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United Nations
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United Nations
Literacy Decade
2003 - 2012

The winners of the UNESCO
International Literacy Prizes

2011

Literacy for Peace





Message from Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO,
on the occasion of International Literacy Day,
8 September 2011

This year, International Literacy Day places a special focus on the essential relationship between literacy and peace. Lasting peace is founded on respect for human rights and social justice.

Literacy, the foundation of all education and lifelong learning, is one of these rights.

Literacy is a prerequisite for peace because it carries multiple benefits, cutting across the human, cultural, social, political and economic spheres.

In today's knowledge-driven societies, lack of literacy is more than ever synonymous with exclusion and marginalization.

According to the most recent figures (2009), 793 million adults lack basic literacy skills, the majority are girls and women. A further 67 million children of primary school age are not in primary school and 72 million adolescents of lower secondary school age are also missing out their right to an education, running the risk of creating a new generation of illiterates.

This unacceptable situation is holding back all efforts to reduce poverty and advance human development.

It is an infringement of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and a threat to peace and security.

Literacy is a development accelerator and a force for peace.

First, literacy empowers individuals, equipping them with the skills and confidence to seek out vital information and to make informed choices that have a direct impact on their families and communities.

Second, literacy is a condition for individuals to effectively participate in democratic processes, to claim a voice in community organizations, gain political knowledge and thereby contribute to shaping the quality of public policies.

Third, literacy programmes strengthen mutual understanding by enabling people to share ideas and to express, preserve and develop their cultural identity and diversity.

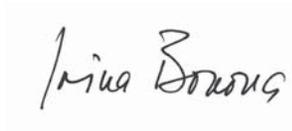
No country can hope to establish lasting conditions for peace unless it finds ways of building mutual trust between its citizens through inclusive education systems that promote mutual understanding, respect, tolerance and dialogue.

It is crucial to integrate literacy in peace-building processes in order to plant the seeds of peace, foster dialogue and reconciliation, and give youth and adults the skills they need to seek decent employment.

The 2011 International Literacy Prizes reward ground-breaking programmes that show the central role of literacy in promoting human rights, gender equality, conflict resolution and cultural diversity. All programmes highlight that even in the most difficult contexts, good quality literacy programmes are working and bringing lasting change into the lives of youth and adults.

Investing in literacy programmes is a sensible and essential development choice. Literacy is a key component of strategies to promote sustainable development and peace. It is central to achieving Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals.

The world urgently needs increased political commitment to literacy backed by adequate resources to scale up effective programmes. Today I urge governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector to make literacy a policy priority, so that every individual can develop their potential, and actively participate in shaping more sustainable, just and peaceful societies.

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

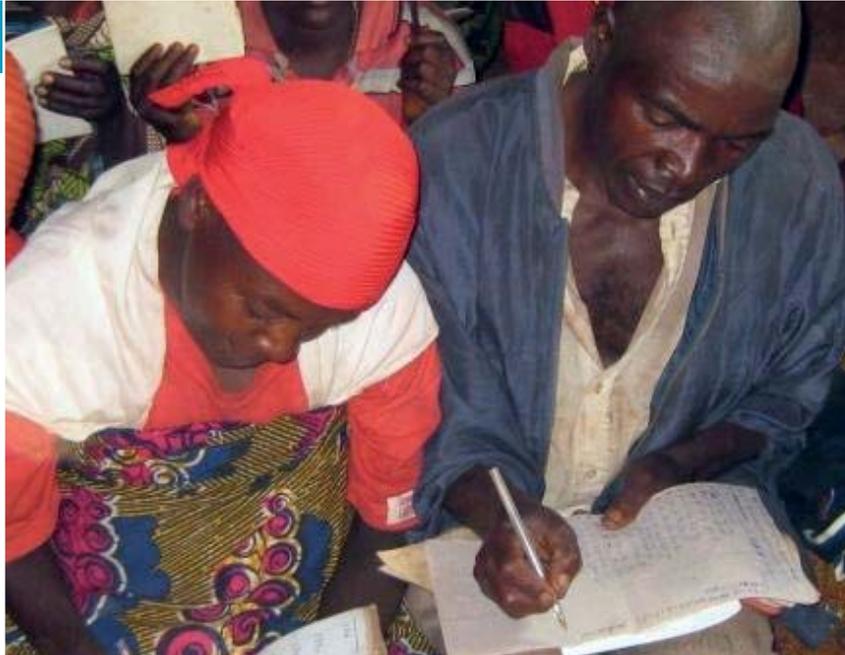
Irina Bokova



BURUNDI

Literacy courses rebuild trust between shattered communities in Burundi

Burundi's National Literacy Service was awarded the 2011 UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize for its National Literacy Programme



© Prime Hakiza

A government literacy programme which promotes reconciliation and equality in war-damaged Burundi has won one of the two awards of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize.

