



The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 25
Issue 1 *March*

Article 7

March 1998

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Recommended Citation

Benjamin, Rebecca; Pecos, Regis; Romero, Mary Eunice; and Filmore, Lily Wong (1998) "Reclaiming Communities and Languages," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 25 : Iss. 1 , Article 7.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol25/iss1/7>

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Reclaiming Communities and Languages¹

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This article discusses efforts by tribal leaders and members of Cochiti Pueblo, one of the 19 Pueblos of New Mexico, to restore aspects of community life that had been damaged by federal programs—programs that had been carried out without careful study of how they might affect the community. The construction of a dam above the Pueblo by the Army Corps of Engineers nearly three decades ago resulted in the destruction of the pueblo's farmlands. It caused profound disruptions in the lives of the people in this agrarian community, not only in economic terms but in nearly every other aspect of life in the Pueblo. The loss of the indigenous language since the building of the dam is viewed by community leaders as the most crucial change because the language was the key to participation in the life of the community. This article documents these changes, and discusses steps being taken to revitalize the language, and to reclaim the community's future.

Introduction

The gradual loss of indigenous languages has been a matter of great concern for American native communities. Of the many

hundreds of languages that evolved in the Americas, only 175 are still spoken today. Of the indigenous languages of North America, 89% are said to be moribund² (Krauss, 1992; Crawford, 1996). Only a few such languages are still being learned and spoken by children.³ In the W. K. Kellogg Foundation sponsored Partnership between the University of California-Berkeley and New Mexico Office of Indian Affairs this issue has become the focus of our attention in the various communities where we have been involved.

The doctoral fellows⁴ in our program work on research and developmental activities in a variety of arenas affecting their communities: governance, resource management and development, customary law and tribal justice systems, education—both traditional and formal, and environmental protection. As they work in these domains, however, the Fellows have come to realize that language loss is involved in many of the issues confronting their communities. The indigenous languages are critical aspects of their cultures: language is the means by which knowledge and traditions are transmitted from one person to another, and from one generation to the next. The loss of the indigenous languages in these communities weakens the connections between people and their past, present and future. There is ample reason for concern when a language is threatened with loss.

Our partnership has been actively involved in a number of New Mexico native communities: The Pueblos of Aacutecoma, Cochiti, Zuni and Tesuque, especially, and Laguna, Zia, Nambé and the Tlingit communities on Alaska's Prince of Wales Island, as well. In each place, we have seen how the rapid erosion of the indigenous language threatens the cultural and social integrity of the community. In each arena of our collective endeavors, we have come to realize that the indigenous language is more than a mere alternative means of communication. A language embodies cultural concepts and precepts that have been crucial to the conduct of life in these American native communities. They are often not translatable, nor can their meanings be paraphrased accurately. Place names, for example, can convey schemata that encode a people's historical and spiritual relationships to their physical world. Address terms and greetings can convey recognition and acceptance of systems of relationships that are essential to the

conduct of social life in these communities. A language reflects the origins, culture, history and social experience of the people who devised and spoke it in the first place. For the communities in our Partnership, the indigenous languages represent their unique connectedness to the continent where they emerged as Peoples. When their languages are lost, the knowledge bases they encode are endangered and are threatened with loss as well.

In our consideration of how families and communities can be strengthened, we have determined that the work must begin with the reclaiming and renewal of their languages. At the heart of every project our Partnership has initiated have been language revitalization efforts. In this paper, we describe the activities in one community, Cochiti Pueblo, where these efforts have had some substantial results. The case of Cochiti Pueblo illustrates both how language loss figures in the problems confronting Native American families and communities and how language revitalization can strengthen them.

Background

The Pueblo of Cochiti is located at the base of the Jemez Mountains in New Mexico, about thirty miles southwest of the city of Santa Fe. It is a relatively small community, with 900 plus tribal members. The median age of Cochiti residents is 26.8 years, according to the 1990 Census. Cochiti Pueblo is situated on land covered with many mesas and canyons. On the eastern end of the Pueblo sits a huge dam—an ominous structure built by the Army Corps of Engineers in 1969 to control the flow of the Rio Grande River. This was necessary, Pueblo leaders were told, to keep the Rio Grande from flooding the city of Albuquerque from time to time. But while the dam, the eleventh largest in the United States, has been beneficial to the city dwellers to the south, it has had devastating effects on Cochiti Pueblo. For many members of the Pueblo, the dam is a literal and figurative watershed. It demarks the point at which life in the community changed. People speak in terms of “before the dam” and “after the dam.”

