

# Literacy and Lifelong Education For All

## Proceedings of the International Literacy Day 2014 UNESCO Paris

### **NGOs partners of the UNESCO-NGO Liaison Committee cooperate in order that:**

- *the unachieved objectives be included in the post-2015 agenda ;*
- *the principles of equity, inclusion and non-discrimination form the basis of policies and practices announced in the post-2015 agenda related to education. Gender equality should represent a central aspect of this agenda.*
- *that a holistic lifelong learning framework be defined, with initiatives for each stage starting with **early childhood care and education** and continuing through to secondary and tertiary education, without forgetting in-service learning and **lifelong learning in all dimensions of life**. An enlarged vision of education should be the foundation of all aspects of development.*

*recommendations of the CC NGO/EFA 2012*



"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..."

Inna Bokova,  
International  
Literacy Day, 2013

## FOREWORD

Following the implementation of new directives adopted by the International Conference of NGOs in 2012, several INGOs<sup>1</sup> involved for many years within UNESCO programs, particularly in the EFA policy, proposed to organize a meeting linked to the United Nations International Literacy Day (September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014). This project was relevant with the Action Plan 2013-2014 of the NGO Liaison Committee, with the Millenium Development Objectives and with the UN Education Program post-2015.

When the initial project was accepted by the NGO Liaison Committee, several formats were considered: an exhibition presenting NGOs programs and literacy material, lectures and debates with experts or interactive workshops with committed NGO members highlighting their prominent role in the field of literacy. Some sub-themes were selected: early childhood education, literacy for girls and women, lifelong literacy with a special focus on excluded populations (minorities, disabled, families in extreme poverty...)

All along the past year the working group (28 INGOs) and its steering committee refined the initial project and the final result was approved and supported by the Education sector, the Division and the section concerned in June 2014. A movie, "The Nomad School", about a school for a nomadic tribe in Siberia, was used as a starter of the program. Three selected NGOs presented their experience. Other NGOs provided written contributions to describe and explain their action worldwide. Finally, a recommendation was adopted at the end of the meeting to highlight the importance of an effective partnership between NGOs, the UNESCO and its state members.

Jean-Claude Guillemard, ISPA (International School Psychology Association)  
Secretary, NGO Working Group on Literacy and Lifelong Education for All.

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<sup>1</sup> i.e, OMEP (World Organization for Early Childhood Education, IAU (International Association of Universities), ISPA (International School Psychology Association), AMI (Montessori Association International), WCL/Euroalfa (World Council for Literacy), ATD Fourth World International, BICE( International Bureau for Childhood Education).

## NGOs' recommendations<sup>2</sup>

### Literacy: a stepping stone for an equitable and sustainable society

The participants of the event organised for the International Literacy Day 2014

- Recalling that the right to education is a fundamental human right and that literacy has been central to UNESCO's statements and programmes since 1947;
- Being aware that literacy is the first step to education, development and contribution of each individual to society and that it contributes to the economic and social development of a country;
- Acknowledging the various definitions of literacy and the fact that literacy does not prevent the number of illiterate people from rising –women and girls currently represent two-thirds of them- as well as taking note of the setbacks in assisting them because of the priority given to primary school;
- Recalling Goal 4 of Education for All: *“Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults”* won't be reached;
- Quoting the proposal of the Open Working Group on the UN Sustainable Development Programme and in charge of proposals for the post-2015 agenda with the 6<sup>th</sup> target of Goal 4 on Education : *“by 2030 ensure that all youth and at least x% of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy”*;
- Recalling the key role played by NGOs in the fight against illiteracy.

#### Recommend

- (1) to consider literacy-and favour its acknowledgement- in view of lifelong learning and sustainable development in partnership with the States and civil society, at the different levels and with no discrimination.
- (2) to advocate for literacy and focus on the following three aspects : prevention of illiteracy in early childhood; designing of post-literacy programmes without forgetting to build bridges with vocational training following each literacy programme; developing research and action, diagnosis and assessment of practises;
- (3) to strengthen the sharing of information, partnerships between NGOs, between academia and NGOs, between generations (particularly with student and parent associations), with diasporas and international agencies dedicated to education (more particularly the CCNGO/ EFA coordinating group at UNESCO);
- (4) to research the role information and communication technologies (ICT) can play in the field of literacy;
- (5) to restrict no longer the number of adults to be made literate to a mere percentage but rather to endeavour to reach them all through quality literacy services and actions with specific attention to the most excluded ones;
- (6) To remember literacy today is not just about being able to read, write and calculate but also being able to use and access ICT (information and communication technologies);
- (7) To systematically associate NGOs in the debate over the future development agenda so as to achieve literacy and education for all, which are the stepping stones to an equitable and sustainable society.

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<sup>2</sup> Traduction Marie-Claude Machon Honoré (BPW International)

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## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LITREACY and LIFELONG EDUCATION FOR ALL

Monday, September 8, 2014

UNESCO HOUSE - PARIS

### CONCEPT PAPER

**Nearly 800 million human beings – of whom 2/3 are women – are illiterate and 57 million school age children don't have access to schooling**

(UNESCO Institute for Statistics)

In her introductory message to the 2013 International Literacy Day, Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director General, declared:

*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. It is the motor of sustainable and inclusive development.*

Both the statistics and the Director General's arguments respond perfectly to the motivation of the International NGOs at UNESCO to propose an event, sponsored by the UNESCO-NGO Liaison Committee for the 2014 International Literacy Day. Its title is **Literacy: an inescapable step on the path towards Lifelong Education for All.**

In fact, literacy is an essential step in the educational process, even if education cannot be reduced to literacy. It is also one of the evaluation criteria for the success of the Education for All (EFA) Program. Finally, it is an essential tool for lifelong learning so that everyone can gain access to the competencies needed for professional insertion and to the culture of the written word that communication technologies – contrary to what one would have imagined in the early times – have transformed into an even greater constraint.

Over the years, the idea of literacy has evolved. The original concept, limited to the acquisition of basic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic, is still largely prevalent, as is the notion of functional literacy that links literacy to economic development. However, other ways of understanding 'literacy' or 'literacies' have appeared, in order to respond to the diversity of learners' needs.

**As Madam Irina Bokova has stressed, "*Literacy is therefore much more than an educational priority. It is the ultimate investment in the future [...]. It is essential to eliminate poverty, reduce infant mortality, reduce demographic growth, establish gender equality and insure sustainable development, peace and democracy.*"**

The six Education for All goals will not be achieved in 2015, but as the Collective Consultation on Education for All (CCNGO/EFA) restated in its October 2012 recommendations,<sup>3</sup> what remains important is that:

- ◆ *the unachieved objectives be included in the post-2015 agenda;*

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<sup>3</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the CC-NGO/EFA, Paris, 24 – 26 October 2012, **Promoting EFA until 2015 and beyond.**

- ◆ *the principles of equity, inclusion and non-discrimination form the basis of policies and practices announced in the post-2015 agenda related to education. Gender equality should represent a central aspect of this agenda;*
- ◆ *that a holistic lifelong learning framework be defined, with initiatives for each stage starting with early childhood care and education and continuing through to secondary and tertiary education, without forgetting in-service learning and lifelong learning in all dimensions of life. An enlarged vision of education should be the foundation of all aspects of development.*

These recommendations fit perfectly within the approach of the UNESCO INGO working group organizers of this event and justify the three priority sub-themes selected:

1. Preparing literacy and basic education: the role of early childhood education.
2. Girls' literacy to achieve Education for All.
3. Achieving literacy and post-literacy of youth and adults, particularly for those farthest from the goal.

