



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

The winners of the UNESCO
International Literacy Prizes

2013

Literacies for
the 21st Century

The winners of the UNESCO
International Literacy Prizes

2013

Federation of Associations for the Promotion of Guera Languages (Chad)

Mother Tongue Literacy in the Guera Region programme

Winner of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize

National Literacy Mission Authority, Ministry of Human Resource Development (India)

Saakshar Bharat (Literate India) Mission

Winner of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize

Directorate of Adult Education, Ministry of Education (Namibia)

National Literacy Programme

Winner of the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy

Dhaka Ahsania Mission (Bangladesh)

Ganokendra (People's Centre) Programme

Winner of the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy

The organisation 'Savoir pour mieux vivre' (Côte d'Ivoire)

*Programme 'I learn your language, you learn my language,
we understand each other, tomorrow belongs to us'*

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 2013

Literacy is a basic right and an essential motor for human development. It paves the way to autonomy, the acquisition of skills, cultural expression and full participation in society.

Illiteracy in the world has fallen over the two decades, thanks to international efforts and work towards the Millennium Development Goals. Today, 84% of the world's population can read and write, compared to 76% in 1990. In 20 years, the illiterate population has been reduced by more than 100 million people.

This is still not enough. Behind these figures there are still serious inequalities. Two thirds of the 774 million illiterate adults in the world are women. Most of the children and young people who do not go to school are girls. Fifty-seven million primary school-age children and 69 million secondary school-age children do not have the opportunity to attend. Children lucky enough to go to school do not always leave being able to read and write. Even in economically developed countries, the proportion of the population lacking basic reading and writing skills is too high. This is a serious obstacle to individual fulfilment, to the development of societies and to mutual understanding between peoples.

This situation is exacerbated by the rise of new technologies and modern knowledge societies that make the ability to read and write all the more essential. Literacy is the first condition for dialogue, communication and integration into new connected societies. Young people need new skills to enter and succeed in the job market: knowledge of several languages, understanding of cultural diversity, lifelong learning. Literacy is the key for acquiring knowledge, interpersonal skills, expertise and the ability to live together in community – all

skills that are the foundations of modern society. In the twenty-first century, more than ever before, literacy is the cornerstone of peace and development.

Literacy is much more than an educational priority – it is the ultimate investment in the future and the first step towards all the new forms of literacy required in the twenty-first century. We wish to see a century where every child is able to read and to use this skill to gain autonomy. On this International Literacy Day, we call on governments to work together to achieve this dream. This requires new funding, policies drawn up with the populations concerned, new and more innovative forms of action, taking full advantage of new technologies. The progress made in recent years shows that this is possible, and UNESCO is committed to doing all that it can to make it happen.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Irina Bokova". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'I'.

Irina Bokova

UNESCO International Literacy Prizes 2013

Since 1967, UNESCO has awarded International Literacy Prizes to outstanding and innovative efforts to promote literacy and non-formal education. Over the years, UNESCO's prestigious literacy prizes have rewarded over 460 projects and programmes undertaken by governments and non-governmental organizations around the world.

Every year, the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes focus on a specific theme. This year it is on "Literacies for the 21st Century".

Over 45 Years of Literacy Prizes

The UNESCO International Literacy Prizes are the oldest UNESCO prizes in education. Since **1967**, UNESCO has rewarded successful and innovative literacy programmes with the aim of recognizing excellence and inspiring projects in the field of literacy throughout the world.

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 in honour of the outstanding contribution made to literacy over 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 training. Two awards are made each year and each Prizewinner is granted \$20,000, a medal and a diploma.



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UNESCO International Literacy Prizes 2013

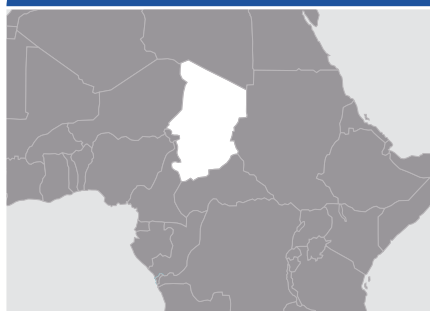
The UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy was established in 2005 thanks to the generosity of the Government of the People's Republic of China in honour of the great Chinese scholar Confucius. The Confucius Prize for Literacy gives special consideration to literacy for people in rural areas and out-of-school youth, particularly women and girls. Three awards are made each year and each Prizewinner 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 constituted 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 presently numbers five experts.



