

The Esperantic Studies Foundation at work

Making a difference in the study and dissemination of Esperanto and interlinguistics, and in the study of linguistic diversity.

2000-2009

A selection of projects supported by grants from ESF

1. THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ESPERANTO

Lernu.net

lernu! is a multilingual website which aims to inform internet users about Esperanto and help them to learn it, easily and free of charge. Construction began in 2002, and the site now operates in 35 different language interfaces, has 65,000 registered users and receives 120,000 visits each month. Visitors to the site will find self-instructional courses in Esperanto, a community of *lernu* users who are in contact with one another (in Esperanto) both through the internet and also in person, dictionaries, texts, videos, and all kinds of additional material. The site is conceived as a cooperative enterprise in which visitors work together on a volunteer basis as they learn the language (and learn as they put the language to practical use). Ways in which people can get involved include translation, tutoring, programming, dictionary editing, testing, and design.

The site makes effective use of sound and video to reinforce its messages. A simple example is the presentation of the Esperanto alphabet:

<http://en.lernu.net/enkonduko/lingvoprezento/alfabeto.php>

lernu! is operated by E@I. E@I is a workgroup affiliated with UEA's youth organization, TEJO, the World Esperanto Youth Organization. It works on projects which help Esperanto speakers use the Internet to cooperate worldwide, become informed about Esperanto and teach it. The three main actions of E@I are creating websites, organizing seminars and informing about how Esperanto and the Internet can be used together to communicate worldwide easily and quickly.

Edukado.net

Edukado.net is designed primarily for teachers of Esperanto and is a site dedicated to materials and methodology for the teaching and learning of the language. Founded in 2001, it operates an extensive website (in Esperanto) that includes a catalogue of learning materials, a forum for the exchange of exercises, tests, and other materials (with an associated database), a “World Mosaic” with world news and other information suitable for use in instruction and often linked to teaching materials, the coordinating center for the International Esperanto Examinations developed by the Esperanto teacher organization, a section containing abundant reading materials suitable for different levels of instruction, a calendar of Esperanto courses across the world, a correspondence service to link students with one another, and various other specialized functions (including pages devoted to university-level study of Esperanto where language professors can exchange information and materials and plan joint activities).

Edukado.net has expanded to include in-person meetings of users of the site, advanced courses in Esperanto meetings, and a host of other activities – generated essentially through the technological linkages afforded by the website. The site currently has over 2000 members in over 100 countries. The catalogue of learning materials contains over 400 items and there are 550 exercises available for downloading (3300 downloads to date).

Springboard

The Springboard to Languages Project (<http://www.springboard2languages.org>) is an effort to introduce Esperanto in selected primary schools in the UK as part of the country’s new language-teaching policy. Four schools in the U.K. are currently involved in the pilot stage of the project. An important component is the evaluation of students’ language learning, with an emphasis on the propedeutic effects of Esperanto language study preceding French language study. ESF provided \$10,000 to help fund the first year of the program (for the 2006-2007 school year). It provided additional funding in 2008 and 2009 to underwrite an ongoing formative evaluation by researchers at the University of Manchester. The Springboard Project is slated to operate for at least four years.

Indiĝenaj Dialogoj

The Indigenous Dialogues Foundation (Indiĝenaj Dialogoj or ID) was an international project which sought to empower organizations of indigenous peoples worldwide to communicate directly, freely, and affordably, allowing them to more effectively work together for their common interests (http://ilei.info/ipr/indigxenaj_dialogoj.htm).

ID provided internet connectivity and taught courses in Esperanto as an international bridge language. Esperanto was chosen rather than a major national language such as English because it is nationally neutral and relatively easy to master, while still backed and proven by an existing infrastructure -- over a century of [Esperanto culture](#) -- and its surface similarities to major European languages facilitate the learning of regional and world languages such as English, Spanish, or Russian.

Bessie Schadee and Sylvain Lelarge of the Netherlands and José Carlos Morales of the Brunka (Boruca) people of Costa Rica started ID in 1998; two worldwide and five regional courses were held from 1999 to 2001, with representatives from over twenty peoples. ID was supported by a number of international organizations, banks, governments, and private individuals, including the Esperantic Studies Foundation.

Pasporto al la Tuta Mondo

This project entailed the production of a comprehensive 15-lesson video course in Esperanto. Entitled *Esperanto, Pasporto al la Tuta Mondo*, the course involves an international team of actors, an original script, a professional documentary film director, and consultation with several outstanding Esperanto teachers. An ESF educational grant enabled the completion and marketing of the first 12 episodes, together with a comprehensive set of workbooks. ESF Board member Grant Goodall has also developed a workshop for teachers interested in using the series. See <http://esperanto-usa.org/en/node/56>.

NASK: North American Summer Courses in Esperanto

NASK, the North American Summer Courses in Esperanto, has a history going back forty years, when the program was launched at San Francisco State University. It later migrated to the University of San Francisco and the School for International Training (in Brattleboro, Vermont). For the past several years it has been housed at the University of California San Diego. Intensive three-week courses, taught by an international team of instructors, are offered during the month of July, primarily for students with some knowledge of Esperanto and for advanced students of the language.

