



LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS
LITERACY AWARDS
2016



A MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Library's mission is to provide Congress, the federal government and the American people with a rich, diverse and enduring source of knowledge that can be relied upon to inform, inspire and engage them, as well as support their intellectual and creative endeavors. Through the generosity of David M. Rubenstein, the Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program furthers this mission by encouraging the continued development of innovative methods for promoting literacy and the wide dissemination of the most effective practices. By recognizing current achievements, the awards seek to inspire organizations, foundations and other private sector groups to become involved in promoting literacy. It is this involvement that contributes to informed, inspired and engaged communities prospering intellectually and creatively around the world.

Since 2013, the Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program has recognized 60 organizations worldwide for their effectiveness in promoting literacy. Seventeen additional organizations are being honored in 2016 and described in this year's publication. This year, applications were due to the Library of Congress on March 31, 2016; submissions came from 19 U.S. states and 28 countries.

The 2016 winners are:

The David M. Rubenstein Prize (\$150,000) for an outstanding and measurable contribution to increasing literacy levels by an organization based either inside or outside the United States that has demonstrated exceptional and sustained depth in its commitment to the advancement of literacy.

Winner: WETA Reading Rockets

The American Prize (\$50,000) for a significant and measurable contribution to increasing literacy levels or the national awareness of the importance of literacy by an organization that is based in the United States.

Winner: Parent-Child Home Program

The International Prize (\$50,000) for a significant and measurable contribution to increasing literacy levels by an organization that is based outside the United States.

Winner: Libraries Without Borders

The Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program is completing year four of a five-year pilot project designed to broaden and stimulate public understanding about the essential role of literacy in all aspects of society. In this spirit of sharing experience and new ideas we hope to continue this work and to encourage organizations that did not receive prizes or best practices recognition to reapply. Information about winning organizations and best practice honorees for prior years is available on read.gov, the Library of Congress reading and literacy promotion website.

The Library of Congress is grateful to the members of the Literacy Awards Advisory Board for their generous and dedicated service, advice and energy, and to David M. Rubenstein for his concern, as a citizen, about the state of literacy in our country and throughout the world.

Carla Hayden

The Librarian of Congress

Pam Jackson

Chair, Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program



LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS
LITERACY AWARDS

2016

**WINNERS &
BEST PRACTICE HONOREES**



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As the winners of the 2016 Library of Congress Literacy Awards, WETA Reading Rockets, Parent-Child Home Program and Libraries Without Borders demonstrate the highest levels of effectiveness and dedication to the cause of literacy promotion. These three organizations are empowering people around the world by providing education, mentorship and increased access to books and reading. Each is an example of the standard by which the prizes are judged.



The David M. Rubenstein Prize (\$150,000) is awarded to an organization that has made outstanding and measurable contributions in increasing literacy levels and has demonstrated exceptional and sustained depth and breadth in its commitment to the advancement of literacy. The organization meets the highest standards of excellence in its operations and services. This award may be given to any organization based either inside or outside the United States.



The American Prize (\$50,000) is awarded to an organization that has made a significant and measurable contribution to increasing literacy levels or the national awareness of the importance of literacy. This award may be given to any organization that is based in the United States.



The International Prize (\$50,000) is awarded to an organization or national entity that has made a significant and measurable contribution to increasing literacy levels. This award may be given to any organization that is based in a country outside the United States.





WETA READING ROCKETS



WETA READING ROCKETS

LOCATION:
Arlington, VA

SERVICE AREA:
Online

POPULATION SERVED:
Parents and educators

SCOPE:
947,000 unique site visitors/
month

FOUNDED:
2001

Reading Rockets was developed by WETA, a PBS affiliate station, to address the need for evidence-based resources and services among literacy providers, educators and parents. Reading Rockets disseminates all of its information and resources via its free website, which is accessed 5.7 million times each year. Most of the material is aimed at teachers, parents and caregivers, but Reading Rockets also works with more than 50 national partner organizations to promote literacy and reading. An example of this is its collaboration with Reach Out and Read, the 2013 Rubenstein Prize winner, to distribute a Reading Rockets brochure on parent reading tips through Reach Out and Read’s network of pediatricians.

Some of the resources that Reading Rockets provides include book and activity suggestions, articles and research briefs, and original series. A set of literacy blogs written by nationally acclaimed authors, literacy specialists and

teachers offers new perspectives on reading and literacy. Launching Young Readers is an original series designed for teachers, parents and caregivers of young readers. The series consists of 30-minute television programs that explore the stages of reading that every child experiences and provides practical advice and reading strategies based on educational and developmental research findings.

