



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

The winners of the UNESCO
International Literacy Prizes

2014

Literacy and
Sustainable
Development

The winners of the UNESCO

International Literacy Prizes

2014

Ministry of Education (Ecuador)

Basic Education for Youth and Adults Project

Winner of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize

Association for Promoting Non-Formal Education in Burkina Faso (Burkina Faso)

'Empowerment of women living in extreme poverty in Burkina Faso' Programme

Winner of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize

Algerian Association for Literacy IQRAA (Algeria)

Literacy, Training and Integration of Women Programme

Winner of the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy

Lifelong Learning School for Community Development 'Polígono Sur' (Spain)

Programme 'Networking as an Educational Project'

Winner of the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy

**Molteno Institute for Language and Literacy & International Literacy Institute
(South Africa and United States of America)**

Bridges to the Future Initiative

Winner of the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy



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Message from Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, on the occasion of International Literacy Day, 8 September 2014


International Literacy Day, devoted this year to the connection between literacy and sustainable development, provides us with an opportunity to remember a simple truth: literacy not only changes lives, it saves them.

Literacy helps reduce poverty and enables people to find jobs and obtain higher salaries. It is one of the most efficient ways of improving the health of mothers and children, understanding doctors' prescriptions and gaining access to healthcare. The lives of more than two million children under the age of five were saved between 1990 and 2009 thanks to improvements in the education of women of reproductive age. Literacy facilitates access to knowledge and triggers a process of empowerment and self-esteem that benefits everyone. This energy, multiplied by millions of people, is essential to the future of societies.

Today, 781 million adults worldwide cannot read, write or count. Two thirds of them are women. More than 250 million children are unable to read a single sentence, even though half of them have spent four years in school. What kind of societies do we expect to build with an illiterate youth? This is not the kind of world we wish to live in. We want a world where everyone can participate in the destiny of their societies, gain access to knowledge and enrich it in turn. To succeed, we must also change the traditional approach of literacy programmes to encompass, beyond reading and writing in the narrower sense, broader skills with regard to consumption and sustainable lifestyles, the conservation of biodiversity, poverty reduction, disaster risk reduction as well as civic participation. In these ways, literacy programmes can unlock their full transformative potential.

Commitment to these goals will be central to the forthcoming Aichi-Nagoya Conference on education for sustainable development to be held in

Japan this November. It will also be at the heart of the World Education Forum to be held next year in Incheon, Republic of Korea, to lead the global debate towards the adoption of new sustainable development goals at the United Nations General Assembly in 2015. UNESCO is working across the world – in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal and elsewhere – to ensure that literacy is integrated into national development strategies. The Global Partnership for Girls’ and Women’s Education and the Malala Fund for Girls’ Right to Education, launched by UNESCO, also focus on literacy. The programmes acknowledged by the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy and the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize enable us each year to celebrate innovative practices that show that achievement is within our reach. New technologies, including mobile telephones, also offer fresh opportunities for literacy for all. We must invest more, and I appeal to every Member State and all our partners to redouble efforts – political and financial – to ensure that literacy is fully recognized as one of the most powerful accelerators of sustainable development. The future we want starts with the alphabet.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Irina Bokova". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Irina Bokova

UNESCO International Literacy Prizes 2014

Since 1967, UNESCO has awarded International Literacy Prizes to outstanding and innovative programs that promote literacy. Throughout the years, UNESCO's prestigious literacy prizes have rewarded over 460 initiatives undertaken by governments and NGOs from across the world.

Every year, the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes focus on a specific theme. This year, the focus is on "Literacy and Sustainable Development".

The two prizes awarded are the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy and the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize.

The UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize was established in 1989, thanks to the generosity of the Government of the Republic of Korea. It honours the



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outstanding contribution made to literacy more than 500 years ago by King Sejong (1397-1450 A.C.), through the creation of the 'Hangul' alphabet. The King Sejong Literacy Prize gives special consideration to the development and use of mother-tongue literacy education and training. Two prizes are awarded every year, and each winner receives \$20,000, a medal and a diploma.

UNESCO International Literacy Prizes 2014

The UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy

was established in 2005, thanks to the generosity of the Government of the People's Republic of China, in honour of the great Chinese scholar Confucius. The Confucius Prize for Literacy gives special consideration to literacy for people in rural areas and out-of-school youth, particularly girls and women. Three prizes are awarded every year, and each winner receives \$20,000, a medal and a diploma.

