el nombre a Cochabamba sin saber exactamente el motivo del mismo.
2. Departamento de ORURO: Este nombre deriva de la más antigua civilización milenaria de los Andes bolivianos que son los Urus.
3. Departamento de POTOSÍ: La palabra "potosí" proviene de la voz quechua (potoc) que significa "explosión", debido a que los nativos se referían así al cerro rico donde realizaban trabajos para la explotación de la plata y recursos minerales.
4. Departamento de CHUQUISACA: la palabra Chuquisaca tenía como idioma nativo primario el puquina, deriva de "Chuquiochata" que significa "hijo del cerro", originario de la lengua puquina de los yamparas, chu cuyo significado es su, quio que significa hijo y chata que significa cerró, dando a lugar a la palabra completa "(su) hijo del cerro"; denominándolo así por los imponentes cerros que tiene en frente. Los quechuas o incas lo cambiaron por la pronunciación a "Choquechaca" o "Chokechaka", finalmente los hispanos decidieron nombrala "Chuquisaca".
5. Departamento de LA PAZ: La región en la que se estableció la ciudad era llamada, antes de su fundación por la comitiva española, Chuquiago Marka (en aymara, chuqiyapu significa 'chacra de oro', probablemente por la explotación de pepitas de oro en los pequeños ríos del lugar). El 3 de enero de 1827, el congreso constituyente de Bolivia amplió el nombre de la ciudad a La Paz de Ayacucho en honor a la victoria en la batalla de Ayacucho (1824).

## Toponimia de provincias.

1. Provincia PACAJES: Las primeras personas que habitaron la provincia fueron los aymaras "Paka Jaqis" siendo la traducción al español "hombres águilas", con el paso del tiempo los conquistadores españoles castellanizarían la palabra a pacajes.
2. Provincia QUILLACOLLO: La toponimia de Quillacollo proviene de dos idiomas en aymara Quella-Kollu que significa "colina de ceniza"; mientras que en la quechua deriva de las palabras Quilla Kollu, que quiere decir "colina de la luna".

3. Provincia AYOPAYA: La toponimia proviene del idioma nativo aymara de la conjunción de palabras hayo que es lejos y paya que significa dos.
4. Provincia PUNATA: Su nombre deriva del quechua y significa "altura o lugar alto".
5. Provincia CAPINOTA: La palabra Capinota podría ser de origen del idioma aymara, de la palabra Khapun Uta que significa casa de hilados o hilandería y en el idioma puquina Khapen Uta significa tres casas o viviendas.
6. Provincia TAPACARI: El nombre de la provincia deriva del quechua "thapa" que significa nido y "qhari" que significa hombre. Por ello la provincia es también conocida como "Nido de Hombres".
7. Provincia MIZQUE: La toponimia proviene del vocablo quechua "Misk'i" que significa dulce, por la producción de miel en el municipio denominado también "Tierra Dulce" ya que en la región abundan las abejas silvestres, que hacen sus nidos en la tierra.

## Toponimia de municipios.

1. Municipio de HUARINA: El nombre es atribuido al ser mitológico andino, "Huari" en aymara significa "vicuña".
2. Municipio de HUACARETA: El término o palabra Huacareta tiene origen en el idioma nativo guaraní, cuyo significado es "lugar de muchas vacas".
3. Municipio de TARABUCO: Derivado de dos palabras del idioma quechua que son tarka que significa "flauta de una sola pieza" y phuku que significa "soplar" que unidas evocan a los "tocadores de flauta".
4. Municipio de SOPACHUY: Este nombre proviene de la combinación de dos palabras una en quechua que es "sapay" que significa diablo y la otra esta referente a los ríos que rodean a ambos lados de la ciudad forman una especie de isla, por esta razón es llamado "Sopachuy" que en español significa "Isla del Diablo".
5. Municipio de SORATA: El nombre viene de la palabra en aymara "SHURU-AHTA", cuyo significado es "lugar o pico resplandeciente", este nombre en honor al nevado Illampu.

## Toponimia de ríos y lagos

1. Río PILCOMAYO: El topónimo "Pilcomayo" deriva del quechua: pishqu que significa pájaro y mayu que significa río, es decir "río de los pájaros".
2. Río YUCUMO: El origen de este nombre se constituye en relación a un asentamiento de la etnia T'simane en las orillas del río yucumaj, palabra compuesta que proviene de dos fonemas "Yucu" que es el nombre de



un pez que existe en las aguas de este río y “Maj” que significa grande o profundo, con la llegada de emigrantes y el transcurso del tiempo fue castellano al actual Yucumo.

3. Río ACHUMANI: Nombre Geográfico en idioma nativo aymara que significa “sector donde el sembradío se renueva”.
4. Río IVO: Según Baldomero Eberlein, la palabra significa “Ivo” o “Ibo” proviene del guaraní y significa “manantial”, que proviene del hecho que cerca de la misión se encuentra una colina con pequeños manantiales.
5. Río TOTORA: Proviene de la palabra del idioma quechua ttutura o t'utura, nombre de una planta acuática (*Schoenoplectus californicus*) la cual en aymara se pronuncia de la misma manera.
6. Río MANURIPI; El nombre proviene del idioma nativo araona, que significa “río querido” en el idioma indígena.
7. Río CAMIRI: Nombre que proviene del idioma nativo guaraní, Caá del guaraní ka'a significa “planta” que describe una planta cuyo tallo, raíz y ramaje no presentan lignificación, es decir, carecen de las estructuras leñosas típicas de la madera en árboles y arbustos, aunque también se le da el significado de “monte o selva de regular tamaño o altura”.
8. Río CARAPARI: El nombre “Carapari” proviene del idioma guaraní de un cactus (*Neoraimondia herzogiana*), llamado con el mismo nombre, que posee una exuberante presencia en el lugar.
9. Lago TITICACA: proviene de la conjunción de dos palabras “Titiqaqa” en idioma aymara que son titi que significa “gato salvaje” y qaqa que significa “cabello cano”, en referencia al gato andino gris es el lago navegable más alto del mundo.

## Toponimia de Montañas.

1. Montaña CH'UCH'U: Proviene del idioma nativo aymara que significa “líquido frío”. Esta montaña se encuentra en los Andes bolivianos y presenta una altura de 5.100 msnm. Aproximadamente.

Como se puede apreciar solo son algunos ejemplos de la variedad de nombres geográficos nativos presentes en la toponimia del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia la cual aún mantiene sus orígenes y se pretende preservar los mismos y así también preservar las lenguas nativas representadas en los elementos geográficos.

## Conclusión.

Se puede evidenciar la gran cantidad de naciones indígenas y también los idiomas nativos que se encuentran presentes en el Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia reflejados en sus nombres geográficos los cuales permiten saber mediante el estudio de la toponimia la riqueza que tiene cada uno de ellos. Actualmente el Instituto Geográfico Militar presentara en el mes de diciembre el Atlas de Áreas Protegidas Nacionales en el cual se evidencio que el 70 % de naciones indígenas habitan dentro de las áreas protegidas, también se trabaja en mapas oficiales en diferentes idiomas nativos con el objetivo de preservar la toponimia de origen nativo como también se va trabajando en la recolección de nombres geográficos en diferentes idiomas nativos buscando el significado e historia de cada una de ellas, para la gestión 2024 ya se tiene aprobado el proyecto de un atlas de Naciones Indígenas del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia esto en un trabajo conjunto entre el Instituto Geográfico Militar, La Confederación Pueblos Indígenas De Bolivia (CIDOB), el Servicio Nacional de Áreas Protegidas (SERNAP) y el Ministerio de Culturas Descolonización y Despatriarcalización con el fin de recolectar en campo toda la información de las 36 naciones o pueblos indígenas que habitan en el Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia referente a su vestimenta, idioma, cultura, danzas propias de cada una de ellas.

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## Referencias.

Embajada de Bolivia en Alemania <http://www.bolivia.de/es/bolivia/culturas/>  
Instituto Geográfico Militar de Bolivia <https://www10.igmbolivia.gob.bo/>  
Ministerio de Culturas Descolonización y Despatriarcalización <https://www.minculturas.gob.bo/>  
Medio de Prensa Opinión Bolivia <https://www.opinion.com.bo/articulo/quillacollo/ldquo-altiva-gloriosa-rdquo/20150911224700530722.html>



## Canada: Les travaux de la Commission de toponymie du Québec dans le cadre de la Décennie internationale des langues autochtones

Au Québec, 11 peuples autochtones, établis dans 55 communautés, continuent de parler leurs langues traditionnelles ou de travailler à leur revitalisation. Ces langues appartiennent aux familles linguistiques algique, haudenosauni et inuit-aléoute. Ainsi peut-on entendre au Québec l'abénakis (*aln8ba8dawaw8gan*), l'anichinabé (*anicinapemo8in*, *anicinabemowin* ou *anishinaabemowin*, dit l'algonquin), l'attikamek (*atikamekw*), le cri de l'Est (*iinuuyimuwin* et *iyyiyuyimuwin*), l'innu-aimun (dit l'innu), l'inuktitut, le micmac (*mi'gmaq*), le mohawk (*kanien'kéha*), le naskapi, le wendat et le wolastoqey (*wolastoqey latuwewakon*, dit le malécite). Les peuples autochtones entretiennent des liens avec le territoire depuis des temps immémoriaux, ce qui a influencé leurs langues et, inévitablement, la toponymie.

La Commission de toponymie du Québec est l'organisme responsable de la gestion des noms de lieux du Québec. Elle a été instituée en vertu de la *Charte de la langue française* en 1977. Elle s'occupe notamment de l'inventaire et de l'officialisation des toponymes, qu'elle diffuse ensuite dans la [Banque de noms de lieux du Québec](#). Dans sa Politique relative aux noms autochtones, la Commission reconnaît l'importance de la toponymie autochtone comme partie intégrante du patrimoine toponymique commun et l'attention particulière qu'elle doit accorder à celle-ci.

Conformément à cette politique, la Commission, en partenariat avec les communautés concernées et certaines institutions, réalise des inventaires de ces noms de lieux autochtones et fait de la recherche sur ceux-ci. Elle consulte également le milieu, particulièrement les conseils de bande, lorsqu'une action toponymique est susceptible de concerner le territoire d'une communauté. Les résultats de ces partenariats sont multiples : officialisation de nouveaux noms de lieux autochtones, révision de la graphie de certains noms de lieux autochtones déjà officiels, diffusion de noms de lieux traditionnels autochtones parallèlement aux noms officiels, enregistrement et diffusion de fichiers audio permettant d'entendre la bonne prononciation des noms,

participation à des projets spéciaux de mise en valeur de la toponymie autochtone.

### Réalizations depuis la proclamation de la Décennie internationale des langues autochtones

Les résultats des efforts investis dans le contexte de la Politique relative aux noms autochtones se font sentir depuis le début des années 1980. Dans les dernières années, les actions menées dans le cadre de cette politique ont été renouvelées et actualisées, ce qui s'inscrit dans les objectifs de la Décennie internationale des langues autochtones, proclamée en 2022.

Ainsi, depuis janvier 2022, parmi les 894 toponymes officialisés par la Commission autres que les noms de voies de communication, 290 étaient d'origine autochtone, ce qui représente plus de 32 % du corpus officialisé pendant un an et demi. Au total, environ 10,5 % des toponymes officiels du Québec – encore une fois, exclusion faite des noms de voies de communication – étaient d'origine autochtone en date du 31 mars 2023.

En conformité avec la *Charte de la langue française*, qui fait du français la seule langue commune au Québec, la Commission officialise les noms de lieux autochtones dans l'alphabet latin. Ainsi, ces noms de lieux peuvent être compris par les non-spécialistes et servir efficacement de repères. Bien sûr, la Commission cherche à respecter, dans la mesure du possible, les systèmes d'écriture normalisés privilégiés par les différentes nations ou communautés. Cette conciliation est l'objet de travaux constants, visant la meilleure représentation des noms autochtones.

Pour que l'importance des noms traditionnels autochtones qui ne sont pas officiels soit reconnue, plus de 400 de ces noms ont été ajoutés à la *Banque de noms de lieux du Québec* depuis avril 2022, ce qui mène le total à plus de 2 400 noms traditionnels autochtones actuellement diffusés. La Commission a par ailleurs commencé à rendre accessibles des fichiers audio dans la *Banque de noms de lieux du Québec* en 2019, dans le cadre de l'Année internationale des langues autochtones, pour favoriser une meilleure connaissance de la bonne



prononciation de noms officiels ou traditionnels autochtones. En date du 31 mars 2023 783 fichiers audio avaient été mis en ligne.

Parmi les autres projets spéciaux auxquels participe la Commission se trouve la diffusion, depuis juin 2022, de la carte interactive [Éléments du patrimoine toponymique autochtone du Québec](#). Cette carte met en lumière des noms de lieux abénakis, anichinabés, innus, naskapis, wendat et wolastoqey particulièrement significatifs. Ces noms ont été retenus par des représentants de communautés autochtones en raison de leur valeur sur le plan culturel.

Enfin, la Commission a désofficialisé, depuis 2020, plusieurs noms de lieux officiels qui contenaient des termes perçus comme péjoratifs par les communautés autochtones.

## Prochaines étapes

Le contexte de la Décennie internationale des langues autochtones se prête à la mise en valeur de la toponymie autochtone, à laquelle la Commission de toponymie du Québec contribue déjà depuis de nombreuses années, de concert avec les communautés concernées.

C'est avec la volonté de continuer à établir et à maintenir de fructueuses collaborations avec les Premières Nations et les Inuit que la Commission compte poursuivre l'officialisation de noms de lieux autochtones, la mise en ligne de fichiers sonores et de toponymes autochtones traditionnels ainsi que la bonification de sa carte interactive consacrée à la toponymie autochtone.

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## The Commission de toponymie du Québec's work as part of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages

In Québec, 11 Indigenous nations in 55 communities continue to speak their traditional languages or work on revitalizing them. These languages belong to the Algonic, Haudenosaunee and Inuit-Aleut language families. In Québec, the following languages are also spoken: Abenaki (*aln8ba8dwaw8gan*), Anishinaabe (*anicinapemo8in*, *anicinabemowin* or *anishinaabemowin*, known as Algonquin), Attikamek (*Atikamekw*), East Cree (*iinuayimuwin* and *iyyiyuyimuwin*), Innu-aimun (known as Innu), Inuktitut, Micmac (*mi'gmaq*), Mohawk (*kanien'kéha*), Naskapi, Wendat and Wolastoqey (*Wolastoqey Latuwewakon*, known as Maliseet). Indigenous Peoples have had ties to the land since time immemorial, and this has influenced their languages and, inevitably, geographical names.

The Commission de toponymie du Québec (the Commission) is the organization responsible for managing place names in Québec. It was established in 1977 in accordance with the *Charter of the French language*. Its

responsibilities include listing and formalizing names that it then publishes in a database of Québec place names called the [Banque de noms de lieux du Québec](#) (in French only). In its *Politique relative aux noms autochtones* [Policy on Indigenous place names], the Commission recognizes the importance of Indigenous geographical names as an integral part of collective geographical naming heritage and the special attention it requires.

In accordance with this policy, the Commission, in partnership with the relevant communities and some institutions, creates lists of these Indigenous place names and researches them. It also consults the community, particularly the band councils, when a geographical naming action is likely to apply to a community's territory. These partnerships have yielded many results, including formalizing new Indigenous place names, reviewing the spelling of certain previously formalized Indigenous place names, publishing traditional Indigenous place names alongside official names, recording and publishing audio



files with the correct pronunciation of names, and participating in special development projects for Indigenous geographical names.

### Achievements since the International Decade of Indigenous Languages was announced

The results of efforts made under the *Politique relative aux noms autochtones* have been felt since the beginning of the 1980s. In recent years, the actions taken under this policy have been renewed and updated to align with the goals of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, announced in 2022.

Since January 2022, of the 894 geographical names formalized by the Commission other than street names, 290 have been Indigenous, representing more than 32% of the body of names formalized in the past year and a half. In total, around 10.5% of the official geographical names in Québec—once again, excluding street names—were Indigenous as of March 31, 2023.

In compliance with the *Charter of the French language*, which makes French the only common language in Québec, the Commission formalizes Indigenous place names using the Latin alphabet. These place names can therefore be understood by non-specialists and effectively serve as points of reference. Of course, where possible, the Commission tries to respect the standardized writing systems preferred by various nations or communities. This reconciliation comes from consistent work, aiming for the best representation of Indigenous names.

To recognize the importance of traditional Indigenous names that are not formalized, more than 400 of these names have been added to the *Banque de noms de lieux du Québec* since April 2022, bringing the total to more than 2,400 traditional Indigenous names currently published. In 2019, the Commission also started providing audio files in the *Banque de noms de lieux du Québec*, as part of the

International Year of Indigenous Languages, to promote better awareness of the proper pronunciation of official or traditional Indigenous names. As of March 31, 2023, 783 audio files have been put online.

The Commission is also involved in other special projects including the June 2022 release of Québec's Indigenous geographical naming heritage interactive map, called the [Éléments du patrimoine toponymique autochtone du Québec](#) (in French only). This map highlights significant Abenaki, Anishinaabe, Innu, Naskapi, Wendat and Wolastoqey place names. These names were chosen by Indigenous community representatives because of their cultural value.

Since 2020, the Commission has removed several official place names that contained terms considered derogatory by Indigenous communities.

### Next steps

The International Decade of Indigenous Languages lends itself to the advancement of Indigenous geographical names, to which the Commission has been contributing for many years now, in partnership with the relevant communities.

With a view to continuing to establish and maintain productive collaborations with First Nations and Inuit, the Commission intends to continue to formalize Indigenous place names, upload audio files and traditional Indigenous geographical names, as well as improve its interactive map for Indigenous geographical names.

