

21 February 2022



International Webinar

This event is organized by UNESCO on the occasion of the celebration of the 23rd edition of the International Mother Language Day (21 February).

Date and time

Monday 21 February 2022, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (CET)

Background

Technology has the potential to address some of the greatest challenges in education today. It can accelerate efforts towards ensuring equitable and inclusive lifelong learning opportunities for all if it is guided by the core principles of inclusion and equity. Multilingual education based on mother tongue is a key component of inclusion in education.

During COVID-19 school closures, many countries around the world employed technology-based solutions to maintain continuity of learning. A recent UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank and OECD survey on national education responses to COVID-19 school closures of 143 countries showed that 96 per cent of high-income countries provided remote learning through online platforms for at least one education level compared to only 58 per cent of low-income countries. In low-income contexts, the majority of countries reported using broadcast media such as television (83%) and radio (85%) to support continuity of learning.

Obviously, teachers lacked skills and readiness for using distance teaching. Many learners lacked the necessary equipment, internet access, accessible materials, adapted content, and human support that would have allowed them to follow distance learning. Moreover, distance teaching and learning tools, programmes and content were largely provided in official/dominant national or international languages.

The theme of the 2022 International Mother Language Day (IMLD) “Using technology for multilingual learning: Challenges and opportunities” will discuss the potential role of technology to advance multilingual education and support the development of quality teaching and learning for all.

Purpose of the webinar

The overall aim of IMLD 2022 is to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 by recognizing the role of teachers in promoting multilingual teaching and learning through technology. More specifically, IMLD 2022 aims to:

- Consider the potential role of technology, including traditional media such as radio and television, in supporting multilingual teaching and learning;
- Discuss action needed to ensure the design and delivery of technology-enabled multilingual teaching and learning.

Webinar program

The webinar will explore the following two main themes:

- Enhancing the role of teachers in the promotion of quality multilingual teaching and learning.
- Reflecting on technologies and its potential to support multilingual teaching and learning.

Target audiences

The webinar will bring together a range of key stakeholders who are drivers of change to foster inclusive learning environments that support multilingual teaching and learning. They include senior officials and managers of Ministries of Education directly responsible for implementing and managing education programmes, as well as non-governmental organizations, bilateral development partners, foundations and others supporting multilingualism. Teachers, educators and those supporting teacher training will also benefit from this event. It is expected that the IMLD event will reach a broader audience through the participants who would spread

the key messages to teachers/educators, parents and families, encouraging them to promote multilingualism.

Technical platform and interpretation

The webinar will take place on the Zoom platform and will be available in English, French and Spanish. The link will be provided in due time.

UNESCO's support to multilingualism

The IMLD celebration aims to inform UNESCO's work on languages and multilingualism across all of UNESCO programme sectors. UNESCO's support to multilingualism includes the development and intergenerational transmission of indigenous knowledge and languages and the safeguarding of indigenous cultural heritage. UNESCO also leads the Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032) and coordinates its implementation through the Global Action Plan of the Decade.

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