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Esperantic Studies Foundation Annual Report for 2010

Table of contents

PRESIDENT'S LETTER 2

PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES 4

EDUCATION 4

lernu! (www.lernu.net) 4

SES (www.lernu.net/ses) 4

Lingvohelpilo (lingvohelpilo.ikso.net) 5

edukado.net (www.edukado.net) 5

NASK (North American Esperanto Institute) (www.esperanto.org/nask) 6

Esperanto Aktuale (aktuale.info) 6

Interlinguistics Certificate Program 6

Springboard to Languages Project 7

Documentary Film Project 7

INTERLINGUAL RESEARCH 7

Interlinguistics Support Fund 7

Research Awards 8

Conferences 8

Information for Interlinguists 9

OPERATIONS 9

APPENDIX : THE FOUNDATION'S ADVISORY BOARD 11

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President's letter

Finding Direction

In our report for the past calendar year, we characterized 2009 as a year of choices – mostly, hard choices brought on by the need to reduce spending to match a diminished portfolio. Whereas in previous years we had been able to fund new initiatives, we were obliged to limit our expenditures largely to the support of ongoing projects. A casualty of this decision was our research program, because it largely underwrote grants of short duration, whose funding was routinely recycled to support new grants each year. Unfortunately we had to shift most of these resources elsewhere. We also had to limit our participation in, and organization of, conferences and special events.

In the year 2010 we were able to stabilize the Foundation and begin to think once again about expanding our efforts in the future. We continued to make an annual grant to the Center for Research and Documentation on World Language Problems (CED), publisher of record for the journal *Language Problems and Language Planning*, and the center in turn made small grants to support research and publication. We also participated in a number of conferences and organized one or two events of our own. More such activity will become possible when our efforts to generate new forms of revenue begin to bear fruit and make us less dependent on income from endowment.

Our overall objectives remain the same. They include: (1) improving the visibility and prestige of Esperanto as a research topic and teaching subject, (2) focusing attention and academic resources on the study of Esperanto and of interlingual communication generally, (3) establishing an intellectual community of teachers and researchers in higher education committed to the above goals, and (4) improving and expanding the operational capacity of the foundation itself. Each of these objectives was addressed in a number of ways in the course of the year:

(1) Improving the visibility and prestige of Esperanto as a research topic and teaching subject. The Foundation helped support participation in the annual Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture Since 1900, organizing a session on Esperanto literature and culture. As already noted, the Foundation continues to underwrite the CED Research Fund, which provides small grants to scholars and researchers. It also provides funding for edukado.net, a web-based community of educators in and on

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Esperanto, which houses a wide variety of materials and resources to assist in the teaching of Esperanto.

(2) Focusing attention and academic resources on the study of Esperanto and of interlingual communication generally. The foundation supports the annual North American Summer Esperanto Institute (NASK) at the University of California San Diego which in 2010 reached its forty-first year. It also supports web-based learning initiatives such as Lernu.net. The ongoing support of ESF has allowed lernu.net not only to attract a considerable following (in terms of sheer numbers, it is now the most populous Esperanto activity in the world) but also to establish itself as an Esperanto-based networking site, and, increasingly, to generate its own resources.

(3) Establishing an intellectual community of teachers and researchers in higher education committed to the above goals. The participation of ESF in the Louisville Conference (see above) helped raise the visibility of the Foundation in scholarly circles, as did ESF's support for a panel at the Economic Forum in Krynica (Poland) in September, and its hosting of the *Informilo por Interlingvistoj* (Information for Interlinguists, IfI) on its website. The Foundation has also created a list of Esperanto-speaking academics in North America and is increasingly using its website to report on new activities of interest to this constituency.

(4) Improving and expanding the operational capacity of the foundation itself. With a new administrator, Joel Amis, in place (see below), with lernu.net having reached a turning point in its development, with edukado.net having achieved a measure of independence, and with NASK about to embark on a new curriculum and structure, the Foundation is now considering a new stage in its development, with more emphasis on its own operations (directed at creating services designed to grow the Esperanto movement as a whole and afford new opportunities for research and teaching) and somewhat less emphasis on traditional grant-making. These new initiatives will form the central element in its planning efforts in the year 2011.

