

National Science Foundation
Workshop for
**Documenting Endangered
Languages**



October 14 - 17, 2007
The New England Center,
University of New Hampshire,
Durham, NH

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Funding Initiative

Documentation of Endangered Languages



Vera Szöllösi-Brenig

NSF Documenting Endangered
Languages Workshop

Durham, New Hampshire, 2007



1. The VolkswagenStiftung in Brief

2. The Funding Initiative „Documentation of Endangered Languages“

3. The Way Ahead

Vera Szöllösi-Brenig
VW Stiftung

NSF Documenting Endangered Languages Workshop,
Durham, New Hampshire, October 2007

1. The VolkswagenStiftung in Brief



**non-profit foundation
under private law
located in Hanover,
Germany**



The VolkswagenStiftung - History

November 1959

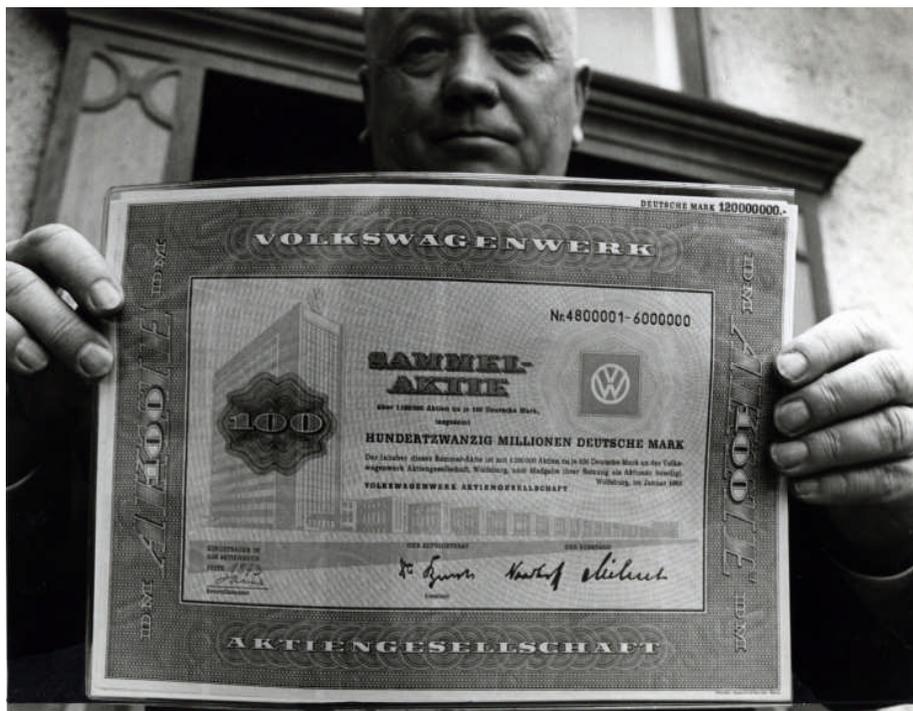
Contract settling the controversy over the ownership of the Volkswagen Company and establishing the Foundation

May 1961:

**Signing of the
Foundation's
statutes**



The VolkswagenStiftung - Capital



**Initial Capital stock
in 1962:**

562 million Euros

Capital today

2.4 billion Euros

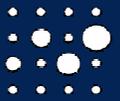
The VolkswagenStiftung - Mission



**Statutes § 2: Purpose of the Foundation:
„support of the humanities and social sciences as well as
science and technology in higher education and research”**

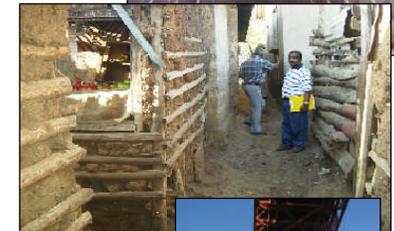
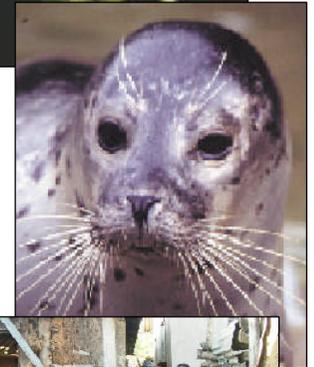
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VW Stiftung

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Funding Philosophy

- providing fresh impetus to higher education and research
- crossing disciplinary and national borders
- improving structures and opportunities for research and higher education, particularly focussing on young academics
- A portfolio of changing, self-developed funding initiatives



