



2008 - International Year of Languages
2008 - Année internationale des langues
2008 - Año Internacional de los Idiomas
2008 - Международный год языков
السنة الدولية للغات - 2008
国际语言年 - 2008 年



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF LANGUAGES

Implementation report

(Updated: 18 February 2009)

1. OBJECTIVES, FUNCTIONS AND CONTENT

1. On 16 May 2007, by resolution A/RES/61/266, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed, 2008 the International Year of Languages (IYL) and designated UNESCO as lead agency.
2. In its role as lead agency, UNESCO elaborated an intersectoral strategy defining the **objectives**, the **functions**, the **content** and the **means** of its action during the year. The strategy monitoring is ensured by the UNESCO Intersectoral Platform for Languages and Multilingualism, coordinated by the Culture Sector.
3. Concerning the **objectives**, UNESCO conformed to the goal of the IYL as in resolution A/RES/61/266, and focused on facilitating the development of “activities aimed at fostering respect for the promotion and protection of all languages in particular endangered languages, linguistic diversity and multilingualism”¹.
4. **As regards the functions** that UNESCO should ensure to attain the above-mentioned objectives in the framework of the IYL, the strategy focused on advocacy, facilitating and monitoring, namely through the mobilization of networks of networks, it being understood that the implementation of effective languages policy should be the responsibility of States.
5. UNESCO’s **main partners** in this initiative were identified in the National Commission as well as in the most important international, regional or specialized linguistic institutions²,

¹ A/RES/61/266, paragraph 25

² including Associated Schools and University Chairs, the African Academy of languages the Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa, the Council of Europe, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, Latin Union Linguamón - Casa de les Llengües, Foundation for Endangered Languages, Linguapax, Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL)

6. **As regards the content of UNESCO action**, the Organization's fundamental message is to convey the idea that languages are not only essential to the identity of groups and individuals and to their peaceful coexistence, but also that they constitute a strategic factor of progress towards sustainable development and in achieving the six goals of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). UNESCO embodied this message in the slogan: "*Languages Matter*", which was translated and disseminated in over 200 languages through UNESCO's website
7. **To provide recommended lines of action** to its partners, UNESCO identified different possible thematic clusters, including: (i) flagship awareness-raising initiatives, (ii) languages and education, (iii) endangered languages, (iv) languages, cultural exchange and translation, (v) languages and cyberspace, (vi) languages, socialization and integration, (vii) languages, knowledge and know-how.
8. **Four main functions or types of project were also identified to the same end:** (i) capacity building, (ii) awareness-raising, (iii) think-tank and research, (iv) project catalyst / multi-stakeholder channeling, as well as five main **outreach levels:** (i) internal, (ii) local, (iii) national, (iv) regional, (v) global.
9. With a view to communicating its action in this area to a wide public, UNESCO created a number of **tools** to be used according to a defined calendar and a programme cycle including an awareness-raising phase, and implementation phase as well as a data-collection and reporting stage.
10. Those instruments included a specially created IYL website providing general information, reference documents, useful contacts, a downloadable guidance brochure, an adaptable poster and a communication tool kit in six languages³. To provide current reporting on the ongoing implementation, this web site also features a daily updated list of project.
11. Circular letters were sent to National Commissions and principal UN, governmental and non-governmental partners in November 2007 and September 2008, and the Director-General made an official call for participation and mobilization in October 2007 (in over thirty languages) and in February 2008. At the same time, all of UNESCO's Sectors and Field Offices were mobilized in order to orient and reinforce their work plans to serve the objectives of the International Year of Languages, in conformity with paragraph 04009 of the Organization's Programme and Budget for the biennium 2008-2009.
12. As a result of this mobilization strategy, we were notified of 200 activities in different domains and of varying scope to be implemented during the year. The present document only included those activities about which UNESCO was notified between 21 February 2008 and 18 February 2009 and so far sufficiently documented. It will be regularly updated in the near future, as

³ Following the versions in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish, a version in Portuguese was also published by the Portuguese National Commission for UNESCO.

further information on the IYL implementation is expected to reach the Secretariat in the weeks to come⁴.

13. The present report has, at this stage, a rather factual and quantitative character. As concerns the qualitative assessment of the sustainable effects of the Year — notably on national language policies implementation and impact throughout 2009, 2010 and 2011 — the new Atlas of Endangered Languages will serve as an important monitoring tool to this end, it being understood that other monitoring instruments could be developed, notably in the framework of the 2010-2011 Programme of the Organization.

2. FLAGSHIP AWARENESS-RAISING INITIATIVES

The Year provided a unique opportunity for successful awareness-raising initiatives. To draw the attention of decision-makers, opinion-makers and larger segments of the general public to the strategic relevance of languages for development, several international seminars and conferences, mainly organized by UNESCO or with the support or sponsorship of UNESCO, took place throughout the year, including the following:

21 February: (*UNESCO, Paris*) Official launch of the International Year of Languages with a conference on standard-setting instruments to promote multilingualism.

5-7 March: (*Johannesburg*) and April 22-24 (*Dar es Salaam,*) Conferences of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) on “The role of trans-border languages and of lesser-used languages in Africa”.

9 June: (*Paris*) Launch of the Chirac Foundation and its Programme for the Protection of Endangered Languages.

13-15 June: (*Eisenstadt, Austria*) International Conference “Multilingualism in everyday life”.

1-3 July: (*Bangkok*) 2nd International Conference on “Language Development, Language Revitalization and Multilingual Education in Ethnolinguistic Communities”.

2-4 July: (*Yakutsk, Russian Federation*) International Conference “Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace”.

27-28 August: (*Tokyo*) UNU-UNESCO Conference “Multilingualism and Globalization”.

7 October: (*UNESCO, Paris*) Executive Board Thematic Debate on “Protecting indigenous and endangered languages and the role of languages in promoting EFA in the context of sustainable development”.

⁴ In conformity with the UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/61/266, the Director-General also presented an interim report on the implementation of the Year at the sixty-third session of the UNGA (document A/63/349 of 9 September 2008).

9-10 October: (*Bilbao, Spain*) International Conference “Challenges of Minority Languages in the Age of Globalization”.

4 November: (*UN Association of Spain, Lleida*) International Year of Languages seminar.

5-7 November: (*Nairobi*) CONFINTEA VI Preparatory Conference in Africa: “The Power of Youth and Adult Learning for Africa’s Development”.

27-28 November: (*Helsinki*) International conference on minority languages.

16--18 December: (*UN Headquarters, New York*) UNESCO-UNDPI “Linguistic Diversity, Globalization and Development”.

19-21 January 2009: (*Bamako*) International Forum on Multilingualism

18 February 2009 (*UNESCO, Paris*) Round Table organized by the group of Non-Aligned Countries at UNESCO “Indigenous Languages: worldviews, globalization, development and peace”.

3. LANGUAGES AND EDUCATION

Two major fields of UNESCO’s action – multilingualism and the use of mother language in the education system – were at the heart of the majority of the initiatives implemented in the framework of the International Year of Languages. Below is a summary of many of the activities reported to date:

UNESCO and UN activities⁵

1. The international conference “**Multilingual Education: Challenges, Perspectives, Opportunities**”, held in New Delhi from 5 to 8 February 2008, brought together some of the best-known international experts in theory and practice of Multilingual Education (MLE) to share views and interact with experts and practitioners in India as well as other South Asian countries. Representatives from JNU, UNICEF, Save the Children Fund, NCERT (MHRD), CIIL, SIL, and UNESCO participated to this constructive dialogue.
2. On 11 July 2008, the international conference “**Preservation of Mother Languages in Diaspora Communities - The Impact of Legislature**” was organized in New-York by the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) The conference focused on the preservation of mother languages in Diaspora communities. It brought together more than 300 participants, including representatives of Member States, UN officials, scholars, NGO representatives, community leaders, as well as youth between the ages of 14 and 24, who examined the national and international legislature impact of the preservation of mother languages, using the Armenian and the Lebanese diaspora as examples.

⁵ Multistakeholder projects coordinated by UNESCO or developed on the initiative of UNESCO programme sectors, as well as, in some cases, by other UN agencies.

