

LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS
LITERACY AWARDS
2014

BEST PRACTICES



A PREFACE FROM JOHN Y. COLE

In 2014, the Library of Congress presented awards to three organizations in recognition and support of their achievements in literacy promotion. The Library of Congress Literacy Awards are made possible through the generosity of David M. Rubenstein. The prizes are:

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

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

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

Applications were due to the Library on March 31, 2014; submissions arrived from organizations in 23 U.S. states and 30 countries. Advisory board members narrowed the field and presented their top choices to Librarian of Congress James H. Billington, who made the final selections. The winners are:

The David M. Rubenstein Prize: Room to Read

The American Prize: SMART

The International Prize: Mother Child Education Foundation

This publication's cover is appropriately graced by Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom, whose image dominates the Great Hall of the Thomas Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress. It highlights the work of the winners and 14 other organizations that are implementing best practices in literacy and also serves to highlight the extraordinary efforts of the many excellent programs that applied to the 2014 Library of Congress Literacy Awards. These practices will be shared 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 energy, service and advice, and to David M. Rubenstein for his concern, as a citizen, about the state of literacy in our country and throughout the world.

John Y. Cole

*Chair, Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program
Director, Library of Congress Center for the Book*



BEST PRACTICES

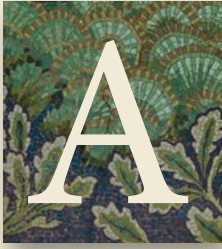
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As the winners of the 2014 Library of Congress Literacy Awards, Room to Read, SMART and the Mother Child Education Foundation demonstrate the highest levels of effectiveness and dedication to the cause of literacy promotion. These three organizations are empowering people around the world through education, mentorship and increased access to books and reading. Each is a functional example of the standard by which the prizes are judged.



The David M. Rubenstein Prize (\$150,000) will be 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 will meet 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) will be 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) will be 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.





ROOM TO READ

LOCATION:

San Francisco, CA

SERVICE AREA:

Africa and Southeast Asia

POPULATION SERVED:

Elementary-aged children

SCOPE:

16,000 libraries established;
9 million children served

FOUNDED:

2001

ROOM TO READ

Room to Read believes that world change starts with educated children and that the best way to create long-term systemic change in the developing world is through literacy and gender equality in education. It focuses on literacy as the foundation of all other learning by developing reading skills and the habit of reading among

libraries and distributed 13 million books. Another is working with the local school systems by implementing literacy instruction in schools, training teachers and sometimes even building the schools or classrooms from the ground up. Over 100,000 teachers have been trained to provide effective reading instruction

with a focus on conceptual and classroom issues and child-centered, interactive teaching methods.



One of the ways that this program raises public awareness about the importance of literacy is through deep engagement with local governments and existing community organizations. Room to Read invests resources locally, including printing

elementary school children. To achieve this goal, Room to Read increases access to culturally relevant, age-appropriate reading materials; increases the effectiveness of instructors teaching literacy skills; and improves the existing school environment so that it is more conducive to learning. The organization also aims to equalize the educational experience for girls by supporting them to complete secondary school with the academic and life skills necessary to succeed in school and beyond.

local-language books in countries where the investment enhances the economy. They have published 1,000 original children's titles in 26 languages, both providing relevant materials for children and supporting local businesses. Community co-investment in elements of all of these projects results in high visibility and local ownership. By applying strategic business practices to scale up a community-based model of literacy enhancement for youth, Room to Read has created a model of scalability and sustainability in literacy promotion.

In order to promote literacy among school-aged children, Room to Read focuses on several types of interventions. One of these is increasing access to books by establishing libraries and distributing books in resource-deprived government schools; to date the program has established 16,000 school



SMART

The third grade reading level is widely recognized as a key indicator of a child's future educational success. A student who can't read on grade level by third grade is four times less likely to graduate by age 19 than a child who does read proficiently in third grade. In 1992, the Oregon Children's Foundation created a program to address the growing number of elementary school children who were reading significantly below grade level. Start Making a Reader Today (SMART) now operates at more than 250 program sites throughout the state and serves approximately 9,000 children each year.



SMART's program model leverages private resources and public infrastructure and combines two elements identified in research as critical to children's literacy development: shared reading and books in the home. Its model uses a combination of interventions to support these goals. First, one-on-one tutors are provided to students who are identified as at-risk or disadvantaged, and then each of these children is given 14 new books to keep. Students meet with tutors for two 30-minute sessions each week for seven months to share books, learn and experience the joy of reading. To date SMART volunteer readers have spent more than 3.2 million hours reading aloud with children.