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CHAD

The mother tongue as the cornerstone of literacy teaching in Chad

The Federation of Associations for the Promotion of Guera Languages, UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize for its “Guera Region Mother Tongue Literacy” (Chad)



© Federation of Associations for the Promotion of Guera Languages

Guera is a crossroad between the north and south of Chad, home to 553,795 inhabitants (2009 census) among whom illiteracy rates are as high as 89%. Ninety-two percent of the region’s illiterate population are women.

Guera has great animal husbandry and farming potential to meet its own and neighbouring areas’ food needs but high illiteracy has been crippling the region’s development. Indeed, illiteracy has been contributing to poor sanitation, including malnutrition, low self-confidence and poor understanding of civil rights.

To remedy this situation, the Federation of Associations for the Promotion of Guera Languages (FAPLG) advocates promoting social and human development with the aim of halving illiteracy by 2025 through mother-tongue education, considered to be the fastest and most efficient way of fostering development.

The UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize was awarded to the Federation to reward its efforts to promote use of the mother tongues in education, training, creativity and revenue-generating activities. The Federation’s main goal is to develop training in the 26 languages of the region so that they may be used for literacy and adult education.



© Federation of Associations for the Promotion of Guera Languages

Since its establishment in 2001, the Federation, a civil society organization, has taught literacy to 7,645 learners aged 15 to 60, including 5,446 women, who speak 15 different languages.

Under the Guera Region Mother Tongue Literacy scheme, literacy courses are taught in four six-month sessions. In the first two years, learners concentrate on mastering reading and writing in their mother tongue. Young learners subsequently attend classes in which they apply their new skills to French. Learners who wish to continue their education can transfer to the formal school system.

“I got married when I was very young; I didn’t have the opportunity to go to school like the other girls in the town, who have now become civil servants, but now, with what I have learnt at the literacy centre, I’m very happy because I can read and write. My life has changed, and I can be better organized at home,” says Adama Ali, a learner enrolled with the Federation, who lives in Banda, 15 km from Mongo, the capital of the region, in the Daju community.

Conversely, adults are transferred to functional literacy centres at which they are supervised by professionals and study animal-husbandry and farming techniques that can be used to boost their productivity. The centres have been organized as community-interest groups and work to achieve socio-economic development to improve lives.

In addition to its adult literacy programme, the FAPLG operates a preschool scheme under which basic education is provided to children aged 5 to 6 in their mother tongue. Time is set aside for spoken French to prepare their entry into the formal education system.

In Chad, where 78% of the people live in rural areas, such initiatives can lead to the achievement of sustainable development.

Antoine Cardey



INDIA

India makes women's literacy a development imperative

An ambitious national literacy plan that builds on the excellent foundation laid during the previous two decades of literacy efforts in India, has won one of the two King Sejong awards. The programme reflects strong and lasting commitment with a clear vision of establishing a fully literate society with a focus on women and girls.



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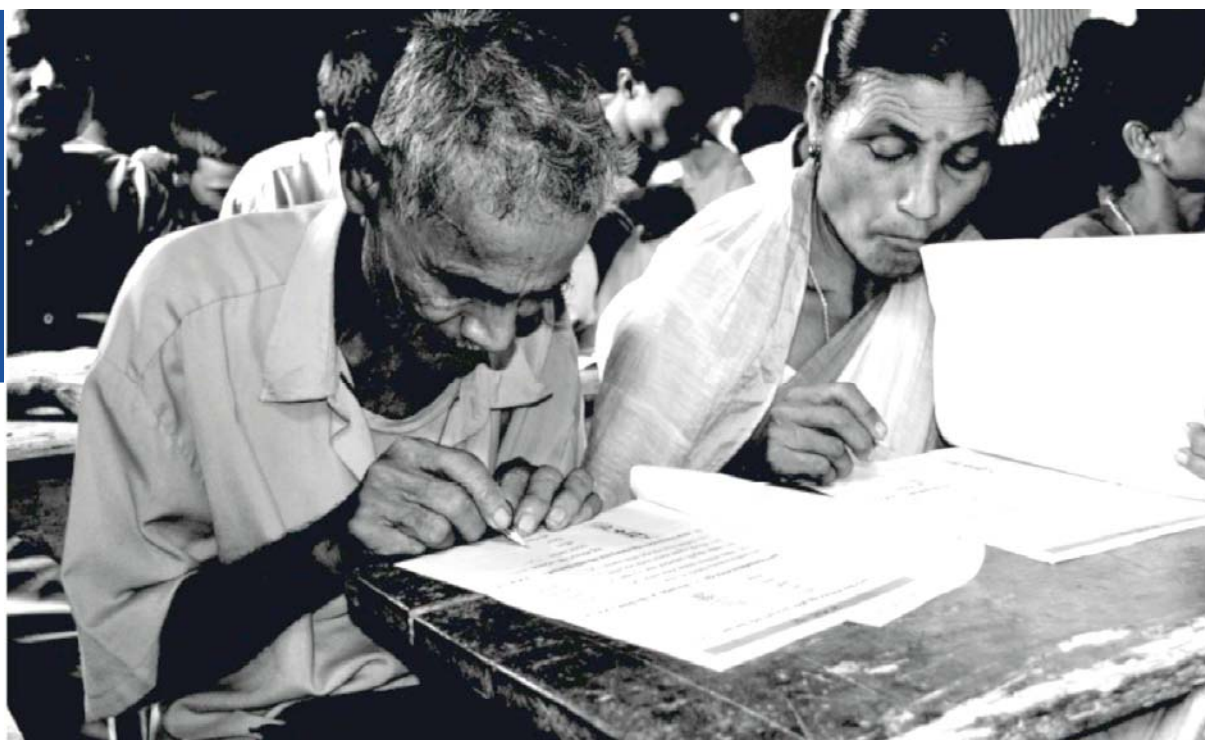
The literacy rate in the country rose from 52.2% in 1991 to 64.8% in 2001 and to 74% in 2011. The new variant of the National Literacy Mission seeks to raise the literacy rate to 80% by 2017 and reduce the gender gap from 16% in 2011 to 10% by 2017.