Reading Rockets also produces free webcasts for teacher professional development. The webcasts offer teachers an opportunity to hear from national experts and are available online to watch at any time. Topics include how to establish an effective reading program, assessment, pre-reading skills, teaching English language learners, writing and parent engagement.



PARENT-CHILD HOME PROGRAM



The Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP) combines intensive home visits with weekly gifts of books and educational materials to develop school readiness in children with disadvantages. The program was developed in 1965 based on early research into the link between early literacy skills, parent interaction and the high school dropout rate. In this program, community-based early literacy specialists visit participating families twice a week for two years. Each week they supply a book or educational toy and model activities designed to stimulate interaction and promote school readiness. When families complete the two year program the staff helps parents enroll their children in high-quality preschool or kindergarten.

Educating parents on the importance of parent-child interaction and giving them the tools they need to inculcate early literacy skills in their children is empowering. It encourages them to see themselves as active participants in their child's education from the beginning. PCHP uses a non-directive, non-didactic approach to form relationships with parents and children.

PCHP has been replicated in 400 high-need communities in 14 states and in Chile, Canada, Ireland and Bermuda. National and regional staffs provide training, technical assistance and quality assurance to local partners and affiliates, enabling rapid expansion of the program. All partner sites operate under the same programmatic model, which includes: a site coordinator trained by a national staff member, early literacy specialists with a minimum of 16 hours of training, culturally appropriate book and toy selections and participation in a program-wide database for evaluation purposes.



PARENT-CHILD HOME PROGRAM

LOCATION:
Garden City, NY

SERVICE AREA:
United States, Bermuda,
Canada, Chile & Ireland

POPULATION SERVED:
Children ages
16 months – 4 years

SCOPE:
7,300 families enrolled

FOUNDED:
1965



LIBRARIES WITHOUT BORDERS



LIBRARIES WITHOUT BORDERS

LOCATION:
Paris, France

SERVICE AREA:
Worldwide

POPULATION SERVED:
Children and adults

SCOPE:
20 countries served

FOUNDED:
2007



Libraries Without Borders (LWB) supports community development in 20 countries around the world through the promotion of literacy. Each community's needs are assessed and context-specific programs are developed to meet them. For example, literacy programs in post-disaster contexts require the creation and maintenance of safe spaces. Therefore, after the earthquake in Haiti LWB helped create information centers offering resources and literacy instruction to those affected.

One of LWB's signature programs is the Ideas Box, a portable classroom, media center and library that fits on two standard pallets and can be installed in 20 minutes. The box expands to create a pop-up space covering over 330 square feet and includes satellite internet connection, laptops and

tablets, a library with both paper books and e-readers, and a built-in cinema. It has its own power source and protects its contents from rain. With tablets, laptops, an electric generator, a library with 250 paper books and 5,000 e-books, a TV and projector, 5 HD cameras, board games, and arts and crafts materials, the Ideas Box can serve a whole community.

It also has the capacity to act as a local server and provide access to pre-loaded educational programs over WiFi even without internet availability. Because the included material is customizable the Ideas Box can be used in many contexts. Ideas Boxes have been implemented in under-resourced areas around the world including urban Detroit, refugee camps in Italy and remote aboriginal communities in Australia.





Each year, in addition to the three winners, 12 to 15 organizations are recognized for their implementation of best practices in literacy promotion. These Best Practice Honorees are successfully using theory in a real-world context by discovering ways to apply research-validated practices to promote literacy. These solutions provide a model for other organizations seeking to create evidence-based literacy programs.

Five practices are presented here. Each is illustrated by profiles of two or three organizations that have successfully used the practice to enhance and focus their literacy promotion activities. The five practices are: outreach to rural communities; initiatives in the workplace; research-based professional development; mobiles for literacy; and supporting refugees and homeless families. They were selected in consultation with the Literacy Awards Advisory Board to reflect methods of addressing a range of factors that lead to low literacy, from physical isolation to economic pressure to earn instead of learn.

The 14 organizations profiled here are effectively applying these practices, often in new and creative ways. They are examples of how a program can successfully use evidence-based practice to enhance the promotion of literacy and reading.



OUTREACH TO RURAL COMMUNITIES



Rural areas are chronically underserved in comparison to their urban counterparts¹ and often have substantially lower literacy rates², leading to high rates of poverty³. Therefore it is vital that literacy promotion organizations reach

out to rural communities with resources and programming that encourage and teach reading and writing.