The INGO organizers, who are working group members, have broad experience in implementing initiatives aimed at achieving the EFA objectives, including literacy. The strategies applied in varied geographic and cultural contexts can be shared and gathered into a repertoire of good practices, which could inspire other civil society organisations as well as governments, who would then adapt them to the specific local conditions.

The INGO Conference on Literacy and Lifelong Education For All will be a time for exchange and sharing among field practitioners and specialists in action research. It will propose an original presentation on the theme: International NGOs are involved daily in grass-roots lifelong education initiatives. From their experiences (positive and negative), they gain knowledge that help them improve their effectiveness. These experiences form the basis to discuss other types of initiatives to reduce illiteracy in more universal ways, applied to varied contexts. In other words, it is not a question of presenting 'good practices' to be transferred here or there. All attempts of this type have failed. Rather, the day will enable participants, starting with a thorough analysis of a specific case (illustrated perhaps by a film) to deepen their reflection in order to create new programs, and to develop and improve the quality of existing programs through sharing experiences. Their shared reflection will form the basis of recommendations to the INGOS, member States, UNESCO and the international community. These recommendations will then be used by all those who wish to use them in order to respond to the immense challenge of the twenty-first century: Lifelong Literacy and Education for All.

**NGO organizers of the event “Literacy and Lifelong Education for All”**

1. Assistance à l'Intégration des Enfants Démobilisés (AIED)
2. Association d'Aide à l'Education de l'Enfant Handicapé (AAEEH)
3. Association de Coopération Femmes, Education, Culture et Développement (MIVAFED)
4. Association Montessori Internationale (AMI)
5. Catholic International Education Office/Organisation Internationale de l'Enseignement Catholique (OIEC)
6. Dyslexia International (DI)
7. Euroalfa/World Committee for Lifelong Learning (CMA)
8. Forum for African Women Educationalists/Forum des Educatrices Africaines (FAWE)
9. International Alliance of Women/Alliance Internationale des Femmes (AIF)
10. International Association of Charities/Association Internationale des Charités (AIC)
11. International Association of Universities (IAU/) Association Internationale des Universités (AIU)
12. International Catholic Child Bureau/ Bureau International Catholique de l'Enfance (BICE)
13. International Catholic Coordination Centre for UNESCO (CCIC)
14. International Council of Jewish Women/Conseil International des Femmes Juives (ICJW)
15. International Council of Women (ICW)/Conseil International des Femmes (CIF)
16. International Federation of Business & Professional Women (IFBPW)
17. International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE)/Federation Internationale d'Economie Familiale (FIEF)
18. International Federation of University Women/Fédération Internationale des Femmes diplômées des Universités (FIFDU)
19. International Movement ATD Fourth World/ATD Quart Monde International
20. International School Psychology Association (ISPA)
21. Lions Club International (LCI)
22. Make Mothers Matter Movement/ Mouvement Mondial des Mères (MMM)
23. SOROPTIMIST International (SI)
24. Universal Alliance of Bible Societies/Alliance Biblique Universelle
25. Universal Esperanto Association (UEA)
26. World Organization for Early Childhood Education/ Organisation Mondiale pour l'Education Préscolaire (OMEP)
27. World ORT Union /Union Mondiale ORT (WO)
28. ZONTA International

## Program

- 9:30** Welcome to Participants
- 10:00** Introductory remarks about the day by the Liaison Committee President, a UNESCO Representative and the Head, Piloting Committee.
- 10:30** **Movie: « l’Ecole nomade » (School for Nomads)**
- 11:30** Break
- 11:45** First Part: **Debate**, Moderator, Monique Scherrer, International Catholic Child Bureau; participants: Michel Debat, film director; Alexandra Lavrillier, ethnologist, founder of education program for Evenk ethnic nomad group, Siberia.
- Contribution:** Alfonso Lizarzaburu, expert appointed by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL, Hamburg).
- Questions from the floor.
- 13:00** Lunch
- 14:30** Second Part: **Round Table: Literacy and EFA for a sustainable development: the role of NGOs. Moderator:** Isabelle Turmaine, International Association of Universities (IAU).
- Three NGOs present their literacy programs, focusing their contributions:
- ◆ **Early childhood education as a preliminary to a successful education:** Alain Houchot, General Inspector, French Ministry of Education; OMEP-France.
  - ◆ **Progressing towards EFA and sustainable development: a program for women and girls:** Anne Simon, Executive Director, SOROPTIMIST.
  - ◆ **Literacy and lifelong education for the marginalized of EFA:** Quyen Tran, International ATD Fourth World Movement.
- Questions from the floor.
- 16:00** Contribution by Mr. Borhene Chakroun, Chief, Section Vocational and Technical Learning, UNESCO.
- 16:30** Presentation, discussion and preliminary adoption of NGOs recommendations for the 2015 Global Education Forum, Seoul (Korea) and the post-2015 agenda.
- 17:30** Closing remarks, Marie-Claude Allez, Coordinator NGO Working Group. on Literacy and Lifelong Education For All.



**Introduction by Patrick Gallaud, President of the Liaison Committee ( Sorry, no English version available)**

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**Introduction to the International Conference on Literacy and Lifelong Education For All**

Jean-Claude Guillemard, ISPA (International School Psychology Association)  
Secretary, NGO Working Group on Literacy and Lifelong Education for All.

Mr the UNESCO Representative,  
Mr the President of the Liaison Committee,  
Mss. and MESSRS. representatives of standing Delegations,  
Dear NGOs friends and partners,

This International Conference on Literacy and Lifelong Education For All is the result of a long and continuous work of 28 UNESCO NGOs. Initiated at the beginning of the year 2013 and agreed by the Liaison Committee in March of the same year, the project was enriched and transformed along the following months. It is in line with several events organized by NGOs since the World Forum in Dakar (2000), in order to illustrate their actions worldwide. It is also in line with the Forum on Education held in Paris in September 2013 and echoes the International Literacy Day held currently in Bangladesh.

We have decided that the Advocacy for Literacy and Lifelong Education For All could be started with a movie. Some of us watched it and considered it raised questions of prominent interest for our purposes. We are honored to welcome the film Director, Michel Debats, who will answer your questions. Henri Lecomte, an ethno-musicologist and a specialist of Siberian tribes, will complete the debate

The UNESCO Institute on Literacy (UIL Hamburg) has delegated Alfonso Lizarzaburu (World Council on Literacy) to share with us the current position of the Institute.

