



United Nations  
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la science et la culture

# Press Release

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY

8 September, 2012

**International Literacy Day, celebrated every year on September 8, offers a good opportunity to assess our progress in pursuing literacy for all in Cambodia and to consider the various challenges that lie ahead. This year the international theme is “Literacy for Peace,” and the Cambodian government has chosen a theme that focuses on the importance of literacy in accelerating national development: “Literacy as a Foundation for Development.”**

Improving literacy in Cambodia is essential, as literacy equips citizens with skills and confidence to seek out essential information and make informed choices that have a direct impact on their families and communities. Additionally, literacy strengthens mutual understanding by enabling people to share ideas and to express, preserve and develop their cultural identity and diversity.

To celebrate the Day, UNESCO is collaborating with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to implement a host of literacy-promoting activities to allow a platform for discussion about the important role that literacy plays in our everyday lives and the country's development. An official launch event of Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports will be held on Saturday in Kandal province with participants including ministry officials, development partners, educational institutions and the general public. UNESCO will participate in a televised round table discussion with Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Cults and Religion, and NGOs. The program will be broadcasted on TVK on September 7<sup>th</sup> (6-7 pm) and September 8 (9-10 am).

UNESCO has long been committed to supporting the country's literacy improvement efforts, and has supported the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in drafting a national Country Literacy Acceleration Plan under the Capacity Development for Education for All (CapEFA) programme. The plan aims to accelerate literacy improvement in Cambodia towards achieving

2015 *Education for All* literacy goals by identifying clear priorities and targeting marginalized groups. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is currently drafting the plan at the district and provincial level based on 500 maps showing illiteracy rates across villages, districts and provinces in Cambodia. All maps are accessible on the UNESCO Phnom Penh homepage: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/phnompenh/education/improving-education-quality/capacity-building-for-education-for-all-capefa/country-literacy-acceleration-plan-clap-maps/>

Promoting literacy as a foundation for lifelong learning will improve Cambodia's human development and thus have an impact on socio-economic development of the country. There must also be a focus on improving the situation of illiterate individuals who are members of hard to reach groups such as ethnic minorities, migrants, or people with disabilities. Let us work together in accelerating literacy efforts to achieve our hopes for peaceful and sustainable development of Cambodia.

Media Contact:

Ms. Jamie Lee, Communication and Information Focal Point, UNESCO, Phone: (+855) 023 426 726, ext. 115 Email: [hj.lee@unesco.org](mailto:hj.lee@unesco.org)

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