The National Literacy Service in Burundi has been honoured for its innovative approach in linking literacy not only to daily life issues but also to peace and tolerance.

Burundi is still recovering from a long period of civil war which fractured its population and created a climate of fear and suspicion between returning refugees and those who stayed in the country. In addition census figures for 2008 show 57.5% of the population in Burundi (three million people) are illiterate, of which 61% are women.

The National Literacy Service has addressed these problems as part of its vast literacy programme by creating courses open to and accessible by all, regardless of sex, ethnicity, religion or region, and where teachers are trained to help the different groups brought together in the classroom towards reconciliation.

The programme, which began in 1989, is aimed at over-15s, children who have never been schooled, women and girls, minorities such as the Batwa tribe, returnees and those demobilized after the war. Its scope includes the design



© Prime Hakiza

of literacy materials and courses, training of personnel, supervision of literacy centres, advocacy and mobilization and post-literacy follow up.

It also includes a Workshop for Peace Education and Sensitization which works with educators and facilities to promote peace, human rights and democracy.

The government-funded courses take place in more than 900 centres across the country and are delivered in the national language, Kirundi. They are tailor-made according to the needs expressed by beneficiaries with duration left flexible to fit around the agricultural timetable.

Learners opt to study topics that relate to their daily lives including agriculture, animal husbandry, nutrition, housing, health, reproductive health, hygiene, jobs, human rights and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

As a result of the programme at least 20,000 people are becoming literate each year. From 2010 to 2011 the programme awarded more than 50,000 certificates to new readers and figures from this year show 19, 897 people following literacy courses in the country.

Jean Nakintije, a learner at the Literacy Centre in Mirinzi in Muramvya said: "Since taking this course I am

able to write my own first name and surname and to read - even if it is slowly. As a farmer and breeder I now know you don't use the same fertilizer for coffee and beans. I am better at cultivating feed for the animals."

Programme Director Mr Prime Hakiza described the aim of the programme as not just to teach people to read, write and add but to help learners towards personal development and economic autonomy, follow up and reinforce literacy learning and build peacefully cohabiting communities that understand human rights and democracy.

He said: "Literacy has encouraged reconciliation between populations separated by war. Meetings in the literacy courses have brought the two camps together and cleared the atmosphere of mistrust."

The programme, which is supported in Burundi by UNESCO, UNICEF and Action Aid as well as religious organizations and local and international NGOs, is being replicated in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