Community and Family Life Before the Dam

Before the dam was built, family and communal farming of the land was a major economic activity. What was life in Cochiti

like in those days? One person who was a child during the pre-dam period recalls a time when family members worked together in their fields. He recalls fields of corn alongside plots planted with chili peppers and squash. Most of all, he remembers golden melons growing in the sun. Children who were tempted to pinch a ripening melon from a neighbor's field restrained themselves, knowing that they would eventually be invited to share in the bounty. The children waited until they saw the work of harvesting begin. Then they would offer their services, knowing that the reward for helping harvest the field would be juicy slices of melon, as much as they could eat.

Those who remember Cochiti before the dam describe it as a world which was truly a community, despite repeated efforts by the federal government to destroy its cultural and spiritual traditions and its integrity (Sando, 1992).⁵ At the heart of Cochiti society is the family—beginning with the nuclear unit and around it in ever-widening circles, the layers of the close-knit extended family, this being the critical social unit. The concentric circles of family relationships expand outward from family to clan,⁶ and clan to moiety,⁷ and moiety to the community itself. These relationships are determined, not only by blood but by religious considerations as well. Thus, individuals and families are multiply linked and are bound to one another in intricate ways. In the days before the dam, families and neighbors worked together cooperatively in community settings. The most important ways in which residents worked together were in the maintenance and furtherance of the community itself.

Cochiti, like other Pueblo communities, was able to retain its traditional way of life, despite repeated attacks by outside forces and agencies, because of the inherent strength of its social structure and traditional form of government. It has two kinds of governments: a secular system, and a traditional, theocratic one. The secular governance system was established by the United States government in 1864, following the issuance of "land patents", which acknowledged the rights to the land that had been "granted" to the Pueblos by the Spanish crown during the period of Spanish domination. The term "recognize" rather than "grant" would have been a more accurate description for the concession made by the Spanish crown in 1689: the land in question had

been owned and occupied by Pueblo people well over a thousand years before the arrival of the Spaniards. Nonetheless, when the U. S. government granted land patents to the Pueblos in 1869, it was on the basis of the Spanish land grants made two hundred years earlier (Sando, *op. cit.*). The secular government is charged with enforcing the laws and regulations of the community. It is headed by a governor and lieutenant governor, and two other officials called "fiscales", who are chosen annually to deal with secular matters, and to manage the economic, social, educational, and political affairs of the community.

The religious governance structure was in place well before the Spaniards installed elements of a secular system in the hope that it would overwhelm and thwart the religious structure. But the religious domain was and continues to be where the real leadership of the Pueblos is vested. A tribal council, consisting of former governors and fiscales, is the governing body with the authority to set policies and adopt laws for the community to follow. This governance structure is headed by the community's religious leader, the cacique. Each year, a war chief, war captain and aides are chosen by the governing body. These leaders are responsible for overseeing and leading the ceremonial life of the community for the year in keeping with the traditional calendar.

The two forms of governance structures function smoothly together to run the affairs of state and to manage community affairs. Critical to the success of this complex structure is the willingness of tribal members to participate in the community's governance and work. An important part of community life is individual commitment and obligation for doing the work necessary to sustaining the social order. When an individual is chosen for a position of leadership, whether in the secular or religious domains of governance, he does not refuse the honor and responsibility of serving the community. Those who are chosen to serve as leaders are expected, and consider it a privilege, to devote the period of service to the community, usually a year at a time. Leaders give up regular employment for their term of office, because they must give all of their time and attention to the community while in office. But at the same time that those who are chosen to serve as leaders are expected to commit themselves fully to the roles and responsibilities of office, so too are other

tribal members expected to help these leaders when their help is requested. The system works because the culture places great importance on individuals being willing to participate in activities that benefit the entire community. From the time children are young, they are socialized to view service for the common good as one of the highest values. Tribal members who show the greatest commitment to community service and participation are afforded the highest respect in communities like Cochiti.

In the pre-dam period, these values were shared by all. The community enjoyed the fruits of its agricultural endeavors and felt sustained by its rich ceremonial and communal life. Members of extended families lived in close proximity to one another, and shared in the work and responsibility of rearing children and caring for the elderly. As much as the community demanded of its members, it gave back to them in mutual support. No one—not the young nor the old nor the infirm—was neglected. There was a sense of communal support in the most real sense. And thus, Cochiti had been able to prosper and survive despite all of the encroachments and attacks from the outside world. But that was before the dam.

Changes in Families and Community After the Dam

Soon after it was built, the people of Cochiti discovered that seepage from the dam was turning the corn fields into swamps, and leeching minerals into the surrounding areas, destroying the land for farming. Families who had depended on farming soon found themselves without a livelihood. Life in the community changed. Many people had to leave the community to look for work in urban areas. Living and working away from the community, they were no longer able to participate in its work or in its social and ceremonial life. The traditional life of the Pueblo which had been based on an agricultural economy was threatened, and the many layers of social and communal life that rested on this agrarian foundation were weakened gradually.

