



Putting SDG 4 Back on Track After COVID-19

The Essential Role of Multilingualism in Education

11 July 2022

High-Level Political Forum Side Event

This event brings together leading experts in the field of language education to address what it means in practice to take a multilingual perspective on the targets of SDG 4. Drawing upon empirical research and documented best practices, they demonstrate how schools can cultivate multilingual resources to achieve inclusive and equitable education that empowers students as global citizens prepared for participation in social, economic, and political life.



Pedagogical Translanguaging to Make the Most of Multilingualism
Professor Jasone Cenoz
University of the Basque Country, UPV/EHU



Multilingualism as a Resource for Learning and a Decolonial Strategy
Dr. Xolisa Guzula
University of Capetown, School of Education



Foundation, Door and Bridge: Esperanto and the Multilingual Learner
Professor Mark Fettes
Simon Fraser University, Faculty of Education

Moderated by Professor Humphrey Tonkin and Professor Francis M. Hult with welcoming remarks by Mr. Guillermo Escribano, Director General for the Spanish Language around the World at the Foreign Affairs Ministry of Spain.



Online | Register [Here](#) by 10 July



13:00-14:30 – New York 19:00-20:30 – Geneva
20:00-21:30 – Nairobi 00:00-01:30 – Bangkok

Hosted by



Permanent Mission
of Spain to the
United Nations

Putting SDG 4 Back on Track After COVID-19: The Essential Role of Multilingualism in Education

Even before COVID-19, alarms were sounded that progress on SDG 4 was too slow and that the achievement of its targets by 2030 was in jeopardy. Linguistic inequality in access to education has been a key factor. The 2016 Global Education Monitoring Report showed that 40% of the global population was not accessing education in a language they understand. The onset of the pandemic exacerbated such inequalities as over 1.6 billion learners experienced school closures, cutting them off from language and literacy learning opportunities. Moreover, the digital divide prevented vulnerable populations, especially in least developed countries, from accessing online education, including resources for language development. In order to achieve inclusive and equitable education for linguistically diverse student populations, multilingualism must be foregrounded in post-pandemic educational planning.

Accordingly, this side event focuses on recommendations for the role of languages in education put forth in *Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education*, the UNESCO report on the Futures of Education initiative. Specifically, it brings together leading experts in the field of language education from diverse global contexts who address what it means in practice to take a multilingual perspective on the targets of SDG 4. Drawing upon empirical research and documented best practices, they demonstrate how schools can cultivate multilingual resources, including mother tongues, major world languages, national and regional languages, Indigenous languages, and international languages like Esperanto to achieve inclusive and equitable education that empowers students as global citizens prepared for participation in social, economic, and political life.

Programme

13:00-13:05 - *Sign In*

13:05-13:07 – *Welcoming Remarks*

Professor Francis M. Hult on behalf of the NGO Committee on Language and Languages

13:07-13:10 – *Welcoming Remarks*

Mr. Guillermo Escribano on behalf of Spanish Language around the World, Foreign Affairs Ministry of Spain

13:10-13:12 – *Welcoming Remarks*

Professor Humphrey Tonkin on behalf of the Universal Esperanto Association

13:12-13:22 – *Multilingualism and SDG 4*

Professor Francis M. Hult

13:22-13:32 - *Pedagogical Translanguaging to Make the Most of Multilingualism*

Professor Jasone Cenoz

13:32-13:42 - *Discussion*

13:42-13:52 - *Multilingualism as a Resource for Learning and a Decolonial Strategy*

Dr. Xolisa Guzula

13:52-14:02 - *Discussion*

14:02-14:12 - *Foundation, Door and Bridge: Esperanto and the Multilingual Learner*

Professor Mark Fettes

14:12-14:22 - *Discussion*

14:22-14:30 – *Concluding Reflection*

Professor Humphrey Tonkin