



Kamëntsá Language Revitalization Project

Preserving a Sacred Language. Reviving a Living Culture.

A Sacred Language on the Brink

The Kamëntsá Nation of Colombia's Sibundoy Valley—guardians of the sacred plant Yagé (Ayahuasca) and carriers of ancient ecological wisdom—stand at a pivotal crossroads. Today, only 6% of the population is fluent in their ancestral tongue. Without urgent action, the Kamëntsá language could disappear within a decade.

When a language dies, a world dies with it: songs, prayers, medicinal knowledge, and the very map of how to live in harmony with nature.

Our Response

In June 2025, with seed support from **Chacruna's Indigenous Reciprocity Initiative (\$4,000 secured)** and our sister organization **Circle of Sacred Nature (USA)**, OIOC launched the **Moch Huasginch Kamëntsá School**—a groundbreaking program for **endangered language revitalization** rooted in **Indigenous knowledge systems** and **community-based education**.

The school serves as a space for language learning and is also a center for **Indigenous-led research, documentation, and investigation** of ancestral knowledge. Through this work, the wisdom of elders is preserved, recorded, and shared, ensuring its **intergenerational transmission** to future generations.

- Today, 200 students—children, youth, and elders—are actively enrolled, learning side by side.
- **4 Indigenous teachers** lead intensive weekly instruction.



- A **motivation bonus system** ensures accountability and measurable results: students who complete the 16-week course and demonstrate progress receive a **\$200 bonus** upon completion. This system—our largest budget item—is designed not as a handout, but as recognition of **effort, discipline, and results**, making accountability concrete and ensuring that investment translates into measurable learning outcomes.
- An interactive curriculum—rooted in oral tradition, music, theater, and storytelling—has been designed for true intergenerational transmission of the Kamëntsá worldview.
- In 2025, integration with the **formal school system** began, with **280 children at Champagnan School** now receiving Kamëntsá classes and experiencing a transformation of their learning environment through signage in the ancestral language.

This work is far more than teaching words. It is the **rebuilding of identity, dignity, and memory**, and a vital act of **Amazon cultural survival** that reinforces the deep **link between language and biodiversity**.

Expansion (July – November 2025)

Building on this foundation, the **Moch Huasginch Kamëntsá School** will expand its reach and deepen its impact in the coming months. Our focus is to strengthen both the **teaching of the language** and the **Indigenous-led documentation of knowledge**, ensuring that this revitalization process is sustainable and community-driven.

Planned activities include:

- **Continue intensive weekly sessions** for 200 students, guided by 4 Indigenous teachers.



- **Develop illustrated materials, theater pieces, and music recordings** as permanent cultural resources for learning and documentation.
- **Expand integration into formal schools** by producing and installing signage in Kamëntsá (e.g., secretary, library, classrooms), reinforcing visibility and daily use of the language.
- **Strengthen the motivation bonus program** to ensure accountability and measurable results, recognizing students' dedication and achievements with completion bonuses.
- **Advance Indigenous-led research and documentation** to record oral traditions, ecological knowledge, and ceremonial chants—building a living archive to guide future generations.

This next phase will not only continue teaching but also create the resources and systems needed for the **long-term survival of the Kamëntsá language**, ensuring its transmission across generations and its recognition as an essential part of Amazonian cultural and ecological resilience.

Financial Plan (July – November 2025)

The Kamëntsá Language Revitalization Program is designed to ensure **accountability, measurable results, and maximum community impact**. Every contribution directly supports the efforts to sustain teachers, motivate students, and create lasting cultural resources.

Total Budget: USD \$46,190 (COP 184,760,000)

Funds Secured: USD \$4,000 from Chacruna's Indigenous Reciprocity Initiative

Remaining Need: USD \$42,190



Category	Cost in COP	Cost in USD	Description
Teachers (4 for 4 months)	16,000,000	4,000	Stipends for Indigenous teachers leading weekly classes
Student Motivation Bonuses	160,000,000	40,000	\$200 bonus for each student completing the 16-week program and demonstrating progress
Creation of Materials	5,000,000	1,250	Research, documentation, theater scripts, music, and cultural documentation
Student Support & Administration	3,760,000	940	Materials and Administration fees
Total	184,760,000	46,190	Every dollar is tied to direct impact: teachers are supported, students are motivated, and materials are created for long-term cultural use.



This budget reflects our belief that **investment must translate into results**: teachers are supported, students are motivated to complete the course, and materials are created for long-term cultural use.

With your support, this funding will sustain a full **16-week cycle** for 200 students and 4 teachers, expand cultural documentation, and ensure that the Kamëntsá language is not only taught, but **lived, remembered, and transmitted**.

Why It Matters

Revitalizing the Kamëntsá language is an urgent act of **endangered language revitalization** and **Amazon cultural survival**—a defense of both culture and ecology. Its extinction would not only erase a language but also sever a vital **link between language and biodiversity**, where ancestral words carry ecological knowledge, sustainable practices, and ceremonial wisdom for living in balance with the forest.

The disappearance of Kamëntsá would be like losing a plant or animal species: each word carries **ancestral memory, spiritual chants, and Indigenous knowledge systems** that cannot be replaced. Through **community-based education** and **intergenerational transmission**, this program ensures that children, youth, and elders learn together, keeping the language alive as a living system of knowledge.

The **motivation bonus system**, while our most significant cost, is central to this approach. It transforms language learning into a commitment with **accountability and results**, ensuring consistency, discipline, and measurable progress. Alongside teaching, the program also invests in **Indigenous-led research, documentation, and investigation**, preserving the wisdom of elders in ways that can guide future generations.

Supporting this project means safeguarding one of the world's most unique living heritages—while empowering Indigenous-led solutions for today's intertwined crises of culture, ecology, and spirit.



Material Links:

<https://www.oioc.co/kamentsalanguage>

YouTube videos:

<https://youtu.be/MPuvyJKMYPw?si=n3FbG6Y8MbznmayF>

https://youtu.be/TZvcZTaFN_I?si=5Q7CDgfuZWU09pS-

OIOC Impact report

<https://www.oioc.co/post/impact> 2024

<https://www.oioc.co/post/oioc-community-impact-report> January - June 2025

Join Us

Together, we can ensure that the Kamëntsá language continues to be spoken, sung, researched, and lived—an enduring voice for future generations.



Contact:

Taita Juan Bautista Agreda | Erika Salazar | Celina De Leon
Director | Program Managers, OIOC
info@oioc.co | www.oioc.co
Alto Putumayo
Amazon Colombia



Organization for
Indigenous Outreach &
Conservation