Work on the outside sometimes changed the perspectives and the values of individuals in fundamental ways. Some people adopted the larger society's faith in economic growth and development as keys to survival and success. Some came to regard

obligatory participation in the governance and ceremonial affairs of the community as onerous duties that kept individuals from advancement and progress in the work world. They regarded as progressive programs offered by federal agencies to "improve" life in the community by renovating public buildings and utilities. These programs imposed conditions on how the renovations were to be done and what materials could be used, but these were seen as improvements over older methods and materials. For example, buildings like the kivas, the traditional ceremonial buildings in which important religious activities and events take place could not be constructed of adobe which requires a great deal of upkeep. They had to be constructed of more durable materials like stucco and concrete. Adobe must be resurfaced annually to prevent deterioration. The job of replastering the kiva was one of the activities that brought the women of the community together each year. But it was much more than a mundane service activity for the women. This particular job had an important religious function as well. The fresh coat of clay was applied to the adobe with bare hands, leaving the imprint of women's hands right on the buildings which brought the community together. Those handprints symbolized the women's blessings on the community itself. The modernization of the public buildings reduced the need for constant upkeep, but it also eliminated the need for people to come together to work at keeping the community together.⁸

Another major force for change was the Bureau of Indian Affairs's boarding school program whereby Native American children were removed from families and tribes to be educated at schools located hundreds and even thousands of miles from home. The federal government had two major programs to assimilate Indians into the larger society. The boarding school program was established late in the 19th century for the purposes of "civilizing" American Indians by disassociating them from family and tribes through education (Adams, 1988).⁹ The other program, that of moving Indians off the reservation had as its purpose the termination of the reservation system, was initiated in the 1950s (Getches, Wilkinson, & Williams, 1993).¹⁰ After Indians were done with school, the government offered them financial incentives to relocate to urban areas, in the hope that they would be assimilated into the larger society. The members of the community who had

been sent away to boarding schools under the federal government's program to assimilate Indian children into the larger society, and who were relocated to urban areas after they completed school under the government's relocation program, tended to stay away from the community. When they did return, they sometimes brought with them changed outlooks on the relationship between the individual and the community, on families, and on what constituted a desirable way to live one's life.

Thus, both communal and family life changed in Cochiti. The community structure remained the same, but willingness to participate in its governance activities and its social life changed dramatically. Whereas before the dam nearly everyone participated in the life of the community, after the dam only the most committed individuals did. Before the dam, the community spoke with one voice on issues that affected its future. After the dam changed people's lives and outlook, the voices were sometimes discordant, particularly on questions of economic development.¹¹ There were those who argued for progressive changes in the management and development of the community's resources. They argued for changes in the decision making process and in the governance structures. But there were those who held out for maintaining tried and true practices and the traditional life style of the community.

The changes in the family were structural and functional. Whereas the traditional unit was the extended family, the nuclear family gradually became a more common configuration. This change was influenced in part by the development of housing which did not allow families to live in close proximity to grandparents and related others,¹² but it was also the result of changes in outlook that came from living and working in the city. These changes in family structure and in residential patterns affected the socialization of the community's children in dramatic ways (c.f., McKnight, 1995).

In the traditional pattern, responsibility for rearing and educating children was shared by members of the extended family, clan and the larger community. Children were in daily contact with grandparents, aunts and uncles, all of whom saw themselves as primary agents of socialization. Through their interactions with the children, members of the extended family inculcated in them

the values, beliefs, practices, and traditional knowledge of the community. Thus, the language and the culture of the community were passed on to the children in keeping with the socialization practices that have sustained Cochiti people for as long as anyone can remember. Traditionally, children participated in the affairs and work of the family and community alongside other family members. In home and community settings, children listened to the adults as they discussed the meanings of the events in which they are engaged or for which they are preparing. In this way, they gained familiar with the community's complex system of cultural symbols, and came to understand the history and experience of the people. As they shared in the work of the community, they acquired prevalent attitudes and beliefs, and adopted the practices that have allowed Cochiti people to live in harmony with both their spiritual and physical worlds.

With the changes in family structure and in residential patterns, child-rearing practices changed. Away from the extended family and community, young parents were on their own as they raised their children. Because of the assimilative influences the parents themselves encountered in school and in the workplace, many of them were far more fluent and comfortable in English than they were in the indigenous language, Keres. The language they spoke at home was English, and thus, the language in which they socialized their children was English. Their children learned English and virtually nothing of Keres, the language spoken by grandparents and other people in the community. When they visited the grandparents in the Pueblo, they could communicate with them only in English. And in turn, the relatives interacted with the children in the only language they understood, English.

