Languages matter!

Understanding Cultures through Language

2008 International Year of Languages

Program Administrator: Wajahat Nassar

Final Report

9 July - 4 August 2008

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Acknowledgements

I am thankful to ALMIGHTY ALLAH, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful for guiding me and providing me a chance to complete this second e-course and this final report.

I would further like to express my gratitude to UNESCO and the Director-General Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura for initiating such a year and my sincere gratitude to Mauro Rosi, the Intersectoral focal point for languages, Culture Sector for guiding me and supporting me throughout the life of the project.

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Especially, I would like to give my special thanks to my mother Farzana whose patient love and support has enabled me to complete this work.

Preface

The project administrator and the participants appreciate the importance of language when seen as a tool to accept the diversity of the human society. The e-course identified that languages are essential and lifeline to the identification of indigenous groups for a peaceful society to prevail, and to bring changes at an increased level. It also identified that languages play an important role in the achievement of the MDGs especially the education for all.

The main objective of the e-course was to promote the global message of diversity in culture through the use of the most modern means of communication.

The final project also identified that many of the world languages are endangered and thus inspired the participants to start similar programmes in their communities, and help spread the core message of acceptance of all. Only if multilingualism is fully accepted can all languages find their place in our globalized world.

The International Year of Languages 2008 provides a unique opportunity to make decisive progress towards achieving these goals.

Wajahat Nassar

Lahore
10 August 2008

Understanding Cultures through Language

9 July - 4 August 2008

1. Introduction

The course gathered a diverse pool of around 15 applicants, form which the best and the most suitable 10 were selected for the course. The applicants were found to be from different educational levels. The course aimed to help promote the UNESCO 2008 International Year of languages through capacity building.

The **three-week project** inquired from the young people about what their cultures and languages mean to them and how the language supports their cultural heritage. Discussion on diversity and about the international year of languages, its aims and the endangered languages were also conducted. The participants provided an insight into their cultures by submitting their stories, literature and other materials for discussion.

1.1 Course Organization

The course was organized online and was a stand-alone, non-partnership project only under the international year of languages 2008.

1.2 Background

The UN General Assembly proclaimed the year 2008 as the International year of languages, identifying that multilingualism promotes unity in diversity and international understanding. This diversity at a larger scale aims for cultural diversity and a mean of promoting and protecting cultures globally.

The e-course identified that the message of cultural diversity was important and needed to be spread through the most modern means of communication. The e-course promoted the message through the use of internet and IT among the young people.

2. Timeframe

The project was divided into the following parts and the timeline.

July 1 – July 8, 2008	Applications invited for the project.
July 9, 2008	Start of the Project
July 9, 2008- July 25, 2008	Educating about the international year of languages
July 26, 2008- August 4, 2008	Short stories

3. Course Participants

Name	Registration Number	Country
Daniel Serrano de Rejil	2008-UCL-001	Mexico
Remmy Shawa M	2008-UCL-002	Zambia
Dipendra K.C.	2008-UCL-003	Nepal
Kateregga Dennis	2008-UCL-004	Uganda
Georgette Harvey	2008-UCL-005	Jamaica
Morteza Moshir Sinaei	2008-UCL-006	Iran
Abdul-Kareem M. Mohammed.	2008-UCL-007	Ghana
George Oboli	2008-UCL-008	Nigeria
Balogun Kasim	2008-UCL-009	Nigeria
Gia Gaspard Taylor	2008-UCL-010	Trinidad and Tobago

4. Methodology for the project

4.1 Educating about the international year of languages:

The participants were provided with the necessary information for the IYL 2008 and the main points were highlighted. The participants were then asked to write a short text on the IYL2008.

4.2 Short Stories:

The participants were asked to submit short stories on their culture and other elements of their daily life and culture to analyse their usage of the language and understand their cultures. The assignments were shared with all the participants and they were requested to contemplate and deliberate on the short stories, as to how the stories reflected each of the cultures.

