

The Foundation for Endangered Languages



Munduko Hizkuntza
Ondarearen
UNESCO Katedra
Cátedra UNESCO
de Patrimonio Lingüístico
Mundial



CALL FOR PAPERS - FEL XXIX 2025

**The Foundation for Endangered Languages (FEL)
AND**

**The UNESCO Chair of World Language Heritage
The University of the Basque Country**

Invite you to

29th Annual Conference

of

The Foundation for Endangered Languages - FEL XXIX 2025

At

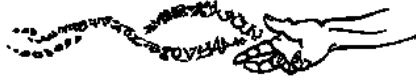
Vitoria-Gasteiz, The Basque Country

Spain

22-25 October 2025

On the theme

**The Missing SDG:
Endangered Languages and
Sustainable Development**



The Foundation for Endangered Languages



Munduko Hizkuntza
Ondarearen
UNESCO Katedra
Cátedra UNESCO
de Patrimonio Lingüístico
Mundial



Why is the entire world shouting about sustainability but everyone is decidedly mute on language?

In 1987, the United Nations (UN) Brundtland Commission defined sustainable development as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Subsequently, the UN carried out extensive work on sustainability, and this was translated into a Development Agenda adopted by the General Assembly in 2015. This universal action plan of unprecedented scope and significance, a “supremely ambitious transnational vision”, contained 17 interconnected goals to be achieved by 2030.

These *Sustainable Development Goals*, or SDGs, are, in the words of the UN, “the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all”. They address “global challenges” which include eradicating poverty, ensuring good health and well-being, providing quality education, protecting the environment, upholding human rights, and promoting the rule of law, among others. However, languages are not explicitly mentioned, and the way in which culture is addressed remains very limited. As one linguist (Suzanne Romaine (2019: 41)) put it, “language is the missing link in the global debate on sustainability”.

Recognizing the significance of languages within the SDGs is not just an act of heritage preservation, it is a dynamic step, an instrument for ensuring equitable and effective development for all. Without linguistic diversity, many communities, particularly minority, indigenous and marginalized groups, are excluded from decision-making processes and denied equal access to vital resources.

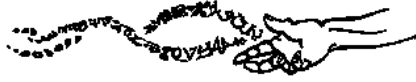
The endangerment or extinction of languages plays an enormous role in this exclusion. Language dominance and dominance by language create fundamental forms of inequality and are often at the root of the very challenges for which the SDGs have been established.

The interrelationship of language and sustainable development has been the object of scrutiny in recent years. At the forefront of the debate, the Basque Country has identified and added to its own agenda, an 18th SDG relating to cultural and linguistic diversity. This 29th FEL Annual Conference will contribute to the promotion of the “missing 18th SDG” and its future adoption in the official agenda of the United Nations.

This conference will aim to explore the conceptual links between maintenance and revitalisation of endangered, minority and indigenous languages and sustainable development in different social, economic, ecological, and linguistic contexts; it will also seek to identify policy implications stemming from, and necessary to, further integration of language revitalization and sustainable development.

The conference will especially welcome contributions which deal with a number of sub-themes, including:

- **The conceptualisation of the links between maintenance and revitalisation of endangered, minority, and indigenous languages and sustainable development.**
 - The central role of language for the success and/or the failure of sustainable development (as vehicle for concrete action).
 - National and/or dominant languages vs EL, minority and indigenous languages, in the success or failure of promotion of concepts and realisation of goals
 - Alternative approaches to articulating the relation between EL revitalisation and sustainable development and to ensuring success in different contexts.



The Foundation for Endangered Languages



Munduko Hizkuntza
Ondarearen
UNESCO Katedra
Cátedra UNESCO
de Patrimonio Lingüístico
Mundial



- **Experiences of community-based and public institution initiatives that integrate both agendas.**
 - Examples of deliberate maintenance and revitalisation by communities in order to reach social, political and economic development goals
 - Examples of institutional use of endangered (incl. minority and indigenous) languages to guarantee success in sustainable development in local or national contexts
 - Examples of successful integrated sustainable development goals resulting from promotion and revitalisation of endangered languages

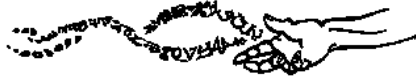
- **Future prospects of the 2030 Agenda and the possibilities and challenges of including an 18th linguistic and cultural goal.**
 - Successful international programmes in policy-making, advocacy and promotion of the inter-relation between languages (including EL) and sustainable development.
 - Examples of campaigns promoting awareness of the interconnectedness of language (maintenance and revitalisation) and sustainable development.
 - Obstacles to the understanding and promotion of the link between EL Maintenance and Revitalisation (M&R) and sustainable development (incl. insufficient knowledge of sustainable development and/or linguistic diversity).
 - Deliberate political and other impediments to the promotion of the relationship between M&R and sustainable development.

- **Designing SDG 18. SDGs have an average 10 targets. What crucial linguistic elements or dimensions should be represented in SDG 18 to enable achievement of sustainable development. May include the following or similar advice.**
 - All States should raise awareness of importance of cultural and linguistic diversity in sustainable development.
 - Establish programmes to increase the profile and use of endangered, minority and indigenous languages in education, the media and all aspects of economic, social and political life.
 - Take decisive measures at national and community level to promote maintenance and revitalisation of endangered, minority and indigenous languages.

=====

The conference will focus on developing and highlighting the interconnectedness of language and sustainable development. It will explore ways to increase understanding and generate commitment to the promotion of languages, especially endangered, minority and indigenous languages, for the purpose of achieving sustainable development.

The ultimate objective is to contribute to the conception and formulation of a new (18th) Sustainable Development Goal dedicated to language and culture and to the necessary implications of its implementation within the framework of the UN Agenda 2030 and beyond.



The Foundation for Endangered Languages



Munduko Hizkuntza
Ondarearen
UNESCO Katedra
Cátedra UNESCO
de Patrimonio Lingüístico
Mundial



The conference will take place from **22 to 25 October 2025** at:

University of the Basque Country

Detail

Participation will be on hybrid format. Online streaming and joining link will be available upon registration.

The languages of the conference will be English and Basque, and simultaneous translation will be provided.

An excursion to an area of significance to the Basque language and culture will be organised for those who attend physically.

Abstracts of 600 - 800 words are invited for submission on EasyChair at this address:

<https://easychair.org/my/conference?conf=felxxix2025>

by the deadline of **15 2025 at 23:59 GMT**

=====

Abstracts should be in English and must be submitted as PDF files. Please note that abstracts in Word document will not be accepted. Abstracts in Basque with its translation into English will also be accepted.

Authors whose abstracts are accepted will be notified by 30th June.

More information: <https://www.ehu.eus/en/web/mho-unesco-katedra/presentation1>

Contact: fel2025@ehu.eus