These shifts in language development occurred even in families that remained in the community. Head Start proved to be a major factor working against the continued use of Keres even in homes where children were still being socialized in that language by parents. In Cochiti as in many other communities across the country, a Head Start Center was established, offering preschool age children early education opportunities which were to prepare them for school by compensating for putative deficiencies in the social, cognitive and linguistic skills needed for academic success (Wong Fillmore, 1990). In Cochiti as elsewhere the emphasis was

on teaching the children English along with other school related skills that were supposed to facilitate their entry to school. The results were just as devastating on the children's retention of the primary language as they were for children from non-English homes elsewhere (Wong Fillmore, 1991a; 1991b).¹³ Their early encounter with the assimilative forces that are present in such compensatory education programs resulted in many children setting aside the language of the home in favor of English once they learned it. The younger children are when they come up against such assimilative forces at school, the faster they lose their primary language. Under these circumstances, second language learning is not usually an additive process, with bilingualism its outcome. In societies like ours which do not place much value on minority groups retaining and using languages other than English, the process of second language learning tends to be subtractive, with the second language displacing and eventually replacing the primary one. The older children are when they confront the assimilative forces they invariably encounter in school, the better able they are to deal with them. But when children are three or four, the ages of children served by Head Start, they are especially vulnerable. By the time the Head Start children enter the public school system, they have had two years of English, and the language they associate with school is English. In fact, their preferred language both at home and at school is English.

And as they used more English and Keres less, the communicative effect these children had on family members at home was not dissimilar to the one their city-dwelling cousins and friends were having on their families. People tended to accommodate to their apparent linguistic preferences, and to talk to them in the language they were using—English. Thus, the children had less and less access to Keres, and if they did not lose it altogether, they were certainly not developing it further. This was the turning point for the language. When children no longer learn and speak the language, it is in decline.

But that was not the only change in the rearing of children. With the younger parents working in jobs outside of the community, they were participating less frequently or not at all in the everyday work and social life of the Pueblo. This meant that their children were not involved in such activities, and therefore

missing the many opportunities available to earlier generations of children to acquire the skills, knowledge, understandings, and perspectives that are critical to the continuation of the community's heritage and traditions. Although these parents tried to raise their children in the ways they themselves were reared, they could not provide all of the socializing experiences that were available in the community. As noted before, when children are included in the everyday life of the community, they are treated to explanations and discussions of the meanings of cultural practices and traditions. But in the period following the construction of the dam, children were spending considerably less time working alongside family members of all ages and interacting with adults other than their parents at community affairs. When children are reared away from the community, they do not have opportunities to acquire the cultural information and skills that would allow them to participate in its social and ceremonial life, nor do they always have the inclination to do so. Most importantly, when they do not understand or speak the language of the community, they do not have access to the knowledge base that it encodes and which enables people to stay connected. Thus, the traditional ways in which children in the community were educated have been weakened or compromised. This was one of the changes in the community that led to the realization that steps had to be taken to stem the loss of language and traditional practices before it was too late to do anything about it.

Efforts to Strengthen the Community and Families Through Language

In Cochiti, the Tribal Council played a pivotal role in determining that the indigenous language, Keres, was the key to strengthening family and community life.¹⁴ It recognized how crucial Keres had been to social and religious practices in the community, and it was aware that the use of Keres in everyday discourse in homes and in other community settings had greatly diminished. The Tribal Council determined that any effort to broaden participation in the work and affairs of the community had to begin with a close look at what was happening to the language, and with a consideration of how education could help

revitalize the language. To that end, the Tribal Council appointed a committee—the Indian Education Committee—and charged it with the responsibility of studying the language situation in Cochiti and the educational needs of the young people in the community. It also commissioned an Education Task Force to examine how well the public schools were serving the needs of the community's children, and to investigate what role the schools might have played in creating the language situation the community faced.

Among the undertakings of the Indian Education Committee for Cochiti Pueblo was a survey of language vitality in the community: Who among the elders, parents of school age children, and children ages 9 to 18 was speaking Keres to whom, in what contexts, and under what conditions? The study found that individuals who were thirty-five or older were fluent in the language; those who were younger were not. Thus, it appeared that the generation that came after the dam generally did not speak the language. Of the post-dam generation, the younger the individuals, the less likely they were to speak or understand the language at all. It was also found that the older Keres speakers accommodated to the linguistic needs of the English speaking children when they were present. The result was that less and less Keres was spoken in the community, and there were fewer and fewer opportunities for the children to hear and learn the language. The children reported hearing Keres used in the home and community by parents and grandparents, but said that they understood little of it. All of them expressed an interest in learning the language, however.

