

Report of the President of FIPLV, Dr Terry Lamb

This report will refer to activities carried out in the period January 2007-January 2009 as previous reports have been oral only, apart from two articles in FIPLV World News.

The primary focus of activity, and therefore of this report, has been on building relationships with the **European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML)** in Graz, Austria, as this is now the official FIPLV address. ECML is part of the Council of Europe and the opportunity afforded by the move of FIPLV from Melbourne to Graz helps us to build on our existing relationship with the Council.

This relationship can be seen in concrete terms through ECML's funding of a project entitled **Language Associations and Collaborative Support (LACS)**. Having developed a successful bid for this project, I am now coordinating the project with the support of a project team consisting of other FIPLV colleagues who represent other partner organisations: Sigurborg Jónsdóttir from Iceland (FIPLV Nordic-Baltic Region and FIPLV Europe), Lucka Pristavec from Slovenia (FIPLV and IDV) and Janina Zielinska from Poland (FIPLV and FIPF). In addition, the project team has been joined by Nicole Thibault, Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT), which is enabling us to explore collaboration on the North American continent.

The LACS project is aimed at exploring the ways in which language teacher associations around the world support their members through professional development activities and action to influence policy. An initial survey has been carried out which had 35 returns from FIPLV, FIPF and IDV members across the globe (Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Macedonia, Morocco, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Switzerland, Togo, United Kingdom, USA, Venezuela, Zambia). There have since been a number of contacts from different countries who missed the deadline for returning the survey, so it will be sent out again in January 2009 to enrich the analysis.

Data returned was analysed and presented at the **AILA World Congress** in Essen, Germany, in August 2008. The presentation focused on ways in which the various associations impact on policy in their countries (see Powerpoint presentation on the LACS and FIPLV websites), and provides a useful starting point for mutually supportive discussion between associations. The next analysis will update these findings as well as focusing on professional development activities, including associations' strategies for building up membership. These will be presented at the FIPLV World Congress in Moscow, in July 2009.

A central element of the project is an exploration of the concept of dissemination, and this is underpinned by our commitment to disseminating the valuable work of ECML projects past and current as part of the project.

This project is designed to be a vehicle for developing collaboration between language teacher associations across the world through the sharing of effective practices and ways of addressing problems, as well as between language teacher associations and other official and professional bodies nationally and internationally. The main partner here is of course ECML, but in September 2008 I was invited to lead an ECML workshop for all of its national contact points, which again provided me with an opportunity to raise the profile of FIPLV and the LACS project as well as to lead discussions about ways in which language teacher associations should be national partners in national developments. As a result of this

workshop, and the raised awareness of the value of language teacher associations, several contacts have informed me that associations are being revived in their countries.

The team is now planning a major workshop with representation from all ECML member countries (which are not exclusively in Europe), which will take place in December 2009. We are asking ECML National Contact Points to find active representatives from language teacher associations who will be able to act as multipliers in their home countries, so please look out for this. It will be a valuable opportunity for different associations to meet up and explore issues together, and will be entirely funded by ECML.

For further information on the project, see the LACS website (still under development), which also contains a report of the first year's activities:

<http://lacs.ecml.at/>

In addition to this work, I have attended and chaired FIPLV activities such as meetings of the **World Council and the Executive Committee**, as well as presenting at the **Nordic-Baltic Conference in Latvia** (in June 2007).

Throughout the last two years I have constantly explored opportunities for collaboration in other parts of the world in an attempt to build up our membership. In March 2008, I was invited to present a paper at the **TESOL conference in New York**, and our relationship with AILA partly supported me in attending the conference in Essen. I have also had meetings with the EC Commissioner for Multilingualism, Leonard Orban, and with UNESCO. As part of my academic work I travel around the world a great deal, and I always find opportunities to raise awareness about FIPLV, either through meetings or presentations. In the last two years, this has enabled me to promote FIPLV (at no expense to FIPLV) in the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, and the USA.

Of course, it takes time for some of these contacts to lead to enhanced membership, and the focus of discussions always comes back to the question of value and benefits of membership. For this reason, it is important that we continue to articulate the benefits of membership and to explore further concrete benefits. The LACS project has shown that many associations are losing members and therefore income, and are being forced to think twice about membership fees to FIPLV. It is crucial, therefore, that members of FIPLV work together on ideas for reasserting their central role in teacher professionalism, finding new ways of articulating their arguments about the importance of language teacher associations not only in a theoretical way, but through tangible, concrete experiences. This is why I have strategically prioritised the LACS project, as this will enable us to provide evidence of the benefit of FIPLV membership in a practical way.

Terry Lamb
President, FIPLV

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