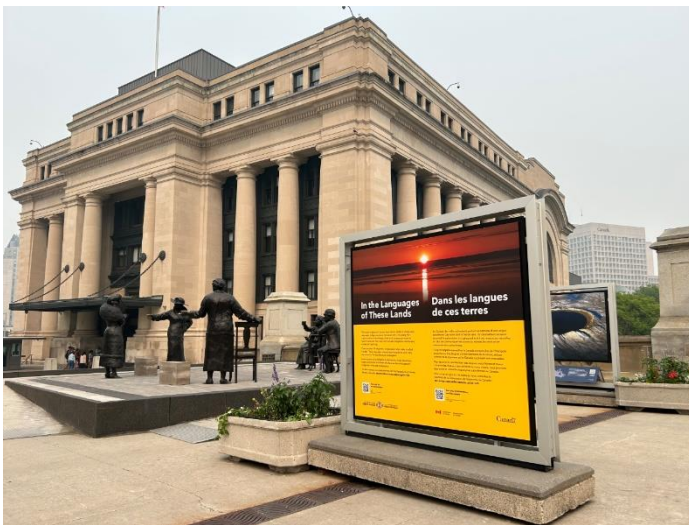
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## Canada : Activités de la Commission de toponymie du Canada à l'appui des langues autochtones

**A**u Canada, des milliers d'endroits portent un nom issu d'une langue autochtone. Ces noms sont riches de sens : ils transmettent un savoir ancestral lié au territoire, à sa géographie et à ses ressources naturelles. Ils communiquent également des visions du monde, des récits et des enseignements autochtones. Leur reconnaissance officielle par les autorités de dénomination contribue à préserver et à revitaliser les cultures, les histoires et les langues autochtones menacées, et joue un rôle essentiel pour faire progresser la réconciliation avec les nations autochtones. La Commission de toponymie du Canada (CTC) est l'organisme national de coordination responsable des noms de lieux officiels au Canada. Elle collabore à la recherche, à la normalisation, à l'approbation, à la consignation et à la promotion des toponymes officiels au Canada.



En 2023, Ressources naturelles Canada et la CTC ont présenté une exposition publique intitulée *Dans les langues de ces terres*, faisant la promotion des noms géographiques et des langues autochtones au Canada. Cette exposition se composait de grands panneaux présentant divers exemples de noms autochtones à travers le pays. Elle était située au centre-ville d'Ottawa, dans un endroit ayant une grande visibilité très en vue et très achalandé, à proximité du siège du Parlement canadien et accessible à de nombreux passants, y compris les touristes et le grand public. Elle a été inaugurée lors d'une cérémonie à laquelle ont participé une Aînée de la

communauté algonquienne de Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, près d'Ottawa, et des cadres supérieurs de Ressources naturelles Canada.

L'exposition regroupait de grandes photos colorées et attrayantes de paysages et de lieux de toutes les régions du Canada, y compris des montagnes, des lacs, des rivières, des villes, des collectivités et des parcs, dont les noms officiels tirent leurs origines dans 22 langues et dialectes autochtones. Chaque image était accompagnée d'une courte narration indiquant la langue autochtone d'origine et la signification du nom. Des panneaux d'introduction expliquaient l'importance des noms géographiques autochtones dans le contexte de la préservation des langues autochtones menacées.

Chaque panneau comprenait un code QR lié au [site Web de Ressources naturelles Canada](#) contenant des renseignements supplémentaires traduits dans de multiples langues autochtones et incluant la prononciation phonétique du nom, un enregistrement audio de celle-ci lorsqu'il était disponible, ainsi qu'une carte interactive. Le développement de l'exposition a été mené conjointement par Ressources naturelles Canada et Patrimoine canadien, le ministère fédéral responsable de la culture et des langues. Le lancement de l'exposition a fait l'objet d'une vaste promotion dans les [médias sociaux](#), notamment au moyen d'une courte vidéo diffusée tout au long de l'été et de l'automne 2023 pendant tout l'été et l'automne 2023.

Au cours de la Semaine de sensibilisation à la géographie 2023 (du 13 au 17 novembre), Ressources naturelles Canada a annoncé la nomination de deux conseillers autochtones à titre de membres votants à part entière de la Commission de toponymie du Canada. Cette dernière compte maintenant trois conseillers autochtones représentant les Premières Nations, les Inuits et les Métis, les trois groupes autochtones reconnus au Canada.

Ressources naturelles Canada a également publié [Un guide des noms de lieux autochtones : vivre l'expérience Gwich'in au Canada](#), un document de référence élaboré par le Conseil tribal des Gwich'in pour aider d'autres communautés autochtones à rapatrier et réintroduire leurs propres noms de lieux. Ce manuel s'appuie sur les expériences et les processus développés pendant 25 ans



avec des Aînés et des utilisateurs traditionnels des terres pour consigner les noms de lieux situés dans les Territoires du Nord-Ouest et au Yukon.

La CTC a également conçu un document de référence sur les noms autochtones qui vise à aider les autorités de dénomination à nommer ou à renommer des entités géographiques. Intitulé [Pratiques recommandées relatives aux noms géographiques autochtones](#), ce document fournit un ensemble de principes fondamentaux à prendre en compte dans le traitement des noms tirant leur origine d'une langue autochtone ou lorsqu'il s'agit de déterminer si de tels noms existent pour une entité ou un lieu

géographiques particuliers. Les membres de la CTC cherchent à obtenir les commentaires des autorités de dénomination, des organisations et des organismes consultatifs sur l'ébauche de ce document.

### **Steve Westley**

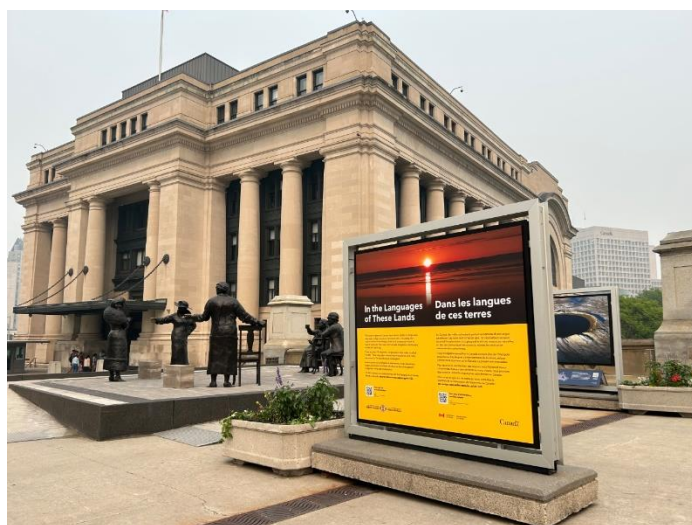
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## Activities by the Geographical Names Board of Canada to support Indigenous Languages

Thousands of places in Canada have names rooted in Indigenous languages. Indigenous place names are rich in meaning: they impart traditional knowledge of the land, its geography and its natural resources. They also communicate Indigenous worldviews, stories and teachings. Official recognition of Indigenous place names by naming authorities contributes to preserving and revitalizing endangered Indigenous cultures, histories, and languages, and plays a vital role toward advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Nations. The Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) serves as Canada's national coordinating body responsible for official place names and works collaboratively to research, standardize, approve, record, and promote official geographical names in Canada.



In 2023, Natural Resources Canada and the GNBC released a public exhibit entitled *In the Languages of These Lands* promoting Indigenous geographical names and languages in Canada. The exhibit consisted of large panels showcasing diverse examples of Indigenous names across the country. The exhibit was situated in downtown Ottawa in a high-profile, high traffic location in close proximity to Canada's seat of parliament and accessible to many passers-by, including tourists and the general public. The exhibit was launched in a ceremony that included a local Elder from the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg Algonquin community near Ottawa, and senior executives from Natural Resources Canada.

The exhibit consisted of large, colourful, and eye-catching photos of landscapes and locations in all regions of Canada, including mountains, lakes, rivers, towns, communities, and parks, that have official names with origins in 22 Indigenous languages and dialects. The images were accompanied by short narratives for each place name providing the Indigenous language of origin and the meaning. Introductory panels explained the importance of Indigenous geographical names in the context of preserving endangered Indigenous languages.

Each display panel included a QR code linked to the [Natural Resources Canada website](#) containing additional information translated into multiple Indigenous languages, and including the phonetic pronunciation of the place name, an audio recording of the pronunciation of the name where available, and an interactive map. Development of the exhibit was co-led by Natural Resources Canada, and Canadian Heritage, the federal



department responsible for culture and languages. The launch of the exhibit was widely promoted through [social media](#) including a short video throughout the summer and fall of 2023.

During Geography Awareness Week 2023 (November 13-17), Natural Resources Canada announced the appointment of two Indigenous Advisors to serve as full voting members of the Geographical Names Board of Canada. The Board now has three Indigenous Advisors representing First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, the recognized Indigenous groups in Canada.

Natural Resources Canada also released the [Indigenous Place Names Handbook: Sharing the Gwich'in Experience in Canada](#), a resource document compiled by the Gwich'in Tribal Council to help other Indigenous communities repatriate their own place names. The handbook is based on experiences and processes developed over 25 years with Elders and traditional land users to document place names in Canada's Northwest Territories and Yukon.

An additional resource for Indigenous naming is the [Best Practices for Indigenous Place Naming](#) developed by the GNBC intended to support naming authorities when naming or renaming geographical features. The best practices provide a set of core principles to consider when addressing geographical names with origins in Indigenous languages, or determining if such names exist for a particular geographical feature or place. The members of the GNBC are seeking feedback from naming authorities, advisory bodies and organizations on this draft document.

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## Cyprus: Geographical names supporting the international decade of indigenous languages – Village Names

The traditional names of a place are the mute, but popular, honest and reliable witnesses of its history. By studying village names alone, the entire past can be accurately and thoroughly represented. The founding of settlements, the racial origin of the inhabitants, **the indigenous languages**, the topography and geomorphology of a place, the political and military events that took place there, the social structure, the economic and productive structure of the system, the cultural development and all other aspects associated with a location, can be extracted from its names, toponyms and microtoponyms.

The island of Cyprus is scattered with villages. It is a country made up of small mosaics, full of peculiarities. Some villages withstood the waves of urbanization, others were almost deserted. Some sit languishing, waiting for their owners to return to occupied land, while others experience growth due to their proximity to urban centers. Each village of Cyprus has its own history, which in some cases stretches back many centuries, reaching all the way to antiquity. **The languages and dialects** spoken in Cyprus and the way they developed through the history of the country constitute clear evidence of their existence and their influence on the geographical names of the island. Cyprus went through several periods in history, which had an influence on the population, **the language**, the religion, the customs, and the culture. Geographical names are a significant part of cultural heritage, and as such, they have been affected significantly by each period in history. Geographical names, in several cases, reveal a significant part of the history of the place they refer to.

In the narrow streets of the villages, history, tradition and myths meet. Although many areas of Cyprus were named after adjacent natural elements, or from the Saints they considered their patrons, or retain names even from antiquity, many toponyms move between history and myth. The following are examples of villages whose name etymology is not clear at a first glance, and the various versions behind the toponyms are presented:

Anglisides is located southwest of the city of Larnaka, and the community has seen great growth in recent years. According to the village webpage, it has been there since at least medieval times. On old maps it is referred to as 'Elisides'. There are three interpretations for this name.

The first is by Simos Menardos and is found in the Great Cypriot Encyclopaedia. According to him, the name comes from the **Greek** word "enkleistra", which is the monk's hermitage and supports the spelling "Aglesides". The second version states that the name of the village is due to the existence of many underground churches. The third version tells of an **English** visitor, searching for his lost wife in the mountains of the village. According to this, he walked around asking the villagers "English ides?" (meaning: have you seen an English person?) and this story was spread in Larnaka by a traveling merchant, who was called "the English Ides."



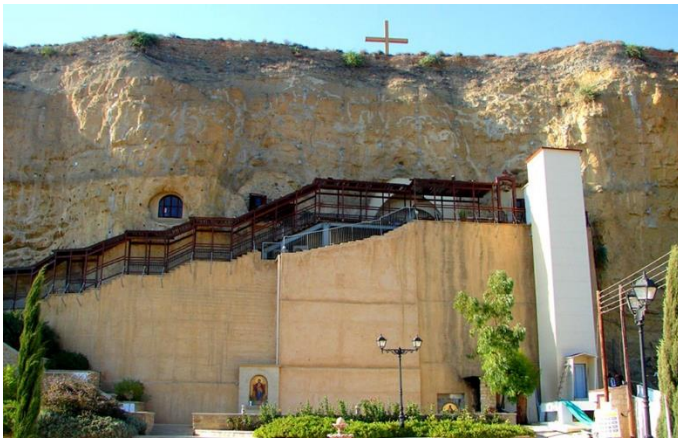
*Anglisides*

Asgata is the easternmost village of Lemesos District and there has been reference to it from the time of the Frankish occupation. However, there have been small settlements and mining tunnels in the area since ancient times. According to the village webpage, there are two possible explanations for its name. One is recorded by Simos Menandros and says that it comes from the estates of Askas, that is, the one who built askia (sacs), with the suffix –"ata", which indicates ownership in various parts of **Greece**. Over time Askata became Asgata. The version recorded by Kostas Pyrros states that the name is a compound of the Doric words "as" and "gatas", which mean "towards" the "farmers", because of the farmers who lived in the area and sold their products.

Delikipos is a small village in the district of Larnaka, which was a fiefdom in the Middle Ages and was recorded on maps as "Dilichiper". There have been references to it since 1461. The first mention of its name, found in the Great Cypriot Encyclopaedia, is that the first owner of the village was called Delis, and the name means "garden of

Deli". The second version, which is considered more correct, according to the village webpage, is that the first compound comes from the Italian word "bella", which means "beautiful", so the name means "beautiful garden".

Deftera, which consists of two separated communities, namely Pano Deftera and Kato Deftera, is located very close to Lefkosia, on the banks of Pediaios river and is mainly known for the medieval church of Panagia Chrysospilotissa. The area has been inhabited since the Geometric era, while it was a fiefdom of the Knights Templar order during the **Frankish** rule. During the **Venetian** period, Deftera, together with Psimolofou, was the property of the Patriarch of Antioch. The prevailing explanation of its name is that it comes from the name Defteras, who was the man who kept the defteria, i.e. the tax books. Less likely is the version that it comes from the **Greek** word "defteroma", which is the second ploughing of the fields.

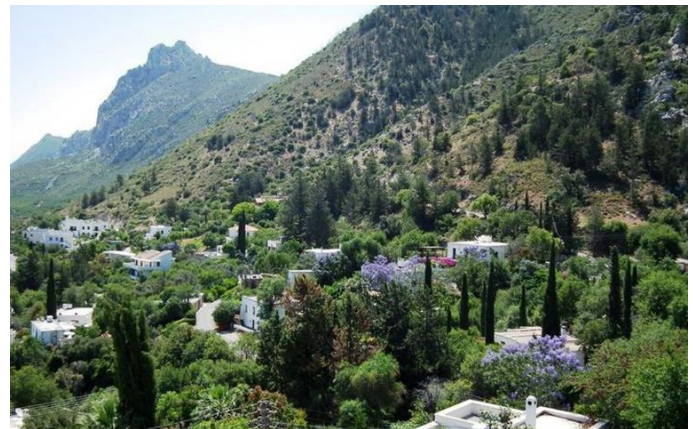


*Panagia Chrysospilotissa, Deftera*

Ergates is a village in the district of Lefkosia, built on the banks of the Pediaios river, with the first settlement in the area possibly being created during the **Roman** period. Its name means the same today, and goes back many centuries, as it is related to the workers in the copper mines of Tamassos, who chose this place on the river to create their settlement. According to the community webpage, little by little, the few huts became more numerous and anyone who wanted to go there said "I'm going to the Workers". Although the mines closed over time, the name remained. On maps from the **Frankish** era, the village is referred to as "Ergates".

Karmi is an occupied village in the Pentadaktylos mountain range, in the district of Keryneia, where the castle of Agios Hilarion is located. During the period of the **Frankish** occupation, it belonged to the order of Carmelite monks,

but it is considered that there may have been a settlement from the Byzantine era. There are three explanations for the name of the village according to the Keryneia District Communities Association. The first is that it came from the mythological Karmis, daughter of Cassiopeia or Demeter and Euthybulus, who was the mother of Dictaena by Zeus and the sister of Arabus, Phoenicus, Cilicia and Europa, from which other geographical names arose. The second version is that the village got its name from the **French** word "charme", which means "charming and wooded location". The most probable version is the one connected with the Carmelite monks, the order of the Carmes, who were named after Mount Carmel in Palestine. The order was active in Cyprus during the **Frankish** period and areas called Carmen, from the same root, also exist in Polemidia, Ammochostos and Tala in Pafos.



*Karmi*

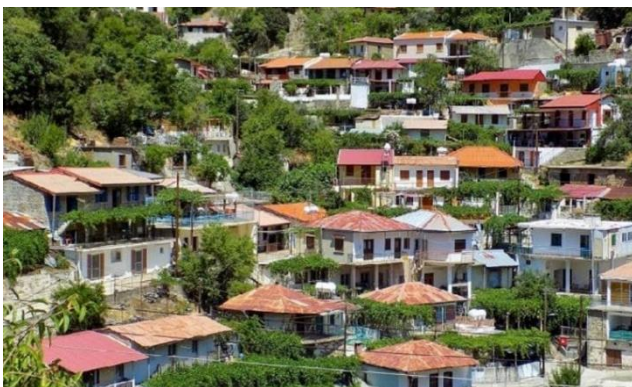
Kritou Terra is a green village in the district of Pafos, overlooking Chrysochous Bay through the mountain peaks. The area has been inhabited since ancient times, with finds dating back to the **Roman** era. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, natural disasters forced the inhabitants to move further south, to where the community is today. According to the village webpage, the first version of its name is connected to the unique carved caves that exist there. The word Crete comes from the **French** "la grotte", which means "caves" and Terra from the corresponding Latin, which means "earth". The second version relates to a feudal lord, Erotokritos, whose name is again linked to the **Latin** "terra". According to an old document, originally the phrase was "to Erotokritos" and gradually changed to a feminine name. Subsequently, the area was merged with

the neighboring village of Terra and both names were united.