There had been one programmatic effort to teach Keres to Cochiti children at school before the survey was conducted. A program begun a decade ago at the off-reservation public school offered Cochiti children bilingual instruction in Keres and English. The program, which was supported by state bilingual funds, was initiated by a Cochiti tribal member¹⁵ who worked as an administrator in the school district. The teacher of this program was a fluent Keres speaker from Cochiti who had received training from the Summer Institute of Linguistics for Native Americans (SILNA), and the program was apparently effective. But that changed with the death of the administrator who started the

program. When he died, the program came under the control of non-Cochiti school administrators who were not supportive of the original concept. They changed the bilingual program to a pull-out language teaching program¹⁶ using methods that were not suitable for the children of this community. The emphasis changed from teaching the children to communicate in Keres, to teaching them isolated vocabulary items from written word lists.¹⁷ Instead of a serious heritage language program, the children were treated to instruction on words, greetings and short phrases—but only if they completed their other school assignments first.

In their deliberations, the Tribal Council, Indian Education Committee and Education Task Force determined that any educational effort directed toward revitalizing the language had to be community based, consistent with its cultural practices and values, and focused on the needs of the community. Whatever was to be done had to be consistent with the larger goals of rebuilding the community, and had to involve people at all levels of the community. It was decided that language revitalization in this community would not work simply by teaching Keres through formal instruction, nor could the task be entrusted to the public schools. Instead, the language had to be taught and learned in the context of the work and everyday activities of the community itself. The hope was that the program would bring tribal members back into the life of the community. By bringing people of all ages together to engage in activities that had connected people in the past, tribal leaders hoped they would renew some of the traditional social ties. Visiting was one social practice that was identified as useful for reconnecting people.

In the past, neighbors and relatives visited back and forth frequently. Such visits often involved children who were brought around to chat and spend time with elderly neighbors and relatives. During these visits, the children heard the adults discussing current concerns in the community, trading remembrances of past events, or commenting on matters of cultural significance. With elderly relatives and neighbors, these discussions were likely to be in Keres, and thus, the children were exposed to the language of their heritage in social use. In the past, these visits were often made to elderly residents of the community for the purpose of

bringing them home-cooked meals. Children often served as the delivery person, and they would stay to visit with the recipient for a while. Sometimes children would visit elderly relatives or neighbors to see whether they needed help with chores, like cutting and stacking firewood, cleaning the yard, or picking fruit from the trees. These visits provided the elderly with help and company, and the young with natural occasions and opportunities to learn from the elderly.

In the post-dam period, social service programs such as Meals on Wheels took over the function of delivering hot meals to the elderly. With the younger members of the community engaged in off-reservation employment and schooling, services like Meals on Wheels seemed to fill important needs in the community (McKnight, 1995).¹⁸ It soon became apparent that such services might meet the needs of the elderly at one level, but they could not meet other equally important social needs. A delivery person did not stop to visit. He might stay for an extra minute or two in an emergency—say to change a light bulb or to move a heavy object—but he could not stay longer than a few minutes because there were other deliveries to make. Thus such social services were often not as beneficial as the neighborly services they replaced.

Visiting was just one area of social practice which tribal leaders saw as providing opportunities for language and social renewal. Equally important were the community work days that used to involve tribal members of all ages. In the pre-dam period, people worked together regularly to clean the community, plaster buildings, clear drainage ditches, and resurface the plaza. Men and women of all ages and the children of the community would come together and work side by side. And as they worked, they talked. Tribal leaders saw such activities as opportunities again to bring people together to work and to learn from one another. If tribal members who knew Keres were to use it during these activities, they would provide a natural context for others to learn the language in the most effective way possible.¹⁹

It should be noted that Tribal leaders saw activities like these as more than mere vehicles for language teaching and learning. They recognized that in bringing people together they were also creating the means for renewal and maintenance of community

ties and spirit. For a plan like this to succeed however required a broad commitment by tribal members to participate in such activities. Meetings were held in the community at which the plan was developed and a consultant from the University of New Mexico²⁰ provided an intensive training program on second language learning and development, and on language teaching methods. Through these training sessions, community members who were fluent speakers of Keres gained an awareness of how they might support the efforts of individuals who were trying to learn the language in their everyday encounters with them. These training sessions were also the means for preparing a small group of Keres speakers from the community who could serve as language teachers when formal classes were established. Six language teachers and some fifteen elders committed themselves to participate in language teaching efforts in the community as a result of these sessions.

Cochiti's Language Revitalization Project

In establishing its language revitalization program, tribal leaders adopted a set of goals with important consequences for the community. The first was to reestablish the sole use of Keres in the community for all traditional activities. Since it was in traditional domains such as ceremonies, governance and administration, and the tribal justice system that the use of the language was most critical, emphasis was placed on efforts to reestablish the use of Keres in such activities. Mentoring relationships between Keres speakers and learners were seen as an especially appropriate way to help tribal members gain skills and confidence in using the language in these domains. The mentor structure for teaching knowledge and skills is consistent with traditional practices. Traditionally, those with expertise and knowledge in the meaning and conduct of ceremonies and other traditional practices shared what they knew while working with others who wanted or needed to acquire such knowledge. It is in the context of mentoring relationships that individuals have the opportunity to learn the formal registers of Keres which are needed in some traditional events and activities. There are in any language forms or "registers" which are reserved for special purposes and

which may differ considerably from everyday speech registers: for example, the register used in performing marriage rites and other ceremonies; the register used in legal proceedings and documents, etc. The only way to learn such registers is by participating in the activities in which they are used.

