



# ESF (Esperantic Studies Foundation)

## Annual Report for 2013

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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Throughout 2013, ESF continued its gradual transformation from being a relatively unnoticed, primarily academic organization to being a significant agent of change in the areas of Esperanto and linguistic justice. This report highlights some of the concrete ways in which this transformation has been occurring. Perhaps our most well-known activity, the on-line Esperanto learning site *lernu!* continues to grow in popularity, while we continue to work behind the scenes to create a completely reworked site that will be unveiled in the months ahead. Its sister site, *edukado.net*, remains an important means of professional support and development for Esperanto teachers around the world, while the ESF-supported North American Summer Esperanto Institute (NASK) had one of its most successful years ever in 2013.

ESF remains committed to its academic roots, though, and to its longstanding interest in issues of linguistic justice beyond Esperanto itself. We helped organize a Nitobe Symposium on the use of English as a language of instruction in higher education internationally, an event that brought together experts on this topic from 23 countries. We also continue to sponsor the Access to Language Education award each year for an outstanding language learning website, in partnership with CALICO, the main professional organization in North America for computer-assisted language learning. These types of activities, in which we seek to deepen understanding and awareness in the scholarly community of the many facets of linguistic justice, continues to be an important part of the Foundation's mission and one that we strive to strengthen further as we move forward.

We welcome your comments on the work that is described in the following pages. ESF is thriving thanks to the ideas, the labor, and the generous contributions of a very wide range of people, and we thank you in advance for your support.

Grant Goodall

President

## PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

### ESF-enrete & lernu! ([www.lernu.net](http://www.lernu.net))

Following the decision in 2011 to invest in a major redesign of lernu.net, ESF's highly successful language learning website, work began in 2012 and continued into 2013, with the goal of launching the new course content and structure in late 2014 or early 2015. A prominent Esperanto author, Anna Lowenstein, and a talented Esperanto educator, Birke Dockhorn, were enlisted for writing a new story for the course with accompanying exercises. The Lernu team collaborated with the author and the educator in an iterative process of writing and editing the contents of the new course. The new course has been calibrated in accord with the Common European Reference Framework for Languages by an international team of writers, teachers and illustrators.

Work continued throughout 2013 on a new "easy word of the day" feature aimed at beginners, a daily e-mail with a word in basic Esperanto, accompanied by translations and sample sentences. The "easy word of the day" content was created by an international group of volunteers, and will launch with the new site.

The new site will also host an extensive multimedia library known as the Mediateko, to which many volunteers contributed content during the year. In another enhancement aimed at beginning and intermediate users, the Lernu reference grammar, Wennergren's *Detala Gramatiko*, is being translated into the site's three dozen user languages. Work continues on overall translation of the new course into user languages, and the content of the course is being checked for linguistic accuracy by a special committee of the Academy of Esperanto.

Meanwhile, a new technical platform has been created that will enable users to access a wide and growing range of services for the Lernu community. At the Universala Kongreso in Reykjavik and in its other activities, the ESF-enrete team continued to build its network of international contacts with national and regional Esperanto organizations, to raise awareness of its desire to promote links between the traditional Esperanto movement and the community of online learners of Esperanto.

### [edukado.net](http://www.edukado.net) ([www.edukado.net](http://www.edukado.net))

Another major web community supported by ESF, edukado.net, was originally aimed at teachers of Esperanto but is increasingly becoming involved in the direct provision of educational content for Esperanto speakers. This enlargement of the site's mission is reflected in the growth of its membership, which reached 2772 from 114 countries by the end of 2012 and passed the 3000-member mark in April 2013. Nearly 1.3 million page views were registered in 2012.

The new online training course for Esperanto teachers, RITE, saw its first full year of use in 2012, with 31 students from 20 countries. RITE is located in a part of the website called the Klerigejo, which now hosts a variety of short courses and single lectures using the same interface, covering topics in Esperanto studies, interlinguistics, language policy and related fields. Older parts of the site remain in active use: the Katalogo, which lists and reviews nearly 500 books, DVDs and other materials for teaching and learning Esperanto; a searchable, edited collection of more than 750 downloadable teaching materials; an up-to-date registry of Esperanto courses around the world; a searchable database of nearly 300 university projects and theses on Esperanto; a collection of some 200 educational videos; and so on.

The greatest innovation introduced by edukado.net in 2012 was the first World Esperanto Exam Day, on June 9, when 360 people at 29 testing sites in 17 countries took one of the accredited tests within the Common European Reference Framework for Languages. The Framework has become the most widely used international

standard for testing linguistic competence; some years ago, ESF funded the development of the Esperanto standards recognized by the Hungarian language testing authority ITK, and edukado.net has played a central role in their dissemination and use. The World Exam Day marked the most ambitious coordinated project yet undertaken by the site.