The country's commitment to scale up literacy efforts is evident from the fact that the \$1 billion programme aims to reach out to 70 million learners, most of them women, by 2017.

In 2009, when the programme was launched, Indian President Pratibha Patil highlighted one of its remarkable aspects, saying that "female literacy is expected to become the force multiplier for all our social development." Focusing on 372 districts where female literacy is a huge challenge, the programme involves women as active participants.

The programme brings an integrated perspective to literacy and includes in its ambit functional literacy, basic education, vocational skills development and continuing education.

The Saakshar Bharat Mission (Literate India) adopts different modalities to impart basic literacy skills. Alongside a volunteer-based mass campaign, it hosts residential camps which provide a second chance to young people aged 15-25 who could not complete the cycle of basic education. The Open Basic Education component of the programme enables neo-literates to continue learning and reach a level of basic education equivalent to 10 years of formal schooling. Computer-based literacy instruction has, moreover, been successfully implemented in a number of



© National Literacy Mission Authority

villages. Vocational skills are also provided in 271 Special Centres while close to 150,000 Adult Education Centres meet youth and adults.

NGOs play a key role in Saakshar Bharat. They manage the 32 State Resource Centres providing academic support to the programme and develop learning materials in the language of learners' choice. State specific primers have been developed in 26 Indian languages and a group of experts ensures the materials' quality. The State Resource Centres also train volunteers and sensitize them to gender, social and cultural issues.

An innovative literacy assessment and certification system designed jointly by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and the National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA) serves to reinforce learners' motivation. Nearly 20 million learners, 70% of them women, have been certified as having acquired the basic literacy skills in the last three years.

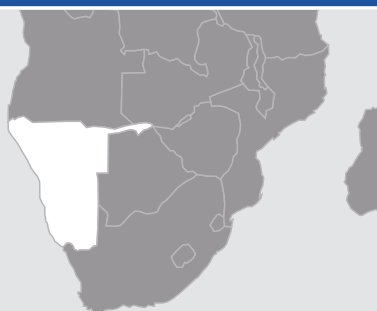
The Mission has a participatory, decentralized management structure and a sound monitoring system. Gram Panchayat – village and small town self-government bodies – plan and implement the programme with funding from the National and State Governments.

A unique feature of the programme is provided by the active involvement of a range of stakeholders and partners. Public sector corporations, for instance, have contributed nearly \$4 million to set up 1,000 model adult education centres and equip them with computers, televisions,

projectors and libraries as part of their corporate social responsibility commitment. The Mission has also mobilized a great many celebrities in its literacy advocacy work helping foster a favourable learning environment.

Faced with the daunting challenge of imparting literacy to nearly 272 million persons in the country, the comprehensive, integrated and innovative approach adopted by the National Literacy Mission is a laudable attempt to empower people and improve literacy across India.