A second goal for the language revitalization project involves bringing the older and younger generations in the community together, and helping people connect with one another in mutually beneficial ways. One important way is by pairing young people—adolescents—with elderly members of the community. The youngsters help their elderly companions by performing useful services for them: chopping wood, shopping, running errands, and doing other chores in their homes. The elderly are encouraged to talk in Keres to the young people who have been assigned to them, thus giving them access to the language they need to learn. At the same time, they also share with their young companions their cultural knowledge and skills. Another intergenerational activity has been undertaken by the chairwoman of the Indian Education Committee in forming a group of women of different ages with varying degrees of Keres fluency to discuss traditional practices and knowledge. The participants in this group are women ages twenty through sixty, with an occasional teen-ager in attendance as well. They talk about cooking, traditional beliefs and practices in child-rearing, preparations for ceremonies, how people are related, and they share stories and recollections of the past. In this way, women of one generation share their cultural knowledge and understandings with women of another, and they also help one another achieve greater levels of fluency in the language.

The third goal of the revitalization effort is to reestablish the use of Keres in the home and in everyday life—not an easy goal to achieve, particularly for those who do not yet have much facility in the language. And yet, it happens. On one occasion, an elder discusses events in the community in Keres with his family: his wife, grown daughter and two teen-age grandchildren. The members of this family vary in their ability to understand and to speak in the language, but each listens intently as the grandfather speaks. They nod occasionally, and indicate when they understand and when they do not. Patiently the grandfather

continues his discourse—repeating, explaining, modeling words now and then for his grandchildren. They repeat the words, and he smiles as they do, pleased with the effort they are making to understand what he is saying, and to speak the language. In this vignette, all three generations make an effort to communicate in Keres. Ordinarily, the discourse would have taken place in English, the language everyone in this family (with the exception of the grandfather) knows better than they do Keres. It took an enormous commitment and effort on the part of all family members to participate in this conversation. But this is what it takes to reestablish the language in the home and community. Several initiatives were designed to reclaim Keres as the language of everyday discourse in the community. Tribal leaders realized that they had to facilitate the learning of Keres and provide opportunities for people to practice using it. They established language classes to help tribal employees learn Keres, which is the language in which tribal affairs will eventually be conducted. Tribal members who are fluent in Keres are asked to use it exclusively during the workday, and to use it while speaking to non-fluent speakers for fifteen minutes each day. Keres classes for other adults in the community are also offered as part of this initiative.

The final goal for the Cochiti language revitalization program is the teaching of Keres to the children of the community. This goal was given high priority since Tribal leaders recognized that the very survival of the language depended on the children of the community learning and speaking it. The plan here has been to establish Keres language classes in the schools attended by the children, and for tribal members to have a voice in deciding both the content to be taught and the methods to be used. The leaders decided that this could be accomplished by working with the schools, and by having elders visit the schools during the language classes to provide help and support for the teaching effort. Another means to accomplish this goal is by providing training for Head Start and public school language teachers in effective language teaching methods—methods that have been found to be more consistent with the goals of the community.

The emphasis on teaching Keres to the children of Cochiti is placed on language development activities that are carried out in the community. After school and week end activities such

as camping trips and community work experiences are seen as important vehicles for immersing the young people in Keres. In all such activities, the goal is to use Keres to the extent possible. Thus, while engaged in work that benefits the community the children are hearing and practicing the language they are learning.

A summer language and cultural program for the children of Cochiti was initiated in 1996, with six fluent speakers of Keres serving as teachers. These teachers who had received training in language teaching methods in the community taught the children a curriculum of traditional knowledge in Keres which was organized around the ceremonial calendar. The program had been planned with an expected enrollment of around thirty children. Thirty five showed up on opening day; by the end of the first week, over eighty children, ages four through sixteen were in attendance. The high mark was ninety-nine, three times the number originally expected. The program of studies which included activities such as learning traditional songs and stories; making ceremonial garments and accoutrement; hosting a traditional dinner to which the community's elders were invited by the children—in Keres; and a host of other activities related to community events that take place in the summer. The program generated great excitement in the community, and the parents were as enthusiastic about it as the children were. The program is set to begin soon for the second year, and from all signs, the level of support and participation will be as great as before.