The afternoon session will be dedicated to NGOs actions, linking Literacy and Sustainable Development. Three of them will bring their experience in three out of six objectives defined at the World Forum in Dakar and in the Millenium Sustainable Development Goals. In the Agenda post-2015 we are invited to maintain and develop Early Childhood Education, Education for Girls and Women, Education for excluded populations, as priorities for the international community.

This is the meaning of the recommendation you will discuss at the end of the meeting.

No lifelong Education For All, no sustainable development without literacy.

We agree with the Director General of UNESCO's statement: **"The future we wish begins with literacy"**.

## INTRODUCTION to the PROJECTION of the FILM "THE NOMAD SCHOOL"

### Monique Scherrer (BICE)

**The film we will now watch represents the essential challenge of literacy.** Especially taking place in a universe where cultural references are so different from ours.

**Its subject:** a rather unique school that follows the children of Evenks, a nomadic tribe in eastern Siberia, so they can be educated without having to leave their families.

**We found this movie at BICE's Film Festival** which takes place every year around November 20th on the occasion of the Universal Children's Day. We are pleased to welcome **Michel Debats**, the director, and **Henri Lecomte**, ethnomusicologist co-founder of the school, who are here to talk with us today.

**This film has won awards** in the USA, Russia, and has also won the special prize of Evreux's 4th Festival of Educational Film in 2008. This film will make us gently enter into the world of the Evenks.

**Only then will we understand what literacy means in such a context.** It is also important in the depths of the taiga to know how to read, write, and count, *but also* to have access to other knowledge: scientific or technical knowledge, cultural and media literacy... and also knowledge on its traditions and roots. Formal and non-formal education is not too much to contribute together.

**Accept to live a moment at another pace**, in another space, where the sounds are lost in the snow but where humans are eager to teach and children to learn.

### QUESTIONS - ANSWERS BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND THE SPEAKERS

(in black represents the public, in brown represents the two guest speakers)

- A question on the spirituality of the Evenks and its place in this education.
- How many families are affected by the nomadic school? **Between 8 and 10 camps, about 40 children.**
- How do the Evenks fit in? **They are aware that they are Russian citizens. They speak Russian and Evenki. The Evenki language was first written in Latin characters then Cyrillic. There is no divide between sedentary and nomadic people, but a continuum. Some Evenks have lived in the city, or studied in the village school.**
- They want to "assimilate to modern culture in order not to be destroyed."
- A question about the coexistence of technical and scientific learning and ancestral beliefs: **it does not cause problems, any more than at home where one can be a scientist and a Christian, for example.**
- The assistant teachers are moms: what do you think of the presence of parents in education? **It is necessary that the mothers get involved due to lack of staffing. Without them the experience would not be viable. They themselves have been educated at a boarding school during the Soviet era.**
- A question about the interest to move the school towards the learners or rather have the learners move towards the school.
  
- What is the attitude of the Russian state? **It is interested in funding this school to which it granted official experimental school status. The school receives regional aid of Oblast**

(regional administration: Amur region). We hope that the experience can be generalized to other regions, including dispersed sedentary populations...

- It is good to see once more the effectiveness of the work of NGOs: a NGO initiates something> it shows that it works> policies follows and are placed.

- Does this experience continue? **It continues. Several teams have been formed. Young girls have asked to become teachers for nomads.**

- We observe the respect of Evenks for nature and for all who inhabit it (the other tribes, the animals, the plants ...) is a beautiful illustration of the theme of this International Literacy Day of 2014: "Literacy and Sustainable Development".

### CONCLUSION on FILM DISCUSSION

Thank you for showing us that **literacy begins with** reading, writing and arithmetic, but **being of service to people** to give them greater skills and allow them the best life possible within society. **If literacy respects people** in all their dimensions, it is a "source of freedom"<sup>4</sup> for them, it has a "transformative potential"<sup>5</sup> in the words of the General Director of UNESCO.

Nomadic school helps strengthen free people, "Evenk humans" according to their own words, capable of making choices about their lives throughout their lives.

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### CONCLUSION after the INTERVENTION of ALFONSO LIZARZABURU

To conclude, I will read this quote by Paulo Freire, your friend you mentioned just now: "Every reading of the word is preceded by a reading of the world". (*Education in the city*, cited in the Education for All Global Monitoring Report, 2006, ch.6, p.160). One who is literate can understand how those who have come before him have read the world. This allows him to develop his own skills to live as a free human.

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<sup>4</sup> A UNESCO poster highlighting the goal of universal literacy. Education for All Global Monitoring Report, 2006, ch.6, p.64.

<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Irina Bokova, message on the occasion of International Literacy Day, September 8, 2014.



# Literacy & Basic Skills as a Foundation for Lifelong Learning

*UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)*

*8 September 2014*

*<http://www.uil.unesco.org/home/>*

## Afternoon Session: Literacy for sustainable development: Role of NGOs.

### 1. Alain Houchot: (Sorry, no English version available)

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### 2. Soroptimist International: Anne Simon, Executive Director

#### A Programme for Women and Girls: Towards the Success of Education for All and Sustainable Development

Let me start with a little Latin. Soroptimist, this somewhat awkward name that dates back almost 100 years, comes from “soror” – women, and “optima” – the best. We are an organisation of women who strive to bring about the very best for other, less privileged women. The best of women, for women.

It is also a happy coincidence, although an unintended one, that the name “Soroptimist” suggests that the 90,000 women who are members of this organisation are not only women working for the very best for other women, but that we are also optimists. And indeed we are.

But some of you might be wondering, who *are* these Soroptimists? Well, we are professional women – doctors, lawyers, teachers, entrepreneurs – who conceptualise and implement projects to better the lives of women and children in our communities.

Our organisation has been around since 1921. We respond to challenges that are global in scope but need to be implemented in accordance with local realities. Today we are 90,000, with some 40,000 of us across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

We witness daily the realities faced by women in our communities and work proudly to improve the lives of women and children.

Our projects fall in five different areas – Education, Economic Empowerment, Health, Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls, and Sustainable Environment – but our guiding principle remains simple: “Educate to Lead.” Almost all of our projects have an educational component, enabling women and children to pursue lifelong learning.

Let me give you an example. A couple of years ago, Soroptimists in the capital of Turkey, Ankara, identified a glaring need in their community: many of the migrant women living in an impoverished area by the medieval Castle in Ankara’s historical centre, didn’t know how to read. They were living in poverty and the doors to employment were essentially closed to them. Soroptimists in Ankara took this problem head on. They started literacy courses for adult migrant women not only to teach them how to read, but to empower them, to give them the tools necessary to be more independent and self-sustaining and to take those initial steps out of poverty. Soroptimists weren’t resigned to the problem! Instead, in their firm belief that women who come from underprivileged backgrounds can, to read and write”. Because it isn’t. with a little help, acquire the tools necessary to be empowered, to be educated, to be independent, they felt compelled to offer a helping hand. They called this project “It is never too late to learn how

As members of a professional women’s organisation that is active across 130 different countries, and whose very *raison d’être* is to help and empower women, we know that the concept of literacy goes well beyond simply knowing how to read.