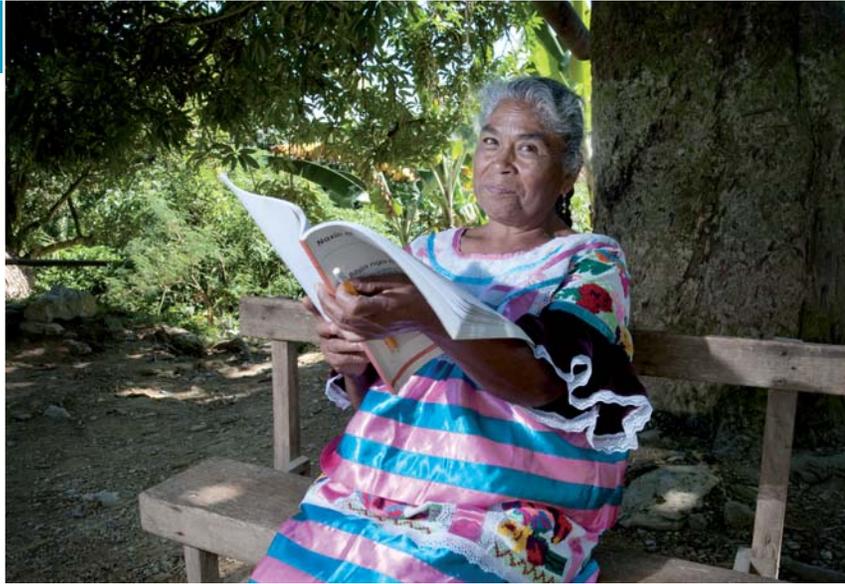
Mary de Sousa



MEXICO

Bilingual Literacy for Life

The National Institute for the Education of Adults, Mexico, was awarded the 2011 UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize for its Bilingual Literacy for Life Programme



© INEA/Libeth Arauz Velasco

The 2010 census in Mexico shows that six million out of a total population of 112 million are illiterate. Among those over the age of 15 years, 6.9% can neither read nor write, and this figure rises to 27.3% if only speakers of indigenous languages are taken into account. The illiteracy rate among Spanish speakers in this age group is 5.4%.

These facts must all be set in an extremely rich yet complex sociocultural context: 64 different ethnic groups and 11 language families (giving a total of 364 recorded linguistic variants).

“The dominant culture tends to think that these communities can be rendered literate in the same way, but experience shows us that this is not so”, explains Luz María Castro Mussot, academic director of the National Institute for Adult Education (INEA), which was awarded the 2011 UNESCO King Sejong prize for its Bilingual Literacy for Life programme, which aims to provide a bilingual education (in Spanish and an indigenous language) in some of the country’s most disadvantaged communities. She explains: “We were working on literacy in Spanish, but we soon realized that we were travelling to indigenous communities that were practically monolingual and we were being asked ‘why are there such opportunities for the mestizos but not for us?’ So we identified 20 priority languages and in 2007 we began to work with Mayan. Later on we introduced Tzotzil and Tzeltal, which are each spoken by more than 400,000



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people in the state of Chiapas, and by 2010 we were working with 40 ethnic groups and we had a budget of 80 million pesos” (US \$636,000). The Bilingual Literacy Programme is implemented by 5,000 bilingual assessors and facilitators living in the communities of the states of Chiapas, Oaxaca, Guerrero, Tabasco, Nayarit, Puebla, Veracruz, Hidalgo, Yucatán, Chihuahua, San Luis Potosí, Quintana Roo, Campeche, Durango, México, Querétaro and Michoacán.

They are volunteers, although there are incentives based on results obtained. This also applies to the newly literate, who are awarded certificates of pre-secondary education. In 2011, there were 1,658 bilingual literacy centres and 50,000 enrolled students learning from materials written in 40 different indigenous languages. According to the academic director “The country’s lowest human development indices are recorded in these communities, which is why we also see our work as a means of overcoming discrimination and non-development”.

“The most outstanding feature of the project is, to my mind, the challenge of entering other cultures and into languages that have no written culture. The grammar is implicit, not explicit, so it must be uncovered. This implies finding ways and means of kindling people’s interest in other worlds.”

Women, who have traditionally recorded the highest rates of monlingualism, account for 92% of literacy programme beneficiaries. Some women, such as Glafira Morán, a 60-year-old from Malinaltepec municipality, Guerrero state, is already beginning to see results: “I sow coffee, I reap maize, I keep my field clean, look after my house, feed the hens and other animals, fetch drinking water ... these are my daily activities ... but to me it is very important to learn to read and write. Now I can communicate with people who speak Spanish. It was not easy before. I am learning little by little and I will continue to do so.”

Maribel Ahuaxocoteco Xoloma, an 18-year-old from Las Trancas, also in Guerrero state, does not intend to throw in the towel: “I share everything I learn with my family. Sometimes they say it is too late to learn, that I should spend my time doing housework. But I don’t listen to these opinions and I keep on learning. Before, when I went to meetings at my son’s school I used to sign with a fingerprint. Now I read everything and I sign my name.”

<http://www.inea.gob.mx/index.php>

Lucía Iglesias



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Peace huts and literacy bring security to politically unstable communities in North Kivu

The Collectif Alpha UJUVI in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has been awarded the 2011 UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy for its programme on Literacy for the peaceful coexistence of communities and good governance in North Kivu



© Daniel Musaka

Peace Huts used for conflict resolution form part of a literacy programme in the Democratic Republic of the Congo which has won one of the two awards of the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy.



