

1990

# INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON LITERACY

Number 8, February 1990

## Literacy Messages to the World

**O**VER 600 DELEGATES from over 100 countries gathered in Bangkok, Thailand on January 12 for the People's Launch of the United Nation's International Literacy Year. The launch was held during the International Council for Adult Education's Fourth World Assembly.

This colourful open air festival began with the presentation of banners which were carried on to the stage by participants in their national dress, one from each of the seven regions of the world (North America, Caribbean, Arab States, Latin America, Asia and the South Pacific, Europe and Africa), containing a statement of that region's view on literacy. The statement was read aloud to the participants by a representative from each region.

After the banner presentation, to the music of a marching band, hundreds of balloons with messages tied to them which had been written by the regions were released in the air by each participant, sending a message to the world in support of literacy.

The festivities continued with the official opening of the **Book Voyage**. Symbolic books, brought from all seven regions were paraded in a procession with a marching band on to the stage by learners and a representative of that particular region. The books were presented to Dame Nita Barrow, President of



Halimatou Traore, Mali, Dame Nita Barrow, Barbados, Musari Al-Rawi, Tunisia, Jong-Gon Hwang, Korea, Joyce Robinson, Jamaica

ICAE, who signed her name in each book. The six learners and one representative from each region then signed their names and inscribed their messages of hope to the world. The books were then returned to regional representatives to begin their official voyages.

The ceremony culminated with the Thai custom of the "lighting of the candle of knowledge". Each participant held a lighted candle as Dame Nita Barrow lighted a larger candle and read the **NGO Call to Action**. This was followed by a fireworks display and a Thai folk dance.

*"ILY challenges us to recognize immediate needs and calls us to action."*

Lalita Ramdas

# PUBLIC AWARENESS

## A National Response to Literacy

On January 23 the National Association for Mass Education (NAME), St. Vincent, West Indies, held a press conference to announce its programme for International Literacy Year. Excerpts from the conference were carried on radio and television as well as in the national newspapers.

A full programme was provided to the press for comments and suggestions that would enhance the overall package.

The programme theme is "Illiteracy: Our National Concern — A National Response" and will be made up of monthly sub-themes on the following topics:

January	Literacy and the International Situation
February	Literacy and the Media
March	Literacy and Women (with focus on children and family)
April	Literacy and the Environment
May	Literacy and the Worker (Labour Education)
June	Literacy and Culture
July	Literacy and Disaster Preparedness
August	Literacy and the Farmer
September	Literacy and Youth
October	Literacy and National Heroes/Independence
November	Literacy and the Community
December	Literacy and Human Rights — Right to Work

Some of the highlights of these monthly programmes will be panel discussions, workshops/seminars, radio and television quizzes, poster competitions, drama presentations, printing and use of posters, surveys, cultural shows, exhibitions, educational tours, use of the media, as well as marches and rallies.

For more information please contact:

Rebecca Jordan  
Coordinator  
NAME  
P.O. Box 1443  
St. Vincent, West Indies

## European Plans for ILY

### Scotland

The aims of the Scottish Community Education Council (SCEC) for International Literacy Year are:

- to raise public awareness on the extent of the problems related to low levels of literacy and adult basic education provisions available to meet the needs and
- to gather and disseminate information and practices on adult literacy.

Some planned activities are:

- publishing a handbook for employers on work-based education;

- highlighting literacy needs among young people;
- highlighting ILY at the annual ABE Organizer's Conference;
- production of a poster to raise awareness;
- seeking funds for a research proposal on literacy needs;
- production of press releases and statistics to highlight needs;
- proposals to Scottish television for the promotion of ILY, including an education debate;
- encouraging bookshops and publishers to support ILY through use of the logo on bookmarks;
- using local radio to highlight ILY.

### Northern Ireland

A coordination committee functioning from the Regional Curriculum Base of the University of Ulster plans to:

- present sixteen local radio programmes representative of each region;
- produce support materials in folder form for use by students;
- request the library service to help set up parent activities to help children to read;
- hold a press conference with the British Minister of Education to launch

ILY, basic education receptions hosted by various departments, a major conference on March 10 on "ABE and the Workplace" with representatives from major industrial and commercial enterprises and a calendar of events for Northern Ireland;

- set-up staff development projects at regional levels;
- ask local publishers to use literacy logo;
- host a cross-frontier meeting of representatives for ABE in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic.

## National Federation of Unesco Associations in Japan

The Federation will hold an international non-governmental forum on the theme of "Education for All" to commemorate International Literacy Year. The dates are June 23-29, 1990 and it will take place at the Nagoya International Centre, Nagoya, Japan.