Venkata Subbarao Ilapavuluri



NAMIBIA

Promoting social, cultural and economic development nationwide to improve the quality of life for all people

The Directorate of Adult Education, Ministry of Education in Namibia, has been awarded the 2013 UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy for its National Literacy Programme



© Directorate of Adult Education

The jury of the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes congratulated the Government of Namibia for its strong commitment to youth and adult literacy, which has led to an increase in the rate of literacy of 24% over 20 years.

Indeed, literacy has risen from 65% in 1991 to 89% in 2011, according to the 2011 National Population and Housing Census and the Government is hoping to achieve 90% adult literacy by 2015. These impressive results can be attributed to work carried out by the National Literacy Programme (NLP), which was launched in 1992, just two years after independence, guided by a vision to make Namibia fully literate and its work force empowered to drive national development.

Realizing the importance of educating both youth and adults to achieve social, cultural, economic and human development, the Government has been allocating more than 6% of its Gross National Product to this sector.

Under the Directorate of Adult Education, the NLP has been providing learning opportunities to out-of-school youth and disadvantaged adults across the country. The objective is to enable learners to acquire knowledge, skills and positive attitudes which will improve their quality of life and their ability to



contribute to their community and national development. Supported by inclusive policies and laws, the programme has developed a holistic and lifelong learning approach that combines basic and functional literacy with a range of skills to address issues such as health and employment, as well as issues related to personal, socio-cultural, economic and environmental development.

NLP runs basic and post-literacy programmes and offers further learning opportunities to graduates. The basic literacy course consists of a 3-year training, averaging some 240 hours per annum. The first two years combine basic mother tongue functional literacy, offered in eleven local languages and life skills. English is introduced during the third part of the training. Completion of the full course is equivalent to fourth grade in the formal primary education system. The Directorate offers diverse possibilities for further learning targeting a wide range of learner groups, including those who are physically challenged.

The Directorate runs the programme through decentralized structures which link decisions and actions taken at central, regional and district levels.

Such decentralization allows the Directorate to foster community involvement, bring learning closer to the communities, support local development initiatives and to extend partnerships with other literacy providers.

The NLP works with a range of ministries, as well as the private sector, NGOs, and religious organizations to meet the diversity of needs in terms of course content, methods, learners and instructors. The Ministry of Education funds 2% of the Directorate's total budget. Funding is also provided from other ministries such as Youth, Sport and Culture, and Defence.

The rapid growth of the National Literacy Programme in Namibia is a praiseworthy demonstration of how long-term government commitment, inclusive legislation and policies combined with a holistic lifelong approach can reduce illiteracy.

Sayeeda Rahman



BANGLADESH

Personal empowerment and community solidarity

Dhaka Ahsania Mission
awarded UNESCO Confucius
Prize for Literacy for its
Ganokendra (People's
Centre) Programme



© Dhaka Ahsania Mission

Bangladesh's Ganokendra Programme, created by Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), has been integrating literacy and livelihood skills to tackle the high rate of illiteracy in the country, the eighth most populous nation in the world. The programme, which numbers 4,193 "people's centres", (Ganokendra in Bengali) is a key actor of a social movement to help citizens become active members of their community.

"Literacy and skills training through Chaderhat Ganokendra changed my life," says Amina, from Narshangdi District, 50 kms northeast of Dhaka. She was 39, newly widowed and left destitute with three young children. "The loan from the micro-finance programme of DAM was a great support to apply my training in banana cultivation. Now I earn enough to feed my family, which was a big dream for me. I also go around helping others take care of their banana gardens. I encourage other distressed women to become self-reliant citing my own example. I am sure many poor families can change their condition with education and training from Ganokendra backed up by small loans from a local institution."

Amina is just one of close to seven million people who have benefitted in various ways from the Ganokendra Programme, which also provides assistance with health issues, notably through health education (close to 2.5 million beneficiaries to date), skills training, and claims pertaining to human and social rights.

The effectiveness of the Ganokendra is based on an apparent contradiction: assisted self-help. In the words of Ehsanur Rahman, the Executive Director



© Dhaka Ahsania Mission

of DAM, “While working with people at grass roots level, DAM realized that the silent majority needs an organization of their own like Ganokendra”. Community-based and managed by members, the Centres facilitate the emergence of a learning society; enable social empowerment and economic self-reliance; support access to government services and help the disadvantaged to mobilize their potential.