2. The Funding Initiative „Documentation of Endangered Languages“

The idea **Summer school “Language
Description and Fieldwork“,
Cologne 1993**

Program Start 1999

Number of Grants **56 - about 45 target languages**

Funding **15.3 Mio EUR**



The DOBES World



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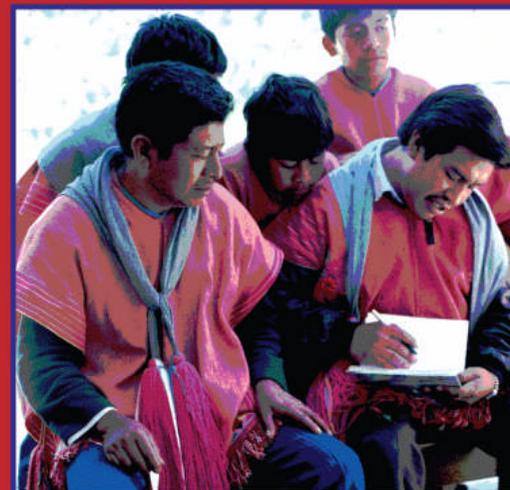
DobeS - Where we are: linguistics

About 30 working teams

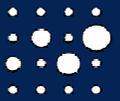
**A network for
documentary linguists
(dobeslist, LAN, meetings)**

**A cheap manual for students
and the Third World in
English and Spanish**

Bases de la
documentación
lingüística

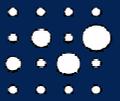


Editores de la versión inglesa: Jost Gippert,
Nikolaus P. Himmelmann, Ulrike Mosel
Editores de la versión castellana:
John B. Haviland, José Antonio Flores Farfán



Moreover

- **DobeS as a new „model“ of documentary linguistics**
- **Documentary linguistics now in the center of linguistics**
- **Documentary linguistics as a „model“ for empirically working humanities**
- **Documentary linguistics as a test case for participatory research/new ethical standard**

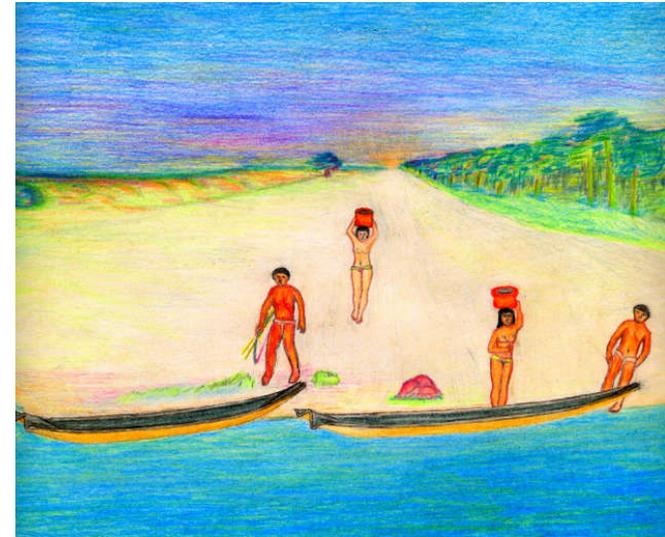


DobeS - Where we are: Technology

- **Development of tools like ELAN, LEXUS, ANNEX and IMDI (open access)**
- **Standardisations have been pushed forward**
- **Setup of a multimedia language archive**
- **Nijmegen as a model for future digital archives**
- **A Roadmap for eHumanities in Europe/Germany**

DobeS - Where we are: speech communities

- The production of didactic material
- The production of music CDs and DVDs of myths, stories, dances
- Training of indigenous research assistants



And sometimes...

The take-over of the speech community - The Kuikuru



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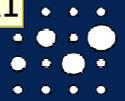
3. The Way Ahead: Midterm Evaluation

**First meeting of the evaluation
panel in November 06**

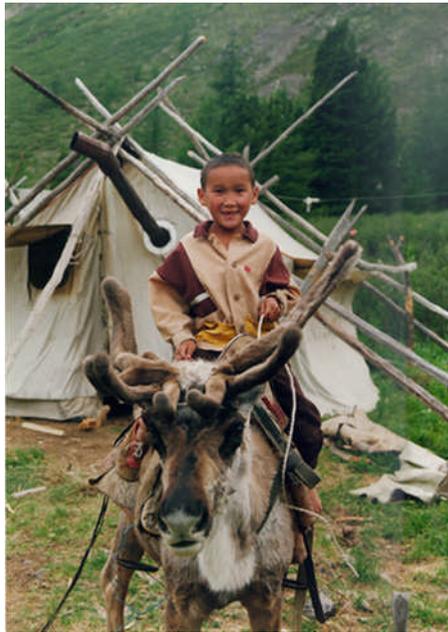
**Evaluation report to the
Foundation's Board of Trustees in
November 07**

