

# Kodrah KRISTANG KAMINYU DI KODRAMINTU

KINYANG NGUA | 2016-2017



The Kristang Language Revitalization Plan Phase One | 2016-2017

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Papia Kristang krensa di linggu Portugis kon linggu Malaio. Ozinidia menus mil jenti podih papiah Papia Kristang, na dos komunidadi di jenti Portugis-Eurasian: Melaka kon Singapura. Kristang nus sa linggu mai, ngua kinyang di nus sa kultura, istoria kon tradisang ki teng mutu balor.

Na Singapura linggu Kristang ta mureh prepesta — teng ung sentu jenti ki podih papiah eli namas. Nteh intindemintu di namba-namba di papianti. Nteh krengkrensa ta prendih Kristang, nteh mestri, nteh skola. Impodih olah eli na TV kon radio. Impodih ubih eli na rua-rua. Nteh na greza, nteh na festa. Ngua kinyang grandi di jenti Singapura mesu ngka sabeh ki nus teng isti linggu.

Nus mistih kodrah Kristang.

Klai? Agora nus falah ku bos.

Kristang is an endangered Portuguese-Malay contact language spoken by less than 1,000 people in Melaka and Singapore. It is the heritage language of the Portuguese-Eurasian community, and an intangible and priceless aspect of the community's cultural heritage, tradition and history.

In Singapore, the language is critically endangered, with less than 100 people thought to still speak the language. There are no official statistics on Kristang speakers. No children are known to be learning Kristang, and it is not taught in schools, seen on the media, or spoken in the streets. It is not used in religious services, and has no festivals. Most Singaporeans are barely aware Kristang even exists.

Kodrah Kristang hopes to change that.

How? Now we will tell you.

## KARNIFOLA

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## 1. BISTA KUMPRIDU | VISION

The long-term vision of the *Kodrah Kristang* initiative is to halt the ongoing rapid decline of the Kristang language in Singapore, and put Kristang back on the path towards renewed use and transmission. Toward this vision, we propose the following three objectives for the status of Kristang in Singapore by 2045:

- (1) By 2045, based on class size projections for the current ongoing *Kodrah Kristang* adult classes, there exists a sizeable pool of 50-100 new adult speakers who have learned Kristang as adults, speaking the language alongside the remaining 75-100 L1 elderly speakers. This is the basis for objective (2), as adult education and awareness must take place before children can start learning the language.
- (2) By 2045, again based on *Kodrah Kristang* class size projections and declared learner intentions of teaching Kristang to their children, the language is used by 5 to 10 new bilingual native (L1) speakers of Kristang, meaning that
  - a. some children have been raised in the language, and
  - b. the language is spoken on a daily basis in some households.

The revival of intergenerational transmission of Kristang in families is crucial to ensuring the language does not become extinct.

(3) By 2045, there is partial institutional support for Kristang from the Ministry of Education (MOE): Kristang is offered as an official subject in primary schools for children of Portuguese-Eurasian descent and has acquired a coherent and holistic curriculum and syllabus in much the same fashion as the other languages presently taught at primary school. This is a secondary long-term objective of the project, as although such institutional support for the language is critical, it requires a substantial amount of effort and long-term commitment from a larger number of Kristang speakers and educators, developed under objective (1).

2045 was selected as our target end-date for these three objectives following the example set by Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu, also known in Singapore as the five Non-Tamil Indian Languages (NTIL). Besides the four national languages English, Mandarin Chinese, Malay and Tamil, the NTIL can also be taken as subjects in Singapore's public education system from primary school — however, this only came about in 2007, following a prolonged period of continual negotiation with the government by the NTIL communities from the late 1980s. This constitutes a period of roughly 20 years; however, because the initiative and Kristang are starting from a weaker position and presently lack a significant amount of community support that the NTIL initiative possessed at its onset, we have suggested a target date 30 years into the future.<sup>1</sup>

To fulfil the *Kodrah Kristang* vision and these three objectives by 2045, the initiative has been divided into five key phases. However, this document is primarily concerned with events in Phase One, and will be updated in March 2017 in time for the start of Phase Two in May of that year.

But what is Kristang? Why is it falling asleep, and why do we need to reawaken it?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Unravel magazine's <u>interview with Dr Bhajan Singh and Dr Harjinder Kaur</u> has much more information about the NTIL and their path into the public education system, as well as the development of the NTIL common curriculum.

## 2. KRISTANG SA JENTI KON ISTORIA | KRISTANG'S PEOPLE AND HISTORY

Kristang is a contact language, meaning that it was formed when two other languages met and mixed together, creating a third language separate and distinct from the first two. Other contact languages Singapore's multilinguistic history, for example, are Singlish and Baba Malay. Kristang itself traces its ancestry back to two main parent languages in the 16th century CE: Continental Portuguese, the language of the Portuguese Empire, and Malay, the language of the Malay people and the Sultanate of Malacca, which at the time was a flourishing port city along the Western edge of the Malayan Peninsula. The meeting of these two languages, and the people of who spoke them, was to produce Kristang, and the people who were to speak it, the Portuguese-Eurasians.

In 1511, pursuing a new, lucrative spice route, a small group of Portuguese soldiers led by the erstwhile explorer Afonso de Albuquerque attacked and captured Malacca, seizing control of it from Sultan Mahmood Shah despite his arsenal of cannons and elephants. Settling in the city, the Portuguese colonisers intermarried with local Malay residents, giving rise to children of two very different worlds: the first Portuguese-Eurasians, and Kristang, the language they spoke.

From the start, the Portuguese-Eurasians were a tight-knit group, reflected in how the word Kristang can refer to the language, the people who speak it, and the religion they practice: *Kristang* comes from the Portuguese















word *cristão*, itself directly related to the English word *Christian*. The community survived two further waves of colonization: first the Dutch, who captured Malacca in 1648, and then the British, who traded the city for their own port of Bencoolen on the island of Sumatra in 1824. Together with Hokkien and other Sinitic languages, spoken by traders long part of Malacca's rich tapestry of cultures, both Dutch and English have also left lasting marks on Kristang vocabulary and grammar; however, the majority of the language continues to reflect its two main parent languages: Portuguese and Malay.