☐ Are women who know how to read but don’t know their rights truly literate?

☐ Are women whose education hasn’t gone beyond basic literacy truly equipped for life?

Literacy is something much broader. Literacy should allow women to be independent, to pursue knowledge, to understand the changes in their societies, to think critically... Just as education is

known to be a multiplier right – a right that, when fulfilled, allows for the fulfilment of a whole series of other rights – so literacy is its basic building block, its foundation, the very first step that should lead to...well, to so much more.

Soroptimists understand this from a theoretical standpoint but also from a vast amount of experience. Working under the principle theme of “Educate to Lead”, we have been implementing projects to ensure lifelong learning opportunities for women for almost one hundred years now.

### **Programme and Projects**

Our projects, all *locally* designed, *locally* funded, and *locally* implemented, give a sense of the overwhelming challenges women and girls still face today in their pursuit of literacy, in their pursuit of education, in their pursuit of equality.

Indeed, if Soroptimists work on raising awareness about the importance of education for women and girls it is because access to education is still restricted to them.

If we provide scholarships and funding for those in need of primary, secondary, and tertiary schooling, it is because there are many young women the world over who cannot afford to go to school.

If we fundraise for the creation of girl-friendly physical environments in schools, such as proper sanitation facilities, clean water in schools, and safe transport to and from school, it is because girls are still dropping out of school because they cannot go to the bathroom in privacy or because they are in danger simply taking the road to school.

If we implement so-called ‘second chance’ programmes providing education and training for mature women, it is because the first chance was never really there for them.

If we train female teachers to achieve gender equity in teaching staff, it is because even in the teaching profession women are still at a disadvantage compared to their male counterparts.

If we run projects which work to ensure seamless access to formal education for girls and young women in the face of natural disasters, conflict, and forced migration, it is because women and girls are still those who suffer the most when such calamities occur.

But with a good understanding of the situation on the ground, which we have because we are there to witness it; with good planning, fundraising and partnerships, in other words, with some hard work,

which are willing to put in since we have seen the fruit it can bear; and with humility towards those we are trying to help; we can and do make a big difference.

Let me give you some further examples. Take, for instance, a recent project by Soroptimists in Austria. Around the year 2000, they decided to help migrant women hailing from four different continents integrate into their new communities, by running German language courses for them, providing information on citizens’ rights, duties and laws in Austria, and sharing festivities and meals. Many of these women have since passed their Austrian citizenship test and obtained employment. Take also Soroptimists from the United States and Canada. Each year, since 1972, they have been awarding education grants to women who have overcome enormous obstacles including poverty, domestic violence or drug and alcohol abuse – grants that they can use to offset any costs associated with their efforts to attain higher education. They give them a “second chance”, a true shot at lifelong learning, these thousands of women who provide the primary source of financial support for their families. So far, believe it or not, they have given out more than 30 million dollars.

Take Soroptimists from the Philippines who established an Alternative Learning System Academy in 2012 to help out-of-school women and girls finish their high school education, or Soroptimists from Italy who ran a series of legal literacy courses for Rwandan women to help them understand their land rights, or Soroptimists in Greece who are offering training and assistance with starting a business to mothers and housewives who are forced to become the family breadwinners as their husbands have lost their employment, or Soroptimists from Switzerland and Mali who joined forces to build a self-sustaining school, where children study by day, and women take literacy classes in the

evenings. Take so many other examples. Take any of the thousands projects Soroptimists ran just this past year and the hundreds of thousands of women and girls they benefitted!  
Just last year, 27 million euros were raised across Europe and Africa for projects last year and numerous partnerships with other NGOs were created.

### **Advocacy**

Of course, our responsibility as Soroptimists goes beyond what we can do in our local communities, and that is why I am here in front of you today.

As I mentioned earlier, Soroptimists are unique and credible witnesses to what is happening in our communities. As Soroptimists, we witness daily the changes in our societies and act as what we might call a “barometer” for women’s rights in the countries we live in.

Don’t just take our word for it. This was recognised decades ago when the United Nations granted us General Consultative Status at ECOSOC.

The Council of Europe did the same when they granted us participatory status.

Such statuses are not merely “nice” rights to have but also meaningful obligations to fulfil. Each day, we witness the progress, and the crises, happening in the world today. It is indeed our responsibility

to provide evidence-based information to these institutions, with what we see are challenges and issues affecting women around the world. We commend and applaud these institutions which do *so much* to promote and safeguard the rights of women – and thereby for their children.

Amongst others, our contributions have given rise to fruitful collaborations with the CEDAW Committee and the World Health Organisation in Geneva, not to mention the Commission on the Status of Women in New York. Our organisation and our members will continue to support their remarkable work in any way we can.

Our representatives at UNESCO are active ambassadors for our 90,000 members. They act as a global voice for women, transmitting the information they received about challenges faced by women in different countries.

I am, of course, also absolutely delighted to be at UNESCO today and to extend the collaboration of Soroptimists with international bodies one step further, for our mutual benefit.

### **Appeal**

Before I finish, I must just say that while civil society actions are powerful and necessary and can set solid, meaningful and even inspiring precedents, government action cannot be bypassed. The experience of Soroptimists around world in the area of education compels us to call on – and remind – governments to:

- At minimum, fulfil existing obligations in international treaties and agreements relating to equal access to education.
- In the lead up to the MDG deadline next year, prioritise quality education for women and children throughout their lifespan as a necessary foundation for the achievement of all development goals – and make sure access to quality education for women and girls is upheld beyond 2015.
- Pledge to work towards policies and programmes with a life-course approach to education, recognising and understanding that access to learning is a human right at all ages, and that women and children have different learning needs at different times in their lives.

I thank you for your attention.

### **3. Quian Tang ‘ATD Fourth World Movement. (Sorry, no English version available)**

## CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

Marie-Claude Allez (ATD Fourth World Movement International), Coordinator, NGO Working Group on Literacy and Lifelong Education for All.

Mr the UNESCO Representative,

Mr the President of the NGOs Liaison Committee,

Dear NGOs friends and partners,

At the end of the International Conference on Literacy and Lifelong Education For All, each of us will have his/her own point of view and will choose the issues of major concern for his/her own experience.

As for me I think we can be globally satisfied. Many obstacles have been met along these past 18 months, but thank to the dedication and support of each other we have overcome all these obstacles.

I really want to thank the Liaison Committee and particularly the president Patrick Gallaud who was always trusty and supportive. His continuous help and his interventions to convince UNESCO staff to bring the project to its end was critical.

We have now to reflect on this day and its follow-up.

The recommendation we adopted can be still be amended until September 30<sup>th</sup>. The steering committee will collect the amendments and finalize the text. The final recommendation will be submitted to the participant's approval by e-mail. Then, we shall work with the Liaison Committee to have this recommendation brought to the World Forum in Korea in 2015.