The Jury

An International Jury appointed by UNESCO's Director-General meets in Paris once a year to select the prizewinners. The Jury is made up of high profile practitioners and academics in the field of education, who are appointed for a period of three years. Candidatures for the prizes are submitted by Member States or by international non-governmental organizations in official partnership with UNESCO. The Jury is presently composed of five experts representing UNESCO's geographical distribution.



© DR Confucius Cultural Week for Confucius



ECUADOR

The Ministry of Education in Ecuador has been awarded the 2014 UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize for its Basic Education for Youth and Adults Project



© EBJA

“I want my 19 year old grandson to be proud, because as his grandfather I was able to learn how to read and write in my old age” Don Luis Villagran, 68 years old, Ambato, Ecuador.

In Ecuador, more than 676 000 people cannot read and write. The high illiteracy rates are largely related to extreme poverty, as well as a lack of schools and trained teachers to meet the educational demand of the population, particularly in rural areas. Tackling illiteracy in Ecuador is a challenge, due to its socio-economic diversity and a large number of spoken languages.

The Basic Education for Youth and Adults Project (EBJA) is working to change this; providing large-scale, inclusive literacy courses in Ecuador. It offers classes to the different Hispanic and indigenous populations, meeting the needs of the diverse populations by using various teaching methodologies. This includes the Manuela Sáenz pedagogy, the Cuban method, Yo, si puedo for the Hispanic population, the Dolores Cacuango for the bilingual speakers, as well as Spanish and Kichwa.

The project complements the efforts of the Ministry of Education in Ecuador, which focuses on vulnerable groups facing discrimination, preventing them from being isolated, and promoting economic independence.



© EBJA

In addition to being linguistically inclusive, the strengths of the EBJA project lie in its robust evaluation structure, and its national and international partnerships. The project has a strong monitoring database, recording and measuring information on the entire cycle of the learning process of the students.

To ensure the project remains sustainable, new strategies are continuously developed by widening its partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organizations. The project also ensures its goals are closely linked to on-going national strategies including the “National Plan for Good Living 2009-2013” and the “Ten Year Education Plan”.

Spread over 9 zones, 24 provinces and 112 Cantons; the EBJA project plays an important role in increasing literacy rates, especially among women from rural indigenous areas in Ecuador.

As of 2013, 324,894 people participated in the project, and developed necessary reading, writing and numeracy skills. It is also important to highlight that 137,096 of the participants were women, corresponding to 69% of the total number of participants.

The project provides a variety of courses on health, nutrition, family education, citizenship and social development. EBJA encourages students to use their

newly acquired knowledge and skills through active participation in the development of policies in their country. This has seen the involvement of women in the Government’s strategy to reduce instances of malnutrition among children between the ages of 0 to 5 years old.



BURKINA FASO

Literacy transforms women's lives in Burkina Faso

The Association for Promoting Non-Formal Education in Burkina Faso has been awarded the 2014 UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize for its 'Empowerment of women living in extreme poverty in Burkina Faso' Programme



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Gaining literacy skills has improved the quality of life for more than 17,600 women over the past five years in Burkina Faso, thanks to an award winning programme run by the Association for the promotion of non-formal education of Burkina Faso (BF-APENF).

The programme, 'Empowerment of women living in extreme poverty in Burkina Faso' has successfully combined traditional literacy and numeracy instruction with practical vocational skills training. It not only teaches basic literacy skills, but essential life skills and livelihood-related competencies that lead to empowerment.

Adopting a learner-centred approach, the programme operates at various times throughout the day, and the teaching is carried out in five local languages.

Learning needs are identified through a participatory process in which local community members discuss main areas of concern and prioritize actions that need to be taken to address them. The programme content evolves over time as it responds to these changing needs; covering various themes including malaria and HIV/AIDS prevention, hygiene, and sanitation, maintenance of peanut, soy and beans fields, as well as accessing and managing micro-credit facilities.

Additional support is also provided to learners to help them use their literacy and vocational skills to generate additional income and become economically independent. Today, over 300 women are engaged in farming, handicrafts and



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trading activities, earning enough income to repay the loans they took to start their businesses.

