



Linguistic diversity is our common heritage. It is fragile heritage. Nearly half of the more than 6,000 languages spoken in the world could die out by the end of the century.

International Mother Language Day ( [IMLD](#) ) is designed to promote linguistic diversity and multilingual education, to highlight greater awareness of the importance of mother tongue education. In 2013, using the slogan "Books for Mother tongue education", IMLD aims to remind key stakeholders in education that in order to support mother tongue education, it is essential to support the production of books in local languages.

"In this age of new technologies, books remain precious instruments, easy to handle, sturdy and practical for sharing knowledge, mutual understanding and opening the world to all. Books are the pillars of knowledge societies and essential for promoting freedom of expression and education for all." UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova message for IMLD.

Mother tongue education in its broader sense refers to the use of mother tongues in the home environment and in schools. Language acquisition and mother tongue literacy should ideally be supported by written resources such as - but not limited to - books, primers and textbooks, to support oral activities. Written materials in mother tongues reinforce learners' literacy acquisition and build strong foundations for learning.

Languages are the most powerful instruments of preserving and developing our tangible and intangible heritage. Language loss impoverishes humanity. It is a retreat in the defence of everyone's rights to be heard, to learn and to communicate. Genuine dialogue implies respect for languages.

**Additional links:**

- More about the day ( [UNESCO](#) | [United Nations](#) )
- [UNESCO Atlas of Endangered Languages](#)
- [UNESCO Interview: How to breathe life back into endangered languages](#)

**Live Windows Project - International Mother Language Day, 21 February, 2012**

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