We also expect to keep testimonies of the Conference. Proceedings of the day will be available on the website of the Liaison Committee. In addition, all the NGOs working in the field of Literacy and Lifelong Education For All are invited to provide written contributions describing and explaining their action. A two pages report with complementary references (bibliography, websites...) can be sent to the Working Group secretary.

Last but not least, we are eager to share our convictions with the new Liaison Committee elected at the next International Conference of NGOs. We wish to mobilize the community of NGOs, and particularly the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education For All (CCNGO on EFA) in order that one of the 4 forums included into the EC plan of action 2015-2016 be dedicated to Education.

I thank you for your attention and wish you a nice journey back home.



## **ANNEX: Contributions of NGO Working Group on Literacy and Lifelong Education For All.**

### **BICE CONTRIBUTION**

#### **A project supported by BICE in Latin-America**

**Attention given to early childhood in Popular Education Centres for Children (PECC) in Paraguay.**

#### **THE NGO AND ITS PURPOSE**

This project is coordinated by the **International Catholic Child Bureau**. Created in 1948, BICE is one of the architects of the CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child). It promotes the dignity and the rights of all children, respecting their nationality, culture, and religion. It engages in concrete projects throughout the world, in conjunction with local partners to involve communities and maintain projects over time. It strives to make the child an actor in his own development. It also advocates with international institutions.

#### **NATURE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT**

The project, launched in **Paraguay** in October 2013 for one year, **concerns young children ages 2 -5 living in five communities in the urban periphery**. They do not receive enough attention because formal education centers in the public sector have only one preschool section open to children above 5 years old.

##### **The objectives are :**

1. That all children ages 2 – 5 benefit from appropriate stimulation to be able to develop, in accordance with their rights, intellectual and manual skills appropriate to their level of growth.
2. That families and adults caregivers adopt good educational practices for children, focused on children's rights.

The action is based on family visits and educational sessions organized in **PECC, areas for educational training well-supervised by neighborhood committees and parents**.

#### **THE PROJECT BENEFICIARIES**

- In the Central department: in San Lorenzo : the communities of *9 de Marzo* (**17 children** enrolled in the PECC as of March 2014) and *15 de Enero* (**14 children**). In Villa Elisa : the *Villa San Antonio* community (**23 children**).
- In the Alto Paraná department: In Ciudad del Este : the *San Roque* community (**14 children**). In Ciudad Presidente Franco : the *Manantial* community (**17 children**).

## WHAT MADE THIS PROJECT POSSIBLE

- **The prior experience of *Callescuola***, partner association of BICE, working since 1983 to improve the quality of life of children living on the streets in Paraguay: it has implemented a program of "comprehensive attention given to children in the communities" in an ongoing process of action and reflection.
- **The support of Kinder Missionswerk** (a German Catholic organization for helping children) to develop additional projects in the communities of the Central Department.
- **Community mobilization around the rights of the child.**

## LOCAL PARTNERS INVOLVED

- **Adult men and women** of different communities
- The **Commission for the Rights of Children and Adolescents** (CODENI): municipal structure working to support children which is part of the National System for Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child (Act 1680, Code of childhood and adolescence). It enables communities to collaborate among themselves.
- The existing **neighborhood committees**, the first to become involved in the project
- The **organisation « Agua y Vida »** of Alto Paraná (fighting for the right to water)
- The **committee of mothers** of San Antonio, recognized by the municipality of Villa Elisa.
- The **Escuela Mercedes Ibarra**, public school close to the two communities of *San Lorenzo*.
- The **Unidad de Salud Familiar - 15 de Enero**, a service of the Ministry of Public Health that provides healthcare to these two communities

## ACTIONS TAKEN (within the « PECC »)

- **Family visits**, first for data collection on young children, then twice a month to monitor the development process of these children.
- **Enrollment of 2-5 year olds in PECC** of each community (85 children as of March 2014.)
- **Educational activities** to stimulate the early learning of children (emotional, psychomotor, cognition) three days a week in the PECC, organized by young people and mothers. Basis of the method: "learning while having fun (games), and together within the community."
- **Healthcare services** provided to young children by the *Unidades de Salud Familiar* (USF) in collaboration with community medical centers: health monitoring, vaccinations, special monitoring if necessary.
- **Food supplements** for all children, especially where poverty rates are highest, as in the *Manantial* community of Alto Paraná department. Integration of healthy foods in their diet. Specific nutritional monitoring if necessary.
- **Training of families and adult caregivers :**

Around gender, inter-generationality, non-violence and participation ...

Meetings are held with parents to explain the project and manage the operation of PECC (organizing, arranging and opening community spaces). Training workshops are organized on child nutrition and development.

- **Sharing a snack with families** at PECC
- **Support and assistance to people who have filed a complaint** for irresponsible paternity and domestic violence.

## RESULTS

**Young children are protected by the community that surrounds them. They increase their intellectual and manual capabilities depending on the progress of their personal development and improve their access to formal education.**

- **A community organization is set up around their needs and interests.**

Great investment of families (especially mothers), interest shown by members of neighborhood committees and community organizations, will to support outreach activities. (ex: providing and managing premises).

- **The integral training and leadership of young people in the communities.**

Young partners have agreed to devote their time and energy to the project ... despite the prejudices of some adults. They are a well-trained **support team**, able to work for and supervise the well-being and development of children ages 2 - 5 in the community.

- **The enrollment of children starting at 5 years old in educational institutions - where they**

**can interact with their peers - was made possible thanks to support work done in the homes of families.**

## **CONCLUSION**

There is still room for improvement: for fathers of children to be more engaged, for example; or that communities have systematic access to public sector services, especially health services and social assistance.

But the project is already a success. It allows high hopes. Established contact with families and community organizations is constant and direct, which enables responding to their interests and concerns. The project is complementary to other intervention strategies so that all of these actions effectively contribute to the integral growth of young children and their families.

[www.bice.org](http://www.bice.org)

**Non basic subjects in PECC *San Antonio* of Villa Elisa City, Paraguay.**

Photo BICE



## IFBPW/BPW INTERNATIONAL CONTRIBUTION

### **Recommendations for basic education, literacy and Life Long Learning Programs for Empowerment of Women in the framework of the Post-2015 Agenda.**

*Submitted by the International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW International), a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and partner organisation of UNESCO<sup>6</sup>*

Literacy and formal and informal basic education are **a stepping stone** for life; this is undisputed and acknowledged numerous times in International treaties, conventions and agreements. Clear examples of that are the CEDAW Convention (art. 10 and 14) and Beijing Platform for Action (chapter B), Articles 13 and 14 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966, Rights of the child art. 28 and Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999, International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 1990 and MDG target 2 – although limiting the target to primary education. **However implementation is another matter.**

Although education was recognized as a human right at the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in April 1990 and strategic objectives were adopted by the Beijing PLATFORM FOR ACTION - ensuring equal access to education (B1), eradicating illiteracy among women (B2), Improving women's access to vocational training, science and technology (B3) and continuing education, developing non-discriminatory education and training (B4), allocating sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms (B5) and Promote lifelong education and training for girls and women(B6) , girls and women still face many discriminative attitudes and practices keeping them from their full participation to the educational opportunities, reality is that the majority of millions of people being illiterate are women.