It was under the British in the late 19th century that the Singapore community of Portuguese-Eurasians first began to grow in size and stature, as many Eurasians moved to the new city. However, it was also under the British that the language started its slow, inexorable decline, as many Eurasians in both Malacca and Singapore sought to emulate the prestige a British, middle-class identity offered, and shifted away from Kristang to English. By the time Malaysia and Singapore gained their independence, a generation was already growing up without Kristang.

Today, in Malacca, the decline has been slowed, although it has not stopped completely. You can still hear snatches of the language whispering along the wide, shorefront roads of the *Padri sa Chang*: the Priest's Land, also known as the Portuguese Settlement. Sometimes, you can hear it at Eurasian festivals still celebrated throughout the year, like Intrudu and the Festa San Pedru. Kristang is still a living part of the Eurasian community there, though it edges ever close to slumber.

But in Singapore, the language has been forgotten.

Most young Singaporeans of Portuguese-Eurasian descent cannot speak Kristang. Throughout the country, there is almost no recognition of the language's existence, in any sphere of public life or by any public institution except the Eurasian Association. No census data has ever existed on the number of speakers in the country, before or after independence. There is no Kristang television, no Kristang radio, no Kristang newspaper. There is a single Kristang dictionary, produced in 2004 by Valerie Scully and Catherine Zuzarte, and a single well-known Kristang song, the Jingkli Nona. There are no Kristang books. The

dedicated and passionate Kristang dance troupe, perhaps one of the last visible symbols of Eurasian culture, shut down in late 2014.

Yet there are still Kristang speakers.

They are few and far between, but they are there. They may speak the language rarely now—maybe with close family members, or alone, in quiet prayer—but Kristang still lives in Singapore. In 2015, the first ever Kristang Language in Singapore Documentation Project found fourteen of them, and spoke to them.

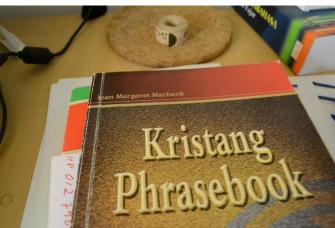
These fourteen Kristang speakers shared their stories and their lives, and their experiences of the language. They told of younger days, long ago, learning to walk in the language. Singing in it. Cursing with it. Playing with it with their friends, and growing in it. Growing past it. Forgetting it.

Words have been lost. Idioms and proverbs are only known in their English forms. Songs are a tangle of misremembered notes and lyrics. Many stories are simply gone. Longer sentences are glimpses of memory interspersed with flashes of regret. Even shame, at having let so much go.

The fourteen Kristang speakers were asked if there was anything they wanted to share with the community.

All of them asked that the language be spoken again.







#### **Image Credits:**

Fola 6, top right. Joan Margaret Marbeck in her home in Seremban in March 2015. Photo by Frances Loke Wei.

Fola 6, centre right. Bernard Mesenas during the first session of Kodrah Kristang in April 2016 at NUS. Photo by Sabrina Noronha.

Fola 6, bottom right. Sara Santa Maria in her home in Malacca in March 2015. Photo by Frances Loke Wei.

Fola 7, all images and Fola 8, top right. The Portuguese Settlement in Malacca in March 2015. Photos by Frances Loke Wei.

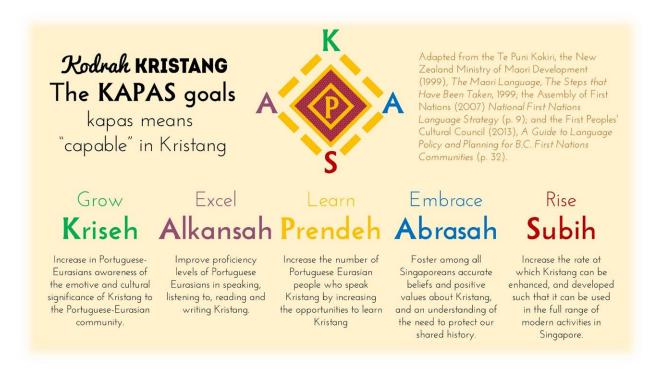
Fola 8, centre right. Joan's copy of the Kristang Phrasebook in her home in Seremban in March 2015. Photo by Frances Loke Wei.

Fola 8, bottom right. Photographs on Joan's dresser in her home in Seremban in March 2015. Photo by Frances Loke Wei.

### 3. BALOR-BALOR KAPAS | THE KAPAS GOALS

Kristang cannot return without a clear, focused path to that return.

The word *kapas* means 'capable' or 'wise' in Kristang, and it forms the foundation of the five strategic goals that guide the *Kodrah* initiative. The goals are adapted from learner profiles and needs, and existing language revitalization projects and initiatives that have been successful around the world.



The diamond, taken from the Two of Coins Chikee card design, encapsulates both the low value of the Two of Coins card in Chikee, and the pricelessness of a diamond: Kristang, once and still thought to be of little value to the community and to the nation, is actually an immensely valuable cultural treasure.

Descriptions of each of the KAPAS goals follow below. Each goal is very much a part of every one of the five phases in the revitalisation effort, and in each phase one goal also takes additional precedence as the most important and critical in that particular phase.

#### PRENDEH | TO LEARN AND TO TEACH

At the diamond's heart and the centre of the word *kapas* is the first goal, *prendeh*, which means both *to learn* and *to teach*: to increase the number of people who speak Kristang by increasing the opportunities to learn Kristang. The demand for *Kodrah Kristang* classes and the commitment to the classes by learners who do come for class demonstrate the need for more opportunities for learning Kristang, and no matter how one sees it, this is the most critical and foundational of the five KAPAS

goals, for without more learners of the language, all the other objectives are irrelevant --- there will be no more language to speak of within a generation. This is the main focus of Phase One of the initiative.

#### ABRASAH | TO EMBRACE

The second goal, *abrasah*, is almost as important as the first: without acceptance by all Singaporeans, Kristang can never contribute to the nation's multicultural fabric and harmony. Through the *abrasah* goal, or the embracing of Kristang, *Kodrah Kristang* hopes to foster among all Singaporeans positive beliefs and values about Kristang, and an understanding of the need to protect this beautiful and unique aspect of our shared history. As the diverse and multicultural classes of *Kodrah Kristang* learners have shown, this respect and appreciation is more than possible: it allows classroom, community and language to thrive. This is the main focus of Phase Two of the initiative.