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PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

EDUCATION

lernu! (www.lernu.net)

Multi-year support of this free, web-based language-learning environment has helped make it the largest and most successful community of Esperanto learners. With some 95,000 registered users as of the end of 2010, it is expected to surpass 100,000 registered users in May-June, 2011. The website's team is planning a competition and an advertisement campaign to mark this unique event. In an average week, sign-ins average between 7000 and 8000, while page visits total some 100,000 daily, by approximately 6000 visitors. At Lernu.net, one may find information about Esperanto in 36 languages. The website's team includes about 200 volunteer assistants who provide translations, language tutoring to the students, improve the dictionary, contribute content, as well as provide programming, making sure the website works smoothly. In addition to the language courses and instructional material (such as grammar exercises, tests and exams), the site provides an opportunity to practically use Esperanto by exchanging private messages with other users, or communicating via chats and forums. The creators of the website organize an annual "live" meeting in Europe (see below).

Following several years of rapid development, the site has undergone only minor updates and additions in 2009-2010. There is a clear need for ongoing investment and coordination. New technologies, such as the grammar checker Lingvohelpilo (see below), are making it possible to extend the site's functionality into new areas. While the community and its activities continue to expand, maintenance and redesign require constant attention. Fortunately, E@I, the organization that operates the site, also has experience in the design of other language-teaching sites.

SES (www.lernu.net/ses)

In 2010, there took place yet another successful convention of creators and users of *lernu!*: 3rd session of Summer Esperanto Studies (SES) in Piešťany (Slovakia), with 190 participants. SES 2011 will take place in July-August in Nitra, Slovakia, and various educational activities are planned: classes, exams, etc., as well as a meeting dedicated to the technical aspects of the website, such as translation.

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Lingvohelpilo (lingvohelpilo.ikso.net)

An innovative technology project supported by ESF took a significant step toward completion in 2010. More than two years of research and development led by Danish computational linguist Eckhard Bick, in collaboration with members of E@I including Bertilo Wennergren and Sonja Petrović Lundberg, culminated in the beta testing phase of an automated Esperanto grammar checker, Lingvohelpilo. The software will not only check texts for possible errors, but will also suggest solutions and provide explanations for grammar choices. The project was inspired by the needs of Lernu learners and language tutors, and was developed on the basis of extensive corpus analysis and Wennergren's prior work on a concise modern grammar of Esperanto for Lernu. As a next step, the intention is to integrate Lingvohelpilo with the language tutor interface in Lernu, and to collect data on typical learner errors to enable its ongoing refinement.

edukado.net (www.edukado.net)

Edukado.net, an initiative of ESF, was developed as a global instructional resource site for teachers and learners of Esperanto. The site is now in its third iteration, having been recently redesigned and reconstructed (by Yevgeniy Gaus) with the aid of financial contributions from users. ESF funding has assisted in editorial work and in the compilation of data for new elements, among them a bibliography of dissertations relating to Esperanto and interlinguistics. An international team of educators and programmers has expanded edukado.net to include an interactive catalog of approx. 450 publications related to the teaching of Esperanto, and a database of more than 700 downloadable resources (for example, different types of exercises at various language skill levels, tests, and sound files) contributed by participating educators. Appropriate items can be found rapidly by the use of a set of search functions. Over the past four years, material from the exercises has been downloaded over 200,000 times.

The site's "reading room" contains a rich collection of articles related to pedagogy and teaching methods. Edukado.net also includes a calendar of courses, a list of schools where Esperanto is taught, and a "workshop" where colleagues can exchange ideas, course materials, and lesson plans. The correspondence service is also popular for those seeking contacts with Esperanto speakers from other countries and/or cultures. There is a notice board, a discussion forum, and a service for providing responses to questions about methodology or grammar.

In April 2011, edukado.net will launch RITE (<http://edukado.net/rite>), a collection of on-line course material consisting of 100 study units in seven broad fields. Its goal is to improve teaching methodology using both pre-programmed material and also the active support of experts in the field through distance learning. Edukado.net cooperates with the Universal Esperanto Association and has become the designated agent for the conducting of examinations using the Common European Framework of Reference (<http://edukado.net/ekzamenoj/ker>).

Edukado.net has a 2000-member "community" whose participants (from more than 100 countries) can request notification about newly published materials, maintaining current

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knowledge of available resources. At international meetings and congresses the team of edukado.net regularly teaches popular language courses at various levels. Dr. Katalin Kováts, a native of Hungary resident in the Netherlands, directs the site.

Between October and December 2010, the site had 22,199 visits from 129 countries. France, Brazil, Hungary and Poland occupied the leading position. Visitors visited 19,963 pages 154,166 times.

