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MAYAN SPEAKERS LAUNCH WIKI GLOSSARY MAYAN LANGUAGES PRESERVATION PROJECT, STAKING A CLAIM ONLINE FOR THEIR DIGITAL FUTURE

[Houston, July 6, 2023] – The Mayan Languages Preservation Project is proud to announce the official launch of its online series of open-source Mayan glossaries on July 7th, 2023. This groundbreaking initiative aims to honor, preserve, and promote the languages of more than seven million Mayan speakers. As an authoritative reference it will increase access to vital information, education, healthcare, and legal services for indigenous speakers globally, and lay the foundation for a greater Mayan presence online.

"I love that it is an open-source community effort. This is an unbelievably valuable resource and I'm so excited to be a part of it," says Gaspar Tomas, a native Q'anjob'al speaker and Wiki moderator who currently lives in South Carolina.

Dr. Winston Scott, leading expert in Mayan languages and project director, explains, "This living document is curated by native speakers and language professionals actively working in the field. It captures the depth and breadth of Mayan languages, creating neologisms [or new terminology] where terms do not exist and ensuring accurate translations without relying on borrowed terms from other languages." The team's vision is that "by establishing a collaborative process in the U.S. and Guatemala, our project will encompass all 22 of Guatemala's existing Mayan languages that will create an authoritative and comprehensive glossary by and for Mayan language speakers."

Hosted by the MasterWord Institute, the Mayan Languages Preservation Project serves communities in Central America and supports Mayan speakers as they interact with and engage in a new way of life in the United States. Most Mayan language immigrants have never had access to many of the services available in the U.S., and they are often unaware of their rights. This project and its glossaries will increase the consistency and quality of language access services for new immigrants. Dr. Scott, laments, "Unfortunately, in medical and legal settings, Mayan language speakers today are often paired with Spanish-English interpreters, even when it's not their strongest language." Mayan-speaking professors, teachers, writers, interpreters, translators, and community members are coming together from around the world to collaborate on and benefit from this project.

At present, there is a growing need in the United States for interpreters and translators who can offer consistent and accurate services in Mayan languages. This is most evident in legal and medical settings, where service providers are often unable to find the resources to adequately fill these roles. According to Elena Langdon, Director of the MasterWord Institute, "The project affords us the opportunity to meet this need for recently arrived Mayan language speakers in the U.S. and offer them practical resources." Ludmila Golovine, CEO of MasterWord Services, Inc., project sponsor and leading US provider of interpretation and translation services, stated, "No language left behind has been at the heart of the way we do business, and this project embodies our commitment to equitable language access for all."

Beyond the glossary, the Mayan Languages Preservation Project has ambitious long-term goals. By partnering with tech companies and embracing advancements in digital technology, the project aims to provide Mayan communities with a full digital presence. The project envisions creating tools, digitizing resources, and developing educational materials to empower Mayan speakers, fostering a vibrant online community, and expanding opportunities for education and cultural preservation.

Want to help? While the project has several moderators for the wiki glossary working with the K'iche' and Q'eqchi' languages, we are actively seeking moderators who are native speakers of the other Mayan languages of Guatemala and Mexico. "This is a great educational project for native speakers like me, who speak Mayan languages, as there is a need for more available sources to really learn how to read and write the language," says Mr. Tomas. Join our team of Mayan language moderators:

https://mayanlanguages.wiki/index.php/Main_Page

As the Mayan Languages Preservation Project goes live on July 7th, 2023, it invites individuals, organizations, and technology experts to join in this transformative endeavor. Together, we can ensure the preservation, vitalization, and accessibility of the rich linguistic heritage embodied in the Mayan languages.

About the Mayan Languages Preservation Project:

The Mayan Languages Preservation Project is hosted by the MasterWord Institute, the learning wing of MasterWord Services, Inc., one of the top language services providers in the United States. The project is a pioneering initiative dedicated to preserving and promoting the Mayan languages. Through an online, open-source glossary and collaboration with technology partners, the project aims to empower Mayan communities by bridging the digital divide and providing access to essential information, education, healthcare, and legal services.

For more information, please visit https://mayanlanguages.wiki/index.php/Main_Page.

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