

CIPL Travel Grant report

By Melissa Irvine

I received a CIPL Travel Grant of €500 earlier this year in order to attend the 23rd Biennial Society for Caribbean Linguistics conference that was to be held in Trinidad & Tobago. To make such a long trip (coming from New Zealand) even more worthwhile, I also planned to spend some time in St. Lucia where I did the majority of the fieldwork for my PhD so that I could continue some work there. Unfortunately, with the COVID-19 situation not improving, the conference was postponed. Nevertheless, a virtual festival was held in its place and the St. Lucia portion of my trip went ahead.

The virtual festival was a celebration of Caribbean languages and included discussions on the topics of fieldwork 'now vs. then', challenges for Caribbean lexicography, translation of public health announcements in the COVID context, and more. Being in St. Lucia during the festival meant that I was able to tune in to all the discussions live. Although I was disappointed about not presenting my research, I learned so much from the various speakers and despite the virtual format, the event really went some way to providing the liveliness and interactions of an in-person conference.



The second part of my trip has involved continued work with the Msgr. Patrick Anthony Folk Research Centre (FRC) in St. Lucia, a non-profit, non-governmental organisation that archives language and cultural materials. I have been working with FRC as a volunteer since 2019, and have been accessing their archives since the first year of my PhD! In my current voluntary stint at the FRC, we have been working on implementing programmes for new youth members that would enable them to carry out fieldwork and documentation in their own communities.