The award was given to the Collectif Alpha UJUVI for its programme “Literacy for the peaceful coexistence of communities and good governance” which started in North Kivu in 2010. The province has suffered long-term political instability and massive displacement of populations leading to permanent insecurity and lack of peace.

Under the direction of Sister Deodata Bunzigiye the innovative programme uses literacy to prevent and resolve tensions and conflicts among individuals and communities in the region.

Its objectives are to train trainers in literacy techniques, sensitize communities about illiteracy, build coordination among literacy centres and supervise and evaluate their work.

The programme took a new direction in 2006 when literacy workers realized through dialogue with learners that there were conflicts between individuals and between communities in the majority of literacy circles.

The Collectif Alpha UJUVI decided to confront the problem and incorporate the solution into work with the newly literate. A training on



© Collectif Alpha UJUVI

prevention, mediation, and management of conflict and good governance and a programme incorporating these elements was created. The training was incorporated into the promotion of peace education in North Kivu.

Newly-literate learners opted for a traditional Kivu method of problem resolution and discussion, the Peace Hut, which would act as a neutral and friendly dialogue space. The programme also aimed specifically to integrate women into the decision-making process at the heart of the community and improve their status.

The task of the learners was to promote exchanges and dialogue and cooperation between community leaders, the population and authorities taking into account different local characteristics of North Kivu's six territories. Each week two cases of conflict are dealt with, equalling 576 cases resolved each year. Since its launch 10,980 people have taken part in the Peace Hut scheme which runs alongside literacy classes for adults and young people in both Swahili and French.

Subjects in the classroom reinforce the Peace Hut formula and include peace, good governance, conflict, violence, cohabitation, corruption, tribalism, power, riches, decision-making, being a leader and hatred.

Louise Cheftaine described how her new abilities had helped to bring peace to her neighbourhood. "I suffered a great deal because of my illiteracy. In this society it is

considered a waste of time to educate a woman because she will just end up doing the housework. My parents believed in this non-progressive philosophy and as a result I was not considered an heir and deprived of my inheritance. Also in my neighbourhood there was huge insecurity and I could do nothing about it. Since I followed the literacy programme I feel free. I am involved in trying to resolve problems in my community and thanks to collaboration and discussion with local leaders I have been instrumental in removing the insecurity."

Learner Mapendon Furaha said: "I never had the chance to study because I was obliged to look after my brothers and sisters and later my nephews and nieces. All my life I had the impression that no one listened to me. Even my husband treated me like a simpleton because I hadn't studied. After following the literacy course I am able to read, write and calculate. To my profound joy my family now treat me with some esteem and consideration. I have become a member of Baraza (Peace Hut) as a counsellor and everyone counts on my opinion to take decisions."

The programme is supported by UNESCO, UNFPA and Action Aid among others.

www.alphaujiuvi.net

Mary de Sousa



UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA

Cultivating the habit of reading

Room to Read, in the United States of America, has been awarded the 2011 UNESCO Confucius Prize for its programme on Promoting Gender Equality and Literacy through Local Language

Publishing



© Room to Read

“**W**orld change starts with educated children” is the credo of the Room to Read non-governmental organization. Working with local communities, partner organizations and governments, it develops literacy skills and the habit of reading among primary school children, and supports girls to complete secondary school with the life skills they need to succeed in school and beyond. Its programme “Promoting Gender Equality and Literacy through Local Language Publishing” has received one of the two awards of the 2011 UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy.

Founded in 2000, based in San Francisco, the United States and operating in nine countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Laos, Nepal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Zambia), Room to Read has helped local communities to develop culturally relevant reading materials in local and minority languages. Its Local Language Publishing Programme has produced more than 500 new titles in 25 languages, of which more than five million copies have been distributed.

Room to Read runs four holistic, interlinked programmes: Reading Room has established 11,000 children’s libraries in communities where poverty, ethnicity, or other barriers put children at an educational disadvantage. School Room helps to build safe, child-friendly schools for children. The Girls’ Education programme enables girls to pursue and complete a secondary education. Finally, the Local Language Publishing programme, the focus of the 2011 UNESCO Literacy Prize, ensures that children and teachers have access



© Room to Read

to a variety of reading materials so they can engage with books in an amusing and meaningful way.