*Kritou Terra*

Mylikouri is a village in Lefkosia district, directly connected to the monastery of Panagia Kykkos. It seems that during the medieval years it belonged to one of the royal fiefs of Marathassa, the Count of Riga. There are three different explanations of its name, two of which are the same, but they disagree on the historical facts. As stated on the village webpage, the first version, supported by Neoklis Kyriazis and Simos Menandros, says that the name came from the myriki plant, but this is met with skepticism, as this is a lowland plant, mainly of salty soils and never existed in the area. The second and third versions are that the name came from the amalgamation of the villages "Milon" and "Kourion". According to one local tradition, the inhabitants of these two communities were massacred by the Karaman Turks in one night and those who were saved lived in the area where Mylikouri is located today. This version, however, is not compatible with historical events, as the village existed before the Turkish occupation. The other tradition says that Milo was hit by a fatal earthquake and Kourio by earthquakes, and with the encouragement of the monk Kylandros, their inhabitants built Mylikouri.



*Mylikouri*

Frenaros is a village in Ammochostos district, in the area of Kokkinochoria, and is in a location that has been inhabited since prehistoric times. The first written reference to the village is made during the **Venetian** period and divides the village into Kato Frenaro and Apano Frenaro. According to the village webpage, the name seems to come from the "freres mineurs" (little brothers), who were Franciscan **Latin** monks from the monastery of Panagia Chortakiotissa in the area. The Greeks called them "Frerides". The second version is similar and says that around Panagia Chortakiotissa there were monasteries during **Byzantine** and **Frankish** times and Frenaria in **French** meant "an area inhabited by monks".

Village names are the special names that people give to each part of their native land. These names were not given by chance. Each name is closely associated with the place and usually describes the landform, its nature, vegetation or its history, **indigenous languages**, customs and traditions. That is why the research and study of these names is very important. They are a valuable national treasure because they come from all periods of our country's history, from ancient times until today. They show, not only the features of land, but also the use of the place, its historical adventures, the relationships and activities of the inhabitants who lived there, the foreign settlers or raiders or passers-by, and generally illuminate many issues of the history and **indigenous languages** of our country.

Village names are an important part of our geographical and cultural environment. They represent irreplaceable cultural, **language**, and environmental values of vital significance to people's sense of well-being and belonging. Geographical names in Cyprus are therefore of major importance. Society must bear the responsibility for respecting geographical names heritage and assuring that place name planning and use are carried out in such a way as to ensure that the place names are preserved.

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## “Geographical names supporting the International Decade of Indigenous Languages” - National Geospatial Policy and other initiatives in India

As the popular Indian saying goes, “*Kos Kos Pe Paani Badle, Chaar Kos Pe Vaani*”. Kos is an Indian unit of distance having different values in different localities, ranging from around 3000 to 4000 meters. This popular aphorism that states, every 12 kilometers, the spoken language or dialect of the people changes, sums up the linguistic diversity of India like no other.

As per the 2011 Language Atlas of India, there are a total of twenty-two scheduled languages and a total of ninety-nine non-scheduled languages in India. (The languages included in the Eighth Schedule of Constitution of India are identified as Scheduled languages and the rest of the languages are identified as non-scheduled languages). In addition to this, several other languages and dialects representing cultures and complex systems of knowledge developed and accumulated over thousands of years, reflecting distinctive worldviews and perspectives of the Indigenous population. Hence it is no surprise that correspondingly, the geographical names in India are also rich and varied.

The spatial aspects and dimensions of the Indigenous languages, the typology of language distribution and its geographical correlates, are valuable inputs to existing fields of innovative research by government organizations, industry and academia. These fields would therefore benefit immensely from free, locally available, locally relevant maps and geospatial names and other data.

### National Geospatial Policy

In India, the 2022 National Geospatial Policy, a citizen-centric policy, was promulgated by the Government of India to liberalize the geospatial sector and democratize the datasets generated from public funds. The development of the country’s geospatial infrastructure and strengthening the national and sub-national arrangements for the generation and management of geospatial information, including spatial datasets and geographical names (toponyms), is envisaged by the policy.

Accordingly, geographical names (toponymy), is one of the 14 national fundamental geospatial data themes as per the policy and Survey of India, Department of Science & Technology, which is the nodal organization for toponymy.

Survey of India maintains an extensive repository of geographical names collected from every state and union territory of India. These names are field verified during the collection process to ensure correct linguistic phonetics. This toponymic data theme is one of the fundamental geospatial themes and is available to the public through online map portals along with other spatial datasets.



Survey of India Oriya Language Map

The **Global Action Plan of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages** emphasizes involving Indigenous People themselves in the standardization of geographical names (Activity 3.3). Survey of India has initiated the process of collecting audio-recordings of geographical names from the local population, so that existing geoname databases can be refined and supplemented. The audio guides generated after consultation with linguistic experts, will assist in correct pronunciation of individual geographical names. The dissemination of these audio files is expected to significantly revitalize the interest in Indigenous place names and languages.



### Initiatives and Programs supporting Indigenous languages

The Global Action Plan also encourages the production of Indigenous language tools and resources to provide access to public information services in indigenous languages, in particular to support local and small economic activities or ecosystems. The integration and deployment of indigenous languages in cyberspace resting on open standards, Artificial Intelligence (AI), blockchain and other state-of-the-art technologies is also envisaged under the same (Activity 2.3 & 3.2).

A major barrier to inclusive development in Indian society, is effective awareness of rights and benefits and access to technology, which has been difficult to overcome because India speaks many languages and dialects.

One of the Government of India’s initiatives addressing this is ‘**Bhashini**’, a local language translation mission that aims to break the barrier between various Indian tongues. This government platform aims to make (AI) and Natural Language Processing resources available in the public domain to be used by micro, small & medium enterprises, startups and individual innovators. This will enable developers to offer all citizens easy access to the internet and digital services in their native languages. **Jugalbandi** is a free and open platform that combines the power of ChatGPT and Indian language translation models under the Bhashini mission to power conversational AI solutions in any domain.



*Bhashini-Meity*

The Global Action Plan also involves capacity building among Indigenous People, particularly Indigenous youth and organizations focused on media and information literacy, digital skills for production of appropriate content

and information using open-source, open educational resources tools (Activity 3.1).

In this context, it is pertinent to mention that Akashvani, the public radio broadcaster, broadcasts its content in more than 23 languages and 179 dialects in India. Akashvani News has also launched news bulletins in classified vulnerable languages like Gondi, the dominant dialect of a tribal community in Chhattisgarh and also in Pochuri language.

Community radio groups using their own mobile radios to transmit local news and songs, have also been contributing to preserving the heritage and culture of Indigenous languages.



*Community radio*

The Asur community, a particularly vulnerable tribal group in Jharkhand belonging to the Austro-Asiatic ethnic group, has been using mobile radio to transmit local news and songs in their language. Asur is considered to be an endangered language and is listed in the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger.



*Photo Credit: ASUR Adivasi Wisdom Documentation Initiative*



Other community radio stations like Radio Mattoli in Wayanad, Kerala, have been producing programs in tribal languages and dialects for acquainting farmers in the Wayanad hills with methods to preserve water bodies, techniques in dairy farming, organic farming, and precision farming. Such initiatives are found to enhance the capacities among the Indigenous population for applying their languages and knowledge in maintaining the integrity of Indigenous food systems and is one of the desired outputs of the Global Action Plan.

The Government of India has also instituted a collaborative Scheme for Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages (SPPEL), galvanized by the grim situation of lesser-known languages in the country. The objective of the Scheme is to document and archive the country's languages that have become endangered or are likely to be endangered in the future. The languages which are spoken by less than 10,000 speakers or languages which were not linguistically studied earlier, are chiefly considered to be documented in the form of grammar, dictionary and ethno-linguistic profiles.

The enabling ecosystem and availability of geospatial datasets including toponyms for industry, academia and research, by way of the National Geospatial Policy and other initiatives of the Government of India, are expected to immensely revitalize interest and support for Indigenous languages, culture, heritage and language recognition.

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## Indonesia: Discovering Minority Identity Through Geographical Names: Wabo Language in Papua

The existence of the identity of minority communities is very dependent on their language use. In the case of a community still using their local language as a marker of group identity, it can be said that it still supports and encourages recognition of its heritage. On the other hand, minority communities that do not use their local language in daily communication create a group identity crisis. The condition emerged because people tend to forget their group identity along with forgetting their local language. The situation is in accordance with opinion from Olko & Sallabank (2021), which states that language loss is accompanied by the loss of knowledge, loss of linkages to the past and cultural achievements, loss of aesthetic possibilities, or loss of cultural autonomy. Moreover, if the minority community only uses their local language orally without a writing system, the group's identity will disappear without a trace.

One example of a minority community at risk of losing their language is the Wabo-language-speaking community in Yapen Islands Regency, Papua Province, Indonesia (see Figure 1). According to the Indonesian National Agency for Language Development and Cultivation (2019), the Wabo language is one of the 718 languages identified. This makes it mandatory to make efforts to preserve the Wabo language in accordance with various laws and regulations in Indonesia. Several regulations supporting the preservation are:

- 1) Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 24 of 2009 concerning the National Flag, Language and Emblem, as well as the National Anthem
- 2) Government Regulation Number 57 of 2014 concerning Development, Guidance and Preservation of Language and Literature and Improvement of the Function of the Indonesian Language, and
- 3) Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 42 of 2018 concerning National Language and Literature Policy.

The aforementioned facts and regulations are solid reason to preserve the Wabo language as the status of the Wabo language is at an endangered level (Eberhard et al., 2021).

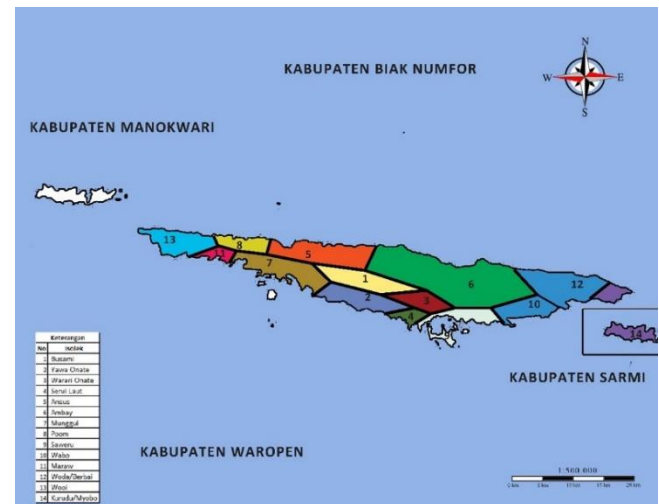


Figure 1. Language map in Yapen Islands Regency, Papua Province (Syarfina & Budiono, 2022)

However, the Wabo people apparently do not use the Wabo language in daily communication (Indonesia Statistics, 2018), instead, they use the Ambai language. Given that the Wabo people often intermarry with the Ambai people, and also that the number of Ambai speakers is greater than the Wabo, it is not surprising that the Wabo people prefer to use Ambai to communicate. It can be said that the Wabo people are experiencing a group identity crisis, arising from the low use of the Wabo language. Additionally, the Wabo language does not (yet) have a writing system, grammar, or other language documentation material. This lack of language documentation could cause the identity of the Wabo people, as a minority group in Papua Province to be lost and eroded by more dominant groups. This could also result in the loss of part of the intangible heritage of Indonesia, as one of the multicultural countries in the world.

Based on information from the Wabo community, efforts to preserve the identity of the Wabo group were carried out when the area was expanded in accordance to Government Regulation Number 40 of 2008. The law regulates changing the name of Yapen Waropen Regency to Yapen Islands Regency in Papua Province. Originally, the Wabo people only lived in Korombobi village, until some of them moved to the villages of Wabo, Wabompi and Wonsyupi. The Wabo people have the awareness to

immortalize their group identity in regional names such as village names when proposing to name regional expansion. This sheds a light on efforts to preserve the Wabo language since Wabo identity, in terms of language, will be difficult to attain if people do not use it in daily communication. Fortunately, the Wabo people have personal documentation of Wabo traditional land maps. The map in Figure 2 contains the names of various mountains and rivers in the Wabo language. Therefore, the only way to determine the Wabo people identity as a minority group is by discovering the names shown on the Wabo traditional land maps.

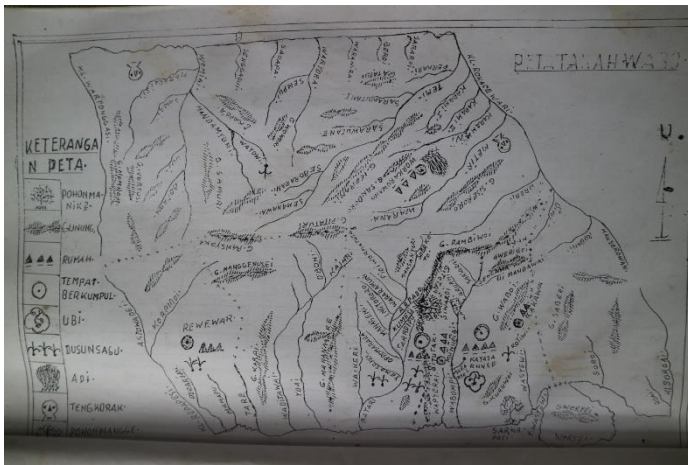


Figure 2. Handwritten Wabo traditional land map

With reference to the Wabo traditional land map, the fact is that not all Wabo people speak the Wabo language. The reality among the Wabo people is that their identity is diminishing, not only in terms of their language use but also in terms of naming their places. For example, the way Wabo people named rivers such as Waditawai River, Moraraisi River, and Peraipi River. The name of the Waditawai river uses the Wabo language, where the symbol for naming a river in the Wabo language is wai which means 'water'. This is similar to naming rivers in West Java which have ci characteristics and naming rivers in West Kalimantan which have sei characteristics. However, the name of the Moraraisi river comes from the Biak language. According to the community recollection, the meaning of Moraraisi is the land given by the Mora clan to the Wabo people. This was because people from

the Mora clan killed the Wabo people in this river. Finally, the naming of the Peraripi river uses the Ambai language. The meaning of this name is 'a place to burn trees'. Even though the Biak language and the Ambai language are used in naming landforms, such as rivers, most river names are derived from the Wabo language. Consequently, the naming of landforms is important to document as a method to preserve the minority Wabo language.

## Conclusion

Discovering the identity of minority communities can be done by exploring the geographical naming in their areas. The exploration can be an alternative if the local language of a minority group is no longer used in daily communication. Geographical naming remains around the location of language speakers, characterizing the identity of the group living in that place so that the minority group's identity can still be known. From the naming of the landforms, language preservation efforts can be achieved by revitalizing the language based on exploring the cultural identity of minority groups in terms of geographical names as the remaining source of identity. This activity is in accordance with UNGEGN's Strategic Plan and Program of Work 2021–2029 to support indigenous regional and/or minority groups' language revitalization preservation. Moreover, disclosing the minority community's identity based on geographical names is also in line with UNESCO's program of calling on all countries in the world to preserve and develop local languages through the International Decade of Indigenous Languages for the period 2022-2032.

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# Indonesia: Geographical Names Supporting the International Decade of Indigenous Languages: Literary Mapping

## Introduction

As an archipelagic state, Indonesia has over 300 ethnic groups each with unique customs and indigenous languages. The Language Development and Fostering Agency of Indonesia (BPPB) has identified and validated 718 indigenous languages, actively engaging in the study of literature in these languages since 1970. These studies encompass oral literature, sagas, short stories, poetry, plays, manuscripts, and biographies of writers from various regions. As a result, 1513 literary data are recorded at <https://repositori.kemdikbud.go.id/>. This reveals that Indonesian literature is not only abundant in terms of form, genre, theme, and motif but also displays diversity in historical, social, political, and ethnic-cultural contexts. (BPPB, 2023)

Preserving Indonesia's literary diversity is a national priority, as recognized by the Indonesian government's commitment to develop literary mapping. The objectives include acknowledging the distribution of literary variants according to the location and indigenous language distribution, establishing a regional database and laying the groundwork for implementing further language and literature safeguarding initiatives. These initiatives include vitality studies, conservation and revitalization of oral literature, preservation of manuscripts, and digitization of printed literature. Based on the results of literary mapping, the types of literature, forms, descriptions, and geographical distribution will unfold. BPPB will collect, process, verify, and manage data, while the Indonesian Geospatial Information Agency (BIG) will support visualizing literary mapping.

## Different Types of Literature

The classification of literary genres into prose, poetry, and drama by Western scholars does not apply to categorizing indigenous literature from Indonesia. Legends, myths, epics, fairy tales, tambo, rhyme, gurindam, saga, poetry, macapat, karungut, mamanda, geguritan, and kakawin are several examples of Indonesia's Indigenous literature. According to BPPB, the literary mapping focuses on oral literature, manuscripts, and printed literature.

In accordance with Ruth Finnegan (2012), oral literature stands apart from written literature, being created, distributed, and performed orally rather than through written or printed words. Not every oral literature is narrative in nature, encompassing songs, riddles, comedic writings, incantations, and even dance performances, if they have spoken components. In essence, oral literature encapsulates all forms of art and knowledge transmitted orally or in writing from generation to generation.

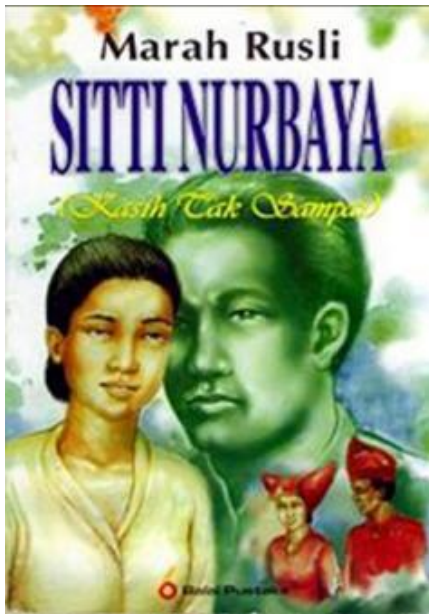


*Two elderly woman played kelintang instrument as part of the Dideng oral tradition performance at the Jambi language office on september 16th, 2019).*

A manuscript is a cultural creation handwritten on materials aged at least fifty years old. The manuscript's content encompasses many topics, including religion, history, law, politics, customs, medicine, engineering, and more, making it extremely pertinent to Indonesian national insight. In the context of manuscript mapping, it focuses on linguistic and literary data, distinguishing between the context (text) and the physical form (manuscript).

