

## How hip-hop is saving a dying Colombian language

Rap folklórico palenquero represents the voice of the people, says Andris Padilla Julio, leader of the Afro-Colombian hip-hop group Kombilesa Mi. The crew rapidly switches between Spanish and another language — but it is not English, the international language of hip-hop.

The other language is Palenquero, one of the two creole languages native to Colombia. There are 68 **indigenous** languages in the country, and many of them are under threat of going extinct from "pressure to **assimilate**".

indigenous 本土的; 国产的

assimilate 吸收; 同化

Palenquero is centuries old, and hip-hop might help it survive further into the 21st Century.

Kombilesa Mi places an emphasis on language and identity through its music, partly making Palenquero words and phrases accessible to audiences. "If we want people to learn how to say goodbye, we do it by singing, adding some rhythm, and people enjoy that," says Padilla Julio.

This common didactic approach also explains why, for Padilla Julio, hip-hop is such a natural foundation for a rap version of folklórico palenquero: "With hip-hop, people can dance but they also listen, and since I'm interested in delivering a message...hip-hop allows me to do that and that's why I love it."

Adapting the rhythmic elements of hip-hop to traditional music and instruments cements it into the community. "People see in us [Kombilesa Mi] that courage, that voice of support, that voice of protest, struggle," adds Padilla Julio.

This is important given both the social context and history of San Basilio de Palenque, a town of 3500 people and the home of Kombilesa Mi. For centuries, San Basilio de Palenque has been a symbol of **resistance**, one that shines through in its language, culture, and identity.

resistance 抵抗