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
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”
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
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
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
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

Vera Szöllösi-Brenig
VW Stiftung

NSF Documenting Endangered Languages Workshop, Durham, New Hampshire, October 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
The VolkswagenStiftung - Some Figures (2006)

- 44 years of funding
- 3 billion Euros
- Projects funded: 29,000

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Million Euros applied for</th>
<th>Million Euros granted</th>
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- Million Euros applied and granted
- Number of applications and number of funded projects
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