3. The project “**Promoting Inclusive Education through Policy Support for Multilingual Education**“, implemented in Thailand from September 2006 to July 2008, aimed to help Member States make their education systems more inclusive and improve educational quality, by promoting mother-tongue-based multilingual education (MLE). It involved awareness raising, capacity building and institutional development, and increasing responsibilities for national institutions. Organized by multiple partners such as SEAMEO (South East Asia Ministry of Education Organization), UNICEF, SIL International, and relevant departments within Ministry of Education, universities, NGOs, this initiative was designed to encourage multilingual education in Thailand, Cambodia, Nepal, Lao PDR, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Indonesia.
4. The translation and publication of the UNESCO publication “**Advocacy Kit for Promoting Multilingual Education: Including the Excluded**“, was carried out from 1 November 2007 to 30 June 2008, in collaboration with the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, to strengthen capacity-building in multilingualism within Cambodia.
5. The “**Plan Décennal de Développement de l’Éducation de Base – phase II**” initiated in January 2008, involves different awareness-raising activities of the Ministère de l’Enseignement de Base et l’Alphabétisation (MEBA) of Burkina Faso, in collaboration with FONAENF, UNICEF, the Coopération Suisse, and ACDI. Activities include transcription workshops in various languages such as Manding, Fulfuldé, Djerma-songhaï, Lingala, and Wolof. These workshops, which will continue until 2010, will bring together participants from the different linguistic regions of the world. The implementation of a literacy policy (AENF) is expected to promote literate environments.
6. Seizing the opportunity provided by the International Mother Language Day and the International Year of Languages, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Education Unit of UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh jointly organized, for the first time in Cambodia, a half-day event to celebrate linguistic and culture diversity, as well as to advocate mother-tongue based bilingual/multilingual education. The main purpose of the “**Celebration of International Mother Language Day and IYL in Cambodia**“, held in Phnom Penh from 19 March to 19 June , was to promote multilingualism, linguistic and cultural diversity.
7. In order to raise awareness on multilingual education, and carry on the joint efforts undertaken in the past two years, the UNESCO Office in Beijing, together with national counterparts such as the China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE), the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO and the Beijing Language and Culture University, organized a one-day seminar to celebrate International Mother Language Day and the International Year of Language on 11 April 2008 in Beijing. The theme of this year’s “**International Year of Languages & the Ninth International Mother Language Day in China**” was “Promoting Cultural Diversity and Preparing for the Olympic Games”. The event brought together 92 participants from embassies, international organizations, universities, research institutes and NGOs.
8. Held in Phnom Penh on 18 June, the **National Workshop on Multi-Lingual Education in Non-Formal Education** activity was a follow-up to the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) and Education Sector Support Programmes (ESSP) of the Mid-Term Review Forum held in March 2008. The Cambodian Ministry of Education, in

collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh organized a workshop on Multi-Lingual Education (MLE). The objective was to raise awareness about the roles of MLE/bilingual education. Approximately 70 participants attended the workshop.

9. UNESCO Dhaka Office, supported by the Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO (BNCU), organized activities to stimulate awareness about the importance of literacy with a focus on adult literacy situation in Bangladesh and to promote indigenous languages. Among the activities organized by BNCU were the Children's Rally, Cultural Show and three-day long UNESCO Books and publication exhibition 2008. The Dhaka Office published a book in September 2008 in collaboration with a local NGO Meghdut titled *First SAARC poetry Evening – A compilation* to celebrate International Mother Language Day.
10. UNESCO's Hanoi Office, in collaboration with the Viet Nam Ministry of Education and Training, the Research Centre on Ethnic Minority Education, and the Ethnic Minority Working Group, organized an awareness-raising event in Hanoi entitled "**Advocacy and capacity building for a mother tongue based instruction approach**" from June to December 2008. The Vietnamese Government has long been supportive of the use of ethnic minority languages through its policies. However, on a practical level, this is often limited to the teaching of ethnic minority languages as a subject rather than as a medium of instruction. This project aimed at increasing awareness among a broad range of stakeholders on the merits of mother-tongue based instruction.
11. UNESCO's Hanoi Office also managed the project entitled: "**Literacy programme for Bahnar ethnic minorities utilising bilingual/mother tongue approach**" from July 2008 to December 2009. Carried out in partnership with the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training, the Research Centre for Ethnic Minority Education and the Department of Education and Training of Gia Lai province, this project is part of a regional JFIT-funded programme. It aims at developing a quality mother tongue/bilingual literacy programme for Bahnar ethnic minority adults.
12. In addition, on the occasion of the new year, the Hanoi Office gave all of its national and international partners an **International Year of Languages pocket diary**. Each month a specific topic was highlighted (e.g. mother tongue education, the declaration on cultural diversity, multilingualism on the Internet) with quotes, illustrations, and half-page information boxes on the chosen topic. The diary served as a useful tool to widely publicize UNESCO's initiatives of in Vietnam as well as activities associated with the International Year of Languages.
13. From January 2007 to December 2009, the Section of Museums and Cultural Objects within UNESCO's Culture Sector will encourage the publication of **cultural heritage guides in local languages** to promote the active participation of all those involved in museum management. This initiative also aims at ensuring long-term conservation and preservation of cultural objects. The multiple versions of these guides in local languages will help staff and public manage linguistic problems, facilitate understanding of the specialized terminology of museum management.

Member States activities⁶

14. The National Commission of the Slovak Republic for UNESCO, together with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, have

⁶ Initiatives mainly coordinated by the National Commissions for UNESCO.

organized since 1993 the annual competition « **Why I like the Slovak language, why I like Slovakia** ». The aim of the competition is to develop and strengthen interest of children and youth in their mother tongue. Various freely chosen forms of prose and poetry could be used as a means to express the young people's attitudes to the Slovak language, Slovakia of the past, present and future, personalities of the Slovak origin, and their homeland.

15. Since July 2004, and till June 2015, the project « **Center of Excellence for Urdu Informatics** », presented in Islamabad by the National Commission of Pakistan for UNESCO, represent a Standards Institute and a successful initiative of capacity building in terms of material, products and localization for the use of Urdu language on Computer and cyberspace.
16. On 7 – 9 November 2008, the University of Cyprus and the Ministry of Education and Culture (under the authority of Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO) organized in Nicosia the three-day event “**Languages for Intercultural Dialogue**” devoted to the teaching and learning of foreign languages at all levels of education. The conference opened a dialogue among all stakeholders on the current situation, the challenges and the prospects of language teaching in Cyprus. Moreover, the conference offered participants a wide variety of both practical and theoretical presentations through academic lectures presentations by teachers, and workshops.
17. The Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education of Lebanon, organized a seminar on 21 February 2008 in Beirut entitled “**Our mother tongue: approaches to practices and functions**”. This awareness-raising activity focuses on the use of the mother tongue in academic sectors, daily life and in political and religious speeches.
18. Since May 2008, the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture and the Austrian UNESCO Commission has organized workshops on multilingualism to Austrian schools. The workshops are conceived for school directors, parents and teachers not involved in language education (grammar and secondary school level) in Austria. Its aim is to support school communities in the field of language education, and it is designed to make people aware of the importance and value of linguistic diversity and its effective implementation in schools. The workshops' content is based on experiences as well as best practices.
19. From April 2008 to October 2009, the National Commission of Swaziland, in partnership with the Ministry of Education of Swaziland, is undertaking a general assessment of the vitality/ endangerment of siSwati, including examining the way languages are used in education beginning at the basic level (i.e. ECCE). Research and efforts already undertaken in this area have been taken into consideration. After the assessment, a strategy will be elaborated to undertake advocacy campaigns to change parents' attitude toward the use of siSwati vs English. Interventions will be made, to reinforce the use of siSwati in the curriculum and the implementation of an national language policy.

Civil society activities⁷

20. From 5 February to 8 August 2008, the e-courses “**Being multilingual for diversity 2008 (e-courses)**” were provided free-of-charge by Wajahat Nassar to educate young people about the International Year of Languages, its aims and endangered

⁷ Multistakeholders activities mainly coordinated by civil society organisations, universities and professional associations

languages. The course focused on helping young people create documents such as essays, short stories and reports in English related to the IYL. Young people were asked what their cultures and languages meant to them and how the language supported their cultural heritage.

