

Esperanto and the UN

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Universala Esperanto-Asocio

Meetings in Tanzania and Burundi prepare for 2024 congress in Africa

Plans for the next World Congress of Esperanto, due to take place in early August 2024 in Arusha, Tanzania, moved a significant step forward in two recent meetings. A three-day seminar at the Arusha International Conference Centre from January 5 to January 7 brought together some 31 Esperanto organizers from Tanzania, Burundi, Kenya, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, along with experts from Germany, for three days of planning. The seminar led, among other concrete results, to the establishment of a local Esperanto organization in Arusha itself.

This meeting followed a seminar in Rumonge, Burundi, from December 23 to December 27, on technology and education, conducted in Esperanto and involving experts from a number of European and African countries, primarily Burundi. The seminar was the 107th in the Universal Esperanto Association's ongoing series of training seminars held in various parts of the world. In 2023 such seminars took place in Brazil, Burundi, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, and Togo; for 2024, seminars are planned in Albania, Armenia, Brazil, China, Croatia, Cuba, France, Poland, and Tanzania.



A multilingual education is essential, UEA declares

“Education, along with the transfer of knowledge, enriches human society in multiple ways – from individual well-being and citizenship to economic growth, reduction of inequality and social unity,” according to the Universal Esperanto Association's message on the occasion of the International Day of Education, 24 January, 2024.

Pointing out that UNESCO's theme for 2024 is “Learning for Lasting Peace,” the UEA's message stresses that education “is a human right and a public responsibility.” Good education “develops knowledge and cultivates in the learners values, attitudes, capabilities and practices that allow them to become agents of peace in their communities. Ongoing peace requires the realization of human rights, democratic rule, dialogue, solidarity, and cooperation.”

UEA's message stresses that "for full realisation of these goals, a multilingual education is essential: literacy in the mother tongue; learning and regular use of several languages, including those in use in the country in question; intercultural understanding through languages internationally known; and lifelong learning. Multilingualism contributes significantly to an international understanding and to learning the art and science of living together."

In a world increasingly divided, finding ways of bridging languages and respecting diversity is more important than ever, says UEA. In its message, UEA stresses the value of the International Language Esperanto but, above all, calls for any and all means of crossing language barriers and reducing unfair discrimination based on the languages that people speak.

Hungary: A distinguished Esperanto history

A ceremony in Mosonmagyaróvár, Hungary, in November 2023 marked the hundredth anniversary of the death of Esperanto pioneer Sándor Giesswein, president (1911-1923) of the Hungarian Esperanto Society, member of parliament, and a founder of the cultural movement leading to the development of the Hungarian school of writers, among them Kálmán Kalocsay and Gyula Baghy, who dominated Esperanto literature in the 1920s and 1930s. In his remarks on the occasion, István Szabolcs, former president of the Hungarian Esperanto Association, stressed Giesswein's advocacy of foreign language learning and of Esperanto as the particular ally of small and linguistically isolated nations. <https://esperantohe.hu/aleksandro-giesswein-100a-datreveno/>

The year 2024 also marks the centennial of the birth of István Szerdahelyi, professor of Esperanto at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, and among the founders of the modern field of Esperanto studies.

China: Esperanto Museum and Library celebrates ten years

President of UEA Prof. Duncan Charters was featured speaker at the tenth anniversary celebration of the International Esperanto Museum at Zaozhuang University, China, in December. The museum and library constitute one of the most complete collections of Esperanto materials in East Asia, along with the collection of the Japanese Esperanto Institute, in Tokyo. Dr Charters' visit to China also included discussions with UEA affiliate the Chinese Esperanto League, publisher of the Esperanto edition of the *UNESCO Courier* and host of two World Congresses of Esperanto, in 1986 and 2004.

The world's largest Esperanto collections are housed in the national libraries of Austria (Vienna) and Poland (Warsaw). The collection in Warsaw, the Hodler Library of the Universal Esperanto Association, is now open to the public and readily accessible – a significant advance on its formerly relative inaccessibility at UEA's headquarters in the Netherlands.

***Neniam plu*: Message of the Universal Esperanto Association on the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust**

Each year, January 27 is recognized across the world as Holocaust Memorial Day, memorialized by the United Nations as a day of special observance. The Universal Esperanto Association joins with the United Nations in noting this anniversary and in mourning the victims of the Holocaust. Some six million Jews, as many as half a million Roma, and massive numbers of disabled people, alleged degenerates, prisoners of war, and various ethnic and religious groups were systematically murdered because of unscientific and atavistic theories falsely based on heredity but in reality born of hatred.

Among the many victims were almost the entire family of L.L. Zamenhof, the founder of Esperanto. Only one of his grandchildren survived. At the first congress of speakers of the International Language Esperanto, in France in 1905, Zamenhof declared: “today we meet, not as French with English, Russians with Poles, but as people with people”. Throughout his life, Zamenhof believed in the basic humanity of all people, regardless of their backgrounds and ancestry. It was this principle – that we are all human beings, entitled to dignity, entitled to be valued for our humanity, entitled to live in harmony with others – that was lost in the tragedy of the Holocaust.

We in the Esperanto movement, speakers of a common language from all across the world, mourn those who died and pledge to practise that humanity, that respect for all people, that was lost in this twentieth-century tragedy and that haunts human relations even today. “*Neniam plu*”, “never again”, we declare. But declarations may not be enough: finding the human in all human beings must be a basic principle if we are ever to overcome the challenges that humanity faces today. We must work, converse, and reason together if humanity is to prevail.

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