SMART's program design and standards were affirmed by a six-year longitudinal study by the Eugene Research Institute that found that fifth-grade students who participated in SMART as first-graders were 60 percent more likely to



reach state reading benchmarks, and developed reading accuracy, fluency and comprehension significantly faster than nonparticipants. This and additional studies have affirmed that children participating in SMART experience a significant positive impact from this cost-effective intervention.

These results have created an additional demand for SMART and the program has expanded from eight to 250 program sites throughout Oregon. To support this rapid expansion and provide the materials and attention that the students need, SMART uses a variety of community partnerships. Schools and other community centers help identify children in need, recruit volunteers and give access to space for tutoring. Corporate sponsors and partners make both financial and in-kind donations. SMART also partners with national groups such as Reach Out and Read and Head Start, and statewide groups such as the Oregon PTA to co-locate programs and coordinate resources.



S M A R T
START MAKING A READER TODAY™

SMART

LOCATION:
Portland, OR

SERVICE AREA:
Oregon

POPULATION SERVED:
Pre-K-3rd grade

SCOPE:
250 program sites;
9,000 children/year

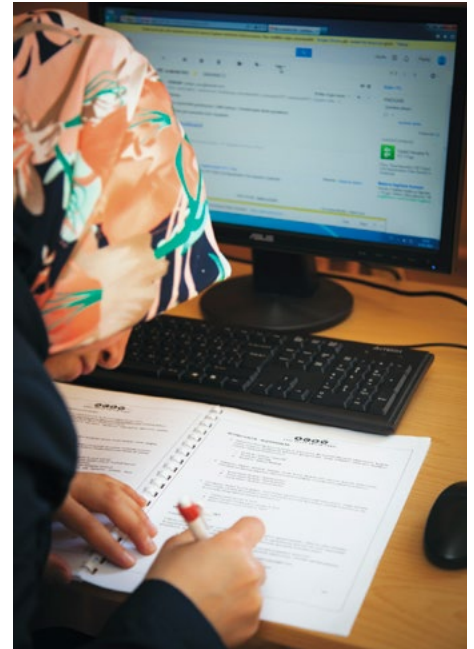
FOUNDED:
1992



MOTHER CHILD EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The Mother Child Education Foundation (AÇEV) was started in 1993 with a mission to empower people through education and enable them to improve the quality of their lives. It operates a variety of programs designed to address family, adult and early childhood literacy. At the time of AÇEV's founding, only one in 10 children in Turkey received any form of preschool education before starting primary school, resulting in large deficits in readiness to learn. AÇEV developed the Mother Child Education Program (MOCEP) for low-income mothers and children without access to preschool education. However, early MOCEP trials revealed that not all participating mothers were literate and therefore many were unable to carry out the collaborative cognitive exercises with their children, pushing AÇEV into a complementary area of need, adult literacy.

The Functional Adult Literacy Program (FALP) focuses on teaching adults literacy skills by using trained volunteer instructors. This program is particularly aimed at educating and empowering women. FALP is differentiated from other literacy programs by its focus on participatory and evidence-based program design. It uses trained volunteers to



facilitate adult literacy classes and activities in accordance with proven educational practices. In 2002, the program introduced the "Women's Support Component," explicitly redefining FALP as a "women's empowerment program." FALP has been implemented in 25 provinces and has been accessed by 140,000 adult learners.

Other AÇEV projects include the Web Based Literacy Program, which contains the full range of FALP learning materials and lectures, and a literacy hotline that connects those seeking literacy assistance with appropriate resources. Additionally, AÇEV engages in policy advocacy and awareness-raising about the importance of literacy.

The success of AÇEV programs like FALP and MOCEP led to the organization's partnership with the National Ministry of Education. AÇEV was the first organization to be authorized by the ministry to train volunteers and has since established strong ties to the government. AÇEV's results and research have influenced official recommendations and the FALP program is now the national standard for adult literacy education.



MOTHER CHILD EDUCATION FOUNDATION

LOCATION:
Istanbul, Turkey

SERVICE AREA:
Turkey

POPULATION SERVED:
Adults, children
and families

SCOPE:
800,000 individuals
served directly

FOUNDED:
1993





In 2014, the “Best Practices” publication and related programming, such as symposia and webcasts, have emerged as core components of the Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program. Highlighting both research-validated practices and concrete implementations of these practices demonstrates how literacy promotion groups have successfully applied theory in a real-world context. These solutions provide a model for organizations seeking to create programs that use evidence-based practice to promote literacy.