21. From 29 March to 29 July 2008, Ann Mihailova, in partnership with the Nacional Universidad de Dal and the Ukrainian charity organization Soziume, compiled into one document informative texts on Spanish culture, economy and education (Spain and Latin America). Titled “**España y America Latina más cerca**”, it was geared to different academic institutes of Ukraine, Argentina, Spain, Panama, Mexico and Chile.
22. At the International Conference “**7th Conference on Languages & International Business Communication**”, organized by Sprachen-Beruf in Berlin from 21 to 23 April 2008, selected experts informed participants via practical workshops, presentations and comprehensive plenary sessions about the benefits of foreign languages and intercultural communication skills for achieving success in business. In addition, an accompanying exhibition allowed both providers and users to come together to exchange ideas, and find relevant solutions for their individual needs.
23. Organized by the Associação de Professores de Expressão e Comunicação Visual (APECV), and in collaboration with the Instituto Politécnico de Beja: Escola Superior de Educação de Beja, the Universidade de Évora: Centro de Investigação em Educação e Psicologia (CIEP) and the Universidade de Huelva, the “**Congreso Ibero Americano de Educacion Artistica**” invited a group of specialist to reflect on pedagogical and educational issues within artistic contexts. This congress was held in Portugal from 22 to 24 May 2008 and included participants from Portugal, Spain, Brazil and other South American countries.
24. The symposium “**Les langues au cœur de la dynamique professionnelle : spécificités aux frontières**”, organized by the Conseil Général de la Moselle, was held on 21 May 2008 at the communication centre SMART in Moselle (East of France). In partnership with the Sarre Ministry of Education, the Inspection Académique de la Moselle and the CEB Akademie, various participants from France, Italy, Germany, Spain and Czech Republic were invited to exchange views on business intercultural communication.
25. The INEX Summer University of Costa Rica together with academic and commercial partner institutions such as the Universidad Latino Americana de Ciencia y Tecnología (ULACIT), AIESEC, Ecosocial Forum Europe, and various Costa Rican government agencies, provided a comprehensive learning adventure, with business visits, academic courses, business projects and Spanish language training to better communicate within the Latin American environment. The “**2008 Program: INEX Summer University Costa Rica, with focus on Sustainable Development**” hawas held in San Jose, Costa Rica, from 29 June 2008 to 26 July 2008.
26. Held in Northallerton (England) from 31 August to 1 September and organized by the North Yorkshire County Council, in collaboration with the Belfast Metropolitan College (North Ireland), the EOI Toledo (Spain), the Berufliche Fortbildungszentren der Bayerischen Wirtschaft (Germany), the Centre de Formation Professionnelle et de Promotion Agricole (France), the Wicklow Further Education Centre (Ireland) and the Drummond Community High School (Scotland), the activity “**Tandem Plus Learning**” aimed at develop a learning/e-learning partnership.

27. Under the leadership of two national centres in the United States, CARLA (Centre for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, University of Minnesota) and CAL (Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, D.C.), the International Conference **“Immersion Education: Pathways to Bilingualism and Beyond”**, held in Minneapolis from 16 to 18 October 2008, brought together lecturers from the US, Canada, and Hong Kong and participants from around the world to engage in meaningful dialogue and professional exchanges in diverse languages, levels, learner audiences, programme models and sociopolitical contexts.
28. **“Multilingualism and Language Self-access in European Higher Education Area”**, a series of conferences on the development of the multilingualism in European universities, was organized by the University of Valencia (Spain) on 23 and 24 October 2008. These linguistic events played a crucial role in the application and development of projects such as the Nancy Declaration with the aim of increasing the number of universities interested in the language learning process, the range of languages offered and learnt as well as improving academic resources.
29. From 29 to 31 October 2008, the bi-annual conference **“Languages & the Media”** devoted to the subject of language transfer in a changing media landscape (video, DVD, digital TV and cinema) was organized in Berlin by the ICWE. Bringing together an international audience, the conference also featured an exhibition where vendors and manufacturers of language services and technology products presented their activities to participants.
30. The **“Expolingua Berlin - International Fair for Languages and Cultures”** held in Berlin from 14 to 16 November 2008 and organized by Explolingua attracted more than 150 exhibitors from over 20 countries who presented products and services related to foreign-language education., They included language schools, language travel, agents, exchange organizers, embassies, cultural institutes, tourism offices, publishers, and language-learning software providers.
31. The **“Expolingua Praha International Fair for Languages, Education and Cultures”** took place in Prague on 7 and 8 November 2008. Exhibitors from countries around the world presented their products and services in international education, further education, study abroad and work experience opportunities. Organized by Explolingua, the fair, targeted all those interested in learning or teaching a foreign language, or studying or working abroad.
32. The Department of Linguistics of the University of Philippines organized the **“10th Philippine Linguistics Congress”** from 10 to 12 December 2008 at the UP Balay Kalinaw Conference Hall, University of Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City. The conference focused on the most current advances in the study of Philippine languages and in the application of linguistic theory to anthropology, sociology, psychology, language planning, translation and language education in the Philippines.
33. Coordinated by the Çukurova University of Adana, Turkey, a series of lullabies in their original European languages, with their translations and background, were made available from 27 October 2006 to 27 September 2008 for families, schools and children from all Europe countries. This project **“Languages from the Cradle (The Lullabies of Europe)”** was based on the belief that lullabies in multiple languages were an excellent way of introducing new languages into a family setting. The main partners were the Kindersite Project (UK), the Mosaic Art and Sound (UK), the Synthesis Center for Research and Education (Cyprus), the Alexander Technological Educational Institute (Greece), the Regional In-Service Teaching Centre Arges

(Romania), the University of West Bohemia (Czech Republic) and the Videnscenter for Integration (Denmark).

34. From 7 January to 18 April 2008, the US Department of Defense Schools in South Korea, held cultural activities, language workshops, and language competitions for secondary school students to promote language learning, respect for other cultures, and unity through diversity. Over 200 people participated in this day-long event titled: **“Korea District Foreign Language Festival and Competition”**. The main partners were Osan American High School, the Osan Air Force Base and military community and Jinwee High School.
35. The symposium **“Plurilingüismo y la importancia de la enseñanza de idiomas extranjeros”**, held at the Goethe Institute of Uruguay from 1 to 19 February 2008, brought together representatives from Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay to discuss multilingual and multicultural interactions and educational reform in Uruguay. This activity received support from the France-Germany Fund and the Alliance Française of Montevideo.
36. To help UNESCO in its efforts for the 2008 International Year of Languages, Wajahat Nassar (Pakistan) undertook a capacity-building e-project from 9 July to 8 August 2008. This three-week project entitled **“Understanding cultures through languages 2008”** questioned young people about what their cultures and languages meant to them and how the language supported their cultural heritage. Discussions on diversity and the IYL, its aims and endangered languages were also conducted.
37. Published in Germany on 28 August 2008 in collaboration with the governments of Iran, Tajikistan and Afghanistan, the publication entitled ***Away-e Eshgh (The Call of the Love)*** includes 220 works among the writings of Djalal Aldin Rumi Molana (commonly known as Rumi) on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the birth of this great philosopher, poet, and scholar of Islamic culture. Each work contains seven verses and focuses on a specific social and/or ethic theme.
38. The **“Curso Avanzado de Escritores en Lenguas Autóctonas”**, an initiative of the Instituto Lingüístico de Verano, took place from 11 to 23 May 2008 in Oaxaca, Mexico. This two-week language course aimed at promoting a better use of Mexico's various indigenous languages by offering training in advanced writing and content providing in mother languages.
39. ***FN-magasinet*** is the journal of the **United Nations Association of Norway (UNA Norway)** for its 800 member schools throughout the country. To celebrate the International Year of Languages, UNA Norway added the IYL logo to the UN calendar on the back cover of the September 13th issue of *FN-magasinet* together with logos for other UN years in 2008.
40. Inspired by a similar event at Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Languages School, **“International Languages Day at Thornhill Primary School”** was held on 2 April 2008 in London at the Thornhill Primary School to celebrate the rich diversity of culture and languages spoken and learned in school. The objectives were to raise awareness of the value and importance of languages and to create a sense of fun and achievement in learning. It was also designed to support bilingual pupils by encouraging them to feel comfortable and confident in using their home languages in school and sharing their expertise with others.
41. From 8 April to 12 August 2008, in conjunction with the project **« Learning Languages for Betterment »**, five main activities were organized in Hatton (Sri

Lanka) by M. R. Vijayanandan to fulfil the following objectives: creating awareness raising programmes for school children regarding learning local and English languages, and awareness raising programmes for school teachers on learning local and English languages, empowering the children as agents in social mobilization, providing professional guidance on educational and career choices for children, and organizing art competitions for school children on UNESCO's theme of "Languages Matter".