In many rural areas the library is the primary, and sometimes only, cultural and educational institution, so it can be an ideal venue for literacy promotion.

**RURAL AREAS OFTEN HAVE
SUBSTANTIALLY LOWER LITERACY
RATES, LEADING TO HIGH RATES
OF POVERTY**



The school may also be a significant local hub, providing access to children and their families. If neither a library nor a school is present and neither can be created, access to books and teachers needs to be ensured by other means. This might include a mobile books program or online access to classes and materials.

Literacy programs in rural communities share certain challenges regardless of which country they are located in: lack of community resources, human capital



and accessibility.⁴ Community resources include money, cultural institutions and affordable childcare; human capital includes having enough educated members of the community to help facilitate programs; and accessibility includes the ability of participants to travel to the program site. All of these must be addressed to successfully promote literacy in rural areas.

Another challenge for organizations promoting literacy in rural areas is the number of small communities. While an urban program might be able to serve hundreds, or even thousands, of learners at a single site, a comparable rural program might need a dozen sites or more to reach the same number of people. One approach is to use an easily replicable program at many different sites; another is to focus on providing intensive services to a single community at a time.



ETHIOPIA READS



ETHIOPIA READS

LOCATION:

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

SERVICE AREA:

Ethiopia

POPULATION SERVED:

Children and adults

SCOPE:

72 libraries built; 130,000 children served/year

FOUNDED:

1998

Ethiopia Reads provides comprehensive support to libraries, publishes books in local languages, administers literacy programs for children and teens and supports a culture of reading by hosting reading events and community book festivals. It has built 72 libraries in regions around the country, many in schools. It supports libraries with books, furniture and professional development for librarians and staff.

Ethiopia Reads also operates four primary schools that model best practices for other educators. It collects data on these schools and its other programs to generate more and better information on which practices are most effective. It also engages with school administrators, local governments and community leaders to influence literacy and education policy.

Providing access to these reading programs and literacy services is particularly challenging in places that do not even have roads, let alone libraries or schools. To serve these remote areas, Ethiopia Reads deploys the Horse-Powered Literacy Program. A teacher on horseback travels from village to village with books, pencils and workbooks in saddlebags. Tethering the horse under a tree, the teacher gathers the children, distributes books and teaches basic literacy and numeracy. When the lesson is over, the saddlebags are packed and the library moves on to the next village, ensuring that even the farthest-flung areas have access to books and literacy instruction.



STUDENTS AND PARENTS IN COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

SPICE

STUDENTS AND PARENTS IN COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

LOCATION:
Thorndike, ME

SERVICE AREA:
Western Waldo County

POPULATION SERVED:
Families with children
ages 0-8

SCOPE:
20 families/year

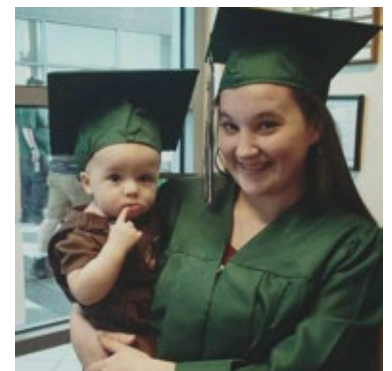
FOUNDED:
2000



Students and Parents in Cooperative Education (SPICE) targets families in Waldo County, Maine, that have children ages 0-8 and parents with less than a 12th grade reading level. The program serves 11 small, rural villages that have no public transportation and limited community resources. Because the resources are limited, it is important not to duplicate those that are already in place. Therefore SPICE partners with existing community programs to provide complementary educational services to parents and children simultaneously.



This family literacy program sends adult education and early childhood literacy instructors to the homes of participating families. By using a home-based approach SPICE addresses some of the barriers that prevent families from accessing literacy resources, which include lack of childcare, perceived stigma and transportation challenges.



In 2011 SPICE created and implemented an online virtual learning center to expand the scope of the program and increase access. The virtual learning center offers a GED prep class, an early childhood literacy curriculum and a high school English class. There is also a community college portion that includes three full online classes and information on enrolling in community colleges. A career center area allows participants to work on job-readiness skills and develop their résumés.



COLLABORATIVE SUMMER LIBRARY PROGRAM



COLLABORATIVE SUMMER LIBRARY PROGRAM

LOCATION:
United States

SERVICE AREA:
Nationwide

POPULATION SERVED:
Children and adults

SCOPE:
16,000 libraries/year

FOUNDED:
1987

The Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP) provides libraries across the country with a shared summer reading theme and supporting materials. These materials include professional artwork, activities and evidence-based instruction manuals targeting pre-readers, children, teens and adults. Each year 16,000 public libraries participate in the program and host summer reading programs based on materials developed by CSLP.

