THE WHEEL BY THE SIL PNG SURVEY TEAM

PRESENTED BY THE

#### WHAT IS THE WHEEL OF VITALITY?

A participatory research tool for rapidly assessing language vitality at the village level

Better than one-on-one interviews

Puts research into the hands of the community

## WHAT IS THE WHEEL OF VITALITY





#### LANGUAGE VITALITY

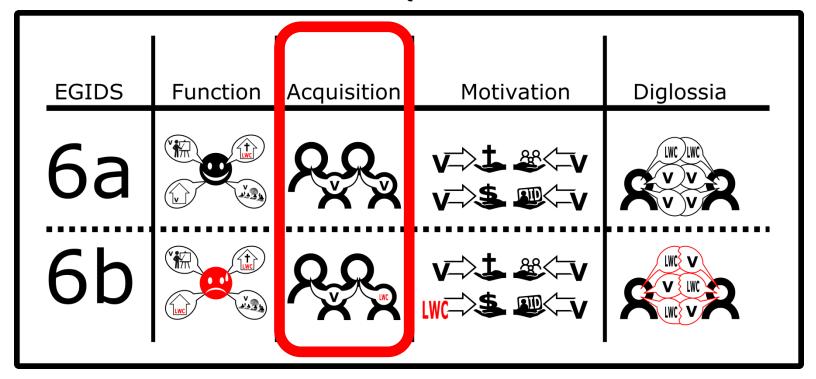
- Often the most important factor for NGOs planning language development
- Defined by the "EGIDS"
- Most languages in PNG are in the 6a, 6b, 7 range
  - EGIDS 6a (Vigorous/sustainable orality): Vernacular spoken by all generations
  - EGIDS 6b (Threatened): Some children no longer speak the vernacular (not sustainable)
  - EGIDS 7 (Shifting): Only the child-bearing generation and older continue to speak the vernacular (not sustainable)

# "EGIDS" WORKS TOGETHER WITH "FAMED" Simons' & Lewis' FAMED conditions

- -Function (stable domains of use)
- -Acquisition (intergenerational)
- -Motivation (spiritual, economic, social etc.)
- -Environment (gov. policies)
- -Diglossia (agreed upon domains)

#### "EGIDS" AND "FAMED" WORK TOGETHER:

#### WHEEL OF VITALITY FOCUSES ON ACQUISITION



#### WHEEL OF VITALITY WAS BORN IN NEW BRITAIN

"Vitality was seen to be central because if threatened in any way, resources invested in language development may not subsequently benefit the community" (Grummit, 2012).

- 1. Surveyors needed a faster way to assess vitality.
- 2. Surveyors wanted a more culturally appropriate method of data collection.

#### **HOW IT WORKS: ORIGINAL**



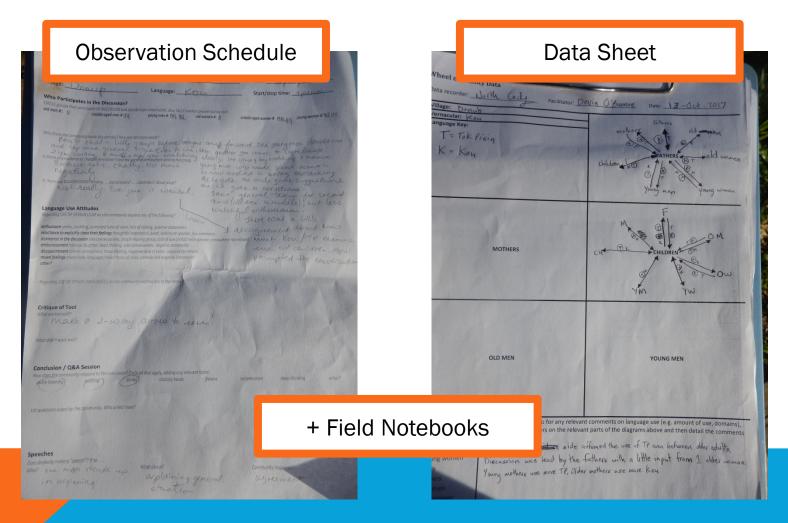
## **HOW IT WORKS: REVISED**



#### **HOW IT WORKS: IMPROVISATIONS**



#### **HOW IT WORKS: DETAILS**



#### OTHER FACTORS IN ASSESSING VITALITY

#### Landweer's Indicators of Ethnolinguistic Vitality (for PNG)

- -Relative position on remote-urban continuum
- -Domains of use
- -Frequency and type of code-switching
- -Population and group dynamics
- -Distribution of speakers within their own social network
- -Social outlook regarding and within the speech community
- -Language prestige
- -Access to stable/acceptable economic base

#### **HOW IT WORKS: TRIANGULATION**

#### It's important to also:

- conduct interviews,
- make detailed observations
- listen to the peoples' history
- ask about their hopes for the future

#### Remember:

- Vitality may not be the same in every village
- Habits of language use may differ between households of the same village
- Many factors influence language use choices and what is reported to researchers

# BENEFITS OF THE WHEEL OF VITALITY?



#### BENEFITS OF THE WHEEL OF VITALITY

- Raises a community's self-awareness of their own language use habits
- Sparks valuable discussion among community members about their language choices and motivations
- Provides an opportunity to encourage local communities that the survival of their language is in their hands
- Can rapidly assess language vitality for proper representation in the academic world
- Informs development strategies for NGOs and other agencies seeking to serve and preserve local language communities and their unique cultures

# **QUESTIONS?**

**Demonstration Available Later**