The Esperantic Studies Foundation has provided support for NASK for much of its history, assisting with money for scholarships and for operating expenses. For the past decade, the support has grown, primarily thanks to a major gift to the Foundation by William and Catherine Schulze. Over the years, the program has provided instruction in Esperanto to hundreds of people from all over the world.

Standards Development in the U.S. and Europe

In 2005, ESF convened a group of educators to develop standards for the learning of Esperanto in the United States, as part of the standards project of ACTFL, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. The project is described in detail in an article by Bonnie Fonseca-Greber and Timothy Reagan in the January-March 2008 issue of the journal *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*. The standards themselves are available at <http://www.esperanto.org/dosieroj/file/EOguidelines1105.pdf>).

In 2007, a grant from ESF enabled the translation into Esperanto of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* and its subsequent publication. This detailed set of recommendations and best practices was originally published by the Council of Europe in 2001 and is intended to form a common base for the development of materials for language courses, examinations, textbooks etc. throughout Europe.

Katedro

Katedro is a project to create video materials to encourage best practices in the teaching of Esperanto. Still under development, the project will make use of footage filmed in actual Esperanto courses. ESF is providing the principal support for Katedro.

Teacher Training in Africa

ESF has provided some limited funding to support an Esperanto teacher training program in Africa. At the end of the funding term, the program administrators will produce a final report and evaluation.

Interkulturo

The educational and research initiative Interkulturo was managed by the International League of Esperanto-Speaking Teachers Network. The project involved the creation of an international network of elementary school classrooms that could use Esperanto as a bridge language through which teachers and students could exchange information, ideas, and instructional materials in a variety of subject areas (e.g., social studies, language arts, sciences). ESF's support of the Interkulturo project enabled the creation of a new interactive website (in effect, a "virtual school") that could better link all participants; in addition, ESF support provided a means for the addition of new classes, the continuing development of support materials and

improved project administration. Click here to go to the Esperanto pages of [Interkulturo](#). Unfortunately this project is currently dormant.

Lingva Prismo

Lingva Prismo's aim is to show the color and diversity of the world's languages. Through its website, it seeks to contribute to the preservation of this cultural richness and provide visitors with an engaging experience. It was created by the work group [Esperanto@Interreto](#) with strong support from the European Youth Foundation (for the European part), the Nordic Cultural Foundation (with special attention to the Nordic regions), the department for youth affairs of the Swedish State (special attention to the Baltic region) and the Esperantic Studies Foundation (special attention to interlingualism and global matters). The project is coordinated by Hesselbom Berlin GmbH. Since it was created, it has attracted over three million visitors. [Click here to go to the Lingva Prismo website.](#)

Esperanto Aktuale

This ambitious project, under development by an international team of web designers, seeks to create an up-to-date multilingual information portal on Esperanto and the Esperanto movement, aimed at informing a primarily external public about events and activities in the Esperanto movement and linking its users to all manner of information about the language. Under the headings Instruction, Information, and Use, the goal is to provide a one-stop multi-media location where users can learn about the language, get access to electronically available texts and visual material, and identify sites for learning the language. With major funding from ESF, the project is now in its early stages.

The Teaching of Esperanto and Interlinguistics in Universities

Through a number of initiatives, ESF has taken an active interest in the promotion of Esperanto studies and interlinguistics in universities and research centers. In 2006 ESF funded, on a one-year basis, a faculty position at ELTE, the leading university in Hungary, which had a formal Esperanto program for many years. It also funded a one-year experimental program at the University of Leipzig, Germany, and a course at the University of Stockholm, Sweden.

In 2008 it provided support for the convening of an international conference on the university teaching of Esperanto and interlinguistics at the University of Amsterdam. Some forty institutions were represented, from some twenty-five countries – from China to Croatia, and from Venezuela to Japan. Several projects launched at that conference are receiving support from ESF.

For the past several years, ESF has provided scholarship funding for the Esperanto diploma program in the Department of Linguistics at Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Poland. This funding has supported students from a number of countries to participate in the program. ESF also supported a recent conference to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the program.

In the United States, ESF has provided funding for the development of an independent study course in Esperanto at the University of California San Diego and for student-sponsored courses at the University of California Berkeley.

2. RESEARCH, ADVANCED STUDY, AND POLICY STUDIES

Research Tools

In recent years, with support from ESF, a written corpus of 18.5 million words has been developed (<http://corp.hum.sdu.dk/cqp.eo.html>) and is steadily expanding, while a spoken corpus (EPAK) is under development at the University of Uppsala in Sweden. Both are of value both to researchers and in the teaching of Esperanto.

ESF also provides support for the compilation of the Invented and International Languages section of the *Modern Language Association International Bibliography*, the major bibliographical database in literature and linguistics. Some 300 items are added each year.

ESF itself maintains a website containing research materials and other aids for researchers.

