

International Women's Day 2010 - UNIFEM

Supporting disadvantaged women across the world is the key message of this year's UNIFEM International Women's Day celebrations.

Premier Kristina Keneally today addressed the annual UNIFEM breakfast – along with notable guest speakers Therese Rein, Federal Minister for Women, Tanya Plibersek, and Governor of New South Wales, Marie Bashir. The UNIFEM International Women's Day Sydney Breakfast is an annual event raising awareness of women's issues and funds for programs supporting the empowerment of women. The UNIFEM Australia theme for International Women's Day 2010 is Empowering Women to End Poverty by 2015.

"We are fortunate to live in a State where the

three highest offices – the Governor, the Premier and the Deputy Premier as well as the Lord Mayor of Sydney are all held by women," Ms Keneally said. "International Women's Day is a time to celebrate and acknowledge the great contribution women have made as leaders around the world.

"Today we recognise that while we have come a long way in the advancement of issues affecting women, there is still along way to go.

"It is a great privilege to be among so many notable women to show support for the cause of women everywhere.

"The theme of this year's International Women's Day Empowering Women to End Poverty by 2015, is both visionary and timely."

Last year the Sydney committee of UNIFEM raised \$80,000 at the UNIFEM breakfast for the Pacific Market project – an initiative promoting women's opportunities and equality in rural marketplaces. Proceeds from UNIFEM's International Women's Day 2010 activities, including the breakfast, will be used to fund a project that empowers women migrant workers in Indonesia through training and support programs.

"I am sure today's event will be just as successful as last year – raising important funds for overseas migrant workers in Indonesia," Ms Keneally said.

"I remain inspired by the efforts of UNIFEM and the positive change your work has brought to so many women and communities around the world."

The challenge in creating Greek Language Courses for foreigners, as the sole purpose in obtaining substantial ability of expression in speaking

This proposal constitutes the urgent need to diversify the approach to date in creating Greek language courses for foreigners, for the sole purpose of acquiring real skills of expression in speaking. Recording the international experience and practice on the efficiency to gain functional skills in the spoken word, my findings converge to the conclusion that the existing methodological approach of the Greek language courses offered to foreigners, has not produced the expected outcomes.

The long-term study, research and implementation of a range of Greek language courses for foreigners in English-speaking countries (Australia, USA) since 1997, has shown in the most affirmative manner, that the persistence in learning reading and writing as a prerequisite for the subsequent acquisition of functional skills in spoken language is ineffective.

This mainly stems from the fact that the general theory and the methodological approach is Greek centred from the outset. In combination with ethnocentric self-absorption it has created an insular framework, at a time when the world has changed and the "global village" is now part of life.

To this challenge we have to give a convincing answer and dare to create new channels of effective communication to create Greek-speakers throughout the world.

-Do you speak English? Someone asks us.

- I learned English we answer, but I speak few English.

We wonder why, after such effort, time and financial outlay we are not able to speak a language we've

learned?

Answers to this question vary. However, all responses converge to the general understanding of the theoretical acquisition of skills in reading and writing as prerequisites to learn how to speak a language.

Turning now the scenario around, what responses do we get for the Greek language?

- I learned Greek at school, but I do not remember much.

- I can read a little, but I do not speak it.

Learning through the traditional book has proven it does not deliver the expected results nowadays, which prompted us to find another channel of delivery in this learning process.

The favourite, according to present data is undoubtedly the Internet or cyberspace.

Cyberspace is now scope for exchange of information, provision of education opportunities and job search, and language clearly states the potential access to "electronic pages" and the busy nodes. For those who still have questions, the Internet speaks English.

Obviously, the "brave new world" of computer language inequality is clearly evident, and English is the undisputed lingua franca on the era of information.

For example, to be sure that an e-mail sent today is readable; one is obliged to resort to Latin characters. So there are two possibilities: either we should make directly in English or to resort to Greeklish: «Sou grafw, mou grafeis». This solution is not very elegant, but in any event, effective.

What does this all mean for a language like Greek? Greek is spoken only by 15 million people if you add

Greeks within Greece and Cyprus to the Greeks of the Diaspora. Admittedly, cyberspace can not make this situation worse.

However, according to a strange logic, it seems to improve it in the first place and provides valuable opportunities. Speaking in 1997 to the newspaper "TO VIMA", two Greek-speaking "prophets" of cyberspace who need no introduction, suggested opportunities for Greece in the "new frontier of information technology.

First, Nicholas Negroponte, founder and head of the Media Lab at MIT, observed that "The digital age is what is needed for Greece. Negroponte noted that cultural globalization espoused by the network fits like a glove to ecumenism for the Greek culture. From a technological perspective, the Internet will join Greeks and immigrants. A similar view has been expressed by the Director of MIT's Laboratory of Computer Science Michael Dertouzos: "Greece can in one or two centuries become bound as a natural Mediterranean country in the Greek mesh nation," he said.

If cyberspace «reheats» the vision of a global Greece, even the existing network of the Internet is helping Greece out of the isolation of the linguistic region. The "electronic democracy" of the Internet is no place for all. From Government Departments and newspapers to teachers, organizations, businesses and individuals, Greece surfs the Internet – and is accessible by pressing a button on every pc around the world".

However, the future promises much more. The isolation of the so-called 'small'

languages, among them Greek, may cease to exist in cyberspace.

Lastly, it can be observed that cyberspace strengthens dramatically the global dominance of English, especially in the face of languages who mean to compete with it, such as Spanish and French but for a "smaller" language like Greek; it provides unique opportunities and a challenge to lure, escaping the isolation in the chaotic ocean of global information society.

(Dimitris Mitropoulos Newspaper TO VIMA)

Greek is now one of the less taught (and spoken) EU languages. This is a proposal in the approach of learning Greek as a foreign language, for foreign adults as a target group who see as a major constraint the weakness of communication in Greek. The course will be offered through an innovative e-learning platform, to the for-

eign language students to become familiar with the communication structures of the Greek language and adopt a positive attitude towards the Greek culture.

The approach to the structure and operation of this course follows current methodological principles by the research community, namely those of autonomous learning, theory of knowledge edification, but especially the communicative approach.

Furthermore, the proposed design of this course and the entire structure is based on the principles designing teaching materials for use by distance learning, using Moodle's e-learning platform in conjunction with Dimdim as a further enhancement tool.

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