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: addressing social barriers to literacy; increasing motivation to read and write; ensuring quality of instruction; increasing awareness of the problem of illiteracy; and promoting gender equity and maternal literacy. 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 a need for national advocacy to a lack of qualified instructors.

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.



ADDRESSING SOCIAL BARRIERS TO LITERACY

There are many social and cultural barriers that can prevent learners from accessing available literacy services. These can include the social stigma and difficulty of using a means-tested program, a lack of engagement with the materials provided and concerns about whether literacy and verbal proficiency in a dominant language will separate learners from their heritage. These concerns prevent both children and adults from accessing materials and programs that can help them learn to



read. Therefore, addressing social barriers to learning is a key program component for literacy promotion groups that want to fully engage with the communities they serve.

Means-tested programs limit enrollment or access to benefits based on individual or family income and assets.¹ They are designed to ensure that the program

benefits are going to the most vulnerable users, who would not otherwise be able to access the necessary services or materials, due to economic need. However, an unintentional consequence of means-testing is that people who are actually eligible for the service may not participate because of misconceptions about eligibility, the difficulties of providing documentation of need, or the perceived social stigma of using a means-tested program.² In addition to limiting enrollment of those with the greatest economic need, means-testing also eliminates participants who need the services, but fall just above the designated economic threshold. Other program designs, such as targeting services to a specific neighborhood with a high concentration of need, can allow everyone who would benefit from the program to participate.³

Cultural engagement is also important to encouraging participation by the widest range of individuals and families in need of literacy services. To be motivated to learn, children who are beginning to read need to have access to books and other materials that are reflective of both their culture and their language. Mother-tongue literacy is useful even if the child will eventually be attending a secondary school that uses a dominant language that is different from his or her first language. By respecting mother-tongue languages, programs teaching dominant language literacy can help learners participate economically without having to devalue their culture and heritage. This can be particularly important for immigrants and linguistic minorities.⁴

ADDRESSING SOCIAL BARRIERS TO LEARNING IS
A KEY COMPONENT OF LITERACY PROMOTION



DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL) is a book distribution program designed to provide preschool children with access to high-quality, culturally diverse children's books. Each child enrolled in the program is sent one book a month from birth to age 5 for a total of 60 books. To increase the number of participants, every child in a program area is eligible, regardless of family income. Not requiring any proof of income maximizes the access of children of low-income families, since having to provide documents and paperwork can discourage even qualifying families from participating.



DPIL started in a single Tennessee county, but now has 1,582 participating communities in 48 states and four countries. Each partner community provides funding to purchase the

books at a steep discount and pay for shipping costs. DPIL covers all administrative expenses and provides logistical support, training, financial management and other support services. This encourages community buy-in, since even in a small area all donations go directly to book purchases rather than administrative overhead. In addition to supplying direct support, DPIL also selects the books and negotiates a large discount for bulk purchases of the books. Local providers only have to fundraise and enter local children into a central database to enroll them.



**DOLLY PARTON'S
IMAGINATION
LIBRARY**

LOCATION:
Pigeon Forge, TN

SERVICE AREA:
Multinational

POPULATION SERVED:
Children ages 0-5

SCOPE:
1,582 participating communities;
9 million books/year

FOUNDED:
1996





PRATHAM BOOKS

A Book in Every Child's Hand

PRATHAM BOOKS

LOCATION:
Bangalore, India

SERVICE AREA:
India

POPULATION SERVED:
Children ages 3-14

SCOPE:
260 titles in 12 languages;
12 million books distributed

FOUNDED:
2004

PRATHAM BOOKS

Pratham Books was created in 2004 to provide high-quality children's books printed in 12 of the most common languages spoken in India. The commercial publishing market in India produces books almost exclusively in English and Hindi and publishes only one book for every five children each year. Charitable contributions provide funding for the development of 250 original books each year and subsidized sales support the distribution of 1.5 million copies each year. In addition, open source licensing under the Creative Commons allows readers to not only access the content online, but also to create derivative works, including translations and commentary.

These digital downloads can dramatically increase the number of books that a child or school can access, without increasing the cost. It also allows the production of the same book in multiple languages without requiring a separate print run.