#### ALKANSAH | TO EXCEL AND TO ACHIEVE

Kristang will not survive if the language is simply used for profanities and secret conversations, as is often currently observed: learners must be able to use the language in a variety of contexts and settings, and with a variety of speakers and text types. However, beyond this, they must also understand that as an endangered contact language, Kristang offers its own unique challenges and rewards as a focus of study. This requires a careful and structured development of Kristang teaching and syllabi with the inclusion of some linguistics study, and is therefore the main focus of Phase Three of the initiative, where new curricula based on a strong understanding of the unique features of contact languages become essential for the sustainability of *Kodrah Kristang*, and also sow the seeds for a new niche field of study in Singapore: contact languages and linguistics.

#### KRISEH | TO GROW AND INCREASE

To survive and become a healthy language again, Kristang must grow; and not only in the number of people who speak it and in the number of places it can be spoken in, but in the hearts and minds of the Portuguese-Eurasian community who speak it. The fourth goal, *kriseh*, is the main focus of the longest phase in the initiative, Phase Four, where each learner develops enough of an appreciation for the language to welcome it into hir home, family and daily use, and values its place in hir identity and understanding of self. Through the language, too, Portuguese-Eurasians will feel every bit as valued as their countrypeople who 'have their own languages'. As children grow up using the language, so too will the impetus for the entry of Kristang into the formal education system grow.

#### SUBIH | TO RISE

Subih means 'to rise'. For Kristang to reawaken, it must be both useful and relevant in the twenty-first century contexts that it live and thrive in. Nonetheless, much of the language remains either lost as a result of its gradual decline over the twentieth century, or inaccessible, tied to the past and not prepared for the future. The Kristang-speaking community must breathe new life into the language by filling its many vocabulary gaps, and allowing it to flourish in literature, art and music, so that it is ready to take up its place in society alongside Singapore's other languages. *Subih*, then, is also the focus of the final phase of the initiative, as Kristang enters the education system and becomes a healthy language, and gains new domains of use in art, story and song.

## BALOR-BALOR JUNTADU: FIGURA DI PAPIANTI KRISTANG | GOALS TOGETHER: A PORTRAIT OF THE FLUENT KRISTANG SPEAKER

Based on learner profiles and the overall goals of the initiative, the KAPAS goals together aim to develop Kristang speakers who are

- **fluent and articulate speakers of Kristang** who are able to express complex opinions and thoughts in clear and coherent Kristang, whether in writing or in speech, and who can work with the language in complex but meaningful ways in new songs, stories and other forms of linguistic art and beauty.
- **community-oriented speakers of Kristang** who embrace Kristang's unique place in the unique multicultural environment of Singapore and what the other communities of Singapore have to offer Kristang, who welcome new learners and speakers of Kristang with open arms regardless of background, and who step up to teach the language to new generations.
- **well-informed speakers of Kristang** who appreciate its distinctive types of complexity as a contact language, especially the variation inherent in its orthography, pronunciation and syntax, as well as the features and urgent needs it shares with many other endangered languages around the region and the world.
- reflective speakers of Kristang who recognise Kristang's value as an intangible treasure of
  the Portuguese-Eurasian community and a major part of their ancestors' lives, and continually
  negotiate and revise their understanding of the language and its place in their own identities,
  without creating new boundaries that cause division within Singapore's multicultural society.
- **adaptable and creative speakers of Kristang** who respect and take reference from the language's five-hundred year old history in developing its new place and relevance in modern society in a way that simultaneously respects the past and addresses the ever-changing needs of the present and of the future.

## 4. KAMINYU DI TEMPU | PROJECT TIMELINE

Revitalising Kristang will take at least thirty years and will involve engaging new Kristang speakers at all levels: child, youth and adult. The overall curriculum plan for the initiative is summarised according to the five revitalisation phases below.

#### PHASE

			PHASE		
	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE
	2016-2017	2017-2019	2019-2021	2021-2036	2036 onwards
	KODRAH KRISTANG	KODRAH KRISTANG	KODRAH KRISTANG	KODRAH KRISTANG	KODRAH KRISTANG
	Komesah	Komesah,	Komesah,	All stages	All stages
	Stage 1 of adult	Kompanyah,	Kompanyah,		
	classes for L2, HL	Këriah	Këriah, Koruah	KONTAH KRISTANG	KONTAH KRISTANG
ADULT	and RL learners	Stages 1, 2 and 3 of	Stage 1-4 of adult		
LEARNER		adult classes for L2,	classes for L2, HL	KRISEH KRISTANG	KRISEH KRISTANG
LEAKINEK	KONTAH KRISTANG	HL and RL learners	and RL learners		
	Audio course				
		KONTAH KRISTANG	KONTAH KRISTANG		
	KRISEH KRISTANG				
	Vocabulary course	KRISEH KRISTANG	KRISEH KRISTANG		
		ADULT	KARTAH KRISTANG	KARTAH KRISTANG	KARTAH KRISTANG
		TEACHER	Teacher training		Mainstream NIE
		TEACHER	course		
				KENTAH KRISTANG	KENTAH KRISTANG
			PRIMARY	Primary school	Mainstream MOE
				classes for MT	
				learners	
				KOLCHAH KRISTANG	KOLCHAH KRISTANG
			SECONDARY	Secondary school	Mainstream MOE
				classes for MT	
				learners	
				KEMAH KRISTANG	KEMAH KRISTANG
				Junior college	Mainstream MOE
				classes for MT	
				learners	H2 CONTACT
			TERTIARY		LANGUAGES AND
					LINGUISTICS (COLL)
					Junior college
					subject for
					academic study of
					contact languages  KADAKIKI KRISTANG
				KINDERGARTEN	Preschool classes
				KIINDEKGAKTEN	
					for MT learners

The Phase One *Karnilisang*, or Curriculum Plan, further describes the *Kodrah Kristang* adult classes commencing under Phase One, which are the core of the revitalisation effort. The *Karnilisang* can be found on the Kodrah Kristang Archive. The next few pages provide more detail about each of the revitalisation phases.