For more information contact:

National Federation of Unesco  
Association in Japan  
c/o Shinjuku Centre Bld., 38F  
P.O. Box 4004  
25-1 Nishi-shinjuku 1  
Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 163, Japan

# STRENGTHENING STRUCTURES

## LEARNER'S CORNER

***"Please don't be a foreign country to the learners that you work for."***

Robin Silverman, Toronto, Canada  
Excerpt from speech made to the ICAE World Assembly in Bangkok, Thailand, January 1990

## Learner Profiles

The following profiles were taken from interviews with learners who attended the 4th World Assembly, Bangkok, Thailand, January 8-18, 1990

**Clemence Registe** was born in 1932 in the Commonwealth of Dominica and is a self-employed mother of eleven. Most of her children now live abroad and she was not able to reply to their letters promptly as she had to depend on someone else to read them and write her replies. This inhibited both the children and herself from writing anything personal or important. This inability to read and write as well as a desire to keep accurate account of her money was what motivated her to learn to read and write.



**Magdalen Gathoni signs the Symbolic Book. Bangkok, Thailand**

**Magdalen Gathoni** was born in Kenya, East Africa. She was unable to attend school because her parents could not afford to pay the school fees. As an adult she started working as a helper in a medical training centre. She was overlooked for a promotion because she could not fill out the form required for her to attend the interview. She then decided to start attending adult education and literacy classes. She is now able to read and write and to speak English. She is also the chairperson of a women's group.

## Self-Help and Literacy

**SWANIRVAR BANGLADESH**, a national private voluntary organization in a country where nearly 75% of the population is unable to read and write, discovered over the years that with motivation, planning and a coordinated approach, much could be achieved with scanty resources. Over the past decade, Swanirvar has helped in establishing some 10,000 literacy centres in various parts of the country. The average out-of-pocket expense has been about \$7.50 per person per year. Many free contributions such as books, implements, accommodation and labour have been made.

Swanirvar's general approach is total development through self-reliance principles to all sections of society. Much of the work is done by and from within the community. Swanirvar does the initial motivational work and organizes five distinct socio-economic groups, namely, farmers, landless, women, youth and available vocational groups within the village who then form a village development committee with equitable representation from each group. The members of the village committee take charge of different developmental activities such as agricultural production, village infrastructure, cottage industries, education, health and family planning. A detailed survey is carried out, a village development plan is drawn up according to what the villagers themselves think should be done for their own development and then funds are collected from villagers

weekly savings. Although these financial contributions are often not sufficient, the local initiatives usually stir enough interest amongst local government officials to induce them to support the programmes through materials and other types of assistance.

The needs of the landless and the women figure most prominently in Swanirvar sponsored development, literacy and family planning receive the highest priority. Literacy and skill development are seen as package programmes and short term loans are available for the landless through the Swanirvar credit scheme (about 70% of the beneficiaries are women). Various evaluations have indicated that literacy rates in Swanirvar villages are about twice that of the rest of Bangladesh. The community involvement in identifying its own development needs triggers maximum participation in planning and implementation.

The literacy classes follow a flexible schedule so that all students can attend. Besides informal instructions, standard text books are followed by both children and adults and after completion of a six month literacy course, adults receive skill training in such courses as animal husbandry, cane and bamboo work, sewing, weaving, carpentry, hair-dressing. The non-formal and primary education at Swanirvar has traditionally looked at the needs beyond literacy and on the basis of community requirements.



## Welcome

We would like to welcome two new funding partners to the ITFL:

- The Mott Foundation, United States
- Dai-Hyaku Friendship Foundation, Japan

We would also like to welcome two new members to the ITFL:

- International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), Austria
- Ligue Internationale de l'Enseignement de l'Education et de la Culture Populaire, France

# GREAT DEBATE

**I**NCLUDED UNDER the **Great Debate** section of the ILY Newsletter No. 4, July 1989, the following statements were made:

To be literate is to become liberated from the constraints of dependency.  
To be literate is to gain a voice...  
To be literate is...to become self-assertive  
To be literate is to become politically conscious...  
Literacy makes people aware of their basic human rights.

These statements cause me much concern. First, the goals mentioned in the above statements are not likely to occur unless one teaches learners how to achieve these goals and most literacy programmes do not. It is incorrect to assume that these statements will be fulfilled merely through the achievement of literacy. There are many examples to

illustrate why this is so. By themselves, then, these statements are not necessarily true. The outcome of these statements can be fulfilled through literacy education providing the education programmes make the effort to teach these as learning outcomes, and provide the political and social climate which will nourish these statements and will help to fulfil them.