The certificates were awarded to all the participants of the course at the end.
The participants had requested that the certificates be mailed to them, but due to the lack of funding, it could not be done and they were provided certificates in electronic format.

5. Evaluation

Purpose of evaluation:
The purpose of the evaluation is to provide UNESCO the progress and the achievements of the project. The evaluation report will provide them with an insight as to what the project has gained. The report will outline the recommendations for changes if required.

5.1 Participant's evaluation
An online survey was conducted using the services of the online surveying technologies provided by Surveymonkey.com, the survey was secretly conducted so that the results of the evaluation would be more transparent.[1]

5.2 Facilitator's evaluation:
Candidates were selected on merit and seeing their vigour for participating in such a project. The candidates presented their stories and their cultures in a well balanced manner. Future projects such as this one, should be started with the cooperation of an organization and certificates could be provided to recruit more students. The general aims of the course were achieved with the target of 10 students achieved.

6. Recommendations
More funding could be secured to have certified courses, and also face-to-face course to bring the message of diversity of the International Year of Languages 2008 to more people worldwide.

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[1] See results of the evaluation in Appendix VI.

Appendices

Appendix I
Application form

Application Form for Understanding Cultures through Language

Deadline: July 8, 2008

Section 1 – Participant Information		For Official Use
Name:	**Age:**	**Decision**
Gender:	**TIG Username:**	☐ Selected
City:	**Country:**	☐ Not Selected
Email Address:		

	For Official Use
Occupation Code:	**Registration Number**
Educational Level Code:	**2008-UCL-**

Section 2 – Additional Information
1. Give a short bio of yourself:
2. Please share why you are interested in this project:
3.Why do you think the international year is important:
4. How do you aim to contribute to this project:

Section 3-Declaration:

I declare that I will stand to all the agreements as made follows and if made hereafter and have been subsequently notified to me:

1. I will submit the assignments within time;
2. I will not engage in activities that are not related to the theme of the project;
3. I will not use any language that degrades any person, entity, organization and state;
4. I am liable to be excluded from the group, if I use the project in any manner to promote anger, fear and extremism against any state.
5. I have been member has been notified this;
6. I will contribute fully and engage with the project administrator, if requested, after the project has been closed.
7. The project administrator is not responsible for the actions of the members.
8. My name will be used as a signature to confirm my understanding of the terms.

Signed:	Place:	Dated:

Occupation Codes:

Codes	Occupation
01	Student
02	Volunteer
03	Youth Leader
04	Organizational Leader
99	Other

Educational Codes:

Codes	Educational Level
01	No formal education
02	Some elementary school
03	Completed elementary school
04	Some high/school/Secondary school
05	Completed high school/Secondary School
06	Some College/University
07	Completed College/University
08	Postgraduate degree

Appendix II

Approval notification

Whereas, it is expedient to add ----------------------------- to the project group 'Understanding Cultures through languages', the following articles are to be observed.

1. The approved member must submit the assignments within time;
2. The member must not engage in activities that are not related to the theme of the project;
3. No use of language that degrades any person, entity, organization and state will be accepted at any cost;
4. The approved member is liable to be excluded from the group, if he/she uses the project in any manner to promote anger, fear and extremism against any state.
5. The approved member has been notified this;
6. If the approved member does not agree to these terms he may change his/her decision and leave the project within 3 days (from approval), otherwise the member is taken to have understood the terms. The first 'blog' on the project site indicates an approval.
7. The member must contribute fully and engage with the project administrator, if requested, after the project has been closed.
8. The project administrator does not take into account the social/religious/political background of the person and selects people on merit only.
9. The project administrator is not responsible for the actions of the members.

DISCLAIMER: The e-course is strictly the project manager's project and is not under a contract with UNESCO or any UN body. The project manager is not responsible for the content of the work submitted by the participants. Selection of the participants is final and no correspondence will be entered into. The project and the manager cannot be held responsible under any law.