42. **The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) celebrated the International Year of Languages (IYL)** with a year-long programme of activities. The celebration included film screenings, public lectures, and a series of open forums about multilingualism. The launch of UTSA's celebration took place on 11 April 2008, with a free screening of the film *In Languages We Live—Voices of the World*. All activities were open to the greater South Texas community. The celebration was coordinated by the inter-departmental IYL Working Group, which included faculty members from the departments of Bicultural-Bilingual Studies; English, Classics, and Philosophy; Modern Languages and Literatures; and Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching.
43. The "**Seminar on Bangla Language and IMLD Monument**" was held in Toronto on 2 June 2008 to highlight the importance of teaching and continuity of the Bangla language in 10 different public schools. Under the supervision of the IMLD Monument Implementation Committee of Canada, and with the collaboration of the Albert Campbell District Library and the Dhaka University Forum, the seminar began with a presentation entitled "In the galaxy of languages, every word is star" as well as with a presentation of four Bangla textbooks.

4. ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

Many of the initiatives undertaken in the framework of the IYL focused on the documentation, revitalization and preservation of endangered languages, mainly at the national level.

UNESCO and UN activities⁸

1. From January 2006 to December 2008, the UNESCO Office in Apia (Papua New Guinea) oversaw a capacity-building project entitled "**Indigenous Language Revitalization and Preservation in Melanesia and the Pacific, Phase II**". Undertaken in collaboration with the University of Papua New Guinea, the University of South Pacific and the Institute of Solomon Island Studies, the project aimed at continuing the survey and documentation of Melanesian languages launched during Phase I (2000-2003). It was focused on capacity-building by training local students and field workers to conduct linguistic research and documentation.
2. The UNESCO Kingston Cluster Office for the Caribbean, is undertaking a project entitled « "Promoting Preservation of Caribbean Indigenous Languages" from October 2006 to December 2009. This initiative seeks to stimulate preservation of indigenous content and dissemination of diverse cultural expressions of indigenous peoples in the Caribbean. It provides training to indigenous groups on techniques to

⁸ Multistakeholders projects coordinated by UNESCO or developed on the initiative of UNESCO programme sectors, as well as, in some cases, by other UN agencies.

gather/document language and culture information from their communities and publish them on the Caribbean Indigenous and Endangered Language Portal.

3. From 24 to 31 May 2008, the Musée des Confluences (France) launched , a new annual public event **“Paroles d’autochtones”** designed to give representatives of indigenous groups a voice:. In partnership with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Survival International and the Théâtre des Asphodèles, various events in cultural and public and academic spaces, were organized on this occasion.
4. Commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and celebrating of the International Year of Languages, the Regional Bureau of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean paid homage to Chile’s indigenous cultures and languages by publishing the Declaration’s text in Spanish and in the country’s three most important native languages: Mapudungun, Aymara and Rapa Nui. This will significantly contribute to preserving languages at risk of extinction, particularly Rapa Nui (spoken on Easter Island). At present, only 1,500 people worldwide speak Rapa Nui, and this is the first translation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into that language.
5. From 1 January to 30 June 2008, the information dictionary system **“Connecting (Mansian and Russian) Cultures”** was launched by the Software-Industry Co. It facilitated the translation of texts from the northern dialect Mansi into Russian. The main partners were the Institute for Education Development, the Yugra State University, the Information Resources Committee of the Governor's Administration of the Khanty-Mansiysk, the Autonomous Region of Yugra, and the ICOS UNESCO IFAP (Russia).
6. In the framework of the International Year of Languages and International Mother Tongue Day, the UNESCO Office in Quito and UNESCOCOM (group of communication) organized a discussion board with leading Ecuadorian and Colombian journalists, writers, poets, culture and linguistics specialists, who analyzed the importance of the mother tongues in minority cultures and scientific development. Some 80 people participated in this event titled **“¡Viva, la Lengua Viva! Long live the Mother Tongue!”** which took place in the Cultural Centre Benjamin Carrion in Quito (Ecuador) on 21 February 2008.
7. From 1 April to 30 September 2008, the UNESCO Brasilia Office (Brazil), in partnership with the Instituto de Investigação e Desenvolvimento em Política Lingüística (IPOL), coordinated a major survey (**“Survey on linguistic diversity in Brazil”**) of the current state of linguistic diversity and ongoing related activities in Brazil, emphasizing the links between intangible heritage (including endangered languages) and cultural diversity.
8. From May to December 2008, the Brasilia Office also carried out, a **national awareness-raising campaign in Brazil on the importance of linguistic diversity and oral traditions**. This initiative, made possible thanks to the collaboration of the Museum of the Person (Brazil), involved the creation of an online platform for multi-language storytelling.
9. In the framework of the International Year of Languages, UNESCO-BREDA helped the Papyrus Afrique Editions to publish a monthly bilingual wolof-pulaar journal and books in national languages. **Lasli/Njëlbéen** is the first Senegalese newspaper printed in national languages. UNESCO sponsored an exhibition celebrating the publication’s 10th anniversary, entitled: **“Lasli/Njëlbéen, 10 ans au service d’une information écrite en langues nationales”** and a meeting on the introduction of

national languages in the educative system of Senegal. These events were held in Dakar from 4 to 6 July 2008.

10. Since 2002, UNESCO Office in Beijing has worked with the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences to record and research endangered minority languages in China. This included the documentation of the working conditions and lexicons of eight different minority languages (Ersu, Manchu, She, Tujia, Gelao, Lakkia, Western Yugur and Hezhen), the development of Latinized writing systems for each of them, and the recording of the languages in use. These activities helped to create an audiovisual archive and teaching materials for each endangered language. Under the heading “**Supporting Chinese efforts to safeguard minority languages**” this activity was featured in a special issue of *The Intangible Heritage Messenger* devoted to Endangered Languages in September 2006.
11. In 2008, the UNESCO Abuja Office (Nigeria), as part of its effort to protect indigenous languages from extinction, carried out capacity-building workshops to **safeguard endangered Nigerian languages** and published the workshop proceedings, which highlighted the challenges involved in safeguarding language in Nigeria. The Culture Sector, in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation has proposed implementing the following activities to commemorate the International Year of Languages: mapping and documentation of indigenous languages in Nigeria, organizing creative writing competitions in indigenous Nigerian languages, networking with UNESCO institutions / capacity-building programmes for cultural officers and stakeholders on safeguarding languages, publication of proceedings of workshops on endangered languages, and sponsoring indigenous language programmes in electronic media.
12. The Japanese Funds-in-Trust cooperation project “**Writing a Runyankore Rukiga – English dictionary for the preservation of the languages in Uganda**” was carried out by a team of linguists from the Institute of Languages of the University of Makerere (Kampala). It was completed on 25 August 2008.
13. The UNESCO Hanoi Office, in close collaboration with the Association of Vietnamese Folklorists, the Vietnam Academy for Social Sciences and the National University for Social and Human Sciences, coordinated the project “**Safeguarding the endangered language of the Khang ethnic minority**” from 9 September 2006 to 28 March 2008. The programme aimed at safeguarding the endangered language of the Khang ethnic minority living in Than Thuoc commune, in Vietnam. The Khang language was researched and revitalized to ensure that this language continues to serve as a living communication tool in all of the community’s daily activities.
14. The primary aim of the project “**Revitalization of a disappearing Southern Khoesan Language, N|u of the Khomani Community**”, carried out in Namibia from 2 October 2006 to 28 March 2008 by the Section of Intangible Cultural Heritage within UNESCO’s Culture Sector (in collaboration of the Department of Linguistics of the University of Namibia) was to progressively teach the community’s youth the grammar and sound system of this language, which is spoken by only eight elderly members of the community at present.
15. Organized by the Section of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Education Ministry of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and the Institute of the Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the project « **Safeguarding the Yukagir language and oral traditions**» carried out from 28 March to 22 September 2008 was designed to safeguard the endangered language and culture of the Yukagirs,

an ethnic group of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) of the Russian Federation. The objectives of the project were to promote and pass Yukagir oral traditions to younger generations and to digitalize the language and cultural materials for preservation and intergenerational transmission.