Summer reading programs are particularly important in rural and underserved areas, where they may be the only supplemental summer activities available. While these

libraries face the greatest need for summer services, they are likely to have the fewest resources to develop unique programming each year. Creating a national curriculum that can be applied in libraries serving small communities as well as large ones increases access for rural communities.



Although CSLP provides a theme and materials, it also encourages libraries to customize their programming to reflect

the local identity. For example, the 2016 summer theme, “On Your Mark, Get Set . . . Read!” was adapted by one community to showcase the local farmer’s market, with story-time at the market. Customizing the national program allows under-resourced libraries to have summer programs that are rigorous and also reflect community values.



INITIATIVES IN THE WORKPLACE

The workplace can be an ideal venue for literacy promotion and education. Business owners have good reason to encourage their workers to increase their literacy, as employers face high costs when their workforce is not functionally literate. These costs can be direct, such as increased training costs and high turnover⁵, or indirect, such as higher insurance



costs due to poorer health outcomes for employees who are not functionally literate⁶. The estimated global cost of illiteracy and low literacy is over USD \$1 trillion each year.⁷

Workers also have strong incentives to participate in literacy education at their workplace. Increases in literacy levels can lead to promotion opportunities or wage increases. This links learning directly to the practical context of the workers' lives. Additionally,

literacy education in the workplace can accommodate the hours that the

employees are free, rather than overlapping with time needed for wage-earning. In many places workers spend many hours a day at their job and may even sleep at the worksite. Literacy programs available on-site are accessible to the maximum number of workers at minimal inconvenience.

Workplace literacy programs have unique access to people who have had to suspend formal schooling before completion. The most common reason for leaving school in many countries is the economic pressure to earn money or support a family member who is earning. Because the need for earnings is continuous, if people are going to further their education it must be in a way that complements, rather than competes with, their jobs.



IF PEOPLE ARE GOING TO FURTHER THEIR EDUCATION IT MUST BE IN A WAY THAT COMPLEMENTS, RATHER THAN COMPETES WITH, THEIR JOBS



ZÉ PEÃO SCHOOL PROGRAM



ZÉ PEÃO SCHOOL PROGRAM

LOCATION:

João Pessoa, Brazil

SERVICE AREA:

João Pessoa

POPULATION SERVED:

Migrant laborers

SCOPE:

5,000 workers served

FOUNDED:

1990

The Zé Peão School Program (PEZP) represents a 25-year collaboration between staff from the Federal University of Paraíba and the construction workers' trade union. Its mission is to support the basic education of construction workers, many of whom have little or no formal education and no professional qualifications. The trade union wants to be a democratic and participatory organization, which is not possible without informed and literate members.

Because most of the workers have left rural homes to work in the building trade, they eat, sleep and work at the construction site. Therefore PEZP establishes classrooms at the building sites where workers can study after working hours. Students attend classes for two hours a night, Monday to Thursday, on top of their nine-hour workdays. The education department in the Federal University of Paraíba provides trained facilitators to teach literacy, math, history, geography and science at these nightly classes.

PEZP is organized around two distinct programs, aimed at learners of different abilities. The first, Alfabetização na Primeira Laje (Literacy in the First Slab), is designed for workers with no functional literacy skills. The second, Tijolo sobre Tijolo (Brick by Brick), targets workers with some basic literacy and numeracy skills. Students also have access to other program components including a mobile library, a mobile learning workshop with tablets and digital media and an art workshop.





**GIZ-POLICE
COOPERATION
PROJECT**

LOCATION:
Kabul, Afghanistan

SERVICE AREA:
Afghanistan

POPULATION SERVED:
Members of the Afghan
National Police

SCOPE:
24,552 current learners

FOUNDED:
2009

GIZ-POLICE COOPERATION PROJECT



The Police Cooperation Project (PCP) was started by GIZ Afghanistan in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior in response to the low literacy rate of the Afghan National Police (ANP). One study found that 72 percent of officers were illiterate. PCP was implemented in nine provinces in 2009 and has since grown to serve 27 of the 34 provinces. Using the national literacy curriculum, PCP provides reading and literacy instruction up to a third-grade level as well as basic instruction in math, religion, healthcare and police duties. Upon completion of the 18-month program learners receive a certificate equivalent to completing the third grade of primary school.

