



Message of the Universal Esperanto Association on International Education Day, 24 January 2025

Education, human rights and linguistic justice... On the occasion of International Education Day, we draw attention to the strong connections among these three values. Education is a human right: Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that elementary education should be free and compulsory, and that “technical and professional education shall be made generally available ... to all on the basis of merit.” Through education we acquire the capability to understand, demand and enjoy the other human rights.

Education is imparted through language: one must know a given language to be educated in it. This raises a fundamental question: in what languages should children learn? Learning, particularly at the elementary level, should take place preferably in the learner’s mother language, or, at the very least, the learner, as a matter of right, should be given the means needed to achieve full understanding of the language of instruction.

A first priority of the educational establishment is therefore delivery of instruction in languages understood by the learners: effective education cannot exist without linguistic justice and full human rights cannot exist without education.

Only respect for everyone’s languages can advance that “full development of the human personality” and promote the “understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups,” sought by this same Article 26 of the Universal Declaration.

Linguistic Human Rights are fundamental to such education, and also function as a way to preserve human decision-making capabilities in a world of automation and artificial intelligence. A fully educated citizenry is essential for our future.

In December 2024, in an international conference in Montevideo, Uruguay, the Universal Esperanto Association celebrated the 70th anniversary of UNESCO’s resolution of 1954 that established relations between the Universal Esperanto Association and UNESCO, and, as a result, cooperation between the two organizations on human rights. On the occasion of International Education Day 2025, we pledge our continuing collaboration for education in all languages, and for the understanding and proximity of the peoples of the world through the International Language Esperanto.