16. The Intangible Cultural Heritage Section also undertook in 2008, in collaboration with the Institut des Sciences des Sociétés of Burkina Faso, a project aimed at helping the Sillanke community in its efforts to keep and develop its language and its cultural heritage. The specific objectives were to build a community center, document the language and the oral traditions, compile a reading manual and help to teach reading to 30 members of the Sillanko community (15 men and 15 women).
17. From 4 September 2006 to 28 March 2008, the project **“Standardization of Documentation and Revitalization of GBETE and BEMBELE languages”** was carried out in Yaoundé, Cameroon, to develop orthographies and writing systems for selected endangered indigenous languages in the country, using the locally developed and time-tested BASAL method. The project was coordinated by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section, in collaboration with the Centre NACALCO de linguistique appliquée of Yaoundé.
18. From 1 May 2007 to 28 March 2008, the UNESCO Office in Jurema Machado (Brazil), in close cooperation with the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section and the Linguistics Division of the Museu Goeldi, oversaw the project **“Language Documentation in Three Indigenous Communities in Brazil”** to document languages, but also to acquaint the native groups of Paresi, Djeoromitxi and Ka’apor with modern documentation methods and train them so that they can continue the work.

Member States activities⁹

19. On 19 February 2008, in the framework of the International Mother Language Day, the Association Pan South African Language Board, organized with the support of the South African National Commission to UNESCO a programme in Pretoria focusing on the reinforcement of multilingualism and on the protection **of minority endangered languages** (especially Khoe, San and Nama in the Northern Cape area).
20. On 21 February 2008, the Egyptian National Commission for UNESCO organized a “Celebration of the International Day of Mother Languages” in Cairo. During the seminar on the protection of the endangered mother language (Arabic), university professors and specialized experts gave lectures on the Arabic language, the challenges of globalization and the ways of protecting cultural diversity. Books about Arabic grammar and common grammatical mistakes were distributed. 70 participants -- university professors, experts, media staff and social society representatives.
21. The National Commission of Croatia for UNESCO also celebrated on 21 February the International Mother Language Day in Zagreb, in collaboration with the Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics. Eight publications on Languages were presented altogether by different speakers.

⁹ Initiatives mainly coordinated by the National Commissions for UNESCO.

22. From 21 to 27 July 2008, all New Zealanders celebrated “**Maori language week: te wiki o te reo**”. This awareness-raising event, which was organized by the Maori Language Commission, in collaboration with the New Zealand Human Rights Commission, the New Zealand Ministry of Education, and the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO, aimed at promoting the use of Maori language in everyday life. The theme was "te reo i te kainga" - Maori language spoken in the home.
23. On 18 November 2008, the Cuban National Commission for UNESCO, in collaboration with the Sociedad Nacional de Esperanto de Cuba and the ACNU organized a seminar in Havana entitled “**El Esperanto y la UNESCO**”, underlining the importance of this language for international communication, and the implication for UNESCO regarding its protection and promotion. Over 200 persons participated in the seminar.
24. Within the framework of the International Year of Languages, the Ministry of Culture of Columbia, in collaboration with the National Commission of Columbia for UNESCO, developed the project: « **Programa de Protección de la Diversidad Etnolingüística** ». Held in Bogotá in January 2008, the project aimed at engaging a dialogue between the different partners for the creation of a national policy to preserve the Colombian indigenous endangered languages.

Civil society activities¹⁰

25. Mainly targeting the people of West Sahara, France, Morocco, and Spain, the survey “**The Legacy of Colonial Language Politics in the Actual Linguistic Situation of the Western Sahara**“, published on 27 May 2008 by the University of Bremen (Germany) in partnership with the École de Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (France), aimed at studying the historical and actual consequences of the colonial language politics of France and Spain for the West Saharian and nomad populations, and the subsequent expansion or deterioration of Spanish and French influence in the region.
26. The Foundation for Endangered Languages (FEL) was created to support, enable and assist the documentation, protection and promotion of endangered languages. From 24 to 27 September 2008, the FEL, in collaboration with the Mercator European Research Center for Multilingualism and Language Learning and the Fryske Akademy, held its twelfth conference “**Endangered Languages and Language Learning**” in the Netherlands. The conference was organized and sponsored in the framework of the jubilee programme KNAW 200 and took place in the conference centre of the Fryske Akademy, It Aljemint.
27. Held at the Bangor University Business Management Conference Centre (North Wales, United Kingdom) on 22 and 23 August 2008, the multidisciplinary conference “**Global Understanding in Multilingual, Multimodal and Multimedia Contexts**” marked the International Year of Languages. This conference, organized by the World Language Documentation Centre (WLDC), attempted to bridge the communication gap between academia and industry.
28. Organized from 7 January to 7 October 2008 by the Rhône-Alpes region (France), in collaboration with multiple partners (ICAR, Institut Pierre Gardette, Centre de dialectologie (Université Grenoble 3), DDL, CREA et INRP), the survey “**Pratiques linguistiques en Rhône-Alpes (occitan, francoprovençal) et politiques**”

¹⁰ Multistakeholders activities mainly coordinated by civil society organisations, universities and professional associations

linguistiques”, outlined the sociolinguistic practices in indigenous languages in the region. The final report provided some important clues on how the Rhône-Alpes region could implement effective language preservation policies.

29. Targeting people in Iran, Iraq, and Kurdistan, the project “**A Comprehensive study of Hawrami Kurdish**” was organized on 5 February 2008 by the English Language and Literature Group of the National Institute of Education in Singapore to investigate the contemporary Hawrami language. The historical foundations of the language, past and ongoing linguistic policies, the grammar of Hawrami, and the application of the Wave Theory to the spread of this language were examined.
30. Under the leadership of the Voronezh State Pedagogical University of Russia, the “**Language Festival**” took place in Voronezh on 4 April 2008. The festival aimed at informing people of Russia, Germany and France about endangered languages in Russia and Europe, and at encouraging linguists, geographers and historians to carry out research in this field.
31. The programme “**International Mother Language Day**” of Purdue University (West Lafayette, Indiana, USA) celebrated International Mother Language Day on 21 February 2008. The day’s activities emphasized endangered languages and featured performances in regional languages by various Purdue students and a screening of the acclaimed documentary *In Language we live*.
32. Organized by Romania’s Armân community, the 5th edition of “**Armân Cultural Days**” took place in Bucharest from 29 to 31 August 2008. This awareness-rising cultural event, which emphasizes Armân spirituality, culture and traditions, featured three theatre performances in Armân language and an art exhibition.
33. Created in 2000 by Klaus-Werner Kahl and published in Germany on 4 September 2008, the dictionary ***Wörterbuch des Münsterländer Platt*** set clear and simple rules for the orthography of the Low German language and use them consistently for all words. In autumn 2008 an encyclopaedia featuring pictures to describe terms in the Low German language will also be published.
34. Organized by the Deline Land Corporation on 18 June 2008, the “**Dene Language Plan**”, in collaboration with the University of Toronto and the University of Manitoba, was held in Deline, Northwest Territories, Canada. It was designed to help maintain a distinct cultural identity for the Dene people, with a focus on understanding, appreciating and transmitting traditional skills, ceremonies, values, history and laws as well as communicating and sharing knowledge in the traditional language.
35. Since September 2008, the Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtit (Inuit Language Authority), through the “**Inuit Language Protection**” project, has expanded the knowledge and expertise available in Canada regarding the Inuit language through the development of standardized terminology and expressions, competency levels of language use or correctness and the establishment of an award programme to recognize achievements in the protection of the Inuit language. The Government of Nunavut (Canada) will be modifying the education programme so that by 1 July 2009, Inuit language instruction will be available for kindergarten to Grade 3 and by 1 July, 2019, instruction will be extended to all primary and secondary grades.

5. LANGUAGES, CULTURAL EXCHANGE AND TRANSLATION

The projects listed in this chapter focus on the role of languages in forging cultural identities and promoting regional integration and intercultural dialogue.

UNESCO and UN activities¹¹

1. The **XVIII FIT World Congress**, a leading event in the global translation community, is held every three years; it took place in 2008 in Asia for the first time (Shanghai, 4 - 7 August). Made possible by the participation of Translators Association of China, the SIL International and UNESCO, this encounter offered a rich programme and presented to participants the best of Chinese culture and civilization.
2. Sponsored by UNESCO, the **World Congress on Specialized Translation: Languages and intercultural dialogue in a Globalizing World** was held in Havana from 8 to 13 December 2008 by the Unión Latina and the MAAYA Network. The forum explored current international policies that further the work of translation and of translators --, a key factor in the preservation of linguistic diversity. In addition to the plenary sessions, specific workshops were organized on related themes and a technological showcase presented the main advances in translation tools.

