



Literacy and Sustainable Societies

8 September 2015

Press Release: International Literacy Day Literacy for Sustainable Societies

“New technologies, including mobile telephones, also offer fresh opportunities for literacy for all. We must invest more, and I appeal to all Members States and all our partners to redouble our efforts – political and financial – to ensure that literacy is fully recognized as one of the most powerful accelerators of sustainable development. The future starts with the alphabet.”

- Ms. Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO

Literacy is a fundamental human right and the foundation for lifelong learning. It is fully essential to social and human development in its ability to transform lives. For individuals, families, and societies alike, it is an instrument of empowerment by enhancing the quality of health, raising livelihoods and fostering the ability to actively participate in society. However, it remains a major challenge due to diverse socio-economic, policy and cultural causes. Globally, 757 million people still can't read or write. Among them, two thirds are female. Since 2000, adult literacy rates have improved, reaching 85% globally, but sub-Saharan African still has among the lowest rates.

The International literacy Day (ILD) will take place on 8th September 2015 under the theme “Literacy and sustainable societies”. The celebration presents an opportunity for countries to take stock of progress made towards the achievement of the Education for All (EFA) goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and to shape the agenda for education and sustainable development.

While 757 million adults – two thirds women – still live without basic reading and writing skills, literacy holds the key to building human capital and peaceful, sustainable societies.

Literacy is central to the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals and a driver of sustainable societies. Literacy is also a basis for lifelong learning. It is central to all age groups and accompanies a person through her or his life. Literacy is a practical tool for personal empowerment and socio-economic development and growth. Literacy is of relevance to “you”, whether you live in Africa, India, Europe, the United States or anywhere else in the world, and we need to invest more in literacy. The focus of the theme is to explore critical links between literacy and key areas for the future sustainable development agenda that will be adopted during the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015.

How does literacy affect and contribute in each area of development? How does development in each area can support the promotion of literacy skills? ILD event in East Africa region will bring together high level experts to explore the synergy between literacy and sustainability. Literacy builds human capital and sustainable societies which are, in turn, conducive to acquiring literacy skills. *Come along! Have your say! Engage with experts!*

Follow us on: ILD website: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/literacy/Pages/literacy-day-2015.aspx>
Twitter: [#LiteracyDay](https://twitter.com/LiteracyDay)

Comoros: A national celebration is being organized in Moroni on September 8 by Ministry of Education, University of Comoros, National Directorate of Literacy, Women and Development Network, General Planning Commission and UNESCO. A UNESCO roundtable on Literacy and Sustainable Societies are being organized with a particular focus on women and literacy, education, health and sustainable development. The discussions are also aimed to: 1. promote access for all to quality education and equity for learning throughout life; 2. develop basic skills in all sectors to improve the fight against poverty; 3. strengthen the resilience of the population to climate change and for building sustainable societies; and 4. strengthen



cooperation between national authorities, islanders, civil society, target populations, technical and financial partners and other stakeholders of the education system.

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Djibouti: A national celebration is being organized at the University of Djibouti on September 9 by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, NGOs, UN partners involved in the fields presented and the University of Djibouti for all scientific reflections related to literacy. The activity consisted of a roundtable to show the correlation between literacy and the various areas that ensure sustainable development like economic self-sufficiency, health, learning throughout life, respect for the environment, etc.). Each stakeholder at roundtable gave a presentation according to its area of intervention, followed by a discussion and exchange with the audience.

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Kenya: A national celebration is being organised on September 8 through in the morning show 'State of the Nation' on Nation FM on behalf of UNESCO. The event was preceded by presenter mentions, spot ads and promos on Nation FM. During the shows the presenters discussed what literacy is, its importance for to day-to-day life and how it can transform a society. Listeners were asked to call in and share their experiences on how literacy has changed their lives. UNESCO director Mohamed Djelid was interviewed on the occasion and a panel discussed issues on literacy and its effects on sustainable living. In the panel were an individual whose life has been changed due literacy, a representative from the Ministry of Education, Science & Technology and other experts on the issue. Simultaneously, a national celebration took place in Makueni County. Telephone communication took place with a resource person from the location of the celebration.

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Rwanda: A national celebration is being organised on September 8 on both themes "Literacy and Sustainable Societies" and "Literacy and Diversity" by MINEDUC and the Ministry of Sports and Culture (MINISPOC) through the Rwanda Academy of Language and Culture. September 8 is also the launch date of 'Rwanda Read's, a 'Literacy month' across the country that will run until October 4. Various events will be conducted by different partners of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC). Events range from organised meetings, dialogues, awarding of certificates to graduates, engaging and conducting media talk shows on literacy, reading etc. The events and activities, taking place in different districts and at the national level, will show how the various stakeholders, partners and beneficiary communities can contribute differently to literacy.

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Uganda: A one day national symposium is being organised on September 8 consisting of a Round Table and an exhibition of literacy products from adult learner centers. The symposium is organised by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and partners, especially UN sister agencies and civil society organisations together with UNATCOM and ULALA. On the same day a radio and TV talk show took place with the ministry, UNATCOM, ULALA and adult literacy learners. Various dialogues took place on the regional level to raise awareness of the public on the importance of literacy for sustainable societies.

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Somalia:

South-Central: A national celebration is being organised on September 8 in the Mogadishu Somali National University compound by UNESCO and MECHE. A Round Table on Literacy and Sustainable Societies took place with discussions on key topics relating to literacy. The event included media (TV and radio) coverage to create awareness on the importance of literacy. Furthermore, the official handover of equipment for the non-formal education department at the Ministry of Education – who are also in charge of literacy programmes - took place.

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Puntland: A national celebration is being organised on September 8 in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education conference Hall in Garowe by UNESCO, UNICEF, Relief International and MEHE. A Round Table on Literacy and Sustainable Societies took place with discussions on key topics relating to literacy. The event included media (TV and radio) coverage to create awareness on the importance of literacy. Furthermore, the official handover of equipment for the non-formal education department at the Ministry of Education – who are also in charge of literacy programmes - took place.

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Somaliland: A national celebration is being organised on September 8 in the Baarka Shaqalaha Venue near Civil Servant Institute in Hargeisa by UNESCO and MEHS. A Round Table on Literacy and Sustainable Societies took place with discussions on key topics relating to literacy. The event included media (TV and radio) coverage to create awareness on the importance of literacy. Furthermore, the official handover of equipment for the non-formal education department at the Ministry of Education – who are also in charge of literacy programmes - took place.

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