# ****Linguistic Fieldwork and Documentation Training in Indonesia****

One of the major problems facing Indonesia, and much of the developing world, is the rapid loss of cultural and linguistic diversity. The problem is especially acute in East Indonesia, a region known for its diversity of languages, both Austronesian and Papuan, where the inroads of contemporary Indonesia on local cultures are well known.

A variety of linguists have made efforts to explore whether it is possible to enlist the efforts of a combination of speakers of local languages, especially college students from East Indonesia, together with professional linguists and graduate students in linguistics, in the task of documenting the myriad undocumented languages of the region. The current project is a training program in linguistic field work and language documentation funded by a grant from the Documenting Endangered Language Program of the National Science Foundation [(](https://www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/documenting-endangered-languages)[DEL](https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=12816)[)](https://www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/documenting-endangered-languages) to the University of Delaware (award BCS – 1747801), and conducted in collaboration with the [Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia](https://www.atmajaya.ac.id/web/) and the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa ([ILCAA](http://www.aa.tufs.ac.jp/en)*),*an affiliate of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS), as well as with  the American Institute for Indonesian Studies [(AIFIS)](https://www.aifis.org/). The project provides an opportunity for American graduate students in linguistics to gain training in linguistic fieldwork, documentary linguistics and in the undocumented languages of east Indonesia. Students from the U.S. travel to East Indonesia and are paired with local students who are interested in documenting their languages. The program is intended to test whether an effective way to increase the pace of language documentation and description in Indonesia is by collaborative fieldwork, the formation of teams of several Indonesian students with an interest in documenting their native language, and one or more American graduate students with an interest in fieldwork and language documentation.

The program involves training in language documentation in Kupang (one week), three weeks gathering stories, personal narratives, conversations, songs and other examples of the language spoken in a village in East Indonesia, and an additional week in Kupang preparing the data for archiving. The first year of the program is now complete, and the data from the first year have been submitted for archiving to Paradisec (http://www.paradisec.org.au/), an archive located in Australia that specializes in the languages and cultures of the Pacific. The American/Indonesian teams are now reviewing the results of the first year of the program and are preparing to recruit participants for the second year.

The senior members of the project team are Peter Cole and Gabriella Hermon (PIs), University of Delaware, Yanti, Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia, Jakarta (local coordinator), Jermy Balukh, Institute of Foreign Languages Studies, Cakrawala Nusantara, Kupang (field coordinator) and [Asako Shiohara,](http://www.aa.tufs.ac.jp/~asako/profile-sjis.htm) Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa ([ILCAA](http://www.aa.tufs.ac.jp/en)),
Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

The student participants during the first year were the following.

Indonesian Student Participants:

Nona Seko (Mollo dialect of Uab Meto)

Yefri Bilaut (Mollo dialect of Uab Meto)

Marlince Lende (Wejewa)

Christian Doda (Wejewa)

Jacklin Patricia Bunga (Sabu)

Leonardo Lede Lay (Sabu)

Risti Ketti (Termanu)

Firda Lusi (Termanu)

American Student Participants:

Richard Bibbs, Ph.D. student in Linguistics, University of California, Santa Cruz

Marielle Butters, Ph. D. student in Linguistics, University of Colorado

Kate Mooney, Ph. D. student in Linguistics, NYU

Rachel Vogel, Ph. D. student in Linguistics, Cornell University

This project is being carried out with the support of the American Institute for Indonesian Studies [(AIFIS), which has](https://www.aifis.org/) provided very important practical assistance in matters ranging from information on visas to help dealing with many of the complications involved in running a research training project in Indonesia. Without the advice and assistance of the AIFIS staff this project would not have been possible.