The programme provides a good example of how literacy learning can be effectively integrated with social development. By focusing primarily on women's empowerment, the programme has had a positive impact on families and the communities.

The women have been able to recognize the importance of sending their children to school, take preventive steps to lead healthier lives and optimally manage their finances. For example, in Worou village, 30 additional children have been enrolled in primary school. Under the programme, 132 HIV affected school children were encouraged to stay on in school through scholarships, 986 women have moved beyond initial literacy classes and acquired vocational skills of their choice, and more than 95 percent of the women have repaid their loans. The learners have also become more active citizens, claiming 581 birth certificates for their children and obtaining national identity cards and residence certificates for their families.

The success of the programme is, in a large measure, due to its ability to embed literacy learning within the overall life context of the individuals and communities.

It also makes important connections between literacy and vocational skills, and creates vital linkages with economic empowerment, social inclusion and environmental integrity.



ALGERIA

Training of women, heart of development in Algeria

The Algerian Association for Literacy IQRAA has been awarded the 2014 UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy for its Literacy Training and Integration of Women (AFIF) Programme.



© IQRAA

The programme not only provides literacy training for women, but enables them to obtain professional qualifications in trades such as computing, sewing and hairdressing. It also helps them become integrated into the workplace or to generate their own income with government support, such as microcredit or through employment offices. It has so far trained and empowered more than 23,000 young women between the ages of 18 and 25, with the support of the Ministry of National Solidarity's social programme.

Soumya, 46, who works as an embroiderer in Attatba, Wilaya de Tipaza, Algeria, said she is here today thanks to the Literacy Training and Integration of Women Programme. "This association came to rescue us when we were cringing in fear. We had called ahead for them to open a literacy class, and this is how I first learned to read and write, and then how I learned the embroidery on a machine," Soumya said.

"Our center is a center of reconciliation. It has allowed us to meet other people; to get to know each other and to share our daily worries, such as medical appointments, school enrollment, and finding a job. It has especially helped us to build the peace we were aspiring to. Then, I enjoyed the benefits of microcredit given by the State, and I created my own studio. Today I live for



© IQRAA

my work; and four girls from the village are working with me, isn't life grand?" Soumya added.

With the support of various partners, the Algerian Association for Literacy IQRAA maintains eight local centres called "Literacy Training and Integration of Women Centres". Through these centres, the programme is adapted to the constraints of family situations of varying levels of education. This method aims at improving the living conditions of the women taking part in the program. It also plays advocacy role; improving understanding and management of social issues, such as health, hygiene, citizenship, a culture of peace, human rights, fight against HIV/AIDS and preservation of the environment.

The Algerian Association for Literacy IQRAA is a Non-Governmental Organization founded in 1990, covering the whole country of Algeria. The main objective of the Association is to fight against illiteracy, exclusion, dropout and poverty. Its field of action is literacy, education and training. It is running programmes for integration into the workplace and promotion of populations in rural and unreachable areas.

Since its foundation, the Association has contributed to the literacy training of more than 1,680,000 citizens; of

whom 1,540,900 are women. Every year, 140,000 people who cannot read, write or count are enrolled, mostly women. They are supervised by around 4,650 teachers and trainers remunerated within the framework of the National Strategy Literacy established by the Government in 2007.

The Association has put in place its programme of supporting isolated populations in difficulty in rural areas with a view to contributing to their social integration and to provide an opportunity to improve their economic conditions



SPAIN

Teaching Literacy to 15 to 90-year-olds in Seville

The Lifelong Learning School for Community Development ‘Polígono Sur’ in Spain has been awarded the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy 2014 for its programme ‘Networking as an Educational Project’



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“I am 54 years old and I am learning to read and write. I couldn’t study when I was little because I had to take care of my brothers and sisters. I now come to the centre every day and I even enrolled my mother, who attended for eight years and has learnt to read”, wrote Dolores Gallego.

“I couldn’t go to school before because my husband was very jealous and didn’t want to let me go out. Now that I am alone, I have decided to come here to learn ... and I learn more every day, even though I don’t go very fast”, Dolores Pascual said for her part .