The Room to Read publishing programme arose from the lack of children's books in local languages. It provides varied content at appropriate levels (from picture books to story cards to flip books) covering gender equality, the environment, health, art, beginning words and basic vocabulary, morals and values, family life, folktales, rhymes and poems. Today it publishes 5,000 to 10,000 copies per new title and distributes them to its network of schools and libraries and other organizations. One of the top publishers of local language children's books in Nepal and Cambodia, its Nepal books have won the "Children's Book of the Year Award" and in Laos, the "Laos Book Excellence Awards" in both 2008 and 2009. Because the local language books are printed and published in-country, costs are extremely low - approximately US\$1 per book.

All books are created within the respective countries. Local writers and illustrators are selected to develop new culturally-relevant children's books. Some stories are adapted from local folktales; others are sourced from writing competitions sponsored and facilitated by Room to Read, which promote literacy as a culture of writing and not just reading. National book development committees in each country consisting of government officials, curriculum experts, authors, illustrators and Room to Read staff serve as advisory boards to evaluate and select manuscripts. Books are often tested with local

Over 5.1 million children have gained better access to education through Room to Read since 2000. This includes:

- Schools established: 1,442
- Libraries established: 11,246
- Original children's books published: 553
- Local English-language books distributed: 9.4 million
- Girls' Education programme participants: 10,590



© Susie Cushman

children, to elicit comments on plot, character, language and suitability for the target age group.

"Stories have a major role in human history" says Ms. Vasanthy Thayavaran, an author with Room to Read's Local Language Publishing program in Sri Lanka. "In my culture, grandmothers traditionally practiced oral storytelling within the family, but times have changed. We now need to fill in that storytelling gap by giving children books which can be their companions forever. It is one of the happiest moments in your life, as an author, when you see books being read by the children you intended them for."

<http://www.roomtoread.org/>

Jean O'Sullivan



PHILIPPINES

Free haircuts and a fresh outlook for night market vendors in the Philippines

The City Literacy Coordinating Council of Tagum City, Philippines, was awarded the 2011 Honorable Mention of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize for the Peace Management Literacy and Continuing Education through Night Market programme



© City Literacy Coordinating Council Tagum City

The City Literacy Coordinating Council of Tagum City is recognized for mobilizing governmental and non-governmental organizations in the Philippines city of Tagum, including Christian, Muslim and homosexual groups, to work together on a literacy project that has done much more to help learners than simply teach them to read and write.

Its programme, “Peace Management Literacy and Continuing Education through Night Market”, uses peace education activities, literacy and entrepreneurship modules to generate employment opportunities for marginalized populations and sustain a peaceful urban environment in the quarter-million strong city of Tagum on the Philippines island of Mindanao that underwent rapid development over the last half century.

It all began in 2004 when the Mayor, Rey T. Uy, legalized the city’s hitherto illegal and disorganized night markets. The project has grown considerably since but the foundation of its success was already present in the initial phase: let learners define the skills they need and help them acquire the means to put these skills to practical use.

The programme benefits people who would have trouble passing a job interview, people who have not benefitted from much formal education. It helps vendors acquire collapsible structures, so-called “go carts” for their wares, gives them access to electrical lines, literacy and numeracy skills training,



© City Literacy Coordinating Council Tagum City

business guidance, cooking demonstrations, hygiene and presentation classes, an improved understanding of community values and more, even free haircuts!

Literacy here is not just the ability to read books and take dictation: it includes learning to sort out garbage for recycling, improving customer relations, making stalls attractive and learning how to handle tense situations without resorting to violence.

The project has dispelled the suspicion that once surrounded the night market of Tagum City. Residents have grown used to enjoying the market to stroll, shop and eat. People have even started flocking in from neighbouring towns, enjoying not only the wares and food on offer, but watching cultural shows organized by the Tagum City Night Market Vendors' Association to attract customers and help increase the vendors' revenues.

The project, whose ambitious development and implementation are supervised by the City Economic Enterprise Office has integrated literacy and skills education in an informal environment giving very real meaning to the all-too-often hollow term of empowerment.