In the early 18th to 19th century, the development of printing technology led to the emergence of a publishing culture in several Indonesian regions. At that time, the majority of printed works were published in Malay-Arabic script. For instance, the 1922 novel titled "Sitti Nurbaya" was published by Balai Pustaka, the national publisher of the Dutch East Indies. This novel was written in Malay script, and explores themes of unconditional love, anti-forced marriage, sacrifice, colonialism and modernity. Written language and publication are two features of

printed literature. The printed works published in Indigenous languages and written in Latin or other regional scripts are the printed literature that became the subject of literary mapping.



*Sitti Nurbaya is written by Marah Rusli in 1922*

### Literary Mapping: Guideline and Data Management

The five key phases of literary mapping include determining population and sample, data inventory, data analysis, data validation, and data dissemination. The population is identified based on the language spoken in the area, and the sample is based on the distribution and variants of Indigenous languages that represent the existence of literary works in the respective language-speaking community. Observation areas align with the language map published by the BPPB (accessible via <https://petabahasa.kemdikbud.go.id/>). The data is collected through observation methods, interviews, and literature studies or document reviews to collect comprehensive information on the form and type of literature in an area. Subsequently, the collected data is

analyzed to sequence the structure and organize it into patterns, categories, and descriptive units. The next step is data validation, which involves the team from the BPPB collaborating with experts to ensure its accuracy, culminating in the formalization of validated data through the issuance of a Language and Literature Object Identification Number, a determination made by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia. The final phase is the dissemination of data, through a dedicated website at <https://petabahasa.kemdikbud.go.id/bahasasastra/home.php>. The literary map featured on the site provides insights into the distribution of Indigenous languages, oral literature, printed literature, manuscripts, and literary communities.

BPPB held two events in 2023 to update the guidelines for literary mapping. This activity was established as a preliminary step towards creating a literary database. The Indonesian Geospatial Information Agency (BIG) recommends use of story maps to distribute literature and preserve various options for literary map visualization. BIG also utilizes literary maps as a valuable source of information on ancient place names and the language origins of geographical names.

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# Preserving Indonesia's Linguistic Diversity through Digital Language Mapping

## Introduction

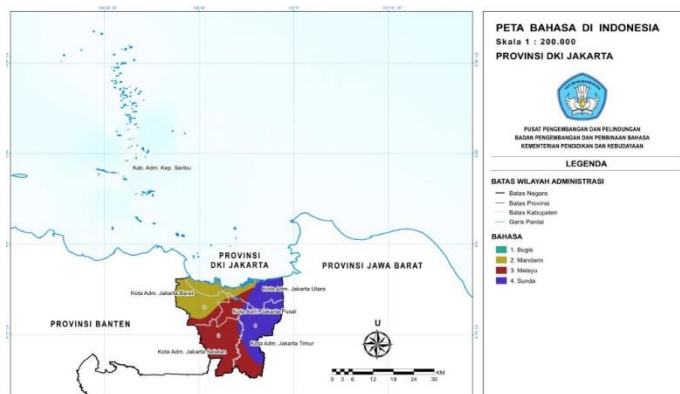
The Republic of Indonesia is a huge nation of both small and large islands, having different ethnic groups, who speak different languages with a rich cultural heritage. Almost all ethnic groups in Indonesia have a regional language that they use for communication and expression. Article 32 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia stipulates that the government is committed to promoting and safeguarding these regional languages as a valuable asset of the country. The legal framework for language studies was established in Law Number 24 of 2009, and further detailed in Government Regulation Number 57 of 2014, which provides the legal foundation for Indonesian language kinship and mapping studies. It is necessary to protect the regional languages that younger generations continue to use in many contexts, such as for family, religion, and customs until they reach the stages of conservation and revitalization. (BPPB, 2018).

Understanding Indonesia's linguistic landscape is crucial for preserving local languages, alongside Bahasa Indonesia as the national language. Language maps offer fundamental insights into the linguistic context, facilitating informed work plans. Language maps can give a broad picture of the local linguistic condition from the standpoint of language development, enabling responses to inquiries concerning the quantity and kinds of regional languages spoken in Indonesia. Therefore, it is possible to precisely calculate how many regional languages must be conserved and which regional languages must be prioritized. (Lauder, 1993)

## Previous Language Mapping Activity

Since 1991, the Research on Kinship and Mapping of Regional Languages throughout Indonesia project has been implemented by the Language Center of the Ministry of National Education. The sixth edition of "Languages and Language Maps in Indonesia", revealed that 718 regional languages were found up to October 2019. This was based on the analysis of data from 2,560 observation points spread across provinces in Indonesia. Those languages consist of two immigrant languages - Mandarin Ampenan

(West Nusa Tenggara) and Mandarin DKI Jakarta - and 716 regional languages.



Language Map of DKI Jakarta Province)

To document the distribution and diversity of regional language variations as well as kinship among regional languages, the Research on Kinship and Mapping of Regional Languages throughout Indonesia integrates comparative historical linguistics and dialectology. Data collection involves a standard questionnaire featuring 302 simple phrases for syntactic analysis, 889 cultural vocabularies with different semantic fields for mapping language variations, and 200 basic Swadesh vocabularies to trace language kinship and age (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019).

For post-field data collection, the data is processed using distinct methods for language mapping and language kinship analysis. Lexicostatistics calculations provide language kinship analysis, while language maps are created by analyzing dialect or language boundaries within the observation region. Idle lines in the shape of isoglosses and isophones analyze the locations of linguistic or dialect boundaries. The Thiessen Polygon approach and the interpolation concept used in the creation of these isoglosses in spatial analysis are related.

The Thiessen Polygon method, which is used to create language maps, creates polygons representing language or dialect boundaries by interpolating the village's coordinates. The spatial distribution of regional languages in Indonesia is then represented by color symbols. Each language has its own color symbol, necessitating 718



distinct colors to display existing languages. However, the limitations of human visual perception, which cannot discern among the hundreds of colors at once, are a challenge when differentiating similar colors corresponding to various languages on the map.

### Language Mapping Digitalization Plan

From 23-27 August 2023, a focused discussion explored the roadmap for language mapping digitalization. Considerations focused on various alternatives aimed at improving the quality of the language map, including increasing the number of observation areas and refining data visualization on the map.

Currently, the Indonesian language map can be revised to update the number of administrative regions from 34 to 38 provinces. Employing Isogloss methods for visualizing language maps is under consideration. Of the estimated 7,000 DPs (Observation Areas), only 2,560 are currently available, making the data available to date still suboptimal. Additionally, 1,992 datasets await integration with the updated administrative region information.

To address these challenges, a Language Mapping Digitalization Team was proposed. To advance this digitalization program, it is necessary to fortify the underlying concept. The proposal to add information descriptions, especially those related to location, will provide significant added value to this digital language

mapping endeavor. Therefore, the proposed updates and improvements lay a good foundation for the accurate and comprehensive evolution of language mapping.

In accordance with geographical name standardization in Indonesia, the digitalization of language mapping is important in supporting the completeness of geographical names data in *Sistem Informasi Nama Rupabumi* (SINAR), a tool used in geographical names standardization in Indonesia. A comprehensive language map enhances the efficacy of tracing the origin language of phrases in geographical names.

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## Netherlands (Kingdom of the): Minority toponyms on maps

In 1983 I (Ferjan Ormeling) defended my PhD thesis entitled '*Minority Toponyms on Maps, the rendering of minority language toponyms on topographic maps of Western Europe*' at Utrecht University. The thesis was recently made publicly available by the University, and therefore I am now able to share this work, particularly given its applicability to the theme of this issue of the Bulletin. The thesis can be accessed through <https://dspace.library.uu.nl/handle/1874/433345>

The study examined the various ways national topographical surveys dealt with toponyms (exonyms included) used by minority language communities in Western Europe. To this end, topographic maps of minority language areas were studied. A questionnaire was sent to all topographic surveys in Western Europe (all of Europe save the socialist countries and Greece, because of the impossibility to procure large-scale topographic maps), and most of their offices were visited as well, in order to contact local toponymic experts. The official attitudes declared or ascertained from the map material, ranged from a total negation of the minority language toponyms and a rendering of majority names instead, to a bilingual representation on the map with paired

majority/minority names to even a monolingual minority rendering of toponyms in minority language areas on the map and a bilingual map legend. These official attitudes were evaluated by comparing them to the guidelines and resolutions of UNGE GN, such as the local names policy. Finally, several recommendations for topographical surveys dealing with minority language areas were included.

Although the topographical maps analysed for this thesis are long superseded and although most of the topographical surveys have more inclusive attitudes regarding linguistic minorities than 40 years ago, the thesis might still be of interest to UNGE GN experts because of its methodology. Moreover, outside Western Europe there are still many countries where topographic surveyors have to deal with linguistic minorities and might profit from the Western-European experience and mistakes.

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## Restoring New Zealand's original Māori geographic names

### Introduction

*Ka ngaro te reo, ka ngaro tāua, pērā i te ngaro o te moa  
If the language is lost, we will be lost, as dead as the moa<sup>1</sup>.*

The reo<sup>2</sup> Māori is the Indigenous language of New Zealand. As with other Indigenous languages around the world, colonisation had a devastating impact on te reo Māori and by the mid-20th century there were grave concerns that the language was dying. A process of revitalisation commenced in the 1970s and in 1987 te reo Māori was made an official language of New Zealand through the Māori Language Act 1987. In 2016 te reo Māori was formally recognised as a taonga<sup>3</sup> under Te Ture mō Te Reo Māori Act (Māori Language Act) 2016. Te reo Māori remains listed as an endangered language in the UNESCO World Atlas of Languages and in recent years there has been an even greater focus on its revitalisation. These revitalisation efforts are supported by government plans such as [Maihi Māori 2017-2040](#) and [Maihi Karauna](#).

This article highlights several ways that the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa<sup>4</sup> is contributing to the revitalisation and promotion of te reo Māori through the restoration of original Māori geographic names.

*Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission) is a government entity which exists to promote the use of Māori as a living language and as an ordinary means of communication. Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori is leading New Zealand's contribution to the UN International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022-2032 (IDIL), working in partnership with UNESCO New Zealand National Commission. Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori Chair, Professor Rawinia Higgins, is of one three Pacific representatives on the Global Taskforce for the Decade.*

### Restoring original Māori geographic names

*'Mēnā kore mātou e mōhio, kore roa ka ngaro ngā ingoa  
tawhito, ngā ingoa tūturu'<sup>5</sup>  
If we don't know the old names then the real names will  
soon disappear.*

Māori extensively named the landscape of New Zealand. These geographic names convey information about the landscape itself and its resources, mark particular events, or tell stories about the traditions and histories of an iwi.<sup>6</sup> Many Māori geographic names were replaced by European names following colonisation or have been lost, a fate shared with many indigenous geographic names around the world. However, growing public support for te ao Māori<sup>7</sup> and te reo Māori has resulted in increased recognition of the importance of restoring our original Māori geographic names. As noted by Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori Chair, Professor Rawinia Higgins, '...as we continue to learn more about our history and recognise te reo as being a big part of our identity, people are more aware of the need to reclaim our landscape with Māori names.'<sup>8</sup>

### The role of the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa<sup>9</sup>

There are many opportunities to increase the use and status of te reo Māori through the Geographic Board's authority to name geographic features and places. The Geographic Board has specific statutory functions to collect and encourage the use of original Māori geographic names and ensure that their orthography is correct. The Geographic Board's work is informed by various policies, protocols and agreements including its [2020-2025 Strategy](#) and its [Māori Language Plan](#) which outlines the impact it can have on the revitalisation of te reo Māori. Original Māori geographic names can be restored by a process which involves public consultation, or as part of the Treaty of Waitangi settlement process.<sup>10</sup> Assigning contemporary

<sup>1</sup> A large flightless native bird, thought to have become extinct by the mid-1400s.

<sup>2</sup> The language.

<sup>3</sup> Treasure.

<sup>4</sup> National naming authority, 'memorial markers of the landscape'.

<sup>5</sup> Quote from Mariameno Kapa-Kingi (Te Aupōuri, Ngāti Kahu ki Whangaroa) in 'History Stored Within Ingoa Māori', *Te Hiku Media*, 22 November, 2023. <https://tehiku.nz/te-hiku-radio/tautinei/42051/history-stored-within-ingoa-maori>.

<sup>6</sup> Tribe.

<sup>7</sup> The Māori world view.

<sup>8</sup> Thornber, Lorna. 2020. 'Is it time to restore all of New Zealand's Māori place names?', *Stuff*, 17 September, 2020. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/pou-tiaki/te-reo-maori/300107523/is-it-time-to-restore-all-of-new-zealands-maori-place-names>.

<sup>9</sup> National naming authority, 'memorial markers of the landscape'.

<sup>10</sup> For further detail about the restoration of Māori geographic names through Treaty settlement, refer to our prior article: Shaw, Wendy. 2023. 'Strengthening relationships, links and connections in New Zealand's geographic naming', *UNGEEN Information Bulletin 65*, pp. 19-21.

Māori names to newly discovered geographic features and places also helps to revitalise and promote te reo Māori.

### Mount Taranaki – a case study of a geographic name supporting indigenous language

This ancestral maunga<sup>11</sup> is named for Ruataranaki, the first ancestor of the Taranaki iwi, and is a place of immense cultural and spiritual significance for the eight iwi of Taranaki Region.<sup>12</sup> Captain Cook viewed the maunga while sailing past in 1770 and named it Mount Egmont after the second Earl of Egmont, John Perceval. The maunga was named Mount Egmont on maps until 1986 when it was officially renamed ‘Mount Taranaki or Mount Egmont’, meaning either name could be used. For the iwi of Taranaki, the maunga has always been Taranaki and they have long sought the official restoration of this name. The name Taranaki Maunga will be officially restored by the upcoming Taranaki Maunga Treaty settlement legislation. Mount Egmont will be no more and the mana<sup>13</sup> and identity of the maunga will finally be restored alongside its original name.<sup>14</sup>



Mount Taranaki - soon to be known as Taranaki Maunga,  
Joanna Barnes-Wylie, 31 March 2023

<sup>11</sup> Mountain.

<sup>12</sup> ‘The Naming of Taranaki’, *Taranaki Iwi*, <https://taranaki.iwi.nz/our-history/the-naming-of-taranaki/>.

<sup>13</sup> Commonly translated as status, prestige or authority. Mana is a supernatural force inside a person, place or object.

<sup>14</sup> Harvey, Helen. 2021. ‘What’s in a name? Restoring the mana of Taranaki Maunga’. *Stuff*, 18 July, 2021. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/pou-tiaki/125720045/whats-in-a-name-restoring-the-mana-of-taranaki-maunga>. The names of other ancestral maunga and geographic features within Egmont National Park (which will be named Te Papa-Kura-o-Taranaki) will also be restored through the Taranaki Maunga Treaty settlement legislation.

<sup>15</sup> People of the place.

### Other initiatives

Other initiatives recently undertaken also help support the revitalisation and promotion of te reo Māori through Māori geographic names.

#### ***New Zealand Gazetteer* audio pronunciation**

Although there is public support for restoring original Māori geographic names, some find their correct pronunciation challenging. To honour te reo Māori and the meaning behind the names, many New Zealanders want to ensure they are pronouncing the names correctly. To that end, the Geographic Board engaged an expert licensed translator and linguist to record audio files for Māori geographic names in the online [New Zealand Gazetteer](#) – specifically for those that have had their orthography confirmed. The Geographic Board has added more than 4,230 audio files to date and another 1,000 are planned for December 2023.

#### **Tangata Whenua<sup>15</sup> place name maps<sup>16</sup>**

In July 2023 the Geographic Board launched new editions of its [poster style maps](#) of Te Ika-a-Māui<sup>17</sup> and Te Waipounamu<sup>18</sup>, which show around 1,800 original Māori and Moriori<sup>19</sup> geographic names as they were prior to European settlement. These maps build on the first editions published in 1995 and involved direct engagement with Māori groups to gather the names and stories behind them. The reverse of each map has an index with a brief kōrero<sup>20</sup> for each name and its current name or description. The maps were distributed to over 2,500 schools and more than 950 iwi authorities and marae<sup>21</sup>. The maps can also be purchased from selected retailers and electronic versions can be downloaded. Overwhelmingly positive feedback on the maps indicates their value as a source of information about our Indigenous geographic names. The maps support our other resources and publications, including:

- [Place Names of the Ancestors: A Māori Oral History Atlas](#)

<sup>16</sup> For further detail on the maps, refer to: Shaw, Wendy. 2023. ‘[Report of New Zealand on new maps showing traditional/customary/ancestral/original Māori names](#)’. *United Nations Group of Experts on Geographic Names, 2023 session, New York 1-5-May 2023*. GEGN.2/2023/24.

<sup>17</sup> The North Island.

<sup>18</sup> The South Island.

<sup>19</sup> Indigenous people of the Chatham Islands, New Zealand’s easternmost offshore islands.

<sup>20</sup> Story.

<sup>21</sup> A communal Māori meeting place comprising land and buildings such as the wharenui (meeting house) and wharekai (dining room). Marae are the hub of Māori communities and places of considerable cultural and spiritual significance.

- [The Survey Pegs of the Past: Understanding Māori Place Names](#)



Children looking at the new Tangata Whenua Place Name Maps, Joanna Barnes-Wylie, 17 November 2023

### Virtual field trip on Māori geographic names

In early 2023 the Geographic Board contributed to a geospatial virtual field trip [Our Place names: The Maniapoto Story](#) in collaboration with Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand and Tātai Aho Rau CORE Education under LEARNZ<sup>22</sup>. This field trip provided a range of multimedia resources from videos to interactive activities. It helped more than 13,000 students gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of Māori geographic names, in both the Maniapoto region and across New Zealand.