Member States activities¹²

3. From 1 January 2008 to 30 December 2009, the project “**Appui à la production et à la diffusion d’outils favorisant la diversité culturelle et le dialogue interculturel**”, launched by the UNESCO Office in Rabat, is intended to promote linguistic diversity. In collaboration with ISESCO, and the National Commissions of the Maghreb region, the project’s main objective is to undertake studies on cultural diversity as well on intercultural dialogue to create teaching tools for awareness-raising in French and Arabic.
4. From 15 November 2007 to 30 March 2008, the database “**The Treasury of the Azerbaijani Language**”, coordinated by the Azerbaijan University of Languages, in collaboration with the Writers’ Union of Azerbaijan, the National Centre for Translation and the UNESCO Clearing House for Literary Translation (Index Translationum), carried out an inventory of literary works translated into Azerbaijani, with special focus on youth literature. A database of Azerbaijani writings and translations has also been created.
5. Organized by the Permanent Representatives of Tajikistan, Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations and co-sponsored by UNESCO, a commemoration ceremony on the occasion of the 1150th anniversary of the birth of **Abu Abdullah Jafar ibn Mohammad Rudaki** was held on 26 June 2008 at UN Headquarters in New York. .This distinguished poet considered to have laid the foundations of Persian classical literature, has proven to be an inspiration to international efforts to combat extremism

¹¹ Multistakeholder projects coordinated by UNESCO or developed on the initiative of UNESCO programme Sectors, or by other UN agencies.

¹² Initiatives mainly coordinated by National Commissions for UNESCO.

6. The seminar “**Cultural and Language Pluralism in the Republic of Bashkortostan**” held on 26 March 2008 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, was a key feature of “Bashkortostan Days in UNESCO”. Participants examined the success story of language policies in the Bashkiria region and attempted to find ways to preserve cultural diversity maintain multilingualism, save endangered languages and build peace. The event was made possible by joint efforts of the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Bashkortostan, the National Commission of the Russian Federation and the Permanent Delegation of the Russian Federation to UNESCO.
7. In January 2008, the Ministry of Culture and Heritage of Tunisia, in collaboration with the Tunisian National Commission for UNESCO, launched the **National Year of Translation**.
8. To launch the International Year of Languages in Cuba, a seminar was organized on 21 February 2008 at the Centro de Estudios Martianos, in Havana by the National Commission of Cuba for UNESCO in collaboration with the Asociación cubana de naciones unidas and the Centro de Estudios Martianos. The seminar entitled “**Celebración del Día de la Lengua dedicada al Año Internacional de los Idiomas**” underlined the importance of the national language and the protection of the language through educational activities and intercultural dialogue.
9. The workshop “**2008 International Year of Languages: Human Rights and Linguistic Rights**” was organized on 25 November 2008 by the Italian Esperanto Foundation and the municipality of Florence, under the auspices of the Italian National Commission for UNESCO.
10. The Italian National Commission for UNESCO also organized, on 25 May 2008, a three-day meeting in Cosenza (in collaboration with the local authorities) on the issue of the **legal instruments for the protection of minority languages** in the political, academic and media sectors.

Civil society activities¹³

11. The symposium “**Why "International Year of Languages"? Language Diversity and Culture of Dialogue**” took place on 12 October 2008 in Tokyo to raise awareness on intercultural dialogue and translation. It was organized by the Japan Esperanto-Institute, in collaboration with UNESCO, the Wakayama International Exchange Association and the Intercultural Research Center (Kobe University).
12. Participating in different public events from 2 February to 23 June 2008 under the theme “**Les intellectuels et artistes pour le plurilinguisme et la diversité culturelle**”, intellectuals and artists from European and non-European countries met to discuss linguistic pluralism and cultural diversity and to promote a common consciousness-raising. These meetings were organized at UNESCO Headquarters (Paris) by the Observatoire européen du plurilinguisme, in collaboration with the Permanent Delegation of Romania to UNESCO.
13. The conference “**Regional development in the Alps-Adriatic area in a global perspective**” was part of the Austrian and international activities to mark the EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue and the UNESCO International Year of Languages. Organized by the Alpen-Adria University of Klagenfurt and the Austrian National

¹³ Multistakeholders activities mainly coordinated by civil society organizations, universities and professional associations.

Commission for UNESCO from 8 to 10 October 2008 in Wien (Austria), the conference adopted a geographic approach, (Alps-Adriatic area) and a sustainable organisational structure.

14. By inviting poets of various origins to read in their native language (French, English, Spanish, Italian, Romanian, Chinese, Arabic, Indonesian) on 6 and 7 February 2008 in Montréal (Canada), Élizabeth Robert, in collaboration with the League of Canadian Poets, the Canada Arts Council and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, created, “**Noches de poesía - Montréal**“, a network and platform of new friendships and understanding for cultural differences.
15. From 1 March to 31 October 2008, the “**Festival de Théâtre Vénézuélien à Paris/FESTHEVE 2008**“, organized in Venezuela by the Le Ciel d'email association, enabled the French public to discover a foreign language through plays performed in their mother tongue: Venezuelan Spanish.
16. The research project “**Multicultural Road Movie**” has been led by the Brazilian professor Hernani Heffner who explored the development of the 'Road movie' and highlights some of the many films that had been made within the genre, showing the road's images made by filmmakers around the world. The research was published with the collaboration of the Casaquattro Comunicação and the Culture Ministry of Brazil in Spanish, English and Portuguese and was distributed for public libraries in Brazil, Spain, UEA, UK and Argentina from 3 March to 30 May 2008.
17. On 13 and 14 June 2008, the international conference « **Translation and Intercultural Dialogue** » organized in Évora (Portugal) by the University of Évora, the University of Malaga and the University of Cordoba presented recent research and analysis on translation, multilingualism and multicultural dialogue, as well as shared experiences from students and teachers of foreign languages and translation studies.
18. The Bengali Community of Italy published on 24 February 2008 the document “**Special Souvenir on International Mother Language day**” in Bengali on the occasion of the International Mother Language Day and to mark the history of martyred of language movement in 1952. The main features of the document were published both in Bengali and in Italian for a better understanding of the various immigrant communities residing in Italy.
19. The Society for Technical Communication (STC) France Chapter, a registered professional non-profit association, hosted the conference “**eCommunicating Europe**” on March 14th 2008 in Paris, France. In collaboration with the enterprises Docware, Acrolinx, Ovidius and AuthorIT, an exciting and varied programme was organized: prestigious international experts spoke to the participants about trends, tools and techniques and shared their secrets for successful communication in Europe.
20. In November 2007, the Indo Bangla Cultural Initiative (IBCI), in collaboration with the Independent University of Bangladesh, organized an “India Bangladesh Festival of Books and Writers” in Dhaka with the support of the High Commission of India. As a continuation of this dialogue, the Indo Bangla Cultural Initiative initiated an Indo Bangla Translation Project with the aim of translating Bangladeshi writings into English and regional writings of India into Bangla. This project of developing network en titled “**Anubad - A Translation Project**” ended on 30 April 2008.

21. Based on new modalities of dialogue and communication, the Network of European Active Citizens (NEAC), a non-profit association in Italy, organized from 18 to 25 September 2008 a youth meeting in Djakovo (Croatia), which was attended by over 70 students from 10 different countries. Titled “**Cross-border Cooperation**”, this event aimed at increasing the level of knowledge about the achievements of the EU in the past 50 years and at promoting EU citizen's networking among youth and greater participation of young people in the debate on Europe.
22. In the framework of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and at the initiative of the European Commission, the “**Diversidad**” project was conceived by the European Music Office (EMO), the association Diversités and Music Information Centre Austria (MICA) to provide a platform for the actors in European urban cultures to get to know one another, to share, to create and to build a lasting bridge of exchanges. It took place in Brussels from 23 to 25 June 2008.
23. From 31 July to 31 August 2008, various French plays dealing with cultural and language exchange were presented in London by the **Exchange Theatre**, in association with the French Embassy in London and the French SACD, a writer's society in Paris. They aimed at producing unique works dealing with cultural exchange, multilingualism and translations.
24. The Working Group on Multicultural Library Service held the seminar “**Language and Cultural Identity**” in Sydney on 21 October 2008. The purpose of this seminar, organized in collaboration with the Public Libraries of New South Wales, was to highlight the role of public libraries, multicultural librarians and the Working Group on Multicultural Library Services in particular, in providing ESL, community languages resources and language learning resources and programmes.
25. The “**6th Asian Youth Forum International Youth Summit**” was organized by the AYF in Tokyo, Japan, from 28 October to 5 November 2008. In collaboration with the Pan Asian Conference, 70 to 100 university and college students from the Asian region joined the week-long cultural exchange programme. Workshops and activities focused on the following principles: youth development and leadership training, cross-cultural awareness and understanding, language communication and multilingualism and responsiveness to social issues.
26. On 22 May 2008, the forum “**Engaging with Languages Education in the 21st Century**” was held in Brisbane (Australia), to celebrate the International Year of Languages. In partnership with the Monash University, the University of Melbourne, the ACSSO, AFMLTA, the Griffith University, the University of Queensland and the Alliance française in Brisbane. The forum helped to stimulate discussion and debate on languages education in the media.
27. Organized by the Moscow Youth Esperanto Club EK MASI, the « **Third Moscow International Festival of Languages** » took place on 26 October 2008 in Moscow. This open non-commercial cultural event was made possible by the collaboration of the Institute of Foreign Languages of the Moscow State Pedagogical University and presented 50 different languages -- ancient and modern, rare and popular -- in 30-minute presentations.