By creating books that are in children's mother tongue and that have illustrations and storylines that reflect their culture and experience, Pratham Books works to engage readers and demonstrate the value and importance of reading. Currently, 12 languages are represented including English, Telugu, Punjabi and Urdu. Millions of children have read these books both in print and online.



LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF GREATER HARTFORD

Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford (LVGH) provides adult literacy services through volunteer teachers who are trained and regularly evaluated based on performance. Its services include basic literacy instruction, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), GED tutoring and job readiness training. These classes are taught using research-based curricula that align with local adult education program standards. LVGH also

partners with other literacy providers, funders and local stakeholders to share resources and information through a local professional organization dedicated to improving results for adult learners.

LVGH serves a large population of immigrants, many of whom come from Brazil. To encourage their increased participation in ESOL classes and other literacy services, LVGH has partnered with the Brazilian Consulate in Hartford to provide the English-speaking children of Brazilian immigrants with classes in Portuguese at the center. While the parents are in one room learning English, the children are next door learning Portuguese. This allows families to maintain language and cultural ties across generations while gaining the skills to participate fully in civic and economic life.



LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF GREATER HARTFORD

LOCATION:
Hartford, CT

SERVICE AREA:
Greater Hartford area

POPULATION SERVED:
Adults

SCOPE:
200 volunteers serving
850 learners / year

FOUNDED:
1972



INCREASING MOTIVATION TO READ AND WRITE

To achieve competence in literacy, learners must be motivated to engage with written materials. Programs that demonstrate the value of reading and writing can increase participant engagement and maximize student development. There are many different ways to demonstrate the value of literacy to participants. These include addressing the “felt needs” of a community, promoting empowerment through writing and the use of person-centered planning techniques to set individual learning goals. Each of these methods engages learners with written materials by showing them the direct and immediate benefits to be gained through reading and writing.

Responsiveness to “felt needs” first arose in the context of community development.⁵ It refers to the practice of asking a community which deficiencies they perceive and then working to correct those deficiencies rather than extrinsically determining what is needed and supplying it. In a literacy context this involves determining which information and learning resources the community is interested in and then supplying materials or programming that responds to those needs. This practice can increase learners’ motivation to read because it uses written materials to provide solutions to community problems and demonstrates the usefulness of reading and writing skills.

STUDENTS BENEFIT MOST FROM LITERACY INSTRUCTION THAT BUILDS ON THEIR STRENGTHS AND SEEMS RELEVANT TO THEIR DAILY LIVES

The benefits of literacy can also be demonstrated by encouraging learners to write, empowering even those with low literacy to create and disseminate their work. This can be particularly important for adolescents, who have an increased need for autonomy, competence and encouragement.⁶ For these students to benefit from literacy instruction they must be engaged by reading and writing activities that build on their strengths and seem relevant to their daily experiences.

Organizations using person-centered planning techniques engage participants by working with them to identify and achieve individual goals.⁷ This allows participants to quickly implement their new skills in a practical context. Individual goals might include being able to read a bus map, write a letter to a grandchild or pass an exam for a promotion. Working directly toward these goals, rather than on a generalized reading curriculum, motivates learners to continue and gain the skills they need.



READ NEPAL

Rural Education and Development Nepal (READ Nepal) provides access to books by establishing community libraries in villages across Nepal. At least one supporting business enterprise is established in conjunction with each library to provide ongoing support for its activities. The profits from the supporting businesses are used to fund the library once the initial investment has been made. Each of the libraries has established sections to appeal to different types of users. They also act as host sites for literacy and development training for the village.

One of the programs implemented in the libraries is called the Practical Answers Program. This program collects questions on wide ranging topics such as law, health care and farming, and then creates print materials that answer these

questions in an accessible format. Because people are invested in getting the answers to their questions, they have direct incentive to read. In addition to offering literacy programs, READ Nepal partners with local service organizations to provide training on health issues, economic empowerment and job skills.



READ NEPAL

LOCATION:
Kathmandu, Nepal

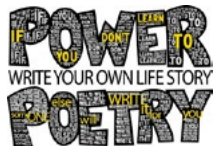
SERVICE AREA:
Nepal

POPULATION SERVED:
Rural villagers

SCOPE:
55 libraries built;
4.3 million books
checked out

FOUNDED:
1992





POWER POETRY

LOCATION:
New York, NY

SERVICE AREA:
Online

POPULATION SERVED:
Youth aged 13-22