Because so many officers wanted to continue their education further, PCP is adding a second program component that provides instruction up to a sixth-grade level. This advanced course comprises 420 hours of instruction in six subjects, with an emphasis on literacy and reading. The curriculum is designed to reflect international literacy standards and coincide with the national school curriculum.

Increases in literacy skills can have profound effects for members of the ANP. One effect is an increased number of educational opportunities. There are several institutions that offer night classes for students with a sixth-grade certificate, but do not serve those with only a third-grade certificate. More practically, officers who complete the advanced course may be eligible for promotion or increases in responsibility and pay.



SIPAR

Sipar promotes literacy by creating libraries that can be accessed by underserved populations. Garment workers, 90 percent of whom are women, are one such underserved group. The garment industry employs 750,000 workers, the majority of whom are young women who have not completed primary school. Since 2012, Sipar has installed Library Resource Centers (LRCs) in 18 garment factories to give these workers the opportunity to continue their interrupted education.

The LRCs are large rooms with a range of fiction and nonfiction books, computers, tablets and informational posters and leaflets. These are staffed by factory workers trained by Sipar to assist others with borrowing materials, provide computer training and screen short educational films. Some workers are trained as peer educators to facilitate awareness sessions on crucial social issues.

In addition to the LRCs, Sipar also promotes literacy through a variety of reading and library programs. Rural areas and poor suburbs are served by nine mobile libraries, 18 permanent community libraries and miniature “Backpack Libraries.” Community institutions such as hospitals, prisons and factories have reading corners and resource centers to provide literacy education and book access to patients, inmates and workers. Sipar also addresses the lack of books written in the local language by publishing books for children, teens and adults written in Khmer. It has produced 1.6 million copies of 130 titles since 2000.



SIPAR

LOCATION:

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

SERVICE AREA:

Cambodia

POPULATION SERVED:

Children and adults

SCOPE:

1.6 million books produced;
310 school libraries created

FOUNDED:

1991



RESEARCH-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Research-based professional development bridges the gap between research and practice for literacy organizations and professionals. Disseminating the most current research on effective practices in literacy promotion allows the research to be rapidly incorporated into programs.

In addition to sharing good practices, it is also important to help organizations and individuals shed ineffective or harmful practices as soon as possible.

A major barrier to effective professional development is lack of access. If practitioners are not able to attend classes or access articles or assessment tools, they will not be able to implement changes. Programs that provide development opportunities where literacy promoters work will be able to

reach more individuals and institutions. Individual professional development can take many forms. Traditionally, publications and conference presentations were the main venue for sharing new effective practices. These have been joined

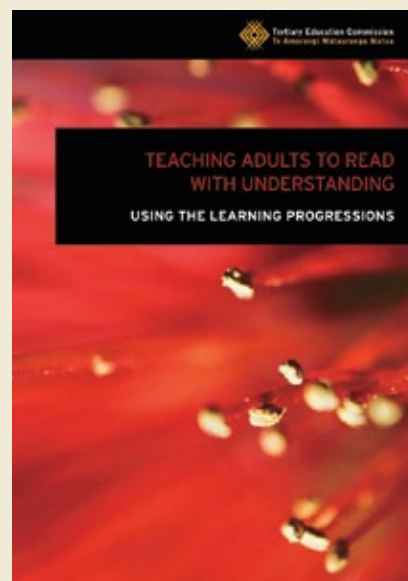
by new tools, such as interactive workshops and pre-service training.

Professional development can also happen on an organization-wide scale. Partnerships with research institutes can help literacy groups implement the newest research and design new programs to help their learners. This can take the form of a mentor relationship, where the research group provides advice and support on an ongoing basis. It may involve helping groups restructure and reassess their organizational practices and procedures, as well as their instructional practices.

Assessment tools and the training to use them are other professional assets that research groups can provide. These tools can help practitioners gather information about the success of their teaching.⁸ However, it is difficult and resource-consuming for each group to create and implement a different assessment tool. It would also be much harder to compare outcomes between groups. Therefore, this is a good service for institutions that support professional development to perform.



**RESEARCH-BASED
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BRIDGES THE GAP BETWEEN
RESEARCH AND PRACTICE**



CHICAGO LITERACY ALLIANCE

The Chicago Literacy Alliance (CLA) was formed in 2009 to encourage collaboration and resource sharing among Chicago-area literacy organizations. The centerpiece of the program is the Literacenter, a 41,000-square-foot space that can be shared by many literacy groups. Providing physical space for literacy promotion organizations at below-market rents saves them money and encourages collaboration and discussion between groups. In some cases organizations have been able to eliminate 85 percent of their overhead expenses.