6. LANGUAGES AND CYBERSPACE

The projects developed on this theme relate to the promotion of multilingualism and universal access to information in cyberspace, in the framework of efforts to build inclusive knowledge societies.

UNESCO and UN activities¹⁴

1. In its 32nd public meeting in June 2008 in Paris, ICANN has approved the introduction of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) in Internet addresses, which would enable millions of users to access the Internet using their own, non-Latin scripts. The introduction of IDN was an important step towards achieving multilingualism in cyberspace. UNESCO participated in the policy design within ICANN through its Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC). UNESCO, in its role as lead international agency for the promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity, was recognized as a key advisor to ICANN for linguistic issues.
2. From July 2008 to February 2009, an update of the study *Measuring Linguistic Diversity on the Internet* published by UNESCO in 2005 as one of the publications for the World Summit on the Information Society has been undertaken in the framework of the International Year of Languages. In collaboration with the Union Latina and the organization Funredes, the result of the study was published under the title ***Twelve years of experiences in measuring linguistic diversity on the Internet: balance and perspectives***. The study focused on different methodologies used over the past 12 years to create indicators and measure linguistic diversity on the Internet, findings and analysis of the past and current web language surveys as well as advantages and limitations of the existing measurement methodologies and future perspectives. The objective of the study was to share and disseminate, among the experts and researchers working in this area, different methodologies and practices as well as future perspectives for measuring linguistic diversity on the Internet, and monitoring the development of a multilingual cyberspace.
3. The project “**Open Training Platform**” (OTP), an initiative of UNESCO CI/INF (Paris), is an online collaborative hub for free learning resources in all development domains, especially language, to better serve local people knowledge and skills acquisition needs worldwide. The OTP represents an unprecedented collaborative effort hyper-linking to 2,300 resources constantly updated. It is enriched by over 1,600 members from all UN agencies and over 630 other institutions dedicated to development issues including those related to languages. The free learning resources are available in the domains of conversational languages courses, language teaching, language acquisition, language exams preparation and linguistics. It will be offered until 2014.
4. In June 2006, the UNESCO Office in Rabat, in co-operation with UNDP/ICTDAR, began creating, , the **Miftaah** memory stick, containing not only free and open source software, but also a storage capacity for the user’s personal data. Until June 2009, the Miftaah will also provide a customized and user-friendly interface, ensuring accessibility to this FOSS package in Arabic, English and French. This resource was made possible by the participation of the Centre de recherche sur l’information scientifique et technique (Alger), the Mohammadia School (Rabat) and the University of Birzeit (Palestine).

¹⁴ Multistakeholders projects coordinated by UNESCO or developed on the initiative of UNESCO programme sectors, as well as, in some cases, by other UN agencies.

5. In June 2008, the Internet Corporation for assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) – the organization responsible for the administration of the Domain Name System (DNS) – announced in Paris the implementation of new IDN both for the country code Top Level Domain Names (ccTLD) and for the General TLD. Using the UNESCO network, and in collaboration with UNESCWA, the Arab League and Affilias, the technical work for allowing the non-Latin script into the DNS required some important coordination among languages sharing the same script. The work undertaken by the ASIWG and UNESCO was to harmonize the Arabic, Pharsi and Urdu languages using the same Arabic script, and to create a common reference table for the implementation of Arabic TLD.
6. Specially devoted to the Maghreb Heritage, the CD Rom Tome II **Majaliss**, made available on 21 June 2008, enabled Maghreb countries easier access to public content through ICT. Made possible by the Rabat UNESCO Office and ISESCO, and with the collaboration of the Morocco Ministry of Education, the CD-ROM aimed at preserving the Arabic literate heritage and contained more than 50 literary works divided into four different themes and eighteen sub-themes, with some soundtracks specially prepared for the visually impaired..

Member States activities¹⁵

7. In September 2008, the UNESCO Russian Committee of the Information for all programme finalized a survey in over half of the regions of the Russian Federation on the implementation of multilingualism in cyberspace policy. The results have been published and discussed in the framework of various round tables and conferences.
8. A cultural evening: “**Sprache bauen welt - Language builds world**” launched the International Year of Languages 2008 in Austria, at the Radio Culture House of the Austrian Broadcast Corporation on the occasion of the International Day of Mother Language on 21 February 2008. The Austrian Commission for UNESCO and the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture invited journalists, the local UNESCO network, policy makers and other individuals. Authors of foreign origins read excerpts of their work and discussed with students, educators and scientists about their experience with multilingualism.

Civil society activities¹⁶

9. Organized by the North-Ossetian State Pedagogical Institute, the second Scientific International **Conference “Multilingual education as the basis for preservation of language heritage and cultural diversity of humanity”** was held on 12 and 13 May 2008 in Vladikavkaz (Republic of North Ossetia – Alania, Russian Federation)., The conference’s main goal was to acquaint scientists and cultural activists with UNESCO’s programmes and projects in the field of language and cultural legacy preservation.
10. Fully aware that information could become more accessible if available in the local language, the Kerala State IT mission, under the leadership of the Government of Kerala (India) and with the collaboration of the Society for Promotion of Alternate Computing and Employment (SPACE) of Akshaya, launched a campaign to promote

¹⁵ Initiatives mainly coordinated by the National Commissions for UNESCO.

¹⁶ Multistakeholders activities mainly coordinated by civil society organizations, universities and professional associations.

Malayalam Computing. The “**Malayalam Computing Campaign**”, took place from 21 February to 31 March 2008 in Trivandrum and included an awareness dimension as well as a capacity building initiative. The campaign has been carried out through Akshaya telecenter network and schools and also included training programs for the general public.

7. LANGUAGES, SOCIALIZATION AND INTEGRATION

The IYL initiatives listed in this section focus on the role of languages within major social transformations (e.g. international migration, increasing urbanization) and other critical social issues, such as exclusion, poverty or minorities rights.

Member States activities¹⁷

1. In the framework of the African Week organized at UNESCO headquarters (Paris) from 26 to 30 May 2008, the conference «**Les langues africaines, facteur d'intégration**” took place on 28 May, under the auspices of the Permanent Delegation of Kenya to UNESCO and the Africa Group. This event featured the Senegalese linguist and historian Pathé Diagne and Ayo Bamgbose from the African Languages Department of the Ibadan University (Nigeria).
2. The international conference “**Multilingualism in every-day life**”, which took place from 13 to 15 July 2008 in Vienna and organized by the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research and the Federal Government of Burgenland, aimed at identifying opportunities and good practices for multilingualism in relevant areas such as education, minorities, economy and media. Nearly 120 experts from 15 countries met to discuss the challenges and opportunities of multilingualism in everyday life.
3. On 20 February 2008, the Zambia National Commission for UNESCO, in partnership with the United National Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Information Centre organized in Lusaka the conference “**The role of language in development in Zambia**”.
4. On 18 November 2008, a national conference was organized in Wellington (New-Zealand) by the New Zealand Commission for UNESCO, in collaboration with the Maori Language Commission, the Human Rights Commission, the Ministry for Culture and Heritage of New Zealand, the Victoria University, AKTESOL, ACE, the Manukau Institute of Technology and the New Zealand Association of Language Teachers. Entitled **Diary of Events**, the conference focused on research and analysis to promote multilingualism.
5. The National Direction for Culture of Mozambique, in collaboration with the National Commission for UNESCO and different national and local partners, organized a series of event entitled “**Improving Language Diversity**”, including a workshop at the Ministry of education Headquarters in Maputo, on 21 February 2008 on the language policy development planned by the government.