Literacy is not just about to be able to read, write, calculate but also have basic vocational skills, knowing how to use communication tools, understand the world around you. It ideally leads to the **ability for life-long learning** and lays the foundation for social and economic independence, it prevents child labour.

IFBPW (also know as BPW international) advocates for the following:

- Involve employers and make a connection with the UN Global compact, UN Women and implement the WEPs:

**Women empowerment Principles** (WEP) stress the importance of this: Principle 4: Promote education, training and professional development for women Education and Training: **Ensure equal**

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<sup>6</sup> The International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW-International) is an organization founded on the vision of achieving gender equality and dedicated to the economic advancement of women. It seeks to empower women and unleash their potential at all levels.

**access to all company-supported education and training programmes, including literacy classes, vocational and information technology training<sup>7</sup>**

- Improve the **circumstances for teachers:**

Raise the **status, facilities and pay for and capacity of teachers** e.g. by implementing the guidelines from IPEC. (<http://www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=1419> and teachers kit). You can build schools, but if no qualified teacher wants to work there, it is all “in vain”.

- Support **gender/ sex-disaggregated data** and gender sensitive information collection

BPW gives input to the WWAP advisory group on gender and highly recommends this program to be supported even more by UNESCO and Member States (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/water/wwap/facts-and-figures/gender-equality/advisory-group-on-gender/>)

- Develop curricula where all **gender-bias is eliminated**

recommends that all curricula should be re-considered in order to **eliminate all gender stereotypes**. Furthermore, a module on gender equality should be added to all curricula which are used in formal, informal, vocational training, adult education and in-serving training programs.

- Develop and **support programs for RENFIL** and coordinate with OECD on this

Although learning often takes place within formal settings and learning environments, a great deal of valuable learning also takes place either deliberately or informally in everyday life -this represents a rich source of human capital. Lots of people are not fully aware of their own stock of human capital or its potential value or are unable to put all the learning they have acquired to full use because they cannot easily prove their capabilities to others. Recognition makes the stock of human capital more visible and more valuable to society at large.

Recognition plays an important role by providing validation of competences to facilitate entry to further formal learning. This often involves exemption from certain coursework or parts of a formal study programme. This approach lets people complete formal education more quickly, efficiently and cheaply by not having to enrol in courses for which they have already mastered the content. Allowing people to fast-track through formal education by making the most of their non-formal and informal learning can also create a virtuous circle by making it more attractive for people to engage in self-directed learning.

- Stresses that **sanitation and drinking water provision in schools is crucial**

To make it possible for girls to attend school, women to work there as teachers and be students, provision of basic facilities is crucial.

- Supports and request all states to **support the current draft SDGs on equality and education** (goal 4 and 5)

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<sup>7</sup> IFBPW is one of the main partners of UN Women and Global Compact for the promotion of the WEPs: <http://weprinciples.org/Site/Principle4/>

The current draft sustainable Development goal proposals on equality and education have to be supported and maybe refined also in view of the issues mentioned above and to include 9 years of basic education.

IFBPW is happy to provide examples of work done on implementing the different recommendations/ actions mentioned above. Projects in Nepal, Mali, Suriname and other places can serve as examples of good practice.

Contact:

Mrs. Marie-Claude Machon [[marieclaude.machon@bpw.fr](mailto:marieclaude.machon@bpw.fr)], permanent delegate of IFBPW to UNESCO

Mrs. Dr. Arzu Özyol, [arzuozyl@gmail.com](mailto:arzuozyl@gmail.com) vice president BPW international



The federation of BPW Nepal was founded in 1972 as a pioneer voluntary social and professional non-profit organization of women, registered with the GoN in 1975 and able to become Federation in 1985 affiliating with BPW International and has affiliation with Social Welfare Council, Nepal.

The main aim of the organization is to advance the gender equality and socio-economic empowerment of women through the process using its members' own professional/business experience and success stories of empowered women.

**Literacy for Women Empowerment** is the main strategic thrust through which capacity enhancement in various vocational, professional, social and economic/business skills needed to successfully compete with the men in the market place and business sectors.

BPW Nepal functions through 12 Chapters in all over the country. Those are: Banepa, Birganj, Biratnagar, Budhanilkantha, Kathmandu, Kirtipur, Nuwakot, Patan, Pokhara, Rajbiraj, Thimi, Rajbiraj, Ramechhap and Young BPW wings in centre and chapters.

At Federation level it has 13 members elected Governing Body represented from all Chapters. Election is held every 3 years for 3 years tenure. In Chapters there are 7 - 9 members elected body with 3 years tenure. There is a strong general assembly holds in every three years. The Chapters are governed by the National Federation's constitution which is under the guiding principles of the International Federation of BPW.

It has established a polytechnic and a Business Services Centre for training in various skill as well as entrepreneurship.

It is been recognized with for its deliberation services, for it in 2011 it won the 1st prize for "Power to make Difference through Action" in Empowerment of Women through literacy, Micro Credit, Poverty Reduction, and sustainable economic development activities in BPW International Congresses held in every three years since 2005. The BPW graduated in Business/Entrepreneurship are also recognized by Surya Nepal as successful social entrepreneurs in 2011 and 2012.

## Programme Summary

The vision and rationale of the program/project: the main goal and the particular problem/s it seeks to address:

**Literacy** is an obvious starting point and FPPWN has been conducting literacy classes for disadvantaged women for nearly 35 years, as an entry point into the community and has proven as an effective tool for holding mind of the target community and change the mind sets.

**The non formal/functional literacy [BPW's business literacy] projects** are implemented as a key to enter into all types of socio economic empowerment activities i.e. Civic Education, Political & legal awareness etc of low income urban /rural communities. In mid seventy's ten Day Care Centres in ten key industrial estates were established in order to establish the rights of the women labor' laws and facilitate women to reduce work burden of working mothers of low income unskill women. Under the support UNFPA it has conducted literacy and numerical training for factory workers, mothers of the children brought to Day Care Center having integrating the components of child spacing, family planning, breast feeding, mother/child health issue, immunization and indigenous way of child feeding methods and composition etc. It was a silent way of lobby with government to get time off as breast feeding time, as child/mother rights. This has been enforced in

Nepalese labor law. It encouraged the Industrial Management to establish a pre-school at the Day Care Centres premise for children not yet eligible to attend primary school.

**BPW's literacy for women** has two tier - I and II, at first tier there is basic literacy: alphabets and numeric for initial 3 month and then at tier II - Post literacy there are components like economic empowerment issues i.e. vocational trainings, income generation skills and life skills are given and continue literacy at advance level. At the end of 6 month they are capable to earn and sensitised as well. These programs are ongoing through all chapters at district/municipal, VDCs and at ward levels.