With the help of soft loans, vendors, assistants and would-be vendors have been able to maximize returns from their hard work and take charge of their lives while

improving the quality of the urban environment in which they live and raise their families. These improvements affect the entire community which can enjoy cleaner and safer streets, a more buoyant economy and better inter-personal relations.

"Peace is a very fragile commodity," the project organizers say. "It can be shattered easily by an empty stomach, by a wrong perception or understanding of an event, by a person's inability to agree on a common goal."

This has proved all the more true as the project succeeded in cutting through ethnic and religious divides, gender and generations. It has also helped the local authorities raise revenue for a wide range of projects thanks to the economic upswing of the Tagum Night Market, which has turned into a tourist attraction.

Competitions and rewards for vendors that operate the best-kept stalls are another incentive for people to foster common goals and values, crossing divides that could once gave rise to hostility. And everybody feels better about themselves and each other after a good haircut: a service provided to the vendors free of charges every three months courtesy of the Tagum City Gay Association.

<http://www.tagumcity.gov.ph/>

Roni Amelan



PAKISTAN

Child labourers, women and the marginalized targeted by Pakistani literacy programme

Dr Allah Bakhsh Malik,
Secretary of the Department
of Literacy and Non-formal
Basic Education, Punjab
Province, Pakistan, was
awarded the Honorable
Mention of the UNESCO
Confucius Prize for Literacy
for the Adult Education and
Vocational skills programme

© Dr Allah Bakhsh Malik



Life-changing courses for child workers in the brick kiln industry are among the initiatives that have helped the head of a Pakistani literacy project gain the Honourable Mention of the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy.

Government Secretary of the Punjab Literacy and Non-formal Basic Education Department, Dr Allah Bakhsh Malik, was awarded the mention for his leadership role in the Literacy, Adult Education and Vocational Skills programme.

Through six projects the ongoing programme which runs under the banner “Making Punjab literate by 2020” has enabled 1.2 million out-of-school children aged 5-14, 60 per cent of them girls, to complete primary education and given literacy and life skills to a further 1.9 million adults. The Punjab has 40 million illiterate adults and 3.8 million out-of-school children with girls and women in slums and rural areas the most disadvantaged.

Launched in 2009, the programme, which runs until 2012, is directed at marginalized groups including children who have never gone to school and adult illiterates, particularly women, living in urban slum and rural areas of the Punjab where literacy levels are lowest.

Dr Malik devised and implemented the six projects with funding from the Pakistani government and technical assistance from organizations including UNESCO, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Department for International Development, United Kingdom (DFID) and the World Bank.



© Dr. Alisha Bakhsh Malik

He said that initial resistance to the literacy programme was overcome with the introduction of vocational skills courses offered alongside and backed by advocacy and awareness campaigns. Parents of child labourers also had to be convinced that their working children would increase their income level later in life as a result of becoming literate.

For 24-year-old former housemaid Sabiha Khan from Muzaffargarh, near Lahore, one six-month functional literacy and skills programme changed her life. She said: "I learnt reading, writing and simple arithmetic calculations along with sewing and stitching. After three months I purchased my own machine and began stitching clothes for ladies and started earning PKR 500-600 per day. I purchased sewing and embroidery machines and started designing bridal costumes. Now after two years, I have my own business, employing 20 skilled workers. My children have started attending public schools and my family is leading a prosperous life."

Eleven-year-old Saira was given a second chance at learning by joining a Non-Formal Basic Education School. She has now completed the primary level and will join the formal mainstream system. "Literacy has given me a second lease of life," she said. "I wanted to become a doctor but since I passed the school-going age that was a dream. Now my dream has materialized."