¹⁷ Initiatives mainly coordinated by the National Commissions for UNESCO.

Civil society activities¹⁸

6. To unite the people, to bring immigrants (Africans) families and friends together to promote integration, friendship, solidarity and unity in the own languages, to attract the attention of the immigrant and wider public to African arts and culture through music/dance spoken words and other art forms, to contribute to the spiritual and physical well being of the people, to promote peace and understanding among various people, families and government and to emphasize the importance of arts and cultures within the sphere of politics, economics and social development, the second edition of the “**Unity Festival**” was organized by Alcala de Henares Municipality (Madrid) from 25 January to 6 August 2008.
7. Organized by the Druid films producers, and in collaboration with the TV studio RT Vojvodina, Magic Box Multimedia and Studio Matrix, the project “**Folk tales and legends from Vojvodina**”, which took place in Vojvodina (Serbia) on 15 and 16 September 2008, selected minority institutions and representatives, whose mission was to gather and preserve works of folk poetry, to produce ten different folk tales -- one for each nationality -- by ten different directors of different ages, visions and working technique.

8. LANGUAGES, INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND KNOW-HOW

The following YIL projects aim to empower local and indigenous peoples by advocating full recognition of their unique knowledge, know-how and practices, including their languages.

UNESCO and UN activities¹⁹

1. UNESCO Hanoi office holds, since March 2008 and till the end of 2009, a project entitled: « **Local Knowledge Education Project - Intersectoral platform** » which fosters the use of ethnic minority language through the development of vernacular language content and supplemental education resources drawing upon the ethnic group's oral traditions and expressions and other expressions of their cultural heritage. General objective of the project is to empower ethnic minority community by increasing their access and encouraging their active participation in sustainable social development.

Civil society activities²⁰

2. The international conference “**Inaugural Indigenous Language Revitalization and Teaching Conference, Mangatu – Gisborne**”, which took place on 27 September 2008 in Hamilton, New-Zealand, examined issues of language revitalization and

¹⁸ Multistakeholders activities mainly coordinated by civil society organizations, universities and professional associations.

¹⁹ Multistakeholders projects coordinated by UNESCO or developed on the initiative of UNESCO programme sectors, as well as, in some cases, by other UN agencies.

²⁰ Multistakeholders activities mainly coordinated by civil society organisations, universities and professional associations

teaching by showcasing Indigenous communities using the Te Ataarangi methodology. The keynote speakers were Professor Bernard Spolsky (Israel), Associate Professor Naomi Losch (Hawai'i) and Dr Katerina Te Heikoko Mataira (New Zealand). The conference, which was organized by Te Runanga o Te Ataarangi association, provided an opportunity to attend a language revitalization symposium based on the development of digital media as tools for language learning.

3. The research, thesis writing, oral defense, bookbinding and publishing in book form of the project “**Pagsasatubuanan: Modernistang Poetikang Bikolnon**”, a literary essay written in the Bikol-Naga language about Bikolnon poetry from the Bicol region of the Philippines, was carried out from 2 June to 2 September 2008 by Jose Jason L. Chancoco, from the Ateneo de Naga University (the Philippines), Department of Literature and Language Studies.
4. The “**Diplomado en lingüística descriptiva y empatía cultural**” was a 160-hour certificate course that took place from 7 July to 1 August 2008 in Mexico at the State University of San Luis Potosí in collaboration with the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Some 20 staff members and 61 students participated in the course with more than 15 distinct minority languages represented. The diploma was intended to offer introductory descriptive linguistic techniques and cultural appreciation to educators, students, bilingual school teachers or mother-tongue speakers of a minority language.

9. OTHER THEMES

Civil society activities

1. “**Between**”, an international graphic arts event organized by Simone Angelica Wolf, took place in Palermo (Italy) from 12 to 16 May 2008 brought together major designers and studios from various regions of the world to discuss a number of topics linked to design. It also offered an interdisciplinary overview by calling upon specialists in diverse fields (art, cinema, music, architecture, design, photography...), to share their thoughts, knowledge and experience.
2. On 26 and 27 July 2008, the Auteurs Associés de la Savoie et de l'Arc Alpin organized at Mont-Cenis (a mystique and symbolic reference place, between Paris and Rome) a meeting of French and Italian authors writing in their mother tongue, but also some authors writing in Occitan, Franco Provençal and other regional dialects. The “**10^e Rencontres Européennes du Livre et des Langues au Mont-Cenis**” aimed at raising awareness on and stimulating minority languages.
3. The International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC), celebrated its second **International AAC Awareness Month** in October 2008 in North Carolina (USA). The theme this year was AAC and Literacy. ISAAC, in partnership with its chapters in Australia, Canada, Denmark, Suomi-Finland, France, German-speaking Countries, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, and the USA, invited people to use AAC (of all languages, ages and skill levels) to write a short story, poem, or essay. The stories were made available on the Internet in a single collection.
4. The Facultad de Humanidades y Artes de Rosario (Santa Fe, Argentina) developed a two-phase capacity-building project “**Blindness, an obstacle that can be translated into sociocultural opportunities**”, to ensure that blind, visually impaired

and sighted participants experience equal access to educational, and employment opportunities. The first phase featured an elementary English course, while the second consisted of a English-Spanish translation workshop for young/adult blind and sighted people at the Rosario's Blind and Amblyopic People Unity Movement. The project, which began in 2007, was completed on 1 October 2008.

5. The international event entitled “**Social and Educational Impact of Language Assessment**”, which took place, in Cambridge (UK) from 10 to 12 April 2008, addressed the debate on the use of language tests in the context of migration and citizenship. Organized by the Cambridge University (ALTE) and with the participation of delegates from over 55 countries, this conference of awareness-raising explored a number of topics, including the development and assessment of language competence for study and work-related purposes.
6. Organized by the World Language Documentation Centre (WLDC) of Wales (UK), a major multidisciplinary conference celebrated 2008 as the International Year of Languages. This capacity-building event, entitled “**Global Understanding in Multilingual, Multimodal and Multimedia Contexts**” took place at the Bangor University Business Management Conference Centre, in North Wales, on 22 and 23 August 2008.
7. In the framework of the International Year of Languages, the label Diversum was launched in Paris on 1 December 2008. The **Diversum** label provides organizations with the guarantee that at least 25 per cent of their funds are invested in public or private stock for the benefit of linguistic and cultural diversity. Diversum is issued by linguo-responsible.org, an independent French association founded in 2006, to help incorporate languages and cultures into sustainable development programmes. The company has created a grading system for linguistic and cultural behaviours. This system analyzes 300 businesses and 300 public services in Europe, based on four distinct criteria. Every six months, a list of public or private issuers acting in the interests of cultural diversity is produced, using this grading system as a reference.
8. To celebrate International Mother Language Day, the bilingual conference “**La langue maternelle: un concept pluriel en evolution**” outlined the main issues related to mother languages and its consequences in various areas, such as language learning, the use of languages in the business world. Organized by the European Commission – DG Traduction, the conference was held in Brussels on 3 March 2008.
9. In order to ensure high-quality and grammatically correct Latvian language translations, a two-month study (from January to March 2008) entitled “**Language Use and the Quality of Latvian Language Translations**” was conducted by the translation centre Skrivanek Latvia and the State Language Agency in Riga (Latvia).

10. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS

1. The important mobilization raised by the International Year of languages with its restricted timeframe and resources proves that languages and multilingualism are a vital item on the international agenda, at both the governmental and non-governmental level.
2. Civil society demonstrated unexpected vitality and responsiveness during the Year. In many cases, civil society was able to act more quickly than institutions and governments, with innovative views that revealed new transdisciplinary areas of action.
3. The goals pursued by the different actors of the IYL were diverse and sometimes contradictory. For instance, the views on the role of vehicular languages as regards languages endangerment and social integration varied considerably. Accordingly, the shared interest for languages does not necessarily imply a shared vision.
4. It should be noted that accurate measurement of sustainable effects of the IYL, notably on national language policies implementation in all relevant domains (education, culture, media and administration etc.), will require an in-depth assessment throughout 2009, 2010 and 2011. To this end, a series of monitoring tools should be created, based on consolidated methodologies. Fund-raising and research will be a key factor in this regard. The *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* is certainly a good practice that will serve as a source of inspiration for the elaboration of international monitoring instruments.

Information, suggestions and corrections

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