Date	Event
KINYANG	KAPOTI / PHASE ZERO, 03/2015 to 03/2016
	stang begins after initiative founder Kevin Martens Wong, working on an article
	l: The Accessible Linguistics Magazine, discovers Kristang, one of his heritage
	, and becomes determined to revitalise it. He learns the language himself and
	nall group class, <i>Korsang di Kristang</i> , that will form the genesis of the <i>Kodrah</i>
•	
Kristarig re	vitalisation effort, which begins public outreach in March 2016.
06/03/2015	The <i>Unravel</i> field expedition to Melaka, Seremban and Kuala Lumpur, and first meetings with Joan Margaret Marbeck, Sara Santa Maria and Stefanie Pillai.
28/03/2015	Pilot Kristang class Korsang di Kristang ('Heart of Kristang') commences.
02/06/2015	Unravel feature on Kristang, "Kristang: A Shallow Sea", published.
KINYANG	NGUA / PHASE ONE, 03/2016 to 05/2017   PRENDEH
Kodrah Kris	stang adult classes for beginners commence and run for 80 contact hours,
leading up	to the first Kristang Language Festival and the first group of learners
• .	g the Komesah stage of <i>Kodrah Kristang</i> in May 2017. Also launched are <i>Kontah</i>
•	nd <i>Kriseh Kristang</i> , which seek to reach learners in the diaspora community
_	Singapore. Momentum and public and community interest are generated and
sustained.	Singapore, Morneritarii ana public ana community interest are generated ana
19/03/2016	First round of public <i>Kodrah Kristang</i> classes commence.
05/06/2016	Kontah Kristang audio course launched.
06/07/2016	Kriseh Kristang vocabulary course launched.
17/06/2016	
to	Kodrah Kristang Kaminyu di Kodramintu drafted in conjunction with specialists at the 2016
29/06/2016	Institute on Collaborative Language Research (CoLang) at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.
30/06/2016	Kodrah Kristang Kaminyu di Kodramintu sent to key community members, linguists and
	specialists for vetting and feedback.
14/07/2016	Kodrah Kristang Kaminyu di Kodramintu published.
30/07/2016	Second round of Kodrah Kristang classes commence.
07/01/2017	Third round of <i>Kodrah Kristang</i> classes commence.
18/03/2017	Fourth round of <i>Kodrah Kristang</i> classes commence.
12/05/2017	
to	First Kristang Language Festival.
19/05/2017	March 2016 learners complete Vedrah Writtens stage 1 Venezach (Deginner) and reach 20
	March 2016 learners complete <i>Kodrah Kristang</i> stage 1 Komesah (Beginner) and reach 80 contact hours in Kristang, equivalent to the Common European Framework of Reference for
20/05/2017	Languages (CEFR) A1, and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)
	Novice Mid.
KINYANG	DOS / PHASE TWO, 05/2017 to 11/2019   ABRASAH
	ntinue and progress through the Kompanyah stage to the Këriah stage in May
∠019, wne	n the first group of learners completes 320 contact hours in Kristang. Also

launched are the Kodrah Kristang textbook, and the Eurasian Association's Centennial

Celebrations and Kristang Tea Sessions, which generate further forward momentum and public interest, and for the first time strongly demonstrate Kristang's 'legitimacy' and		
suitability for the education system.		
03/2018	March 2016 learners complete <i>Kodrah Kristang</i> stage 2 Kompanyah (Intermediate) and reach 160 contact hours in Kristang, equivalent to CEFR A2 and ACTFL Novice High.	
04/2018	04/2018 Second Kristang Language Festival.	
05/2018	5/2018 First textbook in <i>Kodrah Kristang</i> textbook series for Komesah stage launched.	
05/2019	EA Stage Production and EA Centennial Celebrations. Third Kristang Language Festival.	
	EA Kristang Tea Sessions start around this time.	
11/2019	March 2016 learners complete <i>Kodrah Kristang</i> stage 3 Këriah (Experienced) and reach 320 contact hours in Kristang, equivalent to CEFR B1 and ACTFL Intermediate Mid.	

#### KINYANG TRES / PHASE THREE, 11/2019 to 09/2021 | ALKANSAH

As the first group of learners completes the Koruah stage of classes, finishing 480 hours of instruction in Kristang and becoming ready to teach the language, the *Kara di Kristang* and *Kartah Kristang* teacher training courses begin. The *Kodrah Kristang* initiative now becomes sustainable, and with enough momentum and interest, the first new Kristang-speaking children in a generation are raised.

03/2021	Teacher training syllabus and assessment plan (TTSA) published.		
04/2021	Pilot Kara di Kristang teacher training course commences.		
	March 2016 learners complete <i>Kodrah Kristang</i> stage 4 Koruah (Advanced) and reach 480		
06/2021	contact hours in Kristang, equivalent to CEFR B2 and ACTFL Intermediate High.		
	First 3-month Kartah Kristang teacher training course commences.		
09/2021	First group of Kartah-teachers start Kodrah Kristang classes.		
	Target for first family documented using Kristang at home with young children.		

#### KINYANG KWARTU / PHASE FOUR, 2021-2036 | KRISEH

Over the next fifteen years, the teaching of Kristang to adults is refined, while syllabi are developed for the teaching of Kristang in schools. After piloting these syllabi and several years of documented and consistent success, the initiative opens discussions with MOE for the introduction of Kristang into mainstream education, following the example of the Non-Tamil Indian Languages Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu in 1994, and Malayalam in 2016.

2026	Kentah Kristang co-curricular / private Kristang course for primary school students
	commences.
2032	Kolchah Kristang co-curricular / private Kristang course for secondary school students
	commences.
2036	Draft curriculum for Kristang in schools based on 1994 NTIL common curriculum benchmarks
	completed; discussions open with MOE.
	Kemah Kristang co-curricular / private Kristang course for junior college students commences.