Achievements across the range of projects include:

- the Campaign for Enhancement of Literacy which has reached 13 million people since its inception in 2009
- establishing 300 Adult Literacy Centres and 200 Non-Formal Basic Education schools at brick kiln sites providing literacy to more than 4000 adults and 5,500 children
- establishing Community Learning Centers to provide literacy to skills training to 2400 women
- imparting literacy and skills training to 7500 people through the Punjab Literacy and Livelihood Programme
- training 12,400 teachers in teaching methodology of Non-Formal Education Sector

Dr Malik said: "The economic and social consequences of illiteracy are huge. Literacy transforms individuals into knowledge workers and is central to the formation of human social capital. Literacy is also a shield for peace." The programme has been replicated in other areas of Pakistan as well as in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and India.

www.Literacy.gop.pk

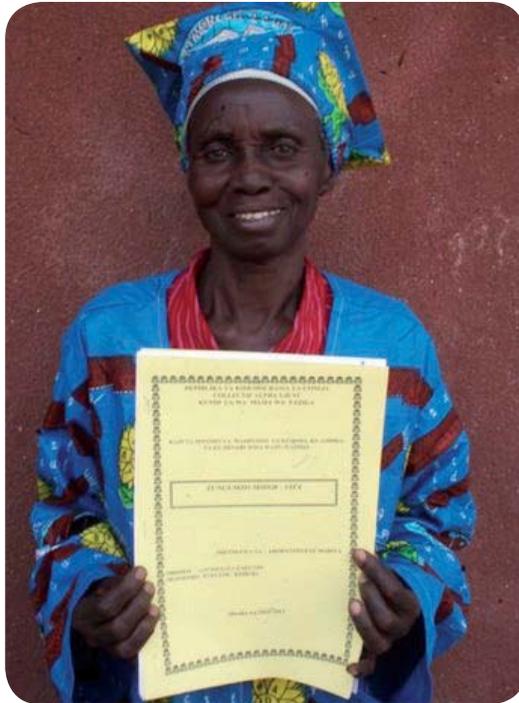
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Mary de Sousa



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Collectif Alpha UJUVI (the Democratic Republic of the Congo)



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Collectif Alpha UJUVI (the Democratic Republic of the Congo)



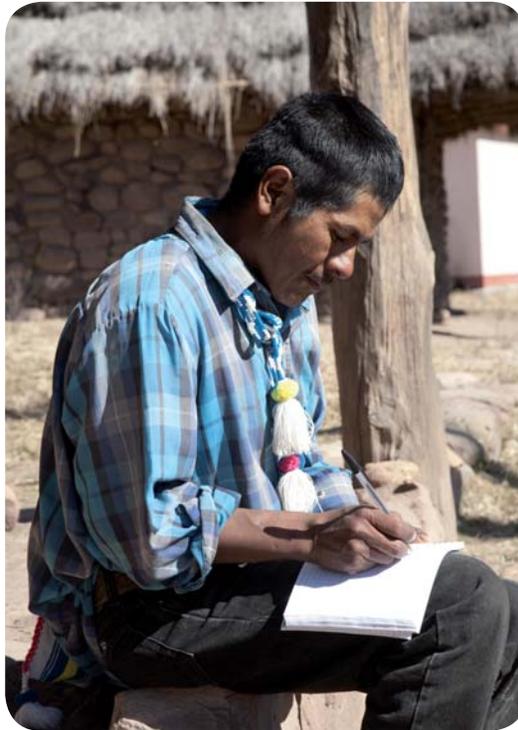
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National Institute for the Education of Adults (Mexico)



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Room to Read (United States of America)



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National Institute for the Education of Adults (Mexico)



© City Literacy Coordinating Council Tagum City

City Literacy Coordinating Council of Tagum City, (Philippines)

The winners of the UNESCO
International Literacy Prizes

2011

National Literacy Service (Burundi)

National Literacy Programme

Winner of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize

National Institute for the Education of Adults (Mexico)

Bilingual Literacy for Life Programme

Winner of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize

Collectif Alpha UJUVI (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

Literacy for the Peaceful Coexistence of Communities and Good Governance in North Kivu Programme

Winner of the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy

Room to Read (United States of America)

Promoting Gender Equality and Literacy through a Local Language Publishing Programme

Winner of the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy

City Literacy Coordinating Council of Tagum City (Philippines)

Peace Management Literacy and Continuing Education through Night Market Programme

Honorable Mention of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize

Dr Allah Bakhsh Malik, Secretary, Department of Literacy and Non-formal Basic Education (Pakistan)

Adult Education and Vocational Skills Programme

Honorable Mention of the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy



From left to right:
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© City Literacy Coordinating
Council, Tagum City
© Dr Allah Bakhsh Malik
© Room to Read
© Daniel Musaka

Literacy for Peace



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

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