Some Lessons from Cochiti

The issues of community and language revitalization concern many Indian communities throughout the United States. There are currently some important on-going efforts aimed at revitalizing indigenous languages in communities across the country. Notable among them are the Navaho bilingual programs in the Navaho Nation (Rosier and Holm, 1980; Platero, 1975); the Hualapai bilingual education program at Peach Springs in Arizona (Watahomigie and Yamamoto, 1992); the Karuk people's language camps and their master and apprentice programs in Northern California (Sims, 1996); the early childhood education language programs by the Blackfeet in Montana; the preschool

Hawaiian language immersion programs on Oahu; the bilingual programs in public schools at a number of locations in Hawaii; and the Mohawk immersion programs in upper New York State.²¹ These programs differ in size, but in all cases, the impetus for their establishment came from the communities served, although the ones in public schools are usually not community-controlled. None of these efforts are as multi-faceted as the language revitalization program at Cochiti Pueblo, however. What makes the Cochiti effort unique is that it is as comprehensive as any program as we have seen. Such an initiative could not have been mounted without the full support and involvement of the Tribal Council. Most of all, it was the far-sighted vision of the leaders in this community that helped them decide to adopt a multi-faceted approach reaching all levels of the community. The programmatic approach it chose in reclaiming the language is unprecedented in its breadth and scope. It is too early to know what the eventual outcome of these community wide efforts will be, but judging from how the program is evolving and working thus far, the outlook is good.

From the experience so far, we believe that there are lessons that can be learned from Cochiti's initiative. The following are a few such lessons and some related principles that other communities might find useful:

1. The leadership and motivation for language and community development must come from the community itself. Outside support is helpful and sometimes necessary, but leadership cannot come from the outside. It is critical that those who have the greatest stake in the initiative's outcome be involved at all levels, starting with taking the lead.
2. Efforts to strengthen a community must have the support of the real leadership in the community. In the case of Cochiti, the Tribal Council not only took the lead by appointing the Indian Education Committee and the Education Task Force to study the language situation in the community, it also gave its support and backing to the activities these groups eventually proposed.
3. The approach taken in the initiative must be ones that the community decides are appropriate, given the problems it

faces, and given the historic and cultural context in which the community finds itself. Solutions must be consistent with the cultural practices of the community undertaking the initiative, and should come directly from the community itself. In Cochiti, the decision to place the emphasis on language revitalization was not arrived at casually; it was only after careful study over a long period of time that the Tribal leaders decided to reclaim the community's language, and how to do it.

4. Language and community revitalization efforts must be both horizontal and vertical in reach. It is not enough to work on just one segment of the community, or with just a few people at a time. In Cochiti, the decision to initiate programs to reach as many tribal members as possible, and to design activities to reconnect members of the community across generations, has signalled to everyone the seriousness of the initiative. The program has had an immediate impact on the community, and it appears to have succeeded in getting people involved in the effort.
5. It takes time to restore a community's linguistic and cultural resources. It can't be done without a real and sustained commitment from people in the community to do whatever is necessary to achieve the objective. Efforts that depend on outside funding are hard to sustain. In Cochiti, there is a real commitment from tribal members to make the program work.

Closing Remarks

In the summer of 1996, two momentous events occurred in Cochiti Pueblo. One took place toward the end of the summer language school, when many of the children had acquired enough Keres to have some confidence using it, not only with their teachers but with one another and with their parents too. The sound of children's voices speaking to one another in Keres as they worked and played together was a sign that the community's language had found new life. The other event was the harvest of corn and alfalfa grown in Cochiti Pueblo—the first crops in twenty-seven years. After a long fight with the U. S. Congress, the Pueblo of

Cochiti won a twelve million dollar settlement in 1992 for the damage done to its farm lands by the building of Cochiti dam. Half of the money was used by the Army Corps of Engineers to develop a drainage system that would allow the surrounding land to be reclaimed. The crops that were harvested in 1996 were grown on the first parcels of land that have been restored to health. To some, these might not seem like such important events. To us, they are portentous. The future of the land and the language is being reclaimed.

Notes

1. The community development activities described in this article have been generously supported by the W K. Kellogg Foundation through its Families and Neighborhoods Initiative. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Foundation.
2. Just five years ago, Krauss (1992) reported that 187 of the indigenous languages of the Americas were still spoken, although 80% of those in North America were moribund. Three years later, in 1995, the figure he gave in a talk at Dartmouth University (cited in Crawford, 1996) had changed to 175—a net loss of 12 languages in the intervening years. He also revised his estimate of the percentage of North American languages that could be considered moribund to 89%.
3. Yup'ik, Zuni and Navaho are several that come to mind, but in each case, there has been a dramatic decline over the past several decades in the numbers of children who enter school speaking the language at age 5. When children are no longer learning and speaking a language, it is in decline. A language can be considered moribund when it is spoken only by adults who are beyond the child-rearing years.
4. There are 6 doctoral fellows in the UCB-NMOIA Partnership. They are from the Pueblos of Cochiti, Acoma, Zuni, and Tesuque. One fellow is a member of the Tlingit and Tsimshian tribes of Prince of Wales, Alaska.
5. The Pueblo peoples endured ruthless exploitation and oppression at the hands of the Spaniards after they appeared as colonizers in the region in 1589. According to Sando (1992), during the 80 years of Spanish domination, many pueblo people were killed or sent off to Mexico where they were sold as slaves. In 1846, at the conclusion of the Mexican-American War, a civil government was established in New Mexico, and the land holdings of the Pueblos were confirmed by the U. S. Congress, two years later with the ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. But while land rights were recognized, the individual rights of Pueblo people were not respected. In 1923 the federal government imposed the Religious Crimes Code, prohibiting the practice of all native ceremonies. There were constant efforts to force Pueblo people, as with other American natives, to assimilate into the larger