**The BPW literacy program** focuses on life skill development and empowerment in various human rights areas. The literacy is followed by skill training [income generating, saving/credits, development of entrepreneurship/enterprises development skills]. Besides them book-keeping/accountings and forming women's groups. The graduates have now become entrepreneurs and operating cooperatives successfully in many places.

The program is not only making them learn to read but also to saving various cross cutting them related to improved life skill as reading topics in their workbooks. **The Literacy program** has been success to builds up capacity of women that creates the critical self-awareness, interest, articulation and advocacy influencing socio-economic relations, participation in community governance and comprehensive empowerment of women. Women empowerment through literacy has therefore been selected by FBPN as a thrust area and have conducted several literacy programs to the thousands households/women that includes training on health, hygiene and population control in Nepal which in turn is giving them more prospective life, self-improvement and skill development. In the meantime the beneficiaries [mothers and their family] motivated to send their daughters to school like sons.

**The literacy [non formal/functional] programs are strategic entry point of all socio economic empowerment programs for rural low income women communities. The community literacy program supported by Australian Aid [1989] has made all women in the Village Development Committee [9 scattered wards/VDC] literate and aware of importance of girls/women education. The VDC having about 150 households that amounting 500 women in Tathali VDC in Bhaktapur with 2 years. The whole VDC was declared "100% Women Literate VDC"**

**The impact of this program is now showing all the girls going to school like their brothers and mothers are starting works in school and business companies.**

The project launched for the 2002-2005/6 – Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur districts under Kathmandu, Thimi and Patan chapters. This is in consistent with the Government's development policy framework and is designed to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development goals, in particular Goal 1 (eradication of extreme poverty and hunger) and Goal 3 (Promote gender equality and empower of women).

Target beneficiaries – landless farmer women (land having 1/20 hector) and low income indigenous women/dalits of Sirutar, Chapali Bhadrakali, thecho Village development Committees of Bhaktapur, Kathmandu and Lalitpur respectively.

**Pre-project situation:**

- More than 90% subsistence farmers
- More than 95% illiterate, shy to talk, lack of self esteem
- Lack of family understanding ,
- Attitude of men and in-laws was not good, perception of women is not good either.
- Not aware of potentiality and value of self earning and earning opportunities
- Fully depend on male members even for a single Rupee.
- Male literacy rate is very low

- VDCs lacked trained man power
- 99% women fully/partly based on agro occupation as their own or as labour
- They lack technical know how of improved farming practice, ignorant of high yielding, crop varieties and seedings., crop diseases, pest, organic farming, bad effects of chemical fertilizers using.

### **Post Project situation (changes)**

- Women literacy rate raised to 80% compared to 43% national rate.
- VDCs have developed trained man power as literacy teachers, social development, micro enterprise management, saving and credits and improved agriculture methods
- Target women are happy – they can read and write and understood technical information useful to their work.
- They are applying acquire knowledge/skill of agriculture production and practicing with confidence.
- They are aware of importance of bio/organic fertilizer and public/environmental health hazard of use of chemical pesticide
- Consumers are feeling secure of organic production.
- Target women become business literate and 70 -100% women have initiated farm based micro-business. They have been producing more quantity and quality and consumers buying directly from farm.
- About 20-25 % women established linkages with fresh vegetable retailers, local hotels.
- 200 women each from Sirutar (Bhaktapur) have involved in micro business enterprises by initiating women’s saving credit cooperatives. In Lalitpur 1575 women n group and individual basis initiated micro and small agro business..
- Remarkable changes in perception, attitude and practice of women, men and their families have been noticed.
- Overall impact of the project has been very satisfactory. Socio economic situation of the project areas have been improved. Living standard of the project areas has been changed. Thatch houses have been turned into concrete house with corrugated roofs.
- Women are successful to establish their identity in family and community.

### **Activities included –**

1. Literacy
2. Skill training/earning
3. Social awareness – general/reproductive health of women, water and sanitation, hygiene education, food and nutrition
4. gender issues/inclusion
5. women’s human right and political rights micro-credit exercise with saving and credits schemes
6. micro-credit exercise with saving and credits schemes

The beneficiaries who have been trained are successfully implementing their knowledge. This makes our training sustainable and result oriented. Some of the trained illiterate young girls under 16 years of age are admitted to the schools and provided scholarship for further studies.

**“I am happy (never before) that I can sign my name, instead of thumb marks in bank, I can read slow but no need to stay mute listening” a literacy graduate says.**

## INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN CONTRIBUTION

**“Promoting literacy, it’s a huge task” !**

The National Council of Women of South Africa is involved in several projects to aid Literacy in our country. Our President, Daphne Hansen has offered her time to a private Secondary School named Dr Beyers Naude and visits twice a month to talk to the learners at the Grade 8 level (about 15 years of age).

### **Home language versus English**

The learners do their senior exams in English and struggle with this as they use their home language more and many don’t have English books in their homes and there is no library in this school or indeed in many of the South African schools.

The visits are encouraged by the Head Mistress who allows the learners to take off an hour from their time table to hear good English being spoken and discuss things in English with Daphne. The learners have asked Daphne to talk to them about various subjects as Space Travel and Apartheid.

### **Reading in English**

In an effort to stimulate them to read in English, NCW collected books of a suitable nature from a local charity and tried to run a mobile car boot library. This was not a success as the books were not brought back, so a member of NCW approached a large company and they agreed to donate a container for a library. It has been painted and windows added and it will stand in the school grounds.

One of our members, Jenny Meyer, visits a school in a poorer suburb and does similar work. She listens to individual reading in English and she has been doing this for many years. Other projects like this are springing up in Johannesburg to assist learners with their English.

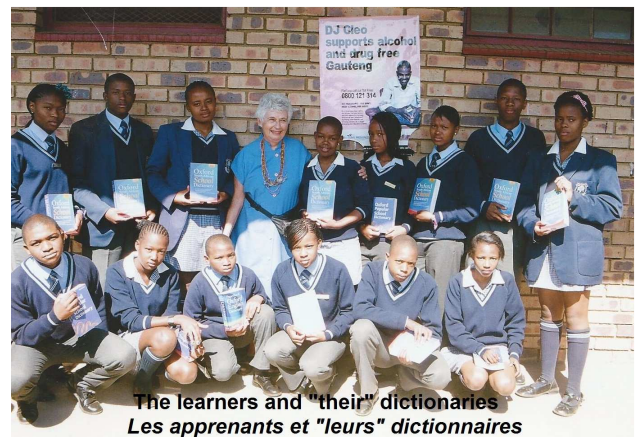
### **Dictionaries Party**

In 2012, the members collected English dictionaries. Some were bought cheaply, some were donated and some found at charity shops. These were donated to a private school called Bophelo Impilo where the Head Mistress is one of our members. A local newspaper came to the small ceremony to hand them over.