#### KINYANG SINGKU / PHASE FIVE, 2040-2045 | SUBIH

The initiative syllabi are refined to match the MOE common curriculum, while a new junior college subject, H2 Contact Languages and Linguistics, is suggested to ensure that future generations are able to understand, work with and preserve Singapore's unique

contact languages, such as Kristang, Singlish and Baba Malay. Kristang itself enters primary school education in 2042, and kindergarten in 2045, with secondary and tertiary		
levels to come in the years that follow.		
	MOE begins training first set of Kristang teachers at NIE.	
2040	Proposal for core of new junior college subject Contact Languages and Linguistics (CoLL) completed; discussions open with MOE.	
2041	Draft syllabus for 01 / Singlish, 02 / Baba Malay and 03 / Kristang specialization options for H2 CoLL completed; discussions open with MOE.	
2042	Kristang enters mainstream education system at primary school level as Kentah Kristang.	
	Kristang enters mainstream education system at kindergarten level as Kadakiki Kristang.	
2045	H2 CoLL enters mainstream education system at junior college level with options for specialization in 01 / Singlish, 02 / Baba Malay and 03 / Kristang.	

The next chapter highlights the successes of the initiative thus far, three months into Phase One of revitalisation.

## 5. KAMINYU ANDADU | PROGRESS REPORT

This chapter describes the events related to the initiative in Phase Zero and Phase One thus far, and highlights the successes of the project, as well as areas for improvement.

#### SKRIBU-SKRIBU DI UNRAVEL | THE UNRAVEL ARTICLES

The genesis of the initiative were two *Unravel: The Accessible Linguistics Magazine* articles on Kristang written by initiative founder Kevin Martens Wong. The first of these was "Kristang: A Shallow Sea", published in the special feature on endangered languages in Issue 3 on June 2, 2015, and focused on Kristang's history and current status in Malacca; the second was "Kristang, lost language of the Eurasians", published in the special feature on the languages of Singapore in issue 4 on September 1, 2015, and focused on Kristang's in Singapore.





The cover art for "Kristang: A Shallow Sea" (left) and "Kristang, lost language of the Eurasians.

Art by Michael Lee for Unravel Issues 3 and 4.

Despite being of Portuguese-Eurasian descent, Kevin previously had not known of Kristang's existence before embarking on research for the endangered languages feature in *Unravel*. With published information on Kristang's current status, research for the articles brought the core *Unravel* team, consisting of Kevin, Anirudh Krishnan, Frances Loke Wei and Fuad Johari, to Seremban, Malacca and Kuala Lumpur, where they met with prolific Kristang writer Joan Margaret Marbeck, Kristang teacher Sara Santa Maria, and Kristang researcher Dr Stefanie Pillai. Returning to Singapore, Kevin also met with Jacqueline Peeris from the Heritage department of the Eurasian Association.







Unravel editors with Joan Margaret Marbeck in Seremban (left), Sara Santa Maria and her husband in Malacca (center), and Stefanie Pillai (right) in Kuala Lumpur in March 2015. Photos by Frances Loke Wei.

These meetings were the impetus for the *Kodrah Kristang* initiative, especially the latter conversation between Kevin and Jacqueline, where Kristang classes that had been briefly held in 2004 in conjunction with the release of the *Eurasian Heritage Dictionary* were discussed. It was also during these meetings that Kevin resolved to document the language as it was still spoken in Singapore, learn it himself, and start teaching it to others.

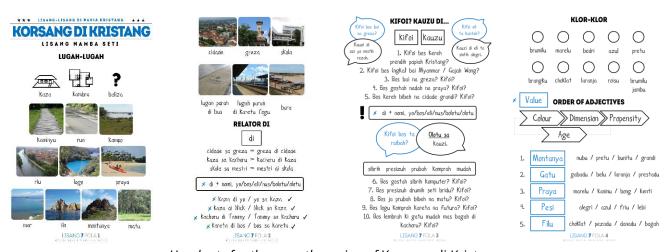
#### KORSANG DI KRISTANG | THE KORSANG DI KRISTANG PILOT COURSE

In March 2015, Kevin launched the pilot adult language beginner's class for Kristang, known as *Korsang di Kristang* ('Heart of Kristang'), with six learners, three of whom were the other *Unravel* editors who had gone up to Malaysia.



The six Korsang di Kristang learners: Anirudh Krishnan, Fuad Johari, Frances Loke Wei, Nicholas Euthymius Loo, Najib Indra and Tammy Lim. Photos by Faiz Rosli and Kevin Martens Wong.

In consultation with Joan Marbeck via email, Kevin developed his own materials for *Korsang*, which ran for eight sessions in a room in his family apartment in Singapore. All sessions were free-of-charge.



Handouts for the seventh session of Korsang di Kristang

Kevin spent the next six months refining the material from the course based on feedback from participants, as well as new information he was gaining from his ongoing documentation project, the *Peskisa di Papia Kristang na Singapura*.

#### PESKISA DI PAPIA KRISTANG NA SINGAPURA | THE KRISTANG LANGUAGE IN SINGAPORE DOCUMENTATION PROJECT

With little known about Kristang's status in Singapore, Kevin embarked on the *Peskisa di Papia Kristang na Singapura* ('The Kristang Language in Singapore Documentation Project') in May 2015 to begin documenting the language as it was still spoken in the country. Since then, the *Peskisa* has been able to speak to fourteen Kristang speakers still living in Singapore.

Results from interviews with these speakers suggest that there are an estimated 100 speakers of Kristang or less left in Singapore, most of whom are over 50 years of age and who haven't spoken the language in years. There is little, if any, transmission of the language to children, other than some formulaic phrases and idiomatic expressions, and the language has few, if any domains of use. Due to lack of use of the language, many speakers express concern at large vocabulary gaps, and there is widespread variation in pronunciation and sentence structure, even with simple sentences and function words. Additionally, although not a target of the study, the lack of awareness regarding the language's existence, especially among the youth was noted by almost every speaker. This information is crucial to the revitalisation effort and acquisition of further data refining these still preliminary understandings continues to be a top priority for the *Peskisa*.

Additional information from these interviews regarding the current structure and vocabulary of Kristang continues to feed the current development of the *Kodrah Kristang* adult classes, particularly in the curriculum focus on developing learners capable of working with systematic variation throughout the language. The *Peskisa* has also led to a number of publications and presentations produced by Kevin, including his undergraduate thesis on formal aspects of Kristang syntax, and further work on Kristang passives that will be presented at the School of Oriental and African Studies in December 2016.

Unfortunately, most collaborators on the *Peskisa di Papia Kristang na Singapura* were not interested in teaching the language to newcomers. Most deemed themselves incapable of teaching. Some explicitly noted their disinterest. One or two asked why anyone would want to learn Kristang at all.