### Linking the *New Zealand Gazetteer* with *Kā Huru Manu*, the cultural atlas of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu<sup>23</sup>

[Kā Huru Manu](#) is an online digital atlas dedicated to mapping traditional Māori geographic names and their stories within the Ngāi Tahu rohe<sup>24</sup> in Te Waipounamu. In 2018 the Geographic Board recognised *Kā Huru Manu* as an authoritative source of geographic names and commenced

a collaborative project with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu to acknowledge the geographic names in the atlas and make them searchable in the *New Zealand Gazetteer* as either official or collected geographic names. 531 geographic names from *Kā Huru Manu* were published in the *Gazetteer* before the project stalled in 2020 due to COVID-19. A number of official geographic names also had their entries in the *Gazetteer* updated with links to the corresponding *Kā Huru Manu* entries. This project has recently recommenced, continuing this important work to help revitalise and promote Ngāi Tahu tūturu<sup>25</sup> geographic names.

### Summary and next steps

The UN Decade of Indigenous Languages shines a global spotlight on the need to preserve, revitalise and promote Indigenous languages, many of which are in a critical state. Geographic names have an important role to play in this. This is particularly recognised in New Zealand where a growing appreciation and acceptance of the importance of te reo Māori has led to greater support for the restoration of our Indigenous Māori geographic names. The Geographic Board will continue to support the preservation, revitalisation and promotion of te reo Māori by way of its authority to name features and places and through its various initiatives and publications. The Decade is a valuable platform to support the Geographic Board's work and it will continue to look for opportunities to actively promote original Māori geographic names in partnership with Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori and other government organisations. These include Te Arawhiti (Office for Māori Crown Relations), Te Papa Atawhai (Department of Conservation), and Te Puni Kōkiri (Ministry for Māori Development).

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<sup>22</sup> A programme of free virtual field trips for New Zealand school students.

<sup>23</sup> The tribe covering most of the South Island Te Waipounamu.

<sup>24</sup> Tribal area.

<sup>25</sup> Traditional/original/authentic.

## Norway: Navigating the Indigenous toponymic terrain

### Collaborative Meeting In Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino, Finnmark

From October 17th to October 19th, 2023, the Sámi Parliament in cooperation with Sámi University of Applied Sciences, invited the Language Council of Norway and the Norwegian Mapping Authority for a collaborative meeting in Guovdageaidnu. The Norwegian name for this place is Kautokeino and is an adaption to the pronunciation of the Sámi name.



This tradition of joint meetings among the three institutions has persisted almost annually since the enactment of the Norwegian Place Names Act in 1991. The primary objective of these gatherings, as stipulated in the legislative preparatory works, is to discuss the handling of name cases in accordance with the Act.

The meeting agenda this time focused on discussions regarding names in minority languages and designations in multilingual regions. The Act covers Norwegian, Sámi, and Kven geographical names, aiming to preserve them as linguistic cultural heritage. Notably, Sámi and Kven names, classified as endangered languages internationally, warrant special attention.

### Echoes of the past

In 2018, the Norwegian Parliament established The Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate assimilation policies against the Sámi and Kven/Finnish Norwegian communities. The comprehensive report, presented in

June 2023, provided a historic overview, mapping Norwegian authorities' activities towards the Sámi and Kven people during the 1800s and 1900s. It scrutinized contemporary repercussions of the Norwegianisation policy, proposing initiatives for further reconciliation.



Liv Inger Somby, a commission member and the rector of Sámi University of Applied Sciences, delivered a speech addressing the report and its associated work. The Commission's efforts involved listening to and documenting narratives shared by individuals or groups detailing the impact of the Norwegianisation policy and injustices on their lives or those close to them. Somby presented emotive quotes from these stories, particularly highlighting the suppression of Indigenous and minority people's language and geographical names.

### Signs of dominance in public spaces

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report states that:

«Language choices in the public sphere convey symbolic messages about the importance, power, and relevance of a language. Whether a language is used or not in public space has a significant impact on language policy and usage. Road signs displaying only Norwegian names in bilingual and multilingual areas indicate that a perception still exists that one culture is dominant» (p. 474).



This is based on the research conducted by Professor Kaisa Rautio Helander from Sámi University of Applied Sciences. Helander, a highly esteemed researcher in Sámi geographical names, emphasized a significant challenge related to this issue in her opening speech at the meeting. She pointed out that municipalities are currently restricted to selecting street names (official address names) in only one language, even if they desire bilingual options. While the government generally supports bilingual road signs, the regulations don't permit multiple languages for street names. Given the dominance of Norwegian, most street names are in Norwegian. The meeting collectively decided to address this concern with The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (KDD), advocating for the consideration of allowing street names in multiple languages, as successfully implemented in countries like Finland and Belgium. When the Place Names Act came into force in 1991, Helander, originally from Finland but residing in Norway, served as the secretary for the Sámi and Kven/Finnish Name Consultancy Service.

New guidelines for the spelling of geographical names in North Sámi and Kven languages were presented by Mikkel Rasmus Logje and Pål Kristian Eriksen, respectively. Establishing a written standard is a crucial component of the revitalization process for Indigenous and minority languages. Both the Sámi and Kven languages boast rich oral traditions, yet their orthographies are relatively recent developments. Due to historical assimilation policies, many individuals of Sámi and Kven descent may not speak, read, or write these languages. Recognizing names on signs and maps as powerful symbols, the accurate spelling of these names is pivotal for various reasons. Beyond enhancing the visibility and representation of names, they also serve as an educational function, aiding name users, insiders as well as outsiders, in learning and recognizing words and name elements while navigating the landscape.

### Perspectives on land

Associate Professor Mikkel Nils Sara delved into the perception of landscapes from a reindeer herding and nomadic standpoint. He highlighted the importance of directional cues, with language playing a key role in navigating vast territories, such as transitioning from inland to coastal terrain. Variations in directional

references exist among Sámi language communities, reflecting cultural nuances. Language incorporates terms tied to light conditions, influencing directional and place names in activities like hunting. Sara emphasized the significance of categorizing land, exemplified by names indicating optimal grazing times for reindeer, such as "early pasture" and reindeer fur length, symbolizing seasonal grazing areas. This interplay of place and time concepts underscores the necessity of firsthand experiences with the land, its elements, and the specific time of the year, enriching the understanding embedded in names.



### Joiking geographical names

Linguist Ole Henrik Magga was the first president of the Sámi Parliament from 1989 to 1997, and he also served as a name consultant for South Sámi language when the Place Names Act came into effect in 1991. Magga was also the inaugural chair of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII).

In the collaborative meeting in Guovdageaidnu, Magga illustrated how joiks, the chanting songs of the Sámi people, seek to describe a place. A joik performs the locality, so to speak. Many natural features have, in this way, acquired their own accompanying joik. Among the joiks he performed to the audience, was the name *Onnegađgi* in Kvænangen. *Onni* is Finnish and means "happiness". The word *geađgi* means "stone," so the full meaning is "Happiness Stone". The words in the joik are "the spirit from the nine valleys". "The nine valleys" symbolize the world, a reference that resonates with Indigenous peoples worldwide.

### A path to reconciliation?

The Act has notably increased awareness of Sámi and Kven names in Norway's multilingual landscape over the past three decades. However, resistance to multilingual road signs in public spaces still exists. The controversy surrounding the signs originates from a deep-seated cultural and ethnic conflict between Norwegian, Sámi, and Kven identities, rights, and territories, materialized through these signs.



Despite these challenges, ongoing collaboration between the Sámi Parliament, the Mapping Authority, and the Language Council is in place to further improve the representation of Indigenous and minority names.

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## Norway: Researching and promoting Sámi geographical names

### Pioneer in Sámi Onomastics

The Sámi University of Applied Sciences provides courses in Sámi geographical names at all academic levels, Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD, with Professor Kaisa Rautio Helander as the lecturer. Prof. Helander has been working for several years to establish Sámi onomastics as a discipline and attended the collaboration meeting in Guovdageaidnu between the Sámi Parliament, the Language Council of Norway and the Norwegian Mapping Authority from October 17th to October 19th, 2023. She explains that Sámi University of Applied Sciences is the only higher education institution in the entire Nordic region where Sámi onomastics is offered as a subject, with multiple courses available. Helander emphasizes the significant contribution of Sámi onomastics to knowledge dissemination and enhancement within the Sámi community and society, as well as in the broader society:



*Ms. Kaisa R Helander*

“It is crucial to establish a research environment for Sámi geographical names, mirroring the importance given to onomastic research in any majority language”.

An additional dimension to the University's program is that all courses are conducted in Sámi, ensuring that those studying Sámi onomastics possess a profound understanding of Sámi culture, identity, and language.

### A journey in Sámi geographical names

In one of the courses named "Báikenamat oahpponeavvun," which translates to "Geographical names as Educational Resources," the task is to create

both a digital and a non-digital educational resource. In the collaborative meeting, Maria Louise Sara, a key organizer of the meeting representing the Sámi Parliament and an UNGEKN expert, shared her work created during her participation in this course.

Choosing to create the non-digital part in a format, she focused on the river Kárášjohka, utilizing topographic appellatives linked to the river. This game, accessible to those with Northern Sámi competence, features the river running through the town where she is from. Her father's assistance in explaining topographic appellatives proved invaluable, she explained. The name of the game is "Čuoibmut" ('to paddle') with questions about places in and along the Kárášjohka river.



*Board game*

For the digital task, she decided to contact the organizers of Finnmarksløpet to ask if they were interested in including the Sámi names for the check points. Finnmarksløpet, The Finnmark race, is the world's northernmost and Europe's longest sled dog race. Sara, who has participated in the race multiple times herself, explains how the idea emerged:

“I grew up with a father who worked with reindeer. He has always been known for being very familiar with, and highly accurate when navigating the mountains. Moreover, he has taken me to the mountains in all kinds of weather, often leaving me alone with my dog to herd the flock. This has led to me not needing GPS when I train my dogs on the plateau”.

As Finnmarksløpet gained global attention with participants from various nations, Sara found it regrettable

that the checkpoint names were exclusively written in Norwegianized versions, given that most checkpoints are situated in settlements with frequently used Sámi names. Motivated by a desire to decolonize and preserve the language, preventing Sámi names from being perceived as merely attributes, she wanted to make visible that these areas are not desolate, as often referred to by the majority society as “untouched territories”. Rather, they have names signifying a rich history, usage, and the presence of the Sámi people. She adds that it's crucial to see the area traversed by Finnmarksløpet is the land of the reindeer, emphasizing the temporary presence of her people. This perspective, stemming from her upbringing in a reindeer herding family, provided inspiration and joy in the process.



Understanding the difficulty in pronouncing many of these names for outsiders, she created a digital book allowing users to listen to the names, read a brief text, and view an image of the location. Additionally, she incorporated the Sámi geographical names into the route map of Finnmarksløpet, enhancing the updated map available on their website. You can watch videos where she explains Sámi names at checkpoints along the trail route of the Finnmarksløpet dog sled race here: <https://checkpoints.finnmarkslopet.no/>.



*Norden Division Experts*

### [From father's footsteps to master's thesis](#)

Sara, who holds the position as a secretary for the Sámi Place Names Consultancy Service in the Sámi Parliament, is currently pursuing a master's degree in Sámi geographical names. Initially intending to focus on names related to reindeer husbandry, she followed a different yet intriguing path. Her thesis involves interviewing her father and his childhood friend, who, despite growing up in traditional mountain dwellings, became passionate fishermen. Her research delves into analyzing topographic appellatives in geographical names and exploring semantic aspects, utilizing distinct approaches with a significant reliance on informant explanations.

When asked about the motivation behind pursuing a master's degree in Sámi geographical names, Sara explained:

“The decision to delve into geographical names originated from various bachelor's courses in this field. Kaisa Rautio Helander, both as an individual and lecturer, sparked my interest. Through these courses, my connection with my father gained a new depth. Growing up with a father known for his familiarity with the terrain and navigating accurately in the mountains I felt a deep sense of pride. His influence, combined with Kaisa's guidance, has shaped my journey, offering a unique perspective on familiar places and the wisdom imparted by both my father and the winds sweeping across the plateaus”.

#### ***Ingvil Nordland***

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## Geographical Names in Support of Indigenous Languages in the Russian Federation

The Russian Federation represents a multinational community of equal peoples. Russian culture is the unique heritage of its multinational people. The state protects the cultural identity of all the peoples and ethnic communities of the Russian Federation and guarantees the preservation of ethno-cultural and linguistic diversity.

There are 155 languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation within the territory of the country. Geographical names are one of the components of the cultural heritage of the peoples of the Russian Federation. This article covers only a small part of the geographical names recently established by the Government of the Russian Federation for geographical objects that reflect the historical and cultural identity of the peoples of Russia.

Republic of Karelia. The villages of *Yendoguba* (Ендозуба) and *Sumostrov* (Сумостров) were formed in the Belomorsky District of the Republic of Karelia.

The name *Yendoguba* is of Sámi origin and means "big lip". Near the village there is a sacred grove, which serves as a burial ground - the village cemetery with the remains of burial structures is located there. The combination of the unique natural landscape and the settlement, which has preserved its traditional planning structure, allows one to classify this architectural and landscape complex as a monument of architectural value. Archaeological monuments have been preserved in the village (ancient sites dating back to 7000 - 2000 BC).

The name *Sumostrov* comes from the name of the Sumi tribe. The village is located on the eastern shore of Lake *Sumozero* (Сумозеро). The building of the village dates from the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century and represents a monument of Pomor architecture and the architecture of Karelian mainland settlements. The presence in the village of the Chapel of the Dormition of the Mother of God (late 17th century), ten monuments (bathhouses, barns) of independent historical and architectural value, a cemetery with the remains of carved burial structures, traditional residential and household buildings, as well as a unique natural landscape, allows the village of *Sumostrov* to be classified as a valuable historical settlement of the Belomorsky district.

In the Zabaikalsky Region, the village of *Kontoi* (Контой) is steeped in regional history, playing a crucial role in the preservation of the cultural heritage of the local Buryat population. Legend has it that Kontoi, a Mongol Khan, lived in this area during the 13th-14th centuries. Wandering across the steppe, Kontoi met the Buryat Princess Balzhin, married her without his father's permission, and built a stone palace. Over time, Kontoi became a powerful and respected khan, but his father never forgave him and sent an army to capture him. The beautiful Balzhin was killed, Kontoi was captured, and his palace was destroyed. The site is now known as *Konduiskiy site* (Кондуйский городок), and the heavily damaged palace has a stone with the inscription: "Archaeological monument. Konduiskiy site. 14th century. Protected by the state."



*Kontoi photo by Aginsky National Museum named after Gombozhav Tsybikov*

Republic of Dagestan. Most of the population of Dagestan speaks the languages of the Dagestan branch of the Iberian-Caucasian languages and languages belonging to the Turkic group.



The newly established villages of *Tsunta* (Цунта), *Balakuri* (Балакури), *Zhamod* (Жамод) and *Isoo* (Исоо) are primarily inhabited by Avars, of the Bezhtins ethnicity (an ethnographic group in the North Caucasus, the indigenous population of Western Dagestan). Bezhtins belong to the Cenza peoples of the Ando-Cenza group and the Bezhtinsky language (unwritten) belongs to the Avar-Andi-Dido? group of Dagestani languages.

In translation from the Avar language, the name *Tsunta* means "overflowing, fertile", and the area where the village was formed is rich in healing water springs.

The name *Balakuri* means "the gorge of fallow deer". The word "balakuri" (in Bezhti language - "balakuvo") came from the merger of two words "bala" - fallow deer and "kuvo" - gorge. The *Balakuri Gorge* is located near the village, and the *Balakuri River* flows in the gorge. There are fallow deer and Dagestani turs on the slopes and spurs of the gorge.

The name *Zhamod* means "echo is heard". The word "Zhamod" came from the merger of the Bezhtin word "zham" - "echo" and the suffix "od", which characterizes the attachment of the phenomenon to a given area, the peculiarity of which is the physical phenomenon of sound echo. This name denotes the village's mountainous setting, where sound is easily reflected among rocks, and if the rocks are at different distances, the sound has a long delay, and a repetitive echo is heard.

Republic. The villages of *Yalkharoi* (Ялхарой), *Akka* (Акка), *Charmakh* (Чармах), *Khiilakh* (Хийлах), *Peshkha* (Пешха), *Khaibakh* (Хайбах), *Galanchozh* (Галанчож) and *Mozarkha* (Моцарха) were established in the Urus-Martanovsky District of the Chechen Republic in November 2023, on the site of pre-existing villages in the historic *Nashkha* region. The villages' territories historically belonged to ancient Chechen *taipas* (clan villages), from which the names of the villages are derived.

The name *Akka* is derived from the Chechen *taip* *Akka*, while the name *Khaibakh* stems from the *Khaibakhoi* clan branch ("gar") of the *Nashkhoi* *taip*.



*Chechen Village of Mozaroi Watchtower by Galina Asharina*



Republic of Tuva - the village of *Toolaylyg* (Тоолайлыг), the Tuvan word "*toolay*" (тоолай) means "*rabbit*" and with the addition of the affix of possession - "*lyg*", the word means "*an area teeming with rabbits*".

Republic of Buryatia - the name *Atsagat Somon* (Ацзагатский сомон) was given due to the establishment of the administrative center in the village of *Naryn-Atsagat* (Нарын-Ацзагат), where the native language, traditions and customs have been preserved. One of the oldest Buddhist monasteries of Buryatia - *Atsagat Datsan* - is located on the western outskirts of the village. The word "*Atsagat*" comes from an ancient Mongolian word, translated into Russian as "*stony terrain*". The Buryat people have long been famous for their proverbs and well-wishing, with sayings such as "Build a house where there are many stones, raise cattle where there are many wolves", and indeed, the area where the village is located is rocky.

Krasnodar Region - the urban settlement of *Dagomys* (Дагомыс) got its name from the river *Dagomys*, formerly called *Pseudago* (Пседаго), which in translation from the Circassian language means: "*pse (psy) - water, river*", "*dago*" - the name of the clan, i.e. "*river (of clan) Dago*".