### **Alison, Member of National Council of Women, South Africa**

Simonne Mirabel, International Council of Women,  
Representative at UNESCO

*Girls and boys learn together, better asset for equality and non-violence.*



The learners and "their" dictionaries  
Les apprenants et "leurs" dictionnaires

*Programs of literacy are managed the same way in many other countries by National Councils of Women, members of International Council of Women.*

[www.icw-cif.com](http://www.icw-cif.com)

# OMEP CONTRIBUTION

*World Organization For Early Childhood Education*



OMEP

*Organisation Mondiale Pour L'Éducation Préscolaire*

*Organización Mundial Para La Educación Preescolar*

*World Organization For Early Childhood Education*

## DECLARATION OF THE 66<sup>TH</sup> OMEP WORLD ASSEMBLY AND CONFERENCE

July 2014 Cork, Ireland

In Recognition of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

With members in nearly 70 countries throughout the world, OMEP is the oldest and largest organization devoted to the general wellbeing, optimal development, and education of children between birth and age 8. OMEP has had consultative status with the United Nations and UNESCO since its founding in 1948. OMEP takes pride in our contributions to the creation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

In recognition of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CRC, the 66<sup>th</sup> OMEP World Assembly calls upon the world community, and especially its leaders, to make early childhood an unambiguous priority in both policy and practice and to vigorously protect and promote the rights of all young children, their parents, their teachers and caregivers, and the institutions that serve them at the local, state, and global levels.

Research from many fields clearly shows that the first years of life are the strongest predictors of later attitudes, values, competencies, habits, and a variety of other important qualities and skills. Further, robust scientific evidence in economics demonstrates that investing in early childhood is

among the wisest financial decisions a society can make because the returns on such investments are consistently high and long-lasting.

OMEP calls upon the world's leaders at all levels to

Ensure equal rights to education and care for *all* children, prioritizing the poorest and most vulnerable, including those living in conflict areas and refugee situations,

Enact policies and practices for comprehensive, high quality early childhood education and care,

Ensure all children's rights to a childhood that includes play and leisure,

Encourage children's active participation in matters that concern them and their future,

To accomplish these goals, OMEP encourages all efforts to promote Education for Sustainable Development in homes, childcare programs, preschools, schools, universities, and communities.

OMEP enthusiastically recommits our organization to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. OMEP offers to the world community, and especially its leaders, the unwavering commitment, energy, and expertise of its members throughout the world in pursuit of these goals.

*The Convention on the Rights of the Child*

*is the world's promise to its children.*

*Let us all fulfill our commitment to our children.*

# ZONTA INTERNATIONAL CONTRIBUTION

## Literacy for women in Afghanistan and Senegal



### Afghanistan

Zonta International partnered with the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIF) to help women and girls providing literacy, education, skills training at nine Women's Learning Centres.

Mir Bacha Kot was the first studies centre opened by Zonta International. Immediately several hundreds of women and little girls learned reading and writing.

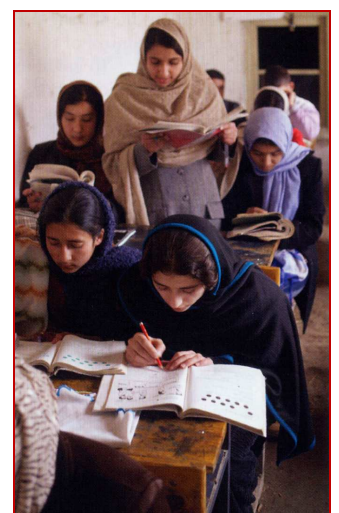
Married Afghan women are not allowed into regular schools, so they appreciate to be able to come at the Afghan Institute of Learning.

And very quickly, the Women's Learning Centres, were opened integrating English, health, peace, empowerment, human rights and leadership lessons.

At present, there are nine centres because Mir Bacha Kot became a model.

Now women are able to work and for a lot of them they support their families because they have resources. They are able to spare and they have confidence and self-respect.

But for rural women, security is not good. They want to learn and request classes in basic education literacy and skills training. They want to be self-sufficient and to provide their families too. But they are not able to freely





participate as much as they would like because they lack a safe environment.

Insecurity is present in many countries, often preventing education for girls. Zonta has projects, at the moment, in Latin America for girls to be able to go to school safe.

## **Senegal**

The women's picture at Gossas, in Senegal, shows a lot of details which are unvoiced comments.

Women indeed decided to go to the school of the village and to come with the youngest family child because they couldn't let him/her alone at home.

Why did they decide to go to school? Because they have understood that they had to face a new situation: the eldest children now go to school and the women, illiterate, already excluded from the life of the City, could risk furthermore to be excluded from the life of their own family. And they should lose their self-respect and self confidence

It's the reason why the Zonta clubs wanted to contribute not only to literacy classes for lifelong, but also to educational programmes, women rights, health, writing workshops particularly.

And we can see how happy they are on the picture, with their babies and their exercise books!

Monique Vernet, Zonta International  
Representative at UNESCO

[www.zonta.org](http://www.zonta.org)



## ISPA CONTRIBUTION

### **Role of School Psychologists in Early Childhood Care and Education to prepare effective literacy.**

The field of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) involves many closely related and inter connected issues such as physical and mental health, nutrition, education, the family and mother's economical independency, gender equality etc. That is the reason why multidisciplinary services organized in unified administrative systems for children sustainable development are probably more efficient than specialized services working under the umbrella of several ministries.

It is to be noticed that ECCE is the first objective (out of 6) of the Education For All (EFA) policy adopted at the World Forum on Education (Dakar, Senegal, 2000) under the leadership of UNESCO.

Its importance has been re-affirmed at the Moscow conference (2010) where the UNESCO member states declared that *"benefiting from quality educational care during early childhood considerably improves outcomes in the following years"*.

The role of SPs in ECCE has been specified internationally in various statements adopted by professional organizations. According to the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, USA), *"school psychologists (have to) work with young children to facilitate learning and development of those skills that are necessary for later schooling success."*

Many authors have insisted on the necessity of evidence based observation to identify young children "at risk". However, the concept of "at risk" used with very young children has been discussed both,

- from an ethical point of view (the major risk being definitive labeling: if a 3 year old child does not speak in the class room it does not mean he/she is going to develop an autistic syndrome...)
- from an efficacy point of view: a child is changing month after month, day after day, it is important to give him/her enough time to cope with this new environment.

### **From "at risk" children identification to the well being of all the children at school.**

French school psychologists<sup>8</sup> have been interviewed to describe their teamwork with specialized teachers<sup>9</sup>, school staff and families and cooperation with health and social

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<sup>8</sup> Catherine Allali, Nathalie Chevillot, Christine Desaubry, Stéphane Houyez.

<sup>9</sup> RASED: Specialized Network for Helping Children with Special Needs. These Teams consist of one SP and 2 specialized teachers (to reinforce language and cognitive development on one hand and to comfort social and emotional skills on the other hand).

professionals. They consider their action in pre-school (in French: Ecole Maternelle) according to a two-fold aim:

1. helping children and families when a possible illness or disorder is suspected and direct them toward the relevant medical setting,
2. supporting teachers and families in building a safe and quality school environment which offers all the children a feeling of well being which facilitates self esteem, autonomy, willingness

Jean-Claude Guillemard, School Psychologist, UNESCO- ISPA liaison officer.