society culturally and linguistically. Under the guise of bringing Indians under the “civilizing influence” of formal schooling, children were removed from families and sent to boarding schools where they were not allowed to speak their languages or to follow their cultural and religious practices (Adams, 1988). These acts had devastating effects on all of the indigenous languages of this country. Pueblo people were not granted U. S. citizenship until 1948—thirty six years after New Mexico achieved full statehood. See Sando (1992) for an excellent historical examination of the social, political and cultural experiences of the Pueblos by a Pueblo scholar.

6. Clan membership is matrilineal.
7. Cochiti, like many other pueblos, is divided into two moieties for social and ceremonial functions (Sando, 1992).
8. This is an instance of how “solutions” from outside of the community can result in breaking down the relationships and activities that held the community together as McKnight (1995) has argued in *The Careless Society*.
9. See Adams, 1988, for an account of federal policies for dealing with the “Indian problem” through schooling Adams argues that while these policies may have been motivated by benevolent sentiments towards the Indians, it is also clear that policy-makers were motivated by the desire to take back the land that had been set aside as reservations. By “civilizing “ Indian people through schooling, “they would be drawn inevitably into the White economy; they would come to hunger for the goods of the Whites just as the Whites hungered for Indian lands” (Adams, 1988, p. 17). Once the Indians abandoned their reservations for life in the larger society, reservation lands would become available for non-Indian homesteading and farming.
10. For a discussion of the federal policy to terminate the reservation system under the guise of “freeing” Indians from the “oppressive” control of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, see Getches, Wilkinson, and Williams, 1993, pp. 229–251.
11. One such dispute over economic and resource development had to do with a plan to build a huge housing subdivision on Pueblo lands which would be open to non-Indians The master plan called for the eventual creation of a community of 30–40,000 people—promising economic development for the Pueblo. Tribal members who wanted to maintain Cochiti’s traditional lifestyle recognized that a development of that size would quickly overwhelm the Pueblo with its population of a thousand tribal members at the time. This situation created an internal schism between the progressive and the traditional groups within the community.
12. This began when HUD funds were used for building much needed housing in the Pueblo What HUD offered was single family housing in a subdivision located away from the core community.
13. See Wong Fillmore (1991a & b) for reports of studies that found evidence of massive disruption of communication patterns in the homes of language minority children after attending preschool programs in which they immersed in English. In one study, 64.4% of the families reported that their

children stopped speaking and eventually lost the languages of their homes and families after spending from 1 to 2 years in English-only preschools. The families also reported loss of family intimacy along with the loss of the family language, which in most cases was the only language spoken by the adult members of the household. In those homes, what was lost was the very means by which parents could continue to socialize their children in language the parents knew well, and the means for supporting and guiding their children as they grew older.

14. For a detailed account of the tribal leadership's role in the planning and development work in Cochiti, see Benjamin, Pecos and Romero, 1996.
15. The tribal member was the late Mr. Carlos Pecos.
16. The children are removed from their regular classrooms for 30 minutes each day for lessons that teach them words in Keres.
17. The Tribal Council has declared that its language should remain an oral one, in keeping with the community's oral tradition of communication and knowledge transmission. It is therefore inappropriate and inconsistent with the community's wishes to teach it to the children through the medium of writing. See Benjamin, Pecos and Romero (1996) for a discussion of the concept of literacy in this oral society.
18. McKnight (1995) discusses how the professionalization of services can have the effect of undermining the social and human needs of people despite meeting their practical need for the social service.
19. The most effective methods are those developed over the years at the Linguistic Institute for Native Americans (LINA). Teachers from many tribal groups from across the nation have been trained to use these methods in language teaching programs at the Summer Institute for Linguistics for Native Americans (SILNA). Christine Sims has long been the driving force in LINA and SILNA.
20. Dr. Rebecca Benjamin of the College of Education at the University of New Mexico.
21. A personal communication 1997, from Leanne Hinton an expert on language revitalization efforts by members of indigenous communities. She is on the Linguistics faculty at the University of California at Berkeley. For discussions of such efforts, see Hinton (1994).

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