In addition to providing workspace for member organizations, the Literacenter also hosts professional development activities for organizations' staff and volunteers. These include weekly best practice workshops, an emerging leaders program and quarterly unconferences. The program will soon be launching a collective volunteer program to provide centralized recruitment, training and database management. Member organizations will be able to secure volunteers from the program to assist with all kinds of literacy promotion activities.



CHICAGO LITERACY ALLIANCE

LOCATION:
Chicago, IL

SERVICE AREA:
Chicago

POPULATION SERVED:
Literacy organizations

SCOPE:
80+ member agencies

FOUNDED:
2009





**NATIONAL CENTER
ON ADULT LITERACY /
INTERNATIONAL
LITERACY INSTITUTE**

LOCATION:
Philadelphia, PA

SERVICE AREA:
Worldwide

POPULATION SERVED:
Literacy professionals
and organizations

SCOPE:
30+ books published;
hundreds of papers
published

FOUNDED:
1983

**NATIONAL CENTER ON ADULT LITERACY /
INTERNATIONAL LITERACY INSTITUTE**



The National Center on Adult Literacy/International Literacy Institute (NCAL/ILI) at the University of Pennsylvania focuses on improving literacy policy, practice and professional development through research. The institute has a long history of partnership with national and international organizations. These partnerships have allowed the institute to influence policy and practice at many different levels.

NCAL/ILI engages in professional development for both individuals and organizations. Educators, researchers and other literacy professionals are reached through papers, conference presentations and digital tools as well as a national online support site. Organizations are supported by partnerships that provide research expertise in developing and using assessment tools, develop joint initiatives and conduct national surveys.



The institute has produced more than 30 books and hundreds of papers on literacy and literacy education. These publications have often led to joint initiatives with other organizations.

For example it worked with the state government of Andhra Pradesh, India, to provide the first digital literacy program in Telugu, a local language.

Domestically, NCAL/ILI has worked with the U.S. state directors of adult education to conduct a national survey of instructors of adult basic education. These and similar initiatives provide an opportunity to apply literacy research to practice.



NATIONAL CENTER OF LITERACY AND NUMERACY FOR ADULTS



THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO



Inspiring Potential

NATIONAL CENTER OF LITERACY AND NUMERACY FOR ADULTS

LOCATION:
New Zealand

SERVICE AREA:
New Zealand

POPULATION SERVED:
Literacy educators and researchers

SCOPE:
7 conferences held; 150+ training events held

FOUNDED:
1963

The National Center of Literacy and Numeracy for Adults (NCLANA) supports literacy and numeracy promotion efforts in New Zealand and internationally by providing professional development training, disseminating research and engaging with regional, national and international policymakers. It provides professional and organizational development assistance to literacy promotion groups using a strengths-based approach with an emphasis on self-assessment. International partnerships allow NCLANA to widely disseminate these techniques as well as original research and policy recommendations. It also hosts a national research symposium each year to bring together practitioners, researchers and policymakers.

To support literacy groups, NCLANA has developed an organizational assessment framework designed to support the use of evidence-based practices throughout the entire organization. The framework focuses on embedding support for literacy and numeracy in all facets of the organization by using a learner-centered perspective.

NCLANA's research focuses in part on developing effective assessment tools to measure adults' literacy and numeracy skills as well as how they use these skills. It takes the position that literacy and numeracy are simultaneously technical skills and social practices, rather than one or the other. Therefore, recognizing cultural perspectives is an important part of literacy education. Using this perspective, NCLANA helped measure and produce New Zealand's results for the Survey of Adult Skills conducted by the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC).



MOBILES FOR LITERACY

Around the world 2.8 billion people have access to the internet and more than 6 billion people have access to a working mobile phone.⁹ Computers, tablets and cell phones can all provide access to books and other reading materials. These nearly ubiquitous tools can be used for literacy promotion and to provide access to relevant, interesting reading material. Programs that can be run on devices that people already own, or on low-cost dedicated devices, maximize their potential user base.

Continuing resource costs are a concern when using mobiles for literacy promotion and education. The continuing resource cost, or life-cycle cost, of a device includes all the expenses associated with its use, such as power and charging requirements, wireless or



Learning on mobile devices—like learning from books—is most effective when the content is relevant to readers and presented in a language that they understand.¹⁰ Curated and customized content increases the usefulness of the material to the learner.