Second, and related to the first point, becoming literate will not automatically free one from exploitation and oppression. Literacy has only the potential to do so. Sadly, there are many examples where new literates are still oppressed and only have propaganda to read. These two points are deeply philosophical and the original statements are not to be taken lightly or assumed to always be true.

James Draper  
Ontario Institute for  
Studies in Education  
Toronto, Canada

*"Illiteracy has to be combated because it is the enemy of the people, it is darkness, it makes people unreceptive to new ideas and change, it hinders development, it exposes people to brutal exploitation and oppression, and it is also an obstacle to people participating fully in economic, social and cultural activities."*

Beyene Abraha, Addis Ababa,  
Ethiopia



*"Are we fully aware of and concerned about the often destructive potential of our literacy endeavours and indirect, negative influences and repercussions on developmental processes which are apparent in phenomena like rural exodus, negligence of traditional skills and cultural heritages bound to non-written transfer?"*

Hizen, Hor, Leumer, Nieman, 1983



*"Literacy is not the end of education or even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby men and women can be educated".*

Kusmal Nanda Dondsena,  
Orissa, India  
Winner of the 1989 J. Roby Kidd  
Award

## Reminder

Our official launching of the **Book Voyage** was a huge success due to the participation of learners and adult educators who attended the 4th World Assembly of ICAE in Bangkok. What about doing something similar to launch your own books? The Thai celebration was very colourful and elaborate. Your ceremony however can be just as impressive by organizing it in your own special way. Please let us know when you plan to do your launch. If it has already happened let us know how successful it was. If some of you are still unaware about who your regional coordinators are, here are their names again:

**Africa** - Musa Njue Njiru, Kenya  
Institute of Education

**South Asia** - Indira Koithara, c/o  
Indian Adult Education  
Association

**Arab States** - Hashim Abu Zeid El  
Safi, Arab Regional Literacy &  
Adult Education Organization

**Caribbean** - Miriam Moulton-  
Campbell, c/o Organization of

American States Office, Dominica  
**Latin America** - César Picón,  
Naciones Unidas, El Salvador  
**Europe** - Rosa Maria Falgas Casanova,  
Federación de Asociación de  
Educación de Adultos, Spain  
**North America** - Louise Miller,  
Regroupement des Groupes  
Populaires d'Alphabetisation du  
Quebec, Canada  
- Elise Mennie, Movement for  
Canadian Literacy, Canada



Also we wish to welcome our new coordinator **Emilliana Afeaki** who is responsible for the South Pacific Region:

Emilliana Afeaki  
Head, Continuing Education  
The University of the South Pacific  
P.O. Box 1168, Suva  
Fiji  
Telephone: 313900 Ext. 351  
Cables: University, Suva  
Telex: FJ2276  
Fax: (679) 300482

## International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW)

The theme of the 25th International Conference on Social Welfare will be "The Human Dimension of Local Development: Accepting the Challenge". It will be held in Marrakesh, Morocco, June 24-29, 1990.

For further information write:

Ingird Gelinek, Secretary-General  
International Council on Social  
Welfare  
Koestlergasse 1/29  
A-1060 Vienna, Austria

# RESEARCH

The following publications are available through the Unesco Institute for Education, Hamburg

1. Functional Illiteracy in Industrialized Countries: An Analytical Bibliography
2. Functional Illiteracy and Literacy Provision in Developed Countries: The Case of the Federal Republic of Germany
3. Learning Strategies for Post-Literacy and Continuing Education in Mali, Niger, Senegal and Upper Volta
4. Learning Strategies for Post-Literacy and Continuing Education: A Cross-National Perspective
5. Learning Strategies for Post-Literacy and Continuing Education in

Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania and United Kingdom

6. Learning Strategies for Post-Literacy and Continuing Education in China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand and Vietnam
7. Learning Strategies for Post-Literacy and Continuing Education in Brazil, Colombia, Jamaica and Venezuela
8. Handbook on Learning Strategies for Post-Literacy and Continuing Education

To obtain a copy please contact:

Unesco Institute for Education  
Feldbrunnenstrasse 58  
2000 Hamburg 13  
Federal Republic of Germany

***"The object of research, like the object of the educational process, should be the liberation of human creative potential and the mobilization of human resources for the solution of social problems."***

## The Golden Rule Award

The Bahá'í International Community and the International Council for Women are happy to announce the establishment of **The Golden Rule Award**. The award will be given annually to an organization or individual whose work has made an outstanding contribution toward the advancement of women.

In its first year, in recognition of the vital importance of International Literacy Year, 1990, the award, along with a \$1 000.00 cash prize, will go to an outstanding grassroots literacy project with a focus on women and/or girls.

