

Establishing sustainable local structures for the documentation of endangered languages in Indonesian Papua: Documenting Woi

Initiative: Dokumentation bedrohter Sprachen (beendet)

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Linguistically, the island of New Guinea is the most diverse region on the planet. The western part of the island politically belongs to the Republic of Indonesia. A majority of the approximately 270 languages spoken in this area are endangered. The project proposed here is designed to realize an exemplary documentation of Woi, one of the highly endangered Austronesian languages of the area. Woi is spoken primarily at the western tip of the island of Yapen, north of the mainland. Woi and neighboring groups practice a very unique indigenous form of conflict resolution including ritualized dialogues and the performance of symbolic bamboo crashes, called hesoku, which will form the major cultural focus of the documentation. Furthermore, the project includes a strong capacity- and institution building component for sustainable language documentation work in the region. The anchoring point for this component is a regional language documentation center at the linguistics department of the Universitas Negeri Papua (UNIPA) sketched by co-applicant Sawaki and a local language documentation center which will be set up in the small capital of the island Yapen, Serui.

Projektbeteiligte

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