Library Support

The Foundation provided a planning grant for the renovation and updating of the Hector Hodler Library in Rotterdam, one of the largest collections of Esperanto books in the world. It supported part of the renovation itself and also the restoration of early film material.

The Foundation also assisted in the founding of the Svitavy Esperanto Museum, in the Czech Republic (2007).

Historical and Linguistic Research

Grants from ESF have supported numerous research and publishing projects around the world, including support for postdoctoral study at the Center for Comparative Literature and Culture

at Columbia University, for research on interpretation at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and for study of Esperanto and Swahili in Tanzania.

The Foundation provides annual funding to the Center for Research and Documentation on World language Problems, to allow the Center to fund small research projects. Grants are given to allow researchers to buy materials, to travel, and to publish their findings.

Support for Publications

Support for publications has included funding for a recent encyclopedia on universal languages in Switzerland, for several University of Poznan projects, for proceedings of the Nitobe Symposia, and for Professor Wim Jansen's study of word-order in Esperanto. The Foundation also supports *Informilo por Interlingvistoj*, a newsletter for scholars in the field of interlinguistics. Recently it has provided funding for a joint Indian/Croatian project for the use of Esperanto as a bridge language for the translation of children's books, and for the development of a documentary film on Esperanto.

Meetings and Conferences

The Foundation has also supported sessions and panels at numbers of conferences – on language problems in science (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 2008), on interlinguistics (International Society for Language Study, Orlando, 2008), the economics of language use in Europe (Krynica Economic Forum, Poland, 2008), on language policy in Asia (International Communication Association, Seoul, 2007), on global education (Phi Delta Kappa Summit on Global Education, Vancouver, 2006), on the teaching of Esperanto (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2005).

It has organized its own meetings, including the series of Nitobe Symposia on language policy, held every few years in different parts of the world (beginning in Prague in the 1990s, and including Berlin, Vilnius, and Tokyo), and it has supported conferences and meetings convened by others, for example the conference "The Translator as Mediator of Cultures," held at the University of Hartford in 2006, and the annual Esperanto Studies Conferences organized by the Center for Research and Documentation on World Language Problems. It also sponsors an annual award at the conference of CALICO, the Computer-Assisted Language Instruction Consortium.

SOME RECENT RESEARCH GRANTS

Researcher: Dr. Chris Krägeloh (2008)

Institution: Auckland University of Technology

Project Title: *Revitalization of Te Reo Maori: Lessons from Research in Interlinguistics*. The goal of the research is to investigate the extent to which language revitalization of Te Reo Maori can benefit from the already existing literature in interlinguistics.

Grant Award: \$6,000

Researcher: Antjie Krog (2008)

Institution: The Center for Comparative Literature and Society at Columbia University

Project: ESF provided a grant in the amount of \$10,000 to the Center for Comparative Literature and Society at Columbia University for a residency by Afrikaans poet Antjie Krog in connection with the Center's interest in translation. This was the foundation's fourth award to the Center.

Grant Award: \$10,000

Researcher: Dr. Probal Dasgupta (2008)

Institution: Indian Statistical Institute

Project: ESF awarded Dr. Dasgupta a travel grant which allowed him to continue work on his project *Developing a Kernel-Theoretic Approach to Lexicography*.

Grant Award: \$5,000

Researcher: Dr. Nergis Erturk (2006)

Institution: The Center for Comparative Literature and Society at Columbia University

Project Title: *Missed Encounters: Modernity and the Crisis of Language*. An investigation of a linguistic crisis in western European and Turkish literary modernism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Grant Award: \$10,000

Researcher: Dr. Sho Konishi (2006)

Institution: formerly at the University of Illinois and now at Oxford University

Project Title: *The Emergence of the Esperanto Movement in Japan: Interlingualism and the Vision of Cooperatist Anarchist Modernity*.

Grant Award: \$10,000

Researcher: Dr. Thomas Cooper (2005)

Institution: formerly at The Center for Comparative Literature and Society at Columbia University and now at the Academia Hungarica in Budapest

Project Title: *An investigation of the role of translation in the (re)creation of a transnational literary consciousness in the linguistically diverse region of Central Europe*.

Grant Award: \$10,000

Researcher: Dr. Nancy Nicholson (2005)**Institution:** University of Delaware**Project Title:** *Linguistic Human Rights for Ethnic Minorities: Language Planning for Interpreting Services at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and Implications for the International Criminal Court (ICC) as well as Future International Tribunals.***Grant Award:** \$10,000**Researcher: Dr. Aleksandr Melnikov (2000 - 2001)****Project Title:** *An investigation of the ways that the culture of the Esperanto speech community is reflected in Esperanto texts, especially those in the various literary genres.* Dr. Melnikov's research is based on analyses of hundreds of original books and articles in Esperanto and includes consideration of aspects of language such as word play, phraseology, literary allusions and institutional knowledge. This research study was published in Russian in late 2003; an abridged Esperanto version was also published in 2004.**Grant Award:** \$8,500