Even with appropriate content, access to reading material is not enough to teach literacy by itself.¹¹ Learners need feedback on their progress and assistance when they encounter material that is difficult for them, whether they are children or adults. This assistance can come from responsive programming or from a teacher in the same room, but must be available to provide help and contextualize material.



cellular data access, the initial cost of the device and access to relevant content. If any of these have high associated costs, particularly costs that are ongoing, the device may not be used for very long.

LEARNING ON MOBILE
DEVICES IS MOST
EFFECTIVE WHEN THE
CONTENT IS RELEVANT
TO THE READER



CELL-ED

Cell-Ed uses a mobile-first approach to deliver literacy services through basic cellphones. To initiate a study session users call a central number and listen to a spoken lesson. They then receive a text that asks questions about the material. They text their response back to complete the lesson and move ahead. If a learner is not able to correctly text back a response, they receive help through a phone call with a live literacy coach. Each session takes approximately five minutes to complete and does not require internet access or a data plan, which means that the continuing resource cost is low. Additionally, because the service does not require either a set time commitment or on-site attendance, learners with family and work responsibilities can adapt the program to their schedule and participate without added expenses such as childcare and transportation.

The program partners with employers, unions and adult education providers to identify where services are needed. These partners cover the cost of implementing the Cell-Ed program for their members. In addition to adult literacy lessons, the program also offers English-language instruction for speakers of other languages.



CELL-ED

CELL-ED

LOCATION:
Los Angeles, CA

SERVICE AREA:
Nationwide, United States

POPULATION SERVED:
Adults

SCOPE:
2000+ adults served

FOUNDED:
2011





LIBRARY FOR ALL

LOCATION:

New York, NY

SERVICE AREA:

Haiti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Cambodia, Mongolia

POPULATION SERVED:

Children

SCOPE:

8,000 children reached

FOUNDED:

2012

LIBRARY FOR ALL



Library For All (LFA) is an online digital library provided to children in developing countries. The platform works on all standard phones, tablets and computers and is designed to be used in low-bandwidth areas. It is available through the internet or via local download points called HUBs. Each HUB provides access to a carefully curated collection of culturally relevant books and materials written in languages spoken locally.

When starting to serve a new area or population, LFA establishes partnerships with local organizations and works with them to curate collections of culturally appropriate books and instructional materials for all grade levels. It then works with

national and international publishers and authors to secure the rights to distribute the content and upload the books and matching curricula. The materials can then be downloaded to mobile devices or computers through the internet or a local HUB.

The program focuses particularly on providing mother tongue books and other reading material. For example, to support the implementation of the pilot program in Haiti, LFA curated a collection of 1,200 titles, of which more than 300 were in Haitian Creole. This is believed to be the largest digital collection of Haitian Creole materials in the world.



RUMIE INITIATIVE



RUMIE INITIATIVE

LOCATION:
Toronto, Canada

SERVICE AREA:
Worldwide

POPULATION SERVED:
School-age children

SCOPE:
20,000 tablets distributed

FOUNDED:
2013

The Rumie Initiative provides children with mobile tablets that are preloaded with lessons and books. The tablets are sold at cost to NGOs and partner organizations around the world. These organizations identify the types of content that they are interested in, which is loaded on by Rumie. Content is housed in an online repository called the LearnCloud and can be added to tablets to create customized curricula. If the partner organization requests material that is not currently in the LearnCloud, volunteers help identify, assess and organize free online resources that can be added to the repository.

Each tablet given to students sends information about usage to the main Rumie analytics platform. This data can also be monitored through a teacher's tablet. The teacher can customize the resources available to students and track their progress. This feature allows a teacher to monitor student progress even if the student cannot regularly attend school. For example, during the Ebola crisis in Liberia, tablets were given to children who were unable to attend school due to quarantine so that they could continue their education. Teachers can even implement incentivized learning by unlocking educational games for students once their lessons are complete.



SUPPORTING REFUGEES AND HOMELESS FAMILIES

Refugees, internally displaced persons and homeless families face similar barriers to literacy, including interrupted schooling, fragmented community relationships and long-term displacement.

For example, homeless families in New York City stay in shelters for an average of 432 days before moving into more permanent housing. For refugees the average length of time in camps is 17 years.¹² Both of these time frames are more than enough to permanently disrupt a child's education, even if it was stable to begin with.

Additionally, domestic homelessness, internal displacement and international displacement are often preceded by traumatic events.¹³ People who have been through trauma have a harder time learning new information and building new skills. While some children in these circumstances are able to learn

successfully, many are at heightened risk for emotional, physical and behavioral problems that interfere with learning.¹⁴ Therefore, it is important to create safe spaces for learning to occur to minimize these external pressures.