Appendix III
Assignments
Assignment 1

Write a short story or essay (which ever you think fits your skills) which consists essentially of the following elements:

- **Your life (fiction or non-fiction)**
- **Your locality**
- **The culture of your country**
- **Food**
- **Music**
- **Dressing**
- **Art**
- **Literature**

And how all of the above effects your daily life.

Appendix IV
Expulsion Notice
Expulsion Notification

Whereas, it is expedient to expel ---------------------- from the project group 'Understanding Cultures through Languages ', the following articles are to be observed.

1. The expelled member is no longer allowed into the project or the group.
2. The expelled member is not allowed the future privileges of the project or the group.
3. The expelled member has been excluded due to his/her negligence of the assignments, which was clearly stated in the application and the approval notification.
4. The project administrator is not responsible for the actions of the members.
5. The expelled member has been notified of this expulsion.

DISCLAIMER: The e-course is strictly the project manager's project and is not under a contract with UNESCO or any UN body. The project manager is not responsible for the content of the work submitted by the participants. Selection of the participants is final and no correspondence will be entered into. The project and the manager cannot be held responsible under any law. The decision of the project manager is final and no future correspondence in this regard will be entered into. The decision cannot be challenged in any court of law.

Appendix V
Evaluation form

For each of the question, please select the option that most accurately reflects your experience during the e-course

1. The course achieved its aims?
○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neutral
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

2. I have found the course motivating?
○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neutral
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

3. I was provided with enough information to complete my assignments?
○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neutral
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

4. My course facilitator made a real effort to understand the difficulties I face?
○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neutral
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

5. I had appropriate support from the course facilitator?
○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neutral
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

6. It was a good opportunity to become involved with other cultures?
○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neutral
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

7. The main objectives of the International Year of Languages were covered?
○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neutral
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

8. Overall, I am satisfied with the course?
○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neutral
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

9. It was a good idea, to conduct the course online?
○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neutral
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

10. The planning and the structure of the course were satisfactory?
○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neutral
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

Appendix VI
Results of evaluation

An online survey was conducted using the services of the online surveying technologies provided by Surveymonkey.com. The results suggested a great success for the e-course and proved that the e-course had achieved its aims.

PERCENATGE PER QUESTION OF THE STUDENT EVALUTION[2]

1. The course achieved its aims
90% of the participants strongly said that the course had achieved its aims. The 10% only agreed to the statement. The main reason for the 10% indicated was that the online meeting suggested could not take place due to the unavailability of an overall platform.

2. I have found the course motivating
80% of the participants strongly said that the course was motivating. The 20% only agreed to the statement, no reasons have come to surface for this.

3. I was provided with enough information to complete my assignments?
100% of the participants strongly agreed to the statement, showing the overall success of the course delivery.

4. My course facilitator made a real effort to understand the difficulties I face?
80 % of the participants strongly agreed to the statement. Only students with genuine problems were allowed to submit assignments at a later stage.

5. I had appropriate support from the course facilitator?
100% of the participants strongly said that they were provided with support from the facilitator towards the completion of their assignments.

6. It was a good opportunity to become involved with other cultures
80% strongly agreed that the e-course gave them a platform to become involved with other cultures; this was made possible by allowing students to read stories from other participants and comment on them, as to how the stories have changed the perception or the general picture of the different citizens in the project. 20% only agreed as no online meeting was formulated for the discussions to be more vibrant.

7. The main objectives of the International Year of Languages were covered?
100% of the participants strongly said that the course had achieved the main objectives of the international year of languages, which is to bring the people

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[2] The percentages show the 'Strongly Agree' percentages only

closer and understand the need to protect the languages. The final project was set to induce some assessment of their endangered language.

8. Overall, I am satisfied with the course?
90% strongly said that they were satisfied with the course

9. It was a good idea, to conduct the course online?
100% of the participants strongly said that it was a good idea to conduct the course online.

10. The planning and the structure of the course were satisfactory?
100% of the participants strongly said that the course was planned and structured in a satisfactory method.