In the past, 3.5 km inland, on the left bank of the *Eastern Dagomys*, stood the village of *Dagomukov aul* (аул Дагомуков) belonging to the Ubykh noble family *Berzek Dokumok*. The names of the family, village and river have the shared ethnonym *Dago* (*Dogo, Dokum*). Over time, the name was transformed, and the river became known as *Dagomys*.

In the Republic of Tatarstan we find the settlement of *Barsil* (Барсил). *Barsily* (*Bersily* or *Basly*) traces its origins to a medieval tribe. In the ancient Turkic language, the word "*bars*" (барс) originally meant a tiger, later a hound dog, and eventually became associated with the contemporary leopard. "*Barsil*" comprises two parts: "*bars*" and "*il*" (*il'*), which means "the genus, tribe or country of the Leopard". This medieval tribe, *Barsily*, held significance among Bulgarian tribes. The leopard, a

totemic symbol, embodied power, and the connection of the earth with the sky. In the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, *Barsil* nomads occupied the lower reaches of the Volga River, later migrating to the Middle Volga region. Historical sources from the 9<sup>th</sup> century mention *Barsily* nomads as one of the three groups of the Volga Bulgars. Scientists consider the *Barsily* as an alien Turkic group.

For the purposes of uniform and sustainable use of geographical names across the Russian Federation, and to preserve these names as an integral part of the historical and cultural heritage of the peoples of the Russian Federation, all listed names are officially registered in the State Catalogue of Geographical Names. This governmental assignment of these names not only preserves historical continuity but also contributes to the restoration and preservation of the names associated with the indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation.

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## The International Decade of Indigenous Languages – Supporting Inuit Geographic Names

In 2019, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/74/135 proclaiming the period between 2022 and 2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL 2022-2032). The dedicated decade on Indigenous Languages was established to raise awareness of the critical situation of Indigenous Languages and act as a catalyst for the mobilization of governments and stakeholders to support, revitalize and develop Indigenous Languages.



In anticipation of the decade, a Global Task Force (GTF) was established and set out to develop a Global Action Plan. This is a strategic framework that outlines major actions and guidelines for implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Output 6 speaks specifically to Indigenous Peoples’ languages being a vehicle of living heritage which allows for more participation and access to all forms of culture. This aligns very well with Aim III of the UNGEGN’s [Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021 – 2029](#), that recognizes, respects and promotes the value of geographical names as significant elements of cultural heritage, language and identity, including those of Indigenous Peoples

### Power of Names

As Indigenous Peoples, reasserting our names for geographic places and features is very empowering. Inuit place names transmit the Inuit language, Inuit culture, Inuit world views, Inuit values and beliefs. Geographical names connect Inuit to the land and sea and ice. It plays a role in hunting – when to hunt and where to hunt. Inuit place names provide a sense of place. Inuit place names describe physical features. Inuit place names relate to Inuit cultural wellbeing.

I live in Iqaluit, Nunavut which is the eastern Arctic territory in Canada. The public majority population are Inuit whose mother tongue is Inuktitut.

In Inuktitut, Iqaluit is the plural word for fish – arctic char to be precise. When I hear, “Iqaluit” for me it conjures up the image of delicious orange-fleshed fish – eaten raw, frozen, fried, boiled, baked, dried, candied etc. It conjures up happy times. Sharing a fish meal with family and friends – because eating is never fun alone. It conjures up the adrenaline rush of catching the fish through ice fishing in the brightness of the spring sun or the rush of feeling the tug on the fishing rod or trying to keep the fish still enough to take it out of the net.

In Inuktitut, Nunavut means “our land” which includes the sea and the ice. When I hear ‘Nunavut’ it reminds me that I am of a collective peoples that are from the land and the sea and the ice and that we belong here. Our landscapes, our environment, the crispness of the air, the breathtaking views, the crackling of the ice, the sparkle of the snow, the steam of our breath are a part of us as much as we are a part of it. It would not be without us the way we would not be without it.

In 1987, I would have told you that I lived in Frobisher Bay, Northwest Territories. Between 1955 and 1987, in English, Iqaluit was officially known as Frobisher Bay. Martin Frobisher was an Englishman who had been looking for the Northwest Passage and the Northwest Territories which has had a long colonial history in Canada.

In Nunavut, some of the communities continue to have official English names – many named after explorers. In 2019, during the International Year of Indigenous Languages, in my capacity as the President for Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, I wrote letters to some Nunavut mayors encouraging them to consider officially changing the community’s name into its’ Inuktitut name. As a result of this, Cape Dorset (named by Captain Luke Foxe to honour his benefactor, Edward Sackville, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Dorset) and Hall Beach (after the American explorer Charles Francis Hall) each officially changed their name to Kinngait and Sanirajak, respectively.



### Commemoration

In 2021, Canada established September 30 as an annual statutory holiday – a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation – often referred to as Orange Shirt Day. This was the same year that the remains of 215 Indigenous children had been uncovered in an unmarked grave outside the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. The important work of identifying unmarked graves continues while the numbers continue to rise. This Day is a solemn reminder of the heavy, traumatic and calculated attempts, by state and church, of cultural genocide of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The residential school system actively attempted to destroy our cultures and our languages. The intergenerational impacts of residential schools remains strong in our communities. The last school was closed in 1997.



*Sivumugiaq street sign*

In anticipation of the Pope Francis’ visit to Iqaluit in July 2022, given the deep-rooted impacts of residential schools in our communities, I wrote a letter encouraging the mayor and council of Iqaluit to consider a commemorative naming of one of the streets. Dedicating it to residential school survivors, Iqaluit changed the former “Federal Road” which leads to the former residence of Inuit students attending federal day school to “Sivumugiaq Street”. In Inuktitut, sivumugiaq means ‘moving forward’. The use of our language in naming can be very healing, meaningful and comes from a place of strength. In addition, sivumugiaq is the only orange street sign in Iqaluit to visually remind us of the impacts of residential schools in our communities while reminding us to move forward despite our living history.

### Conclusion

Article 13.1, of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that, “Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.”

The final report of the twenty-second session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, states, “When an Indigenous Peoples’ language becomes extinct, the richness of the ways of life and world views of Indigenous Peoples is lost, which is detrimental both to Indigenous Peoples and to the world.”

May we use the International Decade of the Indigenous Languages as a vehicle to further strengthen and support use of geographical names in Indigenous Peoples’ Languages.

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# United Kingdom-Wales: Signs of the times: protests and policies to protect and promote Welsh place names

## Welsh in context

**A** Wales of a million Welsh speakers: that is the Welsh Government’s [long-term strategy by 2050](#). According to the [2021 Census](#) an estimated 538,000 people speak this ancient Celtic language – one of the oldest in Europe. We can estimate that a similar number of Welsh speakers would have lived in Wales two centuries ago. However, there’s a key difference: at that time they would have accounted for around 70% of the population, today they are 17.8%. Despite the complex statistical picture presented by the 2021 Census, and the undeniable decline in the percentage and number of speakers over the centuries, there are sure signs of promise. There is clear cross-party consensus in the Senedd (Welsh Parliament) that the Welsh language is a national treasure that should be used, enjoyed and safeguarded for future generations. Indeed, one of our long-term [well-being goals](#) as a nation is to be a Wales of a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.



*The Welsh Language Commissioner’s logo*

Welsh can be seen and heard in all parts of the country today – in communities where over 90% of the population still speak it and, in those communities where less than 10% are able to. In all of these places you will be in the presence of the Welsh language. Sometimes this takes the form of wording on signage or an official publication: the direct and indirect results of language legislation introduced during the course of the twentieth century with the aim of reversing the decline of the language and ensuring that Welsh has its proper place in public life. The Westminster Welsh Language Act of 1993 established the principle that the Welsh language should be treated on the basis of equality with English in public life. But the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011 was the first piece of language legislation to declare unreservedly the official status of the language in Wales and it has revolutionised

the use of Welsh in public life with its principle that the Welsh language should be treated ‘no less favourably’ than English.

## The Welsh Language Commissioner

The Welsh Language Measure established the office of the [Welsh Language Commissioner](#), an independent body with the chief aim of promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh. The Measure also provides a series of mechanisms to promote and facilitate the use of the language. The most prominent – and far-reaching – of these is the introduction of statutory language duties known as Welsh Language Standards. These Standards set out in detail how organisations must use Welsh in different situations: when designing road signs for example. Over 120 organisations in Wales operate under Standards today and we have [evidence](#) that they have contributed significantly to changing the linguistic landscape in Wales.



*Ms. Efa Gruffudd Jones, Welsh Language Commissioner*

## Standards and standardisation

Part of the Commissioner’s role is to ensure that organisations are fulfilling their statutory linguistic duties as set out in the Standards. The Welsh Language Commissioner is therefore a regulator, with considerable regulatory powers, but the role is far broader than this and the Commissioner has many tools to achieve the long-term and ambitious vision of a Wales



where people can live their lives in Welsh. One of the Commissioner’s more niche responsibilities is to provide advice on the standard forms of Welsh place names. However, it should be emphasised that there is no statutory force to these recommendations: there is no mention of place names in the Welsh Language Measure or in the Standards themselves. This responsibility long predates the Commissioner and the language legislation currently in play.

Indeed, the seeds of the Commissioner’s unique responsibility in this field were sown during the late 1960s when monolingual English signs were defaced and discarded by language-rights campaigners as a sign of their discontent at the disregard given to the Welsh language. It was a widespread campaign which compelled the central Westminster government of the day to take notice. In 1971, a Committee of Inquiry into Bilingual Traffic Signs was established, and the Committee’s report finally acknowledged that Welsh-language forms of place names did indeed have a legitimate place in the linguistic landscape. But on making that decision the question arose as to *which* forms should be displayed.



Road sign

It’s unlikely that you as readers of this Bulletin will need much explanation as to why this question arose. You may be able to draw comparisons from your own experiences with a Wales where names were recorded for administrative purposes over the centuries by people whose knowledge of Welsh and its orthographic conventions were either limited or simply lacking. You might also be able to sympathise that matters are further compounded by the fact that Modern Welsh orthography was not finally standardised until 1928. These ‘pre-standardisation’ forms are often well-established and quite literally ‘set in stone’ on modern and ancient road

<sup>26</sup> [Rishi Sunak says he will keep using Brecon Beacons name - BBC News](#).

signs. The resulting situation is a Wales where there may be several forms of place names in circulation and in ‘official’ use by public bodies, with a lack of consensus or consistency.

And this question of which forms to display remains a challenge over half a century later. It seems that Welsh place names – and how to spell them – are never far from the headlines as seen in the recent response to the policy decisions made by two of the Welsh national parks (Snowdonia and Brecon Beacons) to give precedence to the Welsh names Eryri and Bannau Brycheiniog respectively.<sup>26</sup> Which names should we use and how should we spell them aren’t new questions. However, the political context and the legislative framework in which they are asked is new and constantly evolving.



## Snowdonia: Eryri National Park to use Welsh lake names only

*BBC Headline*

Understanding this context is key to understanding the Commissioner’s work in the field of place names. Having briefly outlined the context in this article, my intention is to return to the story of standardisation in the next Bulletin and explain how the Commissioner goes about fulfilling its duty to advise on the standard forms of Welsh place names, and more interestingly, perhaps, how that advice is received and used to further change the physical linguistic landscape of Wales.

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## FROM THE COUNTRIES

### Geographical names in support of languages of ethnic minorities living in the Republic of Armenia

This article entitled “**Geographical names in support of languages of ethnic minorities living in the Republic of Armenia**” reflects on Armenia’s policy in this important area.

According to the Republic of Armenia Constitution, the Republic is a sovereign, democratic, social state governed by the rule of law. Discrimination based on sex, race, skin colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion, world view, political or other views, belonging to an ethnic minority, property status, birth, disability, age, or other personal or social circumstances shall be prohibited.

The linguistic, cultural and religious features and peculiarities of ethnic minorities, as an inseparable part of the state are under the care and protection of Armenia, which plays a crucial role in the further process of democratization of the country and the development of civil society. Apart from contributing to the cultural development of ethnic minorities, all historical, architectural, cultural and religious structures in the Republic of Armenia, regardless of their ethnic or religious affiliation, are under state protection. As well as Armenian cultural and religious monuments of the pre-Christian and Christian era, various historical and cultural monuments belonging to ethnic minorities are under state protection.

The most valuable monuments of Armenia include:

- The Catholic Church of Gyumri built by Canon Reverend Araratyan, in 1848-1855;
- The Russian Orthodox church built southwest of Vanadzor city station square in 1895;
- Gyumri Russian (Plplan zam) church built in 1904;
- The Church of the Intercession of the Holy Mother of God, located in the Kanaker-Zeytun administrative district of Yerevan, built in 1913;
- Masjid-i Juma (Blue Mosque) built by the Persian Husayn Ali Khan in 1766, which is considered as an outstanding example of late Persian architectural art preserved in the South Caucasus;
- Abbas Mirza/Sardari Persian Mosque, built in Yerevan at the beginning of 19th century;
- St. Cyril Assyrian Church built in Dimitrov village in 1840;

- The Assyrian church built in the village of Verin Dvin at the end of the 19th century;
- The Church of Saint Savva, built in the village of Shamlugh in 1909, which is an example of a Greek Orthodox church preserved in Armenia;
- Jewish graves of 14th-17th centuries on the southeastern edge of Yeghegis village, Vayots Dzor marz;
- 16th-18th century Kurdish graves in the northern part of Rya Taza village.

The above-mentioned list is not complete and does not reflect many other monuments currently presented in the state registry of geographical names of the Republic of Armenia.

The legal basis for the naming and renaming of geographical objects of the Republic of Armenia, as well as the registration and protection of geographical names that are part of the historical and cultural heritage, are defined by the laws of the Republic of Armenia "On Geographical Names" and "On Local Self-Government", as well as in many legislative documents in the cultural sphere of Armenia.

It is necessary to emphasize that historical and religious monuments in Armenia were registered as having cultural value 40 years after their construction, with the exception of monuments of great architectural and cultural value. This provision does not apply to monuments belonging to national minorities, which, after passing a mandatory procedure, are promptly registered in the Republic of Armenia’s State registry. It should be noted that Armenia is the homeland of more than 50 nations and nationalities, of which, four of the largest; the Yazidis, Russians, Assyrians and Kurds, are guaranteed to be represented in the National Assembly. This mandatory provision is enshrined by the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia.

Yazidi is considered the largest community of national minorities in the Republic of Armenia, with a population of 35,308. The community began to form in the early 19th century and increased in 1915 after the Armenian Genocide, when many Yazidis were forced to leave their homeland with the Armenians. There are 24 rural communities in Armenia, where Yazidis are the majority. There are 19 Yazidi-inhabited villages in Aragatsotn Marz of Armenia: **Sadunts, Avshen,**





**Charchakis, Mirak, Shenkani, Jamshlu, Rya Taza, Kaniashir, Sipan, Mijnatun, Metsadzor, Otevan, Arevut, Kanch, Tlik, Hako, Ddmasar, Sorik and Shamiram.** There are 4 Yazidi-inhabited villages in Armavir Marz: **Akna lich, Yeraskhanun, Nor Artagers** and **Ferik** and 1 in the Ararat Marz: **Verin Artashat**. The largest village of Yazidi is **Verin Artashat** with a population of 4,270. The community has a representative at the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia.

On September 29, 2012, the first Yazidi temple "Ziarat" was opened in Armavir marz, outside of the Yazidi homeland Shangal and Lalesh. On September 29, 2019, the second largest Yazidi temple "Navt Mere Divane" (Akna lich's Yazidi temple) was built in the village of Akna lich, in Armavir marz.

In 2016, in the center of Yerevan, at the crossroad of A. Isahakyan and M. Nalbandyan streets a monument was installed perpetuating the memory of the Yazidi Genocide. The community is represented by one deputy at the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia.

The Russian community in our country was mainly formed in the 1830s, and was followed by several waves during the years of Armenia's Sovietization. The community is represented by one deputy at the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia. The Russian population of 11,911 in the modern Republic of Armenia, is concentrated in the following cities of the country: **Yerevan, Gyumri, Sevan, Chambarak, Dilijan**, etc., as well as the villages of **Lermontovo, Fioletovo, Blagodarnoye, Medovka, Mikhaylovka, Novoseltsovo, Petrovka, Privolnoye, Pushkino, Saratovka, Sverdlov** of Lori marz, **Semenovka and Chkalovka** of Gegharkunik marz, plus other settlements of the country.

The Assyrian community was formed in the early 19th century and expanded in 1915, when the Assyrians escaping the horrors of the Armenian Genocide had to leave their homeland together with the Armenians. Assyrians are the third largest of the ethnic minorities of Armenia with a population of 2,769. Settlements of Assyrians in Kotayk marz are **Arzni** and **Argel, Dimitrov** and **Verin Dvin** in Ararat marz, and **Nor Artagers** villages in Armavir marz. The largest Assyrian village is **Verin Dvin**, where the Mar Tuma Church, built in 1828, and the Marez Chapel, built in 1830 are located. The community is represented by one deputy at the National Assembly of Armenia.

The Kurdish community of the Republic of Armenia was formed in 1877-1878 because of the influx of thousands of Kurdish refugees during the Russo-Turkish War. The second migration was during the First World War. From the late 1980s to the mid-1990s, many Kurds moved to other

countries. Despite this emigration and a significant decrease of the Kurdish population, the community is the fourth largest of Armenia's ethnic minorities with a population of 2,162, which allowed them to have a representative at the National Assembly of Armenia. The largest Kurdish settlement is the village of **Alagyaz**.

The Greek community with a population of 900 is fifth in the list of Armenia's ethnic minorities. The community began to form in the territory of Armenia since the mid-18th century, when copper mines were found in Lori and there was a need for skilled miners. Currently, in our country there are Greek communities in **Alaverdi, Stepanavan, Vanadzor, Gyumri, Noyemberyan, Yerevan**, as well as in the villages of **Hankavan** (Kotayk marz) and **Yagdan** and **Koghes** in (Lori marz). At one time a considerable number of Greeks settled in Syunik marz, where in 1865 the Greek enterprisers **Kondurovs** from Kapan built the church of Ayos Kharalambos (Berdzens). Today in the Republic of Armenia, exist the Greek Orthodox churches, both called Ayios Georgios, in Hankavan, which was built in 1850 and in Gyumri.