Faced with this, Kevin decided to embark on teaching the language himself, together with the one *Peskisa* speaker who had displayed a keen and passionate interest in passing the language on to the next generation: seventy-eight year old Bernard Mesenas, who met Kevin in February 2016 with his brother Clement, and who was immensely energized by the idea of new classes for Kristang.



Kevin and Bernard after class in April 2016. Photo by Frances Loke Wei.

#### LISANG-LISANG DI KODRAH KRISTANG | THE KODRAH KRISTANG CLASSES

Kodrah Kristang, the first iteration of Kristang classes open to the public in 12 years, began sessions in March 2016. Sessions were free-of-charge and publicity was organized through the Singapore Eurasian Association and the College of Alice and Peter Tan at the National University of Singapore, which hosted the sessions; Kevin also ensured Kristang maintained a vigorous online social media presence in the weeks leading up to the start of class. The class was far more successful than predicted, attracting fourteen learners from an array of backgrounds, including four learners from Korsang di Kristang, and two heritage language speakers: Kevin's grandparents. It was featured on Singapore media publications The New Eurasian, Six-Six.com and The Independent, and formed the focus of two presentations at the College of Alice and Peter Tan Minorities & Languages Reading Group, and the 2016 Institute on Collaborative Language Research at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Planning for the second round of classes started almost immediately after this first round ended in May, and as of July 13, 2016, 28 new learners have signed up for Kodrah Kristang 1A, while 11 learners from the March group are continuing on to Kodrah Kristang 1B. A full Curriculum Plan for up to 480 hours of classes was published on the Kodrah Kristang website in July 2016, and the EA now officially supports the courses. Accreditation will be offered from the Iuly 2016 courses.

Pictures below and right of class in April 2016 at CAPT. Pictures below by Wong Soon Fen; group picture to the right by Sabrina Noronha.

















#### LISANG PAPIADU DI KONTAH KRISTANG | THE KONTAH KRISTANG AUDIO COURSE

In the course of the March iteration of *Kodrah Kristang*, Kevin was contacted by a number of Portuguese-Eurasians in the diaspora community commending the initiative for restarting classes, but lamenting that they could not attend; simultaneously, older *Peskisa* collaborators mentioned their desire to attend classes but their inability to do so due to age and immobility. Inspired by these, Kevin initiated an online *Kontah Kristang* audio course targeting these two groups of speakers, free-of-charge and freely available on the

Soundcloud music sharing website. Each *Kontah Kristang* ('Speak, Kristang' or 'Talk about Kristang') lesson is scripted by Kevin, and performed by Anirudh Krishnan, Frances Loke Wei, Fuad Johari and Tammy Lim, four of the more advanced *Kodrah Kristang* learners. The first unit has accumulated nearly 500 plays since it was published on June 5, 2016, while subsequent units have consistently averaged 20-30 plays, likely indicating 20-30 committed learners. New units are released fortnightly, although these are also contingent on team schedules and availability to record.

## LISANG PALABRA DI KRISEH KRISTANG | THE KRISEH KRISTANG VOCABULARY COURSE

Complementing the *Kontah Kristang* audio course is the *Kriseh Kristang* ('Grow, Kristang') vocabulary course, which was first published on July 7, 2016 on the Memrise website. The inspiration for *Kriseh Kristang* came from *Kodrah Kristang* learner Melissa De Silva in June 2016, who in an email to Kevin highlighted the appeal of app-based learning:



I've just started trying Duolingo for French and I'm enjoying the points-scoring game set up and the goal of getting more points so I can buy clothes for my owl, haha. And when I first tried it I was like, arrrgh, it's so easy to learn French this way, I wish we had Duolingo for Kristang too! You are so good at coming up with games, maybe you might like to try something in that vein?

While inquiries to Duolingo about starting Kristang on Duolingo have thus far met with no reply, *Kriseh Kristang* is built on the free online and mobile vocabulary language learning application Memrise, and makes use of Memrise's spaced repetition algorithm, gamified design and leaderboards to engage learners and help them learn vocabulary in a fun, modern and competitive way. Each unit of *Kriseh Kristang* complements six units of *Kontah Kristang*, revising all the vocabulary learnt in the latter while also adding new items of its own, although both courses can be used independently of each other. Providing the voices for *Kriseh Kristang* are Kevin Michael Sim, a Portuguese-Eurasian heritage speaker, and Linda Longue, a native speaker and Kevin's mother-in-law. The open source nature of Memrise, where almost all its courses are community initiated and produced, and the success of *Kriseh Kristang* has already prompted the start of a similar project for the Eskimo-Aleut language Unangam Tunuu known as *Unangam Qilinĝingin*. (Note for *Kriseh Kristang* iOS / iPhone users: you need to first login on the desktop version of Memrise and add the course to your account (by playing a bit of it) before it

appears on your phone — otherwise it will not show up on your phone, and there is no search function on the iOS version of Memrise. Android users do not have this problem.)



#### NOBAS NOBU KON KANTAH KRISTANG | KANTAH KRISTANG AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Kevin early on realized the importance of creating a presence for Kristang online to engage younger learners in the revitalisation effort. Since International Mother Tongue Day on February 21, 2016, Kevin has produced one new video a month under the *Kantah Kristang* umbrella, where he translates a song from popular culture into Kristang and performs it with piano accompaniment. So far, he has performed renditions of Coldplay's "Yellow", which was the

debut video for *Kantah Kristang* on International Mother Tongue Day and as of July 13, 2016 has garnered 6,147 views on Facebook; Shakira's "Try Everything" in March, from the movie *Zootopia*; Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" in April; Aivi and Surasshu's "Love Like You" in May, from the television show *Steven Universe*; and the Sam Willows' "Take Heart" in June. Planned upcoming songs include Billy Joel's "For the Longest Time" in July, and Dick Lee and Kit Chan's "Home" in August, which will tie in with Singapore's 51st National Day celebrations on August 9. In collaboration with fellow linguists and language workers at CoLang 2016, Kevin also developed *Amigos e Kambradu-Kambradu*, a short film featuring him and Kira Dell, a Brazilian Portuguese speaker, talking about the differences between Kristang and Brazilian Portuguese — in Kristang and Brazilian Portuguese.