Refugees may also face an additional challenge—loss of their culture—as a result of their displacement. Connection to cultural roots is particularly important for refugees who want to return to their homeland, which can be more than 75 percent of the refugee population.¹⁵ Because refugees spend such a long time in the camps, many grow up with no memories of their country. Culturally and linguistically appropriate books are one of the ways they can begin to understand the land they plan to return to.



PEOPLE WHO
HAVE BEEN
THROUGH
TRAUMA HAVE
A HARDER TIME
LEARNING NEW
INFORMATION
AND BUILDING
NEW SKILLS

NYC DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES



NYC DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES

NYC DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES

LOCATION:
New York, NY

SERVICE AREA:
New York City

POPULATION SERVED:
Homeless families

SCOPE:
30 libraries established

FOUNDED:
2015

The New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS) has established 30 shelter-based libraries to make reading materials and educational activities available to children and families residing in the shelters. These shelter libraries serve about 4,900 of the approximately 23,900 children who currently reside in the shelter system. They are designed to provide a safe and secure environment that encourages learning, literacy and creativity.



The libraries provide islands of stability for the families that use them, as well as a venue for reading promotion activities such as library card drives, after-school tutoring and book discussion groups. Children residing in shelters are more likely to be absent from school, need to repeat a

grade and drop out of school. Services provided by the shelter libraries, like homework assistance, tutoring and college prep programs, can help children and teens succeed in school and remain engaged with their education.

In addition to direct services to students, programs at the shelter libraries also target parents with homework instruction workshops and parent and child story-times. These family literacy services model appropriate literacy instruction methods, empowering parents to participate in their children's education.




**AFGHANISTAN CENTER
AT KABUL UNIVERSITY**
LOCATION:

Kabul, Afghanistan

SERVICE AREA:

Afghanistan

POPULATION SERVED:

 Afghan residents and
refugees

SCOPE:

 227 libraries established;
320 titles published

FOUNDED:

1989

AFGHANISTAN CENTER AT KABUL UNIVERSITY


The Afghanistan Center at Kabul University (ACKU) was established in 1989 in Peshawar, Pakistan, to serve Afghan refugees. It is now housed at Kabul University and serves both refugees and those living in Afghanistan. Both before and after the move, ACKU provided books to under-resourced areas through the ACKU Box Library Extension (ABLE).

ABLE was created in 1996 to provide adults with reading materials on practical and cultural topics. ABLE has produced more than 320 titles written in Dari and Pashto and aimed at newly literate adults. These short books cover topics such as history, home-management and agriculture. It is in the process of expanding its publications to include books for

children. In addition to publishing books, ABLE also creates small lending libraries in schools, community centers and mosques. The libraries average 1,640 books each and are periodically monitored by ABLE field staff.

Through the ABLE program, the ACKU provided books to refugees in Pakistan and sent books back over the border into Afghanistan. The number of books flowing over the border increased during the Taliban period, when girls' schools were closed and boys received only restricted lessons. Strong community relationships allowed the ACKU to distribute books without opposition from the Taliban regime. These relationships still sustain the work of the ABLE program throughout the country.



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Former first lady of Iowa, 1999-2007

Founder of the Iowa Center for the Book in the Iowa State Library, 2002





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ENDNOTES

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THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS LITERACY AWARDS

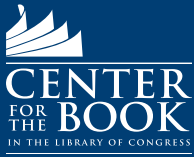
Through the generosity of David M. Rubenstein, the Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program honors organizations that have made outstanding contributions to increasing literacy in the United States or abroad. The awards also encourage the continuing development of innovative methods for promoting literacy and the wide dissemination of the most effective practices. They are intended to draw public attention to the continuing need for literacy services and to increase awareness of the importance of literacy. By recognizing current achievements, the awards seek to inspire organizations, foundations and other private sector groups to become involved in literacy promotion. The Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program is administered by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR THE BOOK

Since its creation by Congress in 1977 to “stimulate public interest in books and reading,” the Center for the Book (read.gov/cfb) has become a major national force for reading and literacy promotion. A public-private partnership, it sponsors educational programs that reach readers of all ages, both nationally and internationally. The center provides leadership for affiliated state centers for the book and nonprofit literacy and reading promotion partners and plays a key role in the Library’s annual National Book Festival. It also oversees the Library’s read.gov website and administers the Young Readers Center and the Poetry and Literature Center.

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