Despite the fact that ethnic minorities do not exceed 2.5% of the population of our country, the number of geographical objects represented in the languages of ethnic minorities, registered in the list of the state card-catalogue of geographical names of Armenia exceeds 4.7%, and in collective communities it reaches 12.5%. 56 of the names of 1003 officially registered settlements of the Republic of Armenia are represented in the languages of ethnic minorities. At the same time, in the case of names of intra-settlement geographical objects, those indicators fluctuate and can reach up to 65%.

In summary, we reaffirm that the Republic of Armenia will further develop its activities in the field of standardization of names of geographical objects, focusing on sensitivity to the traditions of national minorities living in Armenia and the preservation of their historical and cultural heritage.

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# Activities in the Field of Standardization of Geographical Names in the Republic of Croatia in 2022

## Introduction

This article will present activities in the field of standardization of geographical names in the Republic of Croatia, as a member of UNGEGN East Central and South-East Europe Division, during 2022.

In the mentioned period, the Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names adopted four documents for the purpose of quality assurance of the Register of Geographical Names. Also, the Commission actively participates in the implementation of the new Law on Settlements in the Republic of Croatia.

The functionality of the network application of the Register of Geographical Names was improved and the website of the Register of Geographical Names was upgraded. Activities on the revision of the records in the database of the Register of Geographical Names - pilot project have been completed.

Activities in the field of standardization of geographical names in 2021 were presented in the 63rd UNGEGN Information Bulletin and the 2022 UNGEGN session East Central and South-East Europe Division's report.

## The Commission for Standardization of Geographical Names

The Commission for Standardization of Geographical Names, as a multidisciplinary and multi-institutional body, is composed of experts in the fields of geodesy, geography, linguistics, cartography, hydrography, history, culture, international relations, as well as science and education. The President of the Commission is Antonio Šustić, Director General of the State Geodetic Administration of the Republic of Croatia ([URL1](#)), as a representative of the central state administration authority responsible for the Register of Geographical Names.

In 2022 the Commission held nine sessions and consequently adopted three strategic documents for the purpose of quality assurance of the Register of Geographical Names (Recommendations for standardization of geographical names in the Republic of Croatia – naming of transport infrastructure, [URL2](#), Recommendations for standardization of geographical names in the Republic of Croatia – writing geographical

names on maps and in other publications, [URL3](#) and Methodology of acting in the standardization of geographical names in the database of the Register of Geographical Names, [URL4](#)) and one technical document (Review of revision of the records in the database of the Register of Geographical Names - pilot project).

The Commission actively participates in the implementation of the new Law on Settlements ([URL5](#)). From the beginning of April to the end of December 2022, the Commission issued 32 Opinions on the proposal of geographical names in certain local self-governing units (cities and municipalities) and consequently standardized 137 geographical names of settlements, streets and squares.

In order to spread awareness about geographical names, members of the Commission published several publications related to the issue of geographical names. Also, the Commission continuously gives its expert opinions to the users / interested public, related to the suggestions for naming and / or changing the geographical names of geographical objects in the Republic of Croatia.

## The information system of the Register of Geographical Names

The information system of the Register of Geographical Names consists of three basic parts: website dedicated to geographical names, a database of geographical names and an online application for managing the Register of Geographical Names. The dataset of geographical names is publicly available through network services and for that purpose there is a server for publishing different network services for viewing and downloading ([URL6](#)).

In 2022 the functionality of the online application ([URL7](#)) was improved. Visual modernization of the application was completed and data migration to the new server and to the new operating system was started. The application offers the possibility to suggest changes to the records in the database of the Register of Geographical Names by the public. Also, the online application is adapted for portable devices and online services for viewing and downloading data from the Register of Geographical Names database, and is available to public users.



In 2022 activities on the revision of the records in the database of the Register of Geographical Names - pilot project have been completed.

All activities in the field of geographical names are available through the website, which was improved in 2022. ([URL8](#)).

## International cooperation

At the international level, in mid-June 2022, the Commission for Standardization of Geographical Names and the State Geodetic Administration presented activities (Information Bulletin of UNGEGN no.63, [URL9](#)) on the standardization of geographical names in the Republic of Croatia in 2021. Also, at the end of August 2022 a national report on activities in the field of standardization of geographical names in the Republic of Croatia for 2021 ([URL10](#)) was submitted to the UNGEGN East Central and South-East Europe Division.

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## Mozambique: Formation of Gitonga Geographic Names

### Introduction

The work presented here, which studies the formation of geographical names in Gitonga, is derived from my Master's degree dissertation at Eduardo Mondlane University. Gitonga is a language spoken in the province of Inhambane, Mozambique (Sitoe and Ngunga 2000; Ngunga and Faquir 2011 and Amaral et al 2007). In Guthrie's classification (1967-71), Gitonga (S.62) belongs to the Cicopi linguistic group (S.60) together with the Cicopi language (S.61). Gitonga is spoken by approximately 227,256 people over five years of age (INE, 2007).

Data for this study were collected in the cities of Inhambane and Maxixe and in the districts of Jangamo and Morrumbene, in the province of Inhambane. Thirty four informants were interviewed, 32 of whom were male, aged between 42 and 88 years old and two female informants aged between 58 and 65 years old. The unequal number in terms of gender was due to the fact that community leaders were male.

### Operating Concepts

**Geographical name** - is the name of a place, plus ethnographic, etymological and historical attributes, inserted in a temporal context.

**Anthroponyms** - are proper names of people or groups of people.

**Geographical names of Mozambican languages** - in Mozambique, many geographical names changed in the colonial period to accommodate colonial policy. Considering that the geographical name is a historical relic or a symbol of the history of a people, there is a need to take good care of the way in which the Mozambican languages are written (Ngunga, 2010).

**Names in Gitonga Language** - in the Gitonga language and Bantu languages, names are generally organized into nominal classes, which are a set of names with the same prefix and/or the same agreement pattern (Bleek, 1862 and 1969).

Table 1 – Table of Gitonga nominal classes (Adapted from Ngunga 2004)

Nominal Class	Nominal prefix	Meaning
1.	mu-	Singular of human beings mainly
2.	va-	Plural of human beings mainly
3.	mu-	Singular of predominantly plants
4.	mi-	Plural of predominantly plants
5.	li-	Singular of animals and fruits predominantly
6.	ma-	Plural of animals and fruits predominantly
7.	gi-	Singular of general things
8.	si-	Plural of general things
9.	N-	Singular of some beings from the animal kingdom, and others
10.	N-	Plural of some beings from the animal kingdom, and others
11.	-	
12.	-	
13.	-	
14.	wu-	Substances and abstracts
15.	gu-	Verbal infinitive
16.	vba-	Situational locative
17.	Khu-	Directional locative
18.	mu-	Location of interiority

**Names in Bantu** - In Gitonga, geographical names are included in class 18 \*mu-, for example, *mu-gifi* 'inside hennery'. Still in this language, many names become geographical names when the suffix -ini is added to them, for example, *Rombe* + *-ini* = *Rombeni* 'zone of Rombe'.

### Presentation of Data

Below, we present the list of geographical names divided into two groups, namely:



Table 2 – list of Gitonga geographical names with location morpheme

N.r	Endonyms	Exonyms	Type of place	Location
1.	Balani	Balane	Neighborhood	Inhambane City
2.	Khumbanani	Cumbana	Administrative Post	Jangamo District
3.	Nyamatsatseni	Nhamachacha	Neighborhood	Maxixe City
4.	Nyambani	Inhambane	Province/city	Inhambane Province
5.	Nyambihwini	Inhambio	Neighborhood	Maxixe City
6.	Nyamuweni	Nhamua	Neighborhood	Inhambane City
7.	Rombeni	Morrumbene	District	Inhambane Province
8.	Rumbaneni	Rumbana	Neighborhood	Maxixe City

Table 3- List of Gitonga Geographical Names with no location morpheme (∅)

N.r	Endonyms	Exonyms	Type of place	Location
1.	Gikuki	Chicuque	Bairro	Maxixe City
2.	Giwuwa	Giua	Zona	Inhambane City
3.	Lindela	Lindela	Localidade	Jangamo District
4.	Matshitshi	Maxixe	Cidade	Inhambane Province
5.	Mongwe	Mongué	Bairro	Maxixe City
6.	Mwele	Muelé	Bairro	Inhambane City
7.	Salela	Salela	Bairro	Inhambane City
8.	Sewi	Ceu	Cidade	Inhambane Province
9.	Tofu	Tofu	Zona	Inhambane City

### Analysis and discussion of results

Semantically, geographical names, distinguished by *-ini*, indicate the place's belonging to the located name, or rather the area of someone or a certain thing.

Regarding geographical names with no location morpheme (∅), they are those that were initially attributed in Portuguese language and later adopted by Gitonga, for example, *Gikuki*, *Matshitshi*, were attributed, *Chicuque*, *Maxixe*, respectively, having only been framed in the phonology and phonetics of the Gitonga language, without, however, receiving a location morpheme. The names *Mwele* and *Tofu*, in turn, derived from the anthroponyms *NyaMwele* and *Nyatofu*, respectively, and do not have the locative morpheme present. The anthroponyms from which geographical names are derived lose the appreciative augmentative prefix *nya-*, to become geographical names.

### Conclusions

In this research we concluded that Gitonga's geographical names are formed based on the affixation of a locativization morpheme to a name, generally the suffixes of *-ini* and *-tunu*. The geographical names with the location morpheme *-ini* are derived from anthroponyms and other things and *-tunu* from

names of trees and their derivatives. The geographical names with no location morpheme (∅) are generally those that were attributed in another language, those that adopted and applied phonological rules from Gitonga, and geographical names derived from anthroponyms, usually women's names.

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# Mozambique: INGEMO-IP Researches and Standardizes Geographical Names of Localities

## Introduction

The Institute of Geographical Names of Mozambique-IP (INGEMO-IP), the institution responsible for the standardization of geographical names in Mozambique, began, in a pilot program, the work of standardizing the names of localities and their physical-natural limits (rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, valleys and mountains).

Localities are the second level in the administrative and territorial organization of Mozambique, they are located above towns and below administrative posts, districts and provinces.

The pilot program is expected to cover 71 districts in the provinces of Niassa, Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Zambézia, Tete, Sofala, Manica, Inhambane and Maputo. By the end of 2024, when it is estimated that around 800 names of territorial units and their physical-natural limits will be standardized.

This work is expected to ensure the correct indication of geographical names in the land registry, maps, geographical charts, address plates, geographic information systems and databases. This exercise will therefore reduce uncertainty about the identification and location of places, which improves territorial administration, commerce and communication.



Image 1. Fieldwork to survey names of territorial units

During the project exercise several situations were found, namely: names with distorted spelling, locations with official names that were different from those used by local

communities and more than one place with the same name.

## Standardization of geographical names of territorial units in Mozambique

According to UNGEGN Resolution X/4 (2007), in the context of multilingual countries, where the local language is not an official language, the writing of geographical names must be done with respect to the spelling of that language. As long as it has a standardized spelling on maps and signs, geographical names in the local language can also be written in the official language, if necessary.

Decree-Law No. 1/2014, 22 May, which defines the principles, criteria, powers and procedures for attributing and changing toponyms in Mozambique, states in article 6 that “the toponym is used in a single linguistic register” and in article 7, states that “the toponym in the Bantu language is written according to the spelling of the language that designates it”.

Within the scope of this, INGEMO-IP researched and standardized, from April to September 2023, in 29 districts of Mozambique, 692 geographical names of which 266 were of localities and 426 of their natural limits.

It should be noted that standardization is being carried out following a set of duly established norms and procedures, supported by historical-linguistic studies in which 106 interviews were carried out on the origin and meaning of the geographical names now standardized.

## Challenges in researching and standardizing geographical names

In the process of standardizing geographical names, we found situations where one name was attributed to more than one territorial unit, thus making administration, commerce, transport and other services difficult. For example, in Tete province, the name *Nyamayabwe* is used as the name of a municipality and an administrative post, located in the district of Mutarara. The administrative post does not have electricity because when the local administrator requests the service, the electricity company says in its database that *Nyamyabwe* is already

electrified, however, they are referring to the municipality. Another example is the *Kambulatsitsi locality* which has the same name as the administrative post. The locality is known locally as *Mualadzi*, as illustrated in Image 2 below, where it is written on the locality headquarters building. However, the name *Kambulatsitsi* is used for the administrative post headquarters in official documents and according to reports collected on site, there are several examples when services, as well as information documents, notices, letters, etc., that should be sent to the local headquarters are instead sent to the *Kambulatsitsi* administrative post headquarters.



Image 2. Headquarters of the Kambulatsitsi locality

In addition to being an obstacle to the expansion of a product or service, there are names that do not identify local communities, for example, *Homoíne*, the name of both a district and a village in the province of Inhambane. The village of *Homoíne* is located in the administrative post of *Homoíne*, in the locality of *KaManyike*. The story goes that the name *Homoíne* originates from the administrative post of *Cidzapele*, where a lot of cattle were raised and the first urban settlement was established. Later, in search of better conditions, the village was transferred to *KaManyike*, carrying with it the name *Homoíne*, where it evolved into a district and the headquarters town of the district with the same name (*Homoíne*). The fact is that even though it is an official name, the locals and surrounding communities do not use the name *Homoíne* for the village, but rather *KaManyike*. With the municipalization of the village, the local community demanded that the municipality be named *KaManyike*.

Another situation was observed in *Maganja da Costa*, a district located in the province of Zambézia, where officially there is a town called *Maganja da Costa* headquarters, but the local community calls it by the local name of *Bala*. The existence of adulterated names is also a challenge for standardization, for example, the Nyungwe language (Bantu language spoken in Mozambique) names of localities in the district of Moatize, in the province of Tete, *Mikunga*, *Mbhandzu* and *Dzambawe* are written in the orthography of the Portuguese language as *Necungas*, *Mphanzu* and *Zambaue* respectively, which leads to the adulteration of their pronunciation, a situation contested by local communities.

### Final considerations

Therefore, it is recommended that the standardization and attribution of geographical names in Mozambique should be guided by the following:

- Carry out a study with local communities;
- Write the geographical names of Bantu origin in the spelling of the language that designates them;
- Prioritize the name with a long history of use by the community;
- Change names taking into account the historical, social, cultural and political context of Mozambique.

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# Mozambique: "Dicinga" vs "Diciinga": Notes for the standardization of *Lichinga* toponym, retrieving its origin and meaning

## Introduction

Toponymy, as a study of the origin and meaning of geographical names or toponyms, is still a very fertile field for the rediscovery of the centuries-old culture and history of the original peoples of Mozambique.

This article aims to present how the standardization of the spelling of a toponym in an original language, through historical and linguistic research, can retrieve its origin and its historical, cultural and social significance. The toponym in question is *Lichinga*, the name of one of the main cities of Mozambique, as well as of the plateau where it is located. The city is the capital of *Niassa Province*, located in the extreme west of the northern part of the country.

For this research, we used documentary and field research. In the field we used semi-structured interviews, targeting elders, community officials, religious leaders and others who were knowledgeable about the history of the city. Testimonies on the historical-linguistic origin of the toponym were collected, and, based on the orthographic rules of the standardized autochthonous language (*Ciyaawo*) we proposed the standardized form of the toponym.

## Settlement and toponymy of the city

Regarding the settlement of the region of the *Lichinga Plateau*, according to Vijasse<sup>27</sup>, three groups of inhabitants of Bantu origin stand out, before the arrival of the Portuguese, but it was the third and last group, that of *Xiwawula*, which settled and remained in *Lichinga* to this day. This group is of *Yaawo*<sup>28</sup> ethno-linguistic origin, coming from Xikonono.

Masquete (2018:122) states that attempts of settlement by the Portuguese date back to 1895, after overcoming the resistance of the *Yaawo* in an expedition led by the explorer Serpa Pinto, then consul in Zanzibar (Tanzania). Thus, according to Mavie (2009) and Wegher (1995)<sup>29</sup> cited by Namuholopa (2017:74) "*Lichinga* City was derived

from the ancient settlement called *Metonia*" which, according to Elias (2009) and Mavie (2009), was renamed *Vila Cabral* on May 21, 1932, in honor of the former Governor General of Mozambique, José Ricardo Perreira Cabral, and, with the Independence of Mozambique, it once again bore its local name (*Lichinga*).

## Origin and meaning of the *Lichinga* toponym

The origin and meaning of the *Lichinga* toponym is associated with two words in the *Ciyaawo* language, namely, *dicinga* and *diciinga*, with variations in spelling from author to author.

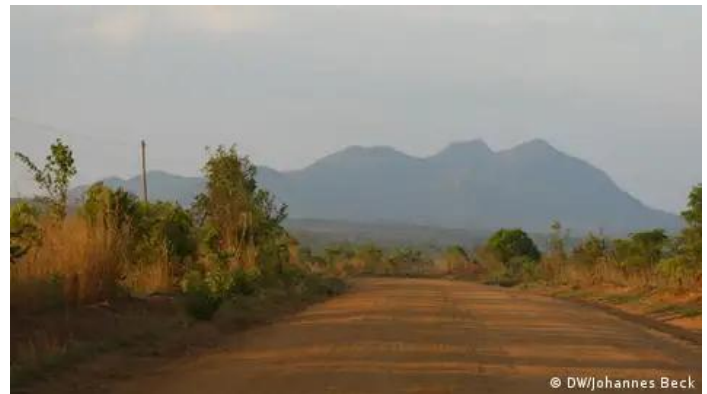


Illustration of the entrance to the city of *Lichinga*.  
Photo credit: DW/Johannes Beck.