**Modification of the program
In April 2008**





The Way Ahead – some ideas



Using language documentation resources

**Next generation of linguists:
PhD Thesis in the framework of
DobeS projects**

**Discussion on quantity and quality standards
for language documentation**

Slide 17

A1

Administrator, 10/05/2007

The Way Ahead – some ideas

**Interactions between documentary linguistics and other
subdisciplines of linguistics – other disciplines**

External access to the archive



A Foundation for Knowledge The Volkswagen Foundation

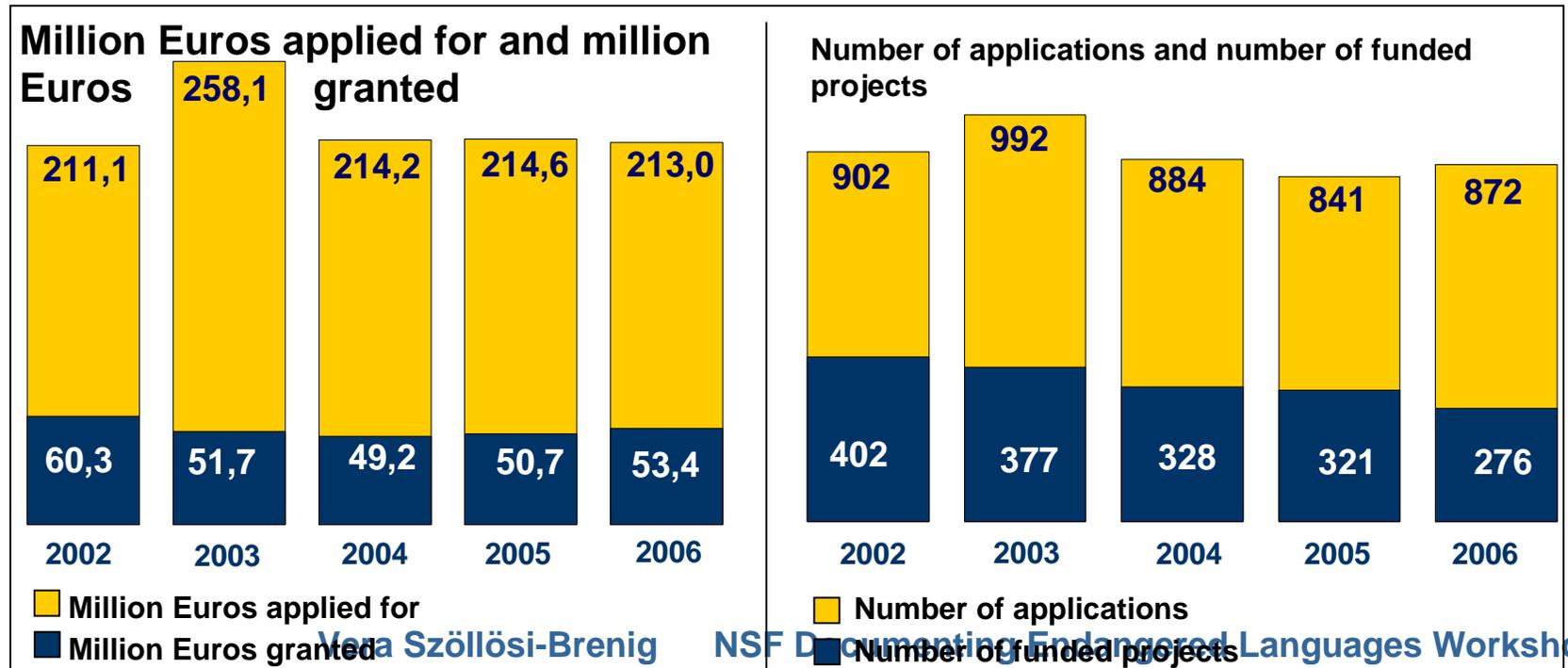


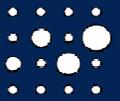
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The VolkswagenStiftung - Some Figures (2006)

44 years of funding	3 billion Euros
Projects funded	29.000





Funding Portfolio today

➤ Support of Persons and New Structures

➤ Thematic Impetus

➤ Social and Cultural Challenges

➤ International Focus

- Knowledge for Tomorrow. Cooperative Research Projects in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Between Europe and the Orient – A Focus on Research and Higher Education in/on Central Asia and the Caucasus
- Unity amidst Variety? Intellectual Foundations and Requirements for an Enlarged Europe
- Documentation of Endangered Languages