These two women study at the Southern Polygon Continuing Education Centre, which opened nearly 35 years ago in “Tres Mil Vivienda” [Three Thousand Homes], a disadvantaged district of Seville with some 40,000 habitants, comprising many people of immigrant descent and a large gitano community, in southern Spain. It has a high unemployment rate. The Centre, a public body, is attached to the autonomous government of Andalusia. Every day 600 learners attend the Centre, open all day without a break. The youngest, school drop-outs, are 15 or 16 years old. Carmen, the “doyenne” of the Centre, celebrated her 90th birthday in April 2014.

The Centre offers somewhat unconventional literacy courses: attendees learn to read and write there using the highway code, for example, after which they can take the test to obtain a driver’s licence, which opens doors and is absolutely necessary to the many learners who are itinerant traders. Courses are offered for those wishing to obtain a school-leaving certificate, which is now required even for the least skilled jobs. In the last few years, the Centre has laid emphasis



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on teaching Spanish as a foreign language to immigrants. "These are evening courses and learners often attend after spending the day begging at the traffic lights", explained Ana García Reina, the Centre's director.

"We acquired our own premises only two years ago, when the local government gave us an old primary school", said Ana. The Centre is small, consisting of eight classrooms, a library and a staff room. "The old school had a very big, untended playground. The learners and their coordinators have turned it into an organic vegetable garden that is already yielding produce. At the end of each season, everyone takes home a basket of chard, courgettes, lettuce, aubergines, tomatoes or melons."

The 12 teachers' salaries are paid by the autonomous government of Andalusia. The Centre's yearly budget of €5,000 is used to pay for water, electricity, course materials and photocopies, but in Tres Mil Viviendas, which has the highest illiteracy and unemployment rates in the European Union, there is no dearth of ingenuity or of motivation. "I passed a competitive examination held by the Ministry of Education and so I have a permanent post in another institution", said Ana. "When I decided to come here, to this backwater where problems such as drug and weapon trafficking and domestic violence are rife, my friends asked me whether I was sure that I had made the right choice. I have, of course, made the right choice! Working here requires total commitment, and I believe in it."



SOUTH AFRICA & USA

Using ICT to Strengthen Literacy in Multilingual Context

The Molteno Institute for Language and Literacy (South Africa) & the International Literacy Institute (USA) have been awarded the 2014 UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy for the Bridges to the Future Initiative



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The jury of the UNESCO International Literacy Prize commends the Bridges to the Future Initiative in South Africa and its partners for their work in promoting literacy in South Africa. The Initiative operates in one of South Africa's most rural areas, the Limpopo province, where 78.9% of the population live below the national poverty line.

The program promotes both early literacy and computer literacy skills among marginalized rural communities. It reaches primary school children and illiterate adults through a specially designed multilingual computer program that tries to bring a more cohesive learning experience to the learner.

This attempt to build a bridge between literacy and technology is the outcome of a partnership between the South African NGO 'Molteno Institute for Language' and the 'International Literacy Institute' in the United States of America. The program is also co-sponsored and co-supported by the national and provincial Departments of Education in South Africa. With support from numerous national and international partners, this multilateral, collaborative partnership has led to the successful development of the first substantive literacy programme in the African region to use a multi-lingual mother-tongue literacy program employing ICT.

The programme has shown improvement in literacy outcomes in targeted schools, reaching more than 30,000 school children since its inception, and



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reaching 6,000 youths and adults in the province. The multimedia application has been used as a tool to empower teachers with literacy content and pedagogical knowledge. The number of annual participants is expected to increase to 70,000 over the course of the next year, with Open Education Resources (OER) coming on line.

With a phonics-approach to literacy acquisition, as well as sentence and whole-text reading; the programme is conducted in schools, PC labs and adult literacy education centres. The students are able to obtain guidance from teachers and also use workbooks.

The learning content is based on multimedia designed around everyday situations, spanning from work life, friends, community, health, environment, and family - aligned with the national education curriculum. This gives the users the opportunity to develop mother-tongue literacy and to improve second and third language literacy.

The intervention of Bridges to the Future Initiative – South Africa has been able to improve access to quality education in rural areas. By engaging a wide variety of stakeholders, the Initiative reinforces literacy knowledge with innovative techniques, promoting and contributing to the improvement of literacy for socioeconomic development in rural South Africa.



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Literacy session, Burkina Faso



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Formación "Polígono Sur"

Literacy and Sustainable Development

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