According to Cabral (1975:74), *Lichinga* is the name of a hill in the *Concelho de Vila Cabral*, in *Niassa*, given by the Indigenous people to the region where the city is located, which, in the *Yao* language means "corral" and/or "wall". The name arises from the fact that, for those who come from the sides of *Amaramba*, the mountain is placed in front of it like a wall. Corroborating Cabral's idea, Elias (2009) states that the origin of the toponym is the expression *Kuvicinga-Licinga* which in *Ajaua* means "wall", or "fence" and comes from the hill that bars the entrance to the city, like a wall, for those who come from *Cuamba* (formerly *Nova Freixo*, its Portuguese name). Loureiro (2012)<sup>30</sup>, cited by Masquete (2018:122) states that the

<sup>27</sup> Estevão Vijasse, a native elder and resident of *Lichinga*, in an interview recorded in 2013, in *Lichinga*, as part of the research on the origin and meanings of toponyms.

<sup>28</sup> *Yaawo*, *Yao*, *Yau*, *Ayao*, *Ajauas* – is one of the main ethnic and linguistic groups, speakers of the *Ciyaawo* language and inhabitants of *Província de Niassa*, particularly of *Cidade de Lichinga*.

<sup>29</sup> WEGHER, Fr. Louis (1995). *Um olhar sobre Niassa*. Maputo: Paulina editora. 1st Vol.

Military officer of the Portuguese colonial Air Force who operated many regions of Africa, including Mozambique.

<sup>30</sup> LOUREIRO, João (2012). *A história de Lichinga, uma breve memória*. [S.l.]: [s.n.].





toponym originates from the word "*N'tchinga*", which in the *Ayao* language is associated with the barrier/wall, linked to previously mentioned hill, a perception that is also presented by Namuholopa (2017:74).

Oral sources present some new aspects about the origin and meaning of the toponym. According to Mwene<sup>31</sup>, "*Lichinga*" comes from the name "*Diciinga*," in the local language (*Ciyaawo*), used to designate an area of the plateau's slope. "*Diciinga*" is the boundary of a mountainous area and a flat area," the source concluded.

Also, Vijasse points out that the name was motivated by the geographical characteristics of the region. According to him, "*diciinga*" is a barrier made up of a succession of mountain ranges, which start from Serra Jesse to Negumano in Cabo Delgado. In addition, Vijasse clarifies that, "it is not to be confused with "*dicinga*", which means corral... "*Diciinga*" is a barrier that prevents anything... The word that gives rise to the name of the city of Lichinga is '*diciinga*' – barrier", he concluded. Another elder added that the word "*diciinga*", which means "barrier", comes from the verb "*kuciinga*" (in *Ciyaawo*), which means "to make barrier". Regarding this distinction between the two words, we found that, for "corral" the interviewees said "*dicinga*" (with the simple vowel "i", after the "c") while for the word "barrier", the vowel "i" after the "c" was extended, rendering "*diciinga*", according to the orthographic rules of the *Ciyaawo* language.

Moreover, we found that in order to say in *Ciyaawo* "I was born in *Lichinga*" and "I am going to *Lichinga*" they said "*Nakabwida ku N'ciinga*" and "*Nguja ku N'ciinga*", respectively. In this exercise, we note the use of the locative (ku) and the replacement of the particle (di) for (ń), a process of nasalization that occurs in the *Ciyaawo* language. But, in everyday speech, the sequence of the localative (ku) and the nasal sound (ń), is replaced by an agglutinated sound (kwi), which results in "*Kwiciinga*".

## Conclusion

Based on the collected data, we conclude that, etymologically, the *Lichinga* toponym originates from the word "*diciinga*", of the *Ciyaawo* language, and its meaning is "barrier", not "corral", "wall" or "fence", as some sources state. There is another word (*dicinga*) of the

*Ciyaawo* language whose meanings are "corral", "wall" and "fence".

We believe that failures in the apprehension of some pronunciation details of the words "*dicinga*" and "*diciinga*", namely the prolongation of the "i" in the second word, was the reason for the mistakes made. Finally, we come to the conclusion that the correct way of standardizing *Lichinga* toponym "is "*Kwiciinga*" with the locative "ku" and "*N'ciinga*", when the locative is not used.

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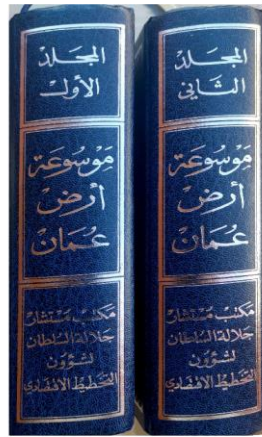
<sup>31</sup> Mwene, a native elder and resident of *Lichinga*, born in *Metónia*, in an interview recorded in 2013, in Lichinga, as part of the research on the origin and meanings of place names.

## Encyclopedia of the land of Oman

### The introduction:

The history of the Sultanate of Oman extends over eight thousand years, and during this long period the Sultanate of Oman was able to influence and be influenced by the civilizations that prevailed in that period. The Sultanate of Oman was also able, throughout its long chronological history, to preserve many legacies, including the names of Omani geographical places that its people identified with, that became part of their identity, were preserved and adhered to throughout history.

Omani geographical names have been documented and preserved in several ways and means, most notably in historical literary works, geography, poetry, encyclopedias, and dictionaries, and among these dictionaries is the **Encyclopedia of the Land of Oman**. The Encyclopedia of the Land of Oman is one of the national projects that was issued in 2005 in two volumes. It included the names of Omani cities and villages, in addition to towers, ancient houses, walls, forts, and castles according to their administrative affiliation.



This article it presents and introduces the most important national publications in the field of geographical names. It reviews the importance of the encyclopedia and its role as one of the sources that captures in some detail Omani geographical names. It also explains the method of documenting Omani geographical names and their relationship with the Omani person.

### Reason for naming the Sultanate of Oman:

Some sources attribute the reason for the name to the Qahtaniya tribe of Oman, and others attribute the name to the homes of the Azd tribe before their migration to Oman. Historians agree that the name Oman has not changed for thousands of years and is a characteristic of countries with an immortal cultural heritage.

### Geographical location:

Oman has an important geographical location, as it is located in the southeastern corner of the Arabian Peninsula and extends north from the Arabian Gulf to the borders of Yemen

in the south. As such, it overlooks the Sea of Oman, the Arabian Sea, and the Indian Ocean.

### Encyclopedia idea:

The idea first came from His Majesty Sultan Qaboos (may God rest his soul) within the framework of his interests in Omani history and geography. The project came after the success of the Sultan Qaboos Encyclopedia of Arab Names project, which was the first of its kind in the history of the study of Arabic names in the modern era and was presented to the Arab Library in the year 1995 in eight volumes.

### Project start:

The project began with the collection of names of villages and cities, then the names of historical monuments such as towers, ancient houses, walls, forts, and castles were added, in addition to natural phenomena such as springs, creeks, islands, and valleys. The project took care that, as much as possible, the researchers were from the regions in which the information was collected. The aim was also to record the initial explanation of the reason for the name, using linguistic dictionaries, dictionaries of countries, books of travelers, the writings of historians and geographers, plus books on the origins of dialects that govern linguistic development, in addition to recording traces. The falaj (underground water channels?) and natural phenomena related to each name (what about them? Were they recorded?).

### Entities that supported the project:

The encyclopedia's supervising body sought the help of many institutions to collect the scientific material and documents which were available, such as the Ministry of the Interior and the National Survey Authority, which provided maps and names of valleys, mountains, and villages.

### What did geographical names provide for Omani civilization?

This study opened broader horizons of knowledge about the history of these cities and villages, architecture, civilization, language, and the great human effort made by the people of this region during successive times. It also provided us with a cultural picture of the antiquity of civilization in the Sultanate of Oman, the diverse geographical nature, and the diversity of activities that were reflected in the names of cities and villages, in addition to the extent of exchange and migration that prevailed in the Arab world for long periods. This all resulted in the similarity of many Omani geographical names



with their counterparts from countries of the Levant and the Arab Maghreb. This richness provides an important indicator for those interested in studying Arabic dialects, Semitic languages, and the relations of non-Arab peoples with Arabs and the influence of and being influenced by them.

### Oman name:

Oman appears in many ancient and pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. Al-A'sha mentions Oman when he says:

We were accompanied by the family of Jaffna who held noble properties in the Levant, Dhat Ar-Rukhaif, and Jalanda in Oman, and then Qais in Hadhramaut Al-Munif.

### Mention of the names of Omani places in Arabic literature before and after Islam:

In addition to the above, many names of Omani places were mentioned in Arab poetry before and after Islam. Examples of this include the name (Al-Aqil), which is a village in the state of Izki in the poetry of Labid bin Rabi'ah, and (Al-Hafer), which is one of the villages in the state of Bahla in the poetry of Al-Rai' An-Numairi. This opens the way for the study of history, geography and literature to trace the relationship between these names and answer many questions about the similarity of the names of places and how the Sultanate of Oman influenced and was affected by these civilizations.

### The role of topography on place names in the Sultanate of Oman

The unique terrain diversity in the Sultanate of Oman has influenced many place names and various environments, as follows:

#### a. Marine environment:

The long coastlines for which the Sultanate of Oman was known had a role in creating the Omani maritime civilization. Historical sources did not mention the sea without also mentioning Oman. The ancient Sumerian and Akkadian paintings indicate documented evidence that Oman was a party to maritime trade with Mesopotamia, as the Sumerian texts indicate that the Omanis were shipbuilders in that period. Omani sailors played a major role in the history of the Sultanate of Oman. They transported frankincense to the civilization of ancient Egypt for use in mummifying and burning the dead, and the Indians used it in their temples.

It should be noted here that all regions in Oman played a role in the scene of historical events that were full of blessings, and Oman served as a historical transit gateway for the migrations of Arab tribes.

#### b. Agricultural environment:

It had an impact in naming villages and cities through the use of the names of plants, trees, and the nature of the green land, in addition to water resources such as wells, falaj, springs, and wadies (the valley). Here it is noted that some words are used in more than one place, such as (Al-Mazra') in the Wilayat of Jaalan and the Wilayat of Ibri, and (Al-Muzayr'a) in the Wilayat of Wadi Bani Khalid. The word Alwadi (the valley) is repeated in more than one state, such as (Wadi Halfin), and (Wadi Bani Khalid) Wilayat (state).

### The names of cities, villages and places in the Sultanate of Oman confirm the generality of Arab and Islamic civilization:

The viewer of the history and geography of Oman leads the reader to confirm the historical antiquity, the richness of human effort, and the specificity of naming.

Also, the collection of names of cities and villages in Oman emphasizes the generality of Arab and Islamic civilization in this aspect, and emphasizes the connection with them and the migrations that will continue throughout history. This confirms the presence of analogues for some names in other places in the Arab and Islamic world, such as the word (Al-Wasit) in Nizwa. Wadi Al-Ma'awal has its counterparts in the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, Egypt and Andalusia, and (Al-Aqqat) is reminiscent of an ancient Arab tradition like (Al-Aqqaat), which is the valley in which the Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, descended in Taif.

(Al-Hamra), which is the name given to a state in the Ad-Dakhiliya Governorate, is close to the name of Hamra Al-Asad, the place where the Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, descended near the city, and in Granada there is a palace called Al-Hamra.

This is also the case with the name of Rabat in the Dhofar Governorate and Rabat in brotherly Morocco, and what Ibn Battuta noted of the similarity of the names of people in both Dhofar and Al-Aqsa Morocco, and the Hebrew equivalent of a city in brotherly Sudan.

The encyclopedia mentions the state of Mahdha in Al-Buraimi Governorate, which was called Al-Jaafariyya in reference to the Ja'afirah in Iraq and Persia. There is a village in it called (Safwan) and it is believed that the displaced people from Iraq named it that way in reference to the city of Safwan in Iraq. The encyclopedia concludes here with a civilizational significance, which is the region's cooperation with its near and distant neighbors in creating a basic fabric of the traditions of Arab and Islamic civilization.



The encyclopedia came up with some phenomena in Omani geographical names, including:

a. Geographic redundancy

It means repeating the name for more than one geographical feature and in different and distant regions, differentiating between them in the six directions (east/west/north/south/upper/lower). For example, two neighboring places are often called Al-Alaya and As-Sifala with North and South, such as Al-Hail North (Al-Hail Ash Shamaliyyah) and Al-Hail South (Al-Hail Al Ganubiyyah), and (Al-Alaya and As-Sifala) the upper and lower parts of Nizwa and Ibra.

b. Spatial repetition

Which means that the name given to the village can be given to another landmark at the same time, such as the fort that is located there, the falaj that passes through it, or the mountain that is located in it, and here the repetition of the name is natural and not ambiguous.

c. Optional redundancy

It is the repetition that occurs in different places and various phenomena without intention. These words are chosen and repeated out of optimism or because they carry specific connotations in a specific environment.

Figures and facts about the encyclopedia:

The encyclopedia was able to provide more than 16,600 scientific materials, which varied between the names of a city, a village, a fort, a tower, a falaj, a sea, a valley, and a mountain for 61 states in 11 governorates.

The number	Scientific material	Sequence
4400	Urban units	1
4000	Aflaj	2
2000	Wadies (Valleys)	3
2000	Mountains	4
1000 +	Towers	6
400 +	Castles	7
400	Aloyoon (the springs)	8
300	The creek (Al khairan)	9
200	Fortresses	10
200	Sands	11
100 +	Ancient houses	12

Call for researchers and students:

The encyclopedia invites scholars and researchers in the science of comparatives and dialects to examine and research the linguistic formulation of Omani geographical names. These names, which were formulated in classical Arabic, indicate the meeting of languages and dialects in the ancient and modern land of this region. There are names that belong to non-Arabic Islamic languages, such as "Al-Bandar," which is of Persian origin. It is found in the Sultanate of Oman, in names such as Bandar Al-Khairan, and the name "Ad-Dreez" in both the governorates of Adh-Dhahirah and North Ash-Sharqiyyah. The name "Barzman" is found in the state of Al-Mudhaibi, which means the Grand Palace, and there was also a fort called "Barzman" in Aleppo city in the Middle Ages.

As for the southern Arabic languages, sisters of classical Arabic, they are still alive in areas in the Sultanate of Oman. Their survival until now opens the way for researchers and students of civilization and linguists, and is considered a scientific treasure that indicates the richness of the region culturally, intellectually, and linguistically. Among these languages are Al Mahri and Ash Shehri in the south (Dhofar Governorate) and Harsusiyya in the centre, and Al-Kamzaria in the north in Musandam Governorate.

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**Reference:**

Encyclopedia of the land of Oman, Office of His Majesty the Sultan's Advisor for Economic Planning Affairs, First edition 2005, International Presses / Masqat

*'The term "Persian Gulf" is used in documents, publications and statements emanating from the Secretariat as the standard geographical designation for the sea area between the Arabian Peninsula and the Islamic Republic of Iran.'*  
(ST/CS/SER.A/29/Rev.1) May 1999

## FROM THE DIVISION

### Arabic Division: Report on Jordan's Activities in the Field of Geographical Names (2021 – 2023)

**T**his report deals with Jordan's activities in the field of geographical names at the Arab level, since Jordan heads the UNGEKN Arabic division, and at the local level, since the Royal Jordanian Geographical Center and the National Committee on Geographical Names are the bodies concerned with the issue of geographical names in Jordan.



- ADEGN (Arab Division of Experts on Geographical Names) in cooperation with the Royal Jordanian Geographical Center and the National Cadastral Authority of Oman organized the ninth conference of Arab experts in geographical names, which was held in the Omani capital Muscat, from 5 to 7 December 2022, entitled 'Geospatial Integration between Name and Location: importance and impact'.
- A meeting was held on the sidelines of the conference for members of the Arabic Division of UNGEKN and was attended by representatives of 16 Arab countries participating in the conference. Jordan, represented by the Director General of the Royal Jordanian Geographical Center, was elected President of the Arabic Division of UNGEKN.
- The Resolution of 9th Conference is accessible here <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/divisions/documents/Results.pdf>

#### Meetings and participations



- A Zoom Meeting of ADEGN Bureau was held on May 23, 2023, chaired by Engineer Muammar Kamel Haddadin. Discussed were the latest developments related to the work of the Arabic Division according to its agenda.
- The Chair of UNGEKN Arabic Division, participated in the 57th regular meeting of specialized Arab federations, organized by the Council of Arab Economic Unity in the League of Arab States in cooperation with the Arab Trainers Union during the period 28 to 31/5/2023 in the Jordanian capital, Amman. The aim of the meeting was to organize economic relations between Arab countries.

## DEGN website



Jordan has created and hosted a website ([www.adegn.info](http://www.adegn.info)) for the Arabic Division in both Arabic and English, and it was recently updated.

The website contains information about the Arabic Division and its most important achievements.

This website is considered as a platform for Arab experts to follow news and publish specialized scientific research and articles related to geographical names, communication between experts, at both the Arab and international levels. It also enables member states to publish their achievements in the fields of geographical names for everyone to see.

## Journal of Geographical Names



The Royal Jordanian Geographical Center and the National Committee for Geographical Names prepared and printed the seventh issue / 2022 and the eighth issue / 2023 of the Journal of Geographical Names, which is a periodical magazine of the Arabic Division, and it was published on its website. [https://www.adegn.info/en/asma\\_magazine](https://www.adegn.info/en/asma_magazine).

It included the most important activities carried out by Member States and valuable scientific articles and lectures.

## Training



Several training workshops were held in the Jordanian capital in the field of geographical names between 20 to 22 September 2022, as well as in the period from 25 to 26 January 2023, as well as in the period 24 to 26 October 2023 in the field of geographical names covering practical training and Romanization.

## Index of Jordanian geographical names.

The index of Jordanian sites has been updated for the purpose of establishing a reference for all sites in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and it has been arranged and classified according to plates as well as according to alphabetical letters. This index includes more than thirteen thousand names, and for the purposes of facilitating use of this index, it was prepared (on CD) using MSOffice Access software. The product is to be distributed and circulated within Jordan to all relevant ministries and institutions. This was supervised by the National Committee for Geographical Names, which meets periodically to discuss all topics related to geographical names and any topics presented to the committee from all parties, scrutinizing the geographical names received from all parties for approval.

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