ESF's principal role in edukado.net is to provide a monthly stipend for its editor, Katalin Kovats, who has led the project since its inception in 2001. In mid-2012, conversations began about the possible integration of edukado.net with ESF's new subsidiary, ESF-enrete (see above). Although closer collaboration between lernu.net and edukado.net is clearly desirable, it was agreed that the two projects will remain separately managed for the time being, while steps are taken to increase revenue from the edukado.net community and look for a greater investment in the site from leading Esperanto organizations.

### NASK (North American Esperanto Institute) ([www.esperanto.org/nask](http://www.esperanto.org/nask))

ESF's flagship educational program in North America continued to develop away from its traditional three-week university format towards a shorter and more mobile program. Following successful short-format NASKs in 2011 and 2012, ESF continued the format in 2013, when NASK took place at William Peace University in Raleigh, North Carolina immediately prior to the US Esperanto convention. 43 students and 6 staff came from 12 countries and 17 US states. The instructional team included Jose Antonio Vergara (Chile), Derek Roff (New Mexico) and Lee Miller (Missouri). Jennifer Bondelid (Washington State), who received her degree in Esperanto studies from Principia College in Illinois, observed and helped in the post-basic class in order to refresh her abilities to teach at that level, Again Hoss Firooznia (New York) organized the extracurricular program and edited the newsletter *NASKa Fasko*. The small college was deemed almost perfect by all participants. A popular 2-part YouTube program was created by student Fabio Mota Monteriro (Brazil) about the history of NASK and the 2013 participants. It has been viewed over 2,750 times so far.

The Board is also pursuing a number of ideas for advertising the event more widely and associating it with online talks and seminars throughout the year. The first such initiative, a NASK-related video series coordinated by Board member Grant Goodall, made its debut on YouTube ("ESF-kanalo") in February 2013.

### Interlinguistics Certificate Program

In 2013, ESF continued to support students in the Interlinguistics certificate program at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland. This three-year non-residential program involves short, intensive on-site study sessions in February and September. Courses offered this year included (with specializations in International and Intercultural communication, Teaching of Esperanto, and Esperanto literature available):

- Esperanto grammar 3 (semantics and typology) (Ilona Koutny)
- Pragmatics (Ilona Koutny)
- Applied linguistics (Ilona Koutny)
- History of the Esperanto movement (Aleksander Korjenkov)

- Contemporary Esperanto literature (István Ertl)
- Linguistic and psychological aspects of Communication (Ilona Koutny)
- Sociological aspects of Communication (Zbigniew Galor)
- Basic concepts of language teaching and methodology (Katalin Kováts)
- Methodology of teaching Esperanto (Katalin Kováts, Ilona Koutny).
- Literary translation (István Ertl)
- Diploma seminar

The sessions also included a rich cultural program.

At the beginning of the year, in the second semester of the 2nd year, 10 students from 6 countries (Brazil, Switzerland, Germany, Hungary, Poland and Russia) were enrolled in the program. Nine began the third year of their studies in September 2013.

### The Esperanto "Access to Language Education" Award

Since 2004, ESF has sponsored an annual award for an outstanding language learning website characterized by ease and range of access, versatility, and breadth. Inspired by the success of Lernu, the award has become a fixture at CALICO, the major North American conference on computer-assisted language learning. In 2013, as in most previous years, the award was presented in person by Board member Derek Roff. The 2013 recipient was Papiers-Mâchés, an online interactive tutorial to help learners improve their French writing skills

<https://sites.google.com/a/nyu.edu/papiers-maches/>

### Interlinguistics Support Fund

This fund is intended to provide small grants for publications, conferences, and similar activities, and is administered by an international three-person committee independently of the ESF Board. In 2013 the committee was made up of Nikola Rašić (Croatia/Netherlands); Detlev Blanke (Germany) and Christer Kiselman (Sweden). Two grants were issued in this year: 1190 EUR to the Herzberg Esperanto Center (Germany) for a project scanning the collection of *Scienca Revuo*, and 1100 to Melanie Maradan for participation in the summer terminology training seminar.

### Research Grants

No significant new research grants were awarded in 2013. The ESF Board is in the process of redesigning the Foundation's research program in an effort to attract projects that are most well aligned with ESF's goals and which will best contribute to research in interlinguistics, language policy and related issues.

