

Summer University cooperation with

Language Working Group & European Day of Languages Project

The goal of this working group is to raise the awareness within AEGEE about the value of multilingualism, encourage and help AEGEEans to learn more foreign languages and to discuss issues related to language policies, minority languages and language diversity. Our main action is the yearly AEGEE European Day of Languages, during which AEGEE follows the example of the Council of Europe and since 2001 Europe's languages are celebrated in many local events, for which we are very thankful to all local organisers.

We would be very happy to also cooperate with local organisers of the bigger project of AEGEE, the Summer Universities. Language learning already has a very important place within this successful project. During many SU's, the participants have the chance to learn the local language during introductory courses and there are even two SU categories especially dedicated to language learning. We would be very happy to increase this cooperation further and also have more focus on multilingualism and language diversity. We therefore propose several concrete options to local SU organisers that can be included in their SU's programme and are very happy to help also with other ideas that you can come up with. You can choose how much focus your SU will put on the themes of our projects. From one or two items in the programme up to having multilingualism as the main theme of your SU.

Short programme ideas that can be integrated in any SU

1. Language Café / Aligatorejo

During this programme, which usually lasts for 1 or 2 hours, participants will not be allowed to speak English (assuming this is the main language of your SU) or their own native language. Everyone will put up a name tag that lists the languages this person understands and can speak. The participants can now form groups and practice other languages. It is very possible that also within one group, the conversation takes place in more than one language. To make the conversations more interesting, this programme could be combined with a "people bingo" for example. Another version is to have days/night/hours dedicated to a specific language, in which the organisers and participants should do their best to speak as much as possible only in this language. The organisers/participants that are native speakers in this language can teach the basics of it the day before.

2. Watching movies with subtitles instead of dubbing

To really appreciate the sound of other languages, it can be a good and easy idea to watch a movie with the original sound and subtitles. You can show a movie from your own area or another European movie from a less frequent European language.

3. Excursion to area with minority language

Europe has many regions with regional or minority languages, where a considerable part of the population speaks a language different from the national language. You could plan an excursion to such an area, which often also has some museum presenting the specific culture connected to this linguistic minority.

4. Introductory language courses by participants

During every SU, participants with many different native languages come together. Presenting and

sharing everyone's specific culture and especially alcoholic specialities is already a very common programme during the European Night. A similar thing could be done by letting the participants give short introductory courses of their language to the other participants. The length and depth of these courses can differ a lot and depends on what the participants want. In this way participants will get to know basic phrases and structure of around 10 or 20 languages in just 2 weeks.

Main theme of Summer University focussing on languages and multilingualism

1. Multilingual Summer University

In this type of SU, learning of multiple foreign languages is the central theme. This can mean that language courses of at least two languages are in the programme. If your SU takes place in or near one of the many multilingual areas in Europe, this could be the national language and also the regional language(s). This type of SU can also include a debate among the participants about multilingualism and language policy in Europe. Some questions you could touch: How should be dealt with linguistic minorities within your area? How should immigrants be stimulated to learn the local language? Should university programmes be taught in the national language, or in English? Is the increasing usage of English a threat to national and regional languages? Do we accept the privileged position of English native speakers, or do we want a more democratic solution? If you are looking for a moderator or introductory speaker for such a debate, you can contact the Language WG board, and we will do our best to find one.

The programme of a multilingual SU can be completed by one or several of the short programme ideas presented above.

2. Esperanto Summer University

In this type of SU, learning of and about the international language Esperanto is the central theme. Because of its simple and effective structure, this language can be learnt to a conversational level within one week. This means that during the second week Esperanto could even replace English as the main language of your SU. This type of SU can also include presentations about the history of Esperanto and discussions about the value of International Auxiliary Languages in general. It can also include a debate among the participants about language policy in Europe and which role English and/or Esperanto can or cannot play in that field. The programme of a multilingual SU can be completed by one or several of the short programme ideas presented above.

To make such a SU more successful, it would be useful if a part of the organisers would learn some basic Esperanto beforehand.

The Language WG board will help you with finding Esperanto teachers and detailed preparations of the programme. To be sure we can assist as much as possible, it's important to coordinate the choice of dates of the SU with us in an early stage.

If you have questions about any of the ideas above or are interested in integrating them in your SU, don't hesitate to contact the Language WG board at lwg@aegee.org. We can of course give you advice, and maybe even come in person to your SU give a workshop or assist with the programme.

Linguistically yours,
The LWG board