The criteria for the Golden Rule Award will be in accordance with the common goals of the collaborating organizations, namely:

- to promote equal rights and responsibilities for both men and women in all spheres by removing all forms of prejudice based on birth, race, sex, language or religion;
- to promote recognition and respect for human rights;
- to support all efforts to achieve a unifying peace;
- to encourage the integration of women in development and in decision-making bodies.

The recipient of the award will be announced at a reception in the Fall of 1990.  
*Deadline for Application:* June 30, 1990.

For further information please contact:

Nora El-Tobgy  
The Golden Rule Award  
866 United Nations Plaza  
Suite 119  
New York, N.Y. 10017 USA  
Tel: (212) 486-0560  
Fax: (212) 838-7027

### International Community Education Association (ICEA)

The ICEA is hosting the first Asian regional conference on "Community Education for a Learning Society in the Context of Asian Heritage". It will be held at the International Youth Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, September 17-20, 1990.

For more information contact:

International Community  
Education Association  
Britton Rd.  
Coventry, England  
CV2 4LF

## Tell Us Your History

The city of Newcastle upon Tyne would like to invite entries from around the world for an exhibition on "The Right to Read". You are asked to write your page of history focusing on the need for reading and writing skills worldwide and why it matters to you or to someone you know to be able to read and write. Cash awards will be given to the entries deemed by our judges to be the most outstanding and unique. The awards will be used to promote further successful study.

For further information contact:

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Coordinator, International  
Literacy Year in Newcastle  
Heaton Education Centre  
Trehitt Road  
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 5DY,  
United Kingdom

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# ITFL ACTIVITIES



The International Task Force on Literacy (ITFL) is a coalition of regional and world-wide international non-governmental organizations to mobilize and stimulate activities of non-governmental organizations prior to, during and after the International Literacy Year 1990 (ILY).

## Toronto Office

- ★ A special meeting of the ITFL was held in Paris, France February 6-7, 1990 to discuss the strategies of the three main NGO bodies, ITFL, Unesco NGO Standing Committee and Unicef NGO Consultation Committee on how best to organize and mobilize all the NGOs which will participate in the "Education for All" Conference to be held in Jomtien, Thailand, March 1990.
- ★ **ITFL Publications:** There is a charge of \$5.00 US for postage and handling for all copies and **must be pre-paid**.
- ITFL Posters and Pins:** are available through the Toronto office. They are \$5.00 US each. The **minimum** order is five and **must be pre-paid** (includes postage and handling)
- ★ The international launch of the **Book Voyage** and the announcement of the **NGO Call to Action on Literacy** were made on January 12 at the International Council for Adult Education's World Assembly of Adult Education which was held in Bangkok, Thailand.
- ★ Copies of the **NGO Call to Action** and a guide for the **Book Voyage** are available free of charge from your regional office.
- ★ A memo regarding the launching of International Literacy Year, with guidelines and useful ideas for events, was prepared and widely distributed to our member organizations, newsletter subscribers, literacy workers and learners.
- ★ Preparations for the ITFL "Roundtable" and an exhibition for the World Conference on Education for All are underway.
- ★ This newsletter is **free of charge**. For copies in English and French please write the ITFL office in Toronto. For copies in Spanish please contact: Consejo de Educación de Adultos de America Latina, Correo 22, Casilla 6257, Santiago, Chile.

### International Task Force on Literacy

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Telex: 06-986766 TOR

## South Asia/India Office

- ★ Approximately two thousand women and children participated in a symbolic "Learner's March" organized by the South Asia office of the ITFL which was held in India on January 1. The March officially ushered in International Literacy Year and was followed by literacy plays put on by learners
- ★ Two new literacy centres which 101 students have been admitted, have been opened in Sangli Apartments and Copernicus Marg, New Delhi as a result of joint efforts by the Task Force and the Naval Wife's Welfare Association
- ★ The South Asia Task Force is sponsoring and initiating various cultural activities and competitions for the promotion of literacy among adults and children. These events will take place from January through June 1990 in many parts of India. They include:
  - o poster competition
  - o learner's conference
  - o music competition
  - o literacy fair
  - o puppet shows
  - o cultural concerts
  - o filmets
  - o television films
  - o rallies
  - o symposia on "Literacy as Mass Movement"
  - o poetry competition
  - o essay competition in Hindi and English on the topic: "A literate woman can make her child a more committed citizen"

For more detailed information on any of the following activities please contact Indira Koithara:

### International Task Force on Literacy

South Asia/India Office  
c/o Indian Adult Education Association  
17-B Indraprastha Marg  
New Delhi - 1100002 India  
Tel: 331-9282  
Cable: ADEO ASSO NEW DELHI  
Fax: 35-33-18