### Conferences

The spread of English as a language of instruction in countries across the world was the topic of this year's Nitobe Symposium, held in Reykjavik, Iceland, July 18-20, 2013. Recent years have seen a marked increase in the number of courses and programs, particularly at the master's level, taught entirely or partially in English – a response to the increasing international mobility of students and the growing interest of universities in

international rankings, which pit universities of many types across the world in competition for resources, particularly research funding, and national and international prestige.

The symposium, hosted by the Center for Research and Documentation on World Language Problems and partly funded by ESF, brought together an invited group of 40 higher education experts from a diverse group of 23 countries, ranging from the United States, Canada, Ireland, and the United Kingdom, to China, Japan, Chile, Mexico, Cyprus, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and India. The Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Iceland) were particularly strongly represented. A forthcoming volume, *English in Nordic Universities: Ideology and Practice*, edited by Anna Kristina Hultgren, Frans Gregersen, and Jacob Thøgersen, to be published by John Benjamins, Amsterdam, was the immediate inspiration for the symposium.

### “Information for Interlinguists” Newsletter

As in previous years, ESF provided a small grant to support publication of the hardcopy version of the newsletter *Informilo por Interlingvistoj* (Ipl), published by the Center for Research and Documentation on World Language Problems under the editorship of Detlev Blanke. ESF also hosts the newsletter’s web archive: <http://www.esperantic.org/en/communications/ipi/archive>.

## Operations

### Administration

Joel Amis completed his third full year as ESF’s part-time administrator, working an average of 50 hours/month. He worked closely with the Board’s Operations Committee, which met weekly by phone for most of the year. His responsibilities included organizing and documenting meetings, ensuring implementation of Board decisions, keeping track of expenditures and revenue, managing the website, and writing and issuing press releases. In the second half of the year he was also actively involved with fundraising.

Yevgeniya Amis completed her first full year as part-time Development Officer, a position created to coordinate ESF’s fundraising and communications strategy. Fundraising efforts coordinated by Yevgeniya brought in just under \$22,000 in donations (this sum excludes bequests), representing a 26% increase over 2012.

### The Board

After serving one year as ESF President, Mark Fettes stepped down from the post, following his election to the presidency of the World Esperanto Association (Universala Esperanto-Asocio). Vice-President Grant Goodall was subsequently elected as the new president of ESF, with Derek Roff as Secretary. Anna Bennett remained on the Board as Treasurer, along with Geoffrey Greatrex, Wally Du Temple, Mark Fettes and Humphrey Tonkin as Board members.

2013 also saw the addition of Chuck Mays, a professional in project management, to the Board. The Board also lost one of its members, as Bonnie Fonseca-Greber had to step down for personal reasons. The Board expresses its heartfelt thanks to Bonnie for her contributions to and years of service on the Board where she also served as Board secretary. Bonnie continues her collaboration with ESF as member of the Advisory Board.

In addition to monthly teleconferences, the Board met in Raleigh, North Carolina, for its annual Board Retreat. The timing and location of the Board Retreat coincided with NASK and the Esperanto-USA conference.

As noted under “Administration,” the day-to-day management of ESF was delegated by the Board to its Operations Committee, consisting of Fettes, Tonkin, Bennett, Du Temple and Roff. Erin Piatetski was included in these meetings following her appointment as CEO of ESF’s web projects subsidiary, ESF-enrete.

## Advisory Board

ESF continued to expand and develop its Advisory Board in 2013 by the appointment of three new members with strengths in various fields.

### **Arika Okrent, Ph.D.**

Arika Okrent is the author of the widely acclaimed book *In the Land of Invented Languages* (Spiegel & Grau, 2009), which vividly recounts the history and present state of various planned languages, Esperanto included. She holds a PhD in psycholinguistics from the University of Chicago.

### **Sebastian Tonkin**

As director of advertising products and strategy for Boingo Wireless, Sebastian Tonkin is responsible for the development of the company’s advertising service products and sponsorship campaigns for the global internet service company. Prior to joining Boingo, Sebastian co-founded and served as CEO of Cloud Nine Media, having served as a product marketing manager at Google, and having co-authored a book on using Google Analytics for marketing.

### **Allan Simon**

Now retired after a long carrier in computing, Allan Simon lives in Calgary, Canada, though he grew up in Austria where his family has deep roots in the Esperanto movement. For many years he served as secretary of the Carson Educational Foundation, and he also served as vice-president and treasurer of the Canadian Esperanto Association. In 2013 he was elected to the board of the worldwide German language association Schlaraffia, where he heads the North American section.

In addition to these new members, Bonnie Fonseca-Greber joined the Advisory Board after many years of faithful service on ESF’s Board.