

12th International Language and Development Conference

LANGUAGE AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

27, 28, 29 November 2017, Senegal



The 12th biennial international Language and Development Conference will be hosted by the British Council and its partners in Dakar, Senegal, in November 2017, and is the third one to be convened in sub-Saharan Africa.

Senegal is a beacon for stability, leadership and democracy in the West Africa region, and known for its ‘teranga’, a very special sense of hospitality and welcome. Dakar is an exciting, cultural and secure location for the conference. Senegal is also a linguistically rich and diverse country, whose government has prioritised language issues in recent years.

The introduction of local languages in the National Assembly to enhance participation and the quality of parliamentary debates, the inclusion of language skill development in the National Reform of the Higher Education Sector to better equip the workforce and internationalise the sector, and the exploration of the use of local languages in the early grades of primary education, point to a government that is aware of the importance of language in the development of the country.

Notably, hosting the next Language and Development Conference in Senegal will open up the conference series for the first time to a new, wider audience - that of the **francophone** world. The 12th conference in the series will provide an exciting opportunity to explore common themes and share language-related best practices between countries of various socio-linguistic backgrounds.

Language is one of the defining features of our species; yet when it comes to international and local development discourse, language is often left on the periphery. We know, however, that language as a cross-cutting issue is inextricably tied to all aspects of human development. Development is about sharing experiences and ideas to find better ways of working together as humans, and thus the languages of initiative, of education, of trade, of creative expression, of justice and of peacebuilding, are so crucial to sustainable development.

In September 2015, the United Nations adopted the new **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. Two years on, this 12th Language and Development Conference will provide a timely opportunity for the role of language to be explored in achieving these new ambitious, universal and sustainable development goals and targets.

The conference will bring together policy makers, development professionals, the NGO sector, private sector, artists and creative industry representatives, researchers and all those with a perspective on the role of language in society.

It will provide a forum for **real-life successes and challenges** to be shared; **frank and open reflections** to be facilitated; and **pragmatic, evidence-based proposals** to be put forward, so as to inform the global development community as it continues on this journey towards achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

The central theme will be ‘Language and the Sustainable Development Goals’

Sustainable development is increasingly viewed not only from an economic perspective, but also from social and environmental perspectives. All three dimensions are important to ensure that human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality. As **language and communication are crucial to how societies grow, work together and become more inclusive**, the conference will seek to explore the role of language in a range of interlinking aspects of development. It will do this by focussing on three of the goals:

- SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning
- SDG 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all
- SDG 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

The conference programme will also take into consideration other cross cutting goals, notably SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; and SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.

The conference will therefore be structured around **three sub-themes**:

Multilingualism for Quality, Equitable and Inclusive Education

This sub-theme will look in particular at language policy and practice, local-language literacy issues in rural and urban areas, the place of mother-tongue-based multilingual education (MTB MLE) and the role of languages in multilingual classrooms. The sub-theme will also focus on effective oral and written communication strategies for formal and informal education at all levels.

We are particularly interested in contributions presenting innovative approaches to ensure that all learners have access to quality and inclusive education, in different learning environments and at different stages in their lives.

The sub-theme also seeks to investigate the impact that local language literacy has on creative expression among young people.

Language, Skills and Sustainable Economic Growth

This sub-theme will look at the role of languages and skills in supporting emerging economies and in equipping current and future workforces to be active players in increasing prosperity for all. It will explore how the use of one’s mother tongue may lead to the unlocking of one’s full potential and participation effectively in all economic production processes that are intrinsically linked to sustainable economic growth.

In addition to focussing on the formal sector we are looking to focus on the development of language skills for Africa’s burgeoning informal economies and reflect on how these can be catered for by different stakeholders in education and language planning.

We also seek to explore the impact of the language of creative expression on the economic prospects of artists and creators particularly at the beginning of their careers.

Communication, Peace and Justice

This sub-theme will look at the importance of languages and resilience in conflict and post-conflict situations, in tackling extremism, migration issues and also in strengthening societies through access to justice for all, human rights and intercultural communication.

Languages in general and mother tongue in particular can be a useful tool in mediating conflicts with a view to bringing about justice and lasting peace. The exclusive use of former colonial languages has led to poor communication, exclusion and resentment. In other words, those who do not speak the former colonial languages may feel resentful at being excluded from participating in the affairs of their countries.

The sub-theme seeks to explore topics such as innovative approaches to translation and intercultural communication in legal contexts, the role of multilingualism for the integration of refugees, for social cohesion across colonial borders, etc.

We also welcome insights into the role that language of artistic expression plays in including or excluding members of communities (especially young people) and the resultant impact on peace and justice.

Conference Information

Abstract Submissions

We will welcome the submission of papers and perspectives that highlight relevant research and practice in the three thematic areas of the conference as outlined above. For further information about the call for papers and contributions, please visit the conference website.

Registration Fees

Registration fees will cover the conference packs, access to all sessions, welcome reception, morning and afternoon refreshments and buffet lunches for the three days of the conference. Registration will open in April 2017. Further information will be available on the conference website.

Scholarships

There will be a limited number of scholarships for participants who are able to demonstrate ability to bring relevant expertise and diverse perspectives to the conference through their papers, as well as demonstrating financial need. Criteria for eligibility and further information will be available on the conference website.

Exhibition space

Exhibition space will be available at the conference venue throughout the duration of the conference, accessible to all conference attendees. We aim to attract the local and international private sector as well as NGOs and civil society organisations, in particular in relevant fields of education, technology, publishing and environment. If your organisation or company is interested in securing exhibition space, information for applications will soon be available on the conference website.

Partnership

The British Council will be hosting the conference in partnership with the Senegalese **Ministry of Higher Education and Research** and **Ministry of National Education**, the **Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA)**, **UNESCO**, the **UK's School of Oriental and Africa Studies (SOAS)** and **SIL Africa**, along with other partners.

If you or your organisation or company are interested in partnering with us for this exciting conference or funding a scholarship to enable young academics or specialists to attend the conference, with a particular focus on enabling more women and those from minority or otherwise disadvantaged backgrounds to attend, please contact the British Council to discuss further.

For more information on the conference

Further details are available on the conference website where you can find the latest information. The website will be updated regularly.

Website: www.britishcouncil.com/sn/en/programmes/language-development-conference-2017

Email: LDC2017@britishcouncil.sn