NASK (North American Esperanto Institute) (www.esperanto.org/nask)

ESF has been supporting this unique 3-week immersion program since 1998 and it has become a core educational priority for the foundation. NASK's 2010 session took place in July at the University of California San Diego – the fourth year of its return to the West Coast after several years in Brattleboro, Vermont. The NASK program is an example of an educational project that supports the improvement of the teaching and learning of Esperanto, with a specific North American focus. In 2011 the format of NASK will change. Instead of the usual three week duration, NASK will offer a short seven day intensive Esperanto course. This change was made in order to accommodate students unable to participate in a longer session.

Esperanto Aktuale (aktuale.info)

To assist in the development of a comprehensive website on all aspects of Esperanto and its context, the foundation has provided support to the E@I team, which is developing the site. Esperanto Aktuale is intended to be a multilingual information portal about Esperanto and the global Esperanto movement. The website will focus on providing news and information to the non-Esperanto public. The conceptual design and building of the website continued throughout 2010. Aktuale.info will be fully integrated and compatible with *Lernu.net*. Progress on this project is documented on the Aktuale Wiki at <http://aktuale.info/>. Its launch is planned for 2011.

Interlinguistics Certificate Program

Reports on individual sessions at:

Feb. 2010: <http://www.staff.amu.edu.pl/~interl/raportoj/r2010feb.html>

Sept. 2010: <http://edukado.net/novajhoj?id=53>

Jan. 2011: <http://edukado.net/novajhoj?id=100>

ESF continued to provide scholarship support for students enrolled in the Interlinguistics certificate program at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland. Now in its twelfth year, the two-year non-residential program involves short, intensive study sessions twice yearly.

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Springboard to Languages Project

The Springboard to Languages Project is an effort to introduce Esperanto in selected primary schools in the UK as part of the country's new language policy. An important component of the project is the evaluation of students' language learning, with an emphasis on the propedeutic effects of Esperanto language study preceding French language study. ESF provided a final grant to the project in 2010.

Documentary Film Project

In 2006 ESF agreed to provide limited funding to support a documentary film project on Esperanto produced by Sam Green, whose earlier documentary *The Weather Underground* was nominated for an Academy Award. A second grant was awarded in 2007. Mr. Green and his team visited the 2006 World Esperanto Congress in Florence and the 2007 Congress in Yokohama. *Utopia in Four Movements*, the first of two planned documentaries, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and was very well received. The second documentary is now in the final editing phase and was presented in preliminary form at a symposium in New York on December 15, 2010 (see below).

INTERLINGUAL RESEARCH

Interlinguistics Support Fund

This fund was established, under the leadership of Detlev Blanke (Germany), in 2007 to support small grants for publications, conferences, and similar activities. The sum of \$7,000 was approved for this fund in 2010. Proposals are reviewed and recommended by a three-person committee consisting of Dr. Blanke, Dr. Christer Kiselman (Sweden) and Mr. Osmo Buller (Netherlands). A grant in 2008 to Alexander Korzhenkov (Russia) for his biography of Zamenhof helped bring about its publication in 2009, to much critical acclaim. ESF has continued to take an interest in the biography, and an abridged English-language version, translated by former ESF board member Ian Richmond, appeared in New York in 2010, published by Mondial. The translation can also be read on the ESF website at

<http://www.esperantic.org/en/communications/articles>. Grants made in 2010 were as follows:

- Support for publication of essay collection by Karl-Hermann Simon on forestry terminology.
- Support for publication of second edition of the biography of Zamenhof by Alexander Korzhenkov.
- Support of project for the analysis of Zamenhof's address collections of early Esperantists, by Marek Blahuš (to be presented at the 34th Esperantological Conference

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in Copenhagen during the World Esperanto Congress, 2011, as well as published in paper form)

- Support for CDELI, the Center for Documentation and Research on International Languages, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland
- Support of Esperanto-Gesellschaft Südharz for a computerized Esperanto Platform in the Herzberg Public Museum, Herzberg, Germany.

Research Awards

(1) In 2008 the Foundation provided a grant to the Center for Comparative Literature and Society at Columbia University for a residency by Afrikaans poet Antjie Krog in connection with the Center's interest in translation. Shortly before her return to South Africa, Ms. Krog, along with Rosalind Morris (anthropology, Columbia) and Humphrey Tonkin, participated in a recorded conversation on the South African language situation that subsequently appeared in the volume *The Translator as Mediator* (ed. Humphrey Tonkin and Maria Esposito Frank), a volume in the series *Studies in World Language Problems*, published in 2010 (Amsterdam: Benjamins). Much of the rest of the material in this volume resulted from an earlier ESF grant to the University of Hartford for a symposium on translation. More info: http://www.benjamins.com/cgi-bin/t_articles.cgi?bookid=WLP%203&artid=557138446

(2) Nancy Schweda Nicholson (University of Delaware), having completed work on her project on interpretation at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague, published some of its findings in *The Translator as Mediator* (see above).

(3) The Foundation provided partial funding for research connected with a project for translating children's books into Bengali and several European languages, using Esperanto as a bridge. Project leaders Probal Dasgupta, Spomenka Štimec, and Zlatko Tišljar completed the project early in 2010. Probal Dasgupta is in the process of publishing several articles derived from his work on the project.

Conferences

(1) In February, ESF organized a panel on Esperanto at the Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture Since 1900. For the 2011 conference this participation will extend not only to a special session on Esperanto literature but also to a two-day seminar on that topic in the days following the conference.

(2) ESF continues to fund an award presented at the annual conference of CALICO (Computer-Assisted Language Instruction).

(3) ESF provided support to the European Esperanto Union for a panel at the Economic Forum in Krynica, Poland.

(4) A grant from the Foundation supported "From Zamenhof to Soros," a symposium organized by the New York Office of the Universal Esperanto Association. The symposium provided a historical overview of the beginning period of Esperanto, organized in order to recognize the publication of two new books: the English language biography of Zamenhof (see above) and a newly translated book by Tivadar Soros, *Crusoes in Siberia*, originally published in 1923. Speakers included Esther Schor (Princeton University) on "Zamenhof and the Future," historian Ralph

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Dumain on the 1910 World Congress of Esperanto in Washington, and Humphrey Tonkin, the translator of the Soros book and editor of the Zamenhof biography. The film maker Sam Green showed a draft version of his documentary about Esperanto. The new, 25-minute, film is mainly a product of filming he did during several recent World Esperanto Congresses, with support from ESF. But the biggest surprise was the speech (not included in the announced symposium program) of financier George Soros, son of Tivadar Soros. George Soros and his brother Paul contributed a foreword to the new translation. About 70 people participated in the symposium: Esperantists, representatives of NGO's, UN officials, diplomats, journalists and scholars.

(5) ESF was a sponsor of the Conference on the Application of Esperanto in Science and Technology (KAEST) that was held on November 18-21 in Modra-Harmónia (Slovakia) and gathered 52 specialists from 15 countries. The topic of the Conference was "Modern technologies for Esperanto." The program consisted of around thirty presentations on such topics as terminology, spellchecking and automated translation, corpora, Wikipedias, internet dictionaries etc.

(6) The Foundation provided support for a symposium on language inequality in the sciences and science teaching to be held at the University of Copenhagen in July 2011.

Newsletter Information for Interlinguists

The Foundation continues to support publication of the hardcopy version of the newsletter *Information for Interlinguists (IfI) – Informilo por Interlingvistoj*, published by CED under the editorship of Detlev Blanke (a web version appears on the ESF web pages: <http://www.esperantic.org/en/communications/ipi/archive>).

OPERATIONS

Administration

In the fall, our administrator of many years, Jason Clark, resigned his position and was replaced by Joel Amis, whose administrative skills include activity in various Esperanto organizations in the United States and internationally. Joel Amis has recently taken up residence in Montreal, and so the office function of ESF has moved there from Vancouver. Joel and his wife Yevgeniya (also a skilled Esperanto speaker) have had a significantly positive effect on the administrative responsiveness of the Foundation and have led to improvements also in the website.

The Board

At the beginning of the year, board membership consisted of Wallace du Temple, Mark Fettes (V. P.), Geoffrey Greatrex, Bonnie Fonseca-Greber (Sec.), Grant Goodall (V. P), Timothy Reagan, Derek Roff, and Humphrey Tonkin (Pres.).

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Humphrey Tonkin
University of Hartford

Vice-Presidents

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San Diego*

Mark Fettes
Simon Fraser University

Secretary

Bonnie Fonseca-Greber
University of Louisville

Treasurer

Wallace G. Du Temple

Other Directors

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*Central Connecticut State
University*

Derek Roff
University of New Mexico

Geoffrey Greatrex
University of Ottawa

Advisory Board

Jonathan Pool
Utilika Foundation

David K. Jordan
*University of California,
San Diego*

Ian M. Richmond (*ret.*)
Université Sainte-Anne

John Edwards
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*School for International
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François Grin
University of Geneva

Duncan Charters
Principia College

Klaus Schubert
Universität Hildesheim

Nancy Schweda-Nicholson
University of Delaware

Probal Dasgupta
Indian Statistical Institute

Katalin Kovats
Edukado.net

Ghuzal Badamshina
Author, Scholar

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Administrative Office

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Operations Committee

An Operations Committee was established by Board action in May 2008, and is in telephone contact on a regular weekly basis with Joel Amis, who administers the finances of the foundation and conducts other administrative business. He, in turn, works closely with the foundation's Treasurer, Wallace du Temple, to manage accounts payable and receivable and the organization's financial reporting requirements. The current membership of the Operations Committee is Wallace Du Temple, Mark Fettes, Derek Roff, and Humphrey Tonkin.

Finance and Administration

(1) At the end of 2009 and beginning of 2010, management of the Foundation's portfolio was moved from S. R. Schill and Associates (Seattle) to the more conveniently located TD Waterhouse (Vancouver). A similar process is underway to transfer the Foundation's banking from Seattle to Victoria, BC, for similar reasons.

(2) The Foundation has adopted a new formal spending policy, which guided it in building the budget for 2010. This policy calls for a gradual reduction in the percentage of Foundation resources expended in a given year. It will remain in place until the Board judges that spending is once again well within the means of the Foundation, at which point the percentage will remain constant unless changed by Board action.

Advisory Board

An advisory board provides occasional advice and counsel on the work of the Foundation. In 2010 membership remained the same, except that Dr. Ghuzal Badamshina (Washington, DC) was added to its membership.

Prospects

In 2009 the Foundation took many of the steps needed to live within the somewhat straitened circumstances in which it found itself: it reorganized its portfolio management and banking arrangements to make them more responsive to the Foundation's needs, it strengthened its board, it introduced much tighter spending and budgeting procedures, and it began an effort to augment its resources by new gifts and contributions. The Foundation continues to strive to become better known and more transparent in its operations. ESF remains one of the very few organizations providing material support for the study of Esperanto, interlinguistics, and related fields. It continues to play a vital role in the promotion of research and teaching.

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Appendix : The Foundation's Advisory Board

Ghuzal Badamshina, Ph.D. Independent Scholar, Author. Areas of Interest: multimedia non-fiction narratives; latest neuroscience findings in multilinguality and human translation processes; nomadism in its current practices and forms; cultural diplomacy, science diplomacy; the diverse phenomena of jazz influences beyond the music idiom.

Duncan Charters, Ph.D. Professor of Foreign Languages, Principia College. Areas of interest: Spanish language and literature, teaching culture and listening comprehension, developing proficiency in language skills, and using technology in teaching.

Probal Dasgupta, Ph.D. Professor of Linguistics, Indian Statistical Institute; President, Universal Esperanto Association.

John Edwards, Ph.D. Professor of Psychology, St. Francis Xavier University. Areas of interest: social psychology of language; language and group identity.

Alvino Fantini, Professor Emeritus of Applied Linguistics, SIT Graduate Institute, Brattleboro, Vermont. Areas of interest: language education, intercultural communication.

François Grin, Ph.D. Professor of Economics, University of Geneva, Switzerland. Areas of interest: language economics, education economics and policy evaluation in these areas.

David K. Jordan, Ph.D. Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, University of California San Diego. His academic interests center in cultural and psychological anthropology, sociolinguistics, and the cross-cultural study of religion. Regional interests focus on Chinese society, especially in Taiwan, with a secondary interest in pre-Columbian Mexico.

Katalin Kovats, Ph.D. Language educator, director of the program edukado.net, holds a doctorate in Esperanto and applied linguistics from Eötvös Lóránd University, Budapest, and now lives in the Netherlands.

Jonathan Pool, Ph.D. President of Utilika Foundation & Co-Founder of ESF. Areas of interest: universal interactivity; obstacles to human-human, human-machine and machine-mediated human communication and collaboration arising from the diversity and limitations of languages.

Ian Richmond, Ph.D. Professor Emeritus, Université Sainte-Anne. Areas of interest: second language learning, computer-assisted language learning, literary studies, translation.

Klaus Schubert, Ph.D. Professor at Universität Hildesheim, Germany; specializes in preparation of technical translators and specialists in international communication. Particular interest in technical translation and machine translation.

Nancy Schweda Nicholson, Ph.D. Professor, Dept. of Linguistics & Cognitive Science, University of Delaware. Areas of interest: sociolinguistics, language planning, language and the law, court interpretation, interpretation theory and practice.