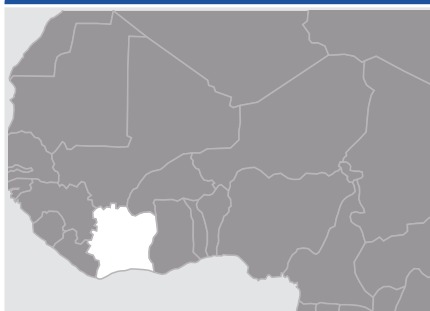
The primary role of Ganokendra is to foster literacy. It also encourages “graduates” to continue to frequent their local centres and help them design and implement activities that respond to users’ needs. As individual talents blossom, well-being in the community progresses and information on local results is disseminated via the Community Resource Centres, providing models that can be adapted to the conditions of other localities. This model of reciprocal give-and-take between an institution, individuals and communities has proved to be an inspiration for fertile collaboration with formal and informal learning centres, NGOs, government, and health programmes.

DAM, the initiator of the Ganokendra Programme, was founded in 1958 by the eminent educator and social reformer Khan Bahadur Ahsanullah (1874–1965). DAM expanded its original philanthropic mandate in the 1970s to embrace gender equality, education and social development, health, social justice, environmental issues, as well as disaster risk reduction and preparedness.

It created the People’s Centres so as to reach the poorest and most disadvantaged members of society, with

a particular focus on women, and Amina’s story provides a telling illustration of the Programme’s contribution to the dynamic social progress registered by Bangladesh, long thought doomed to remain one of the poorest nations in the world.

Clare Cleret



CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Strengthen knowledge acquisition in the mother tongue

The Ivorian NGO “Savoir pour mieux vivre” [Knowledge for a Better Life] awarded the third UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy for its work to promote mother-tongue learning



© Savoir pour mieux vivre

Senufo, Dyula, Baulé, Bété, Yakuba, Agni... Côte d'Ivoire has 60 official languages including French, which is the main language of instruction and is spoken by nearly 70% of Ivorians. Some languages, however, are only spoken in a few villages. This is true of Gban, spoken by the Gagous, a Mandinka people in the central western part of the country.

Children taught in their mother tongue are more likely to succeed at school. They are also likely to have a positive image of their culture and identity. This is why Savoir pour mieux vivre (SAPOMIVIE), the Ivorian NGO, has been working since 2006 to introduce children to the country's cultures and to writing in its different languages. Some 3,500 people, mostly children, but also adults up to 60 years of age have already benefited from its project “*J'apprends ta langue, tu apprends ma langue, nous nous comprenons, demain nous appartient*” [I learn your language, you learn my language, we understand each other, tomorrow belongs to us].

Using songs, games and adapted teaching material, the NGO travels throughout the country, from Yamoussoukro to Abidjan, via Bouna, to give literacy lessons and build on the skills learnt at primary school, in a country where only 63% of women aged between 15 and 24 years can read and write, compared to 72% of men in the same age group (Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics).



© Savoir Pour Mieux Vivre

Moreover, the tutors, some 100 volunteers, including ten permanent staff, work on the bilingual publication of literary works for young people, for example *Les confidences de Médor*, by Micheline Coulibaly, which is on the syllabus for second-year secondary-school pupils, translated into 23 languages including Senufo and Bambara. Maninka, Attié, Abidji, Kulango or Dan syllabaries are used.

“We work in schools outside lesson periods, for example during library time, and so avoid sparking discontent among parents. Our classes are free and we have a kind of contract with headteachers, thus securing their support for our project. Our method is fully participatory,” explains Mical Dréhi Lorougnon, director of SAPOMIVIE.

Pupils attend the classes because they wish to communicate more easily with family members who live in village communities, avoid feeling like estranged from their families’ culture and master another language than French, among other reasons.

“I come to these lessons to learn to speak my mother tongue,” explains Samira Zamblé, a first-year pupil at the Sainte-Marie de Cocody Secondary School (Abidjan), “because when I go to Zamblé, my aunt speaks to me in Gur, which I don’t understand, and people laugh at me.” Samira’s friend, Alexia Mayzan would also like to be able to communicate better with

her family, “when they speak Anyi or Abidji, I would like not to have to ask what everything means in French.”

“Speaking, reading and writing in your mother tongue is a right,” stressed Mical Dréhi Lorougnon. Quite simply.

Lucía Iglesias



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India



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© Savoir pour mieux vivre

The winners of the best polyglot competition, *Savoir pour mieux vivre*, Côte d'Ivoire



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Literacies for the 21st Century

UNESCO wishes to express its profound appreciation and deepest thanks to:

- **The generous support of the GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA which has enabled the awarding of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize since 1989**
- **The generous support of the GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA which has enabled the awarding of the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy since 2005**

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