#### SIBRISU PROSIMU | FUTURE PHASE ONE PROJECTS

The initiative continues to grow by leaps and bounds, as more people become interested in and then committed to helping revitalize the language. The following projects are planned between now and the start of *Kodrah Kristang* Phase Two in May 2017.

- Phase One is planned to conclude with the Festa Sumana Kristang na Singapura, or the 1st Singapore Kristang Language Festival, which will be held in late April or early May 2017.
   Kevin, Melissa De Silva, Anirudh Krishnan, Frances Loke Wei and Fuad Johari are the steering committee for the Festa.
- Filling an important gap in the revitalisation initiative will be Melissa De Silva's **Bruang Barnaby** ('Barnaby the Bear') series of books for young children. The Bruang Barnaby series will be structured in a systematic function to encourage learning of the language, while remaining fun, vivid and appealing to very young learners.
- Acknowledging calls for more online reference resources for Kristang, Kevin and Luis Morgado
  da Costa, a native Continental Portuguese-speaking *Kodrah* learner, have begun plans for an
  as-of-yet unnamed **online Wordnet dictionary for Kristang**. The dictionary is planned to be
  open access and freely updatable by the community.
- In conjunction with the Singapore Eurasian Association, Kevin, Anirudh Krishnan and Fuad Johari have begun developing **a full textbook for Kristang learners** based on *Kodrah Kristang* material. The textbook is targeted for publication in May 2018.
- Other projects that may arise as initiative participants come forward with new ideas.

## 6. KAMINYU KRISTANG: JUDAH KU NUS | THE ROAD AHEAD: HOW YOU CAN HELP

Kristang remains in danger of extinction, but there is hope. In just one year, many people, Eurasian and non-Eurasian alike, have already come forward to walk with the language as it begins to awaken again. There is talk about Kristang in university classrooms and online. Some learners say that speaking the language has given them back a part of themselves they never knew they had. Some want to give it new stories and songs. Some want to raise their children in it. All want to hear it spoken again.

Here is what you can do if you want to help Kristang reawaken in Singapore.

## JENTI KRISTANG PODIH PAPIAH KRISTANG | PORTUGUESE-EURASIANS WHO CAN SPEAK KRISTANG

If you can speak Kristang, and you're of Portuguese-Eurasian descent, married into a Portuguese-Eurasian family, were adopted into a Portuguese-Eurasian family, or are dating someone of Portuguese-Eurasian descent,

- volunteer to teach the language. Join the Kodrah Kristang classes as a teacher, or start your own classes, or develop your own learning materials. The possibilities are endless. If you need resources, The Canadian First Peoples' Cultural Council and their Guide to Language Policy and Planning for B.C. First Nations Communities are an excellent place to begin learning about how you can teach to support the language and the community.
- if you have a child or children, **teach Kristang to your child or children**, and guide them toward viewing the language in a positive and meaningful way. Decide with the family that you will only speak Kristang on certain days, or at meals, or some other agreed upon routine time. Tell your children stories in Kristang, especially about what life was like when you were growing up. Encourage them to use the language whenever they can. Play Eurasian games with This is the best way to preserve the language in the long-term. If you need resources, Kevin can loan you Leanne Hinton's beautiful and moving edited volume Bringing Our Languages Home: Language Revitalization for Families.
- if you have a grandchild or grandchildren, teach Kristang to your grandchild or grandchildren, using the same ideas and concepts as above.
- **create new things in Kristang**. Novels, short stories, poems, plays, songs, videos, blogs, podcasts, vodcasts, Vines, Snaps, memes, 9gag material, Tweets, Instagram posts, status updates, nursery rhymes, T-Shirts, cups and mugs, souvenirs. All of these will give the language strength and substance it does not currently have. *If you need resources*, <u>Audacity</u> is free for song and podcast creation, <u>GIMP</u> and <u>GIMPShop</u> for images, and <u>Memrise</u> for vocabulary courses. Most smartphones can record audio and video content. Kevin also uses Microsoft PowerPoint for design, and Windows Live MovieMaker for videos.
- talk about the language everywhere and all the time. Kristang needs exposure. Tell your non-Eurasian family members. Tell your friends and co-workers and maids and acquaintances and strangers you meet on the train. If you don't like face-to-face interaction, social media networks like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and Tumblr are all free for use. Papiahpapiah.

- if you own or run a business or organisation, you can **support the initiative** by considering some form of collaboration. Write to <a href="mailto:kodrahkristang@gmail.com">kodrahkristang@gmail.com</a>.
- if you live in Singapore, write to or arrange to meet a representative of the Eurasian Association in a polite, cooperative and professional manner asking about what can be done for Kristang. Contact details for the Eurasian Association can be found here.
- if you live in Singapore, write to or arrange to meet your Member of Parliament (MP), the Minister representing the Eurasians in Parliament and the Minister for Education (Schools) in a polite, cooperative and professional manner asking about what can be done for Kristang. The current Minister representing the Eurasians in Parliament is the very approachable and down-to-earth Mr S Iswaran, whose profile is <a href="here">here</a>; the Acting Minister for Education (Schools) is Mr Ng Chee Meng, whose profile is <a href="here">here</a>. You can find out who your current MP is <a href="here">here</a>, as well as when their Meet-the-People Sessions are.

## JENTI KEREH PRENDIH KRISTANG | PEOPLE WHO WANT TO LEARN KRISTANG

If you want to learn Kristang, regardless of your ethnicity or family background, you can

- **come for class**. Join the <u>Kodrah Kristang classes</u> in Singapore, or Sara Santa Maria's classes in Malacca, or classes being offered wherever you are. Commit to learning the language with a diverse group of people passionate about keeping Kristang alive, and have fun doing so. If you'd like to get in touch with Sara, let Kevin know through <u>kodrahkristang@gmail.com</u>.
- while you're at it, **get a certificate for coming to class**. If you're joining *Kodrah Kristang*, certificates are now presented to all learners who choose to complete an optional summative assessment at the end of each module, signed by the *Kodrah Kristang* Kabesa and the President of the Eurasian Association. More information on this and the *Kodrah Kristang* initiative is available in the *Kodrah Kristang Karnilisang* document on the website.
- convince all your friends and family to come for class. This is a given!
- if you can't make it for class or no classes are offered around you, **download the** *Kontah Kristang audio course* and **the** *Kriseh Kristang vocabulary course* they were made specifically for you if you're in this situation. Load these onto your smartphone, listen to the audio on the way to work, and work on the vocabulary when you're taking a break in the office or in school or use them on the desktop. (Note for *Kriseh Kristang* iOS / iPhone users: you need to first login on the desktop version of Memrise and add the course to your account (by playing a bit of it) before it appears on your phone otherwise it will not show up on your phone, and there is no search function on the iOS version of Memrise. Android users do not have this problem.)
- send Kontah Kristang and Kriseh Kristang to all your friends and family.
- talk about the language everywhere and all the time. Kristang needs exposure. Tell your non-Eurasian family members. Tell your friends and co-workers and maids and acquaintances and strangers you meet on the train. If you don't like face-to-face interaction, social media networks like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and Tumblr are all free for use. Papiahpapiah.
- if you own or run a business or organisation, you can **support the initiative** by considering some form of collaboration. Write to <a href="mailto:kodrahkristang@gmail.com">kodrahkristang@gmail.com</a>.
- if you live in Singapore, write to or arrange to meet a representative of the Eurasian Association in a polite, cooperative and professional manner asking about what can be done for Kristang. Contact details for the Eurasian Association can be found <a href="https://example.com/here">here</a>.

• if you live in Singapore, write to or arrange to meet your Member of Parliament (MP), the Minister representing the Eurasians in Parliament and the Minister for Education (Schools) in a polite, cooperative and professional manner asking about what can be done for Kristang. The current Minister representing the Eurasians in Parliament is the very approachable and down-to-earth Mr S Iswaran, whose profile is <a href="here">here</a>; the Acting Minister for Education (Schools) is Mr Ng Chee Meng, whose profile is <a href="here">here</a>. You can find out who your current MP is <a href="here">here</a>, as well as when their Meet-the-People Sessions are.

# JENTI NGGEREH PRENDIH KRISTANG MAS KEREH JUDAH | PEOPLE WHO DON'T WANT TO LEARN KRISTANG BUT WANT TO HFI P

If you don't want to learn Kristang but want to help the revitalisation initiative, regardless of your ethnicity or family background, you can

- volunteer and help us run things. We always need help with the Festa Sumana Kristang, taking photographs, helping elderly learners get to class, writing press releases, food, outreach, website design, podcast compilation, finance management, grant applications, materials design and coming up with new and awesome ideas. If you have a skill in something, we can use it, no matter what that skill is this is language revitalisation! Write to kodrahkristang@gmail.com.
- talk about the language everywhere and all the time. Kristang needs exposure. Tell your non-Eurasian family members. Tell your friends and co-workers and maids and acquaintances and strangers you meet on the train. If you don't like face-to-face interaction, social media networks like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and Tumblr are all free for use. Papiahpapiah.
- point people who are interested in learning the language to the **Kodrah Kristang Archive**.
- if you own or run a business or organisation, you can **support the initiative** by considering some form of collaboration. Write to <a href="mailto:kodrahkristang@gmail.com">kodrahkristang@gmail.com</a>.
- if you live in Singapore, write to or arrange to meet a representative of the Eurasian Association in a polite, cooperative and professional manner asking about what can be done for Kristang. Contact details for the Eurasian Association can be found <a href="https://example.com/here">here</a>.
- if you live in Singapore, write to or arrange to meet your Member of Parliament (MP), the Minister representing the Eurasians in Parliament and the Minister for Education (Schools) in a polite, cooperative and professional manner asking about what can be done for Kristang. The current Minister representing the Eurasians in Parliament is the very approachable and down-to-earth Mr S Iswaran, whose profile is <a href="here">here</a>; the Acting Minister for Education (Schools) is Mr Ng Chee Meng, whose profile is <a href="here">here</a>. You can find out who your current MP is <a href="here">here</a>, as well as when their Meet-the-People Sessions are.

#### REMU-REMU KRISTANG | LINKS TO KRISTANG RESOURCES

If you're from another community looking to revitalize your language, check out the next chapter with a list of sources and useful links to revitalisation resources and tools.

- 1. Email Kevin here or contact him on Facebook here.
- 2. The **Kodrah Kristang Archive** is <u>here</u>. All the materials from the Kodrah Kristang classes, together with links to other exciting Kristang happenings and writings, are posted there.
- 3. The **Kontah Kristang** Audio Course is <u>here</u>.
- 4. The **Kriseh Kristang** Vocabulary Course is here.
- 5. The **Kantah Kristang** playlist is <u>here</u>.
- 6. Dr Alan Baxter's **grammar and dictionary of Kristang are** freely and legally available <u>here</u> as PDF documents at the Pacific Linguistics Out-of-Print Archive. (Search "Kristang" or "Baxter").
- 7. Contact Joan Margaret Marbeck <a href="here">here</a> to get copies of *Ungua Adanza, Linggu Mai* and the *Kristang Phrasebook*.
- 8. Contact the Singapore Eurasian Association <a href="here">here</a> to get copies of the **Eurasian Heritage Dictionary**.
- 9. Contact the Malaccan Portuguese Eurasian Association <a href="here">here</a> on Facebook.

#### TUDU JUNTADU | EVERYONE TOGETHER

All of what we are doing requires community support, but that support must come from many different communities: Eurasians, learners, students, parents, politicians, educators, linguists, archivists, teachers, researchers, Singaporeans, Malaysians, native speakers, new speakers, friends and supporters around the world. Language revitalisation is a long, hard and difficult struggle, and involves many, many people working together to bring a language back to life; but with your help, Kristang might be reawakened again.

We thank you for reading this document, and ask that you choose to learn Kristang yourself, so that one day, this document might itself be written in Kristang by future generations.

There is much more to be done, but perhaps, soon, Kristang will be heard, sung and spoken again on our shores.

Mutu grandi merseh, and Kodrah Kristang!

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#### Memrise

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The Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Language Structures (APiCS).

The Canadian <u>First Peoples' Cultural Council</u> and their <u>Guide to Language Policy and Planning for B.C. First Nations</u> Communities.

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The Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR) at the School of Oriental and African Studies and their materials.

The Endangered Languages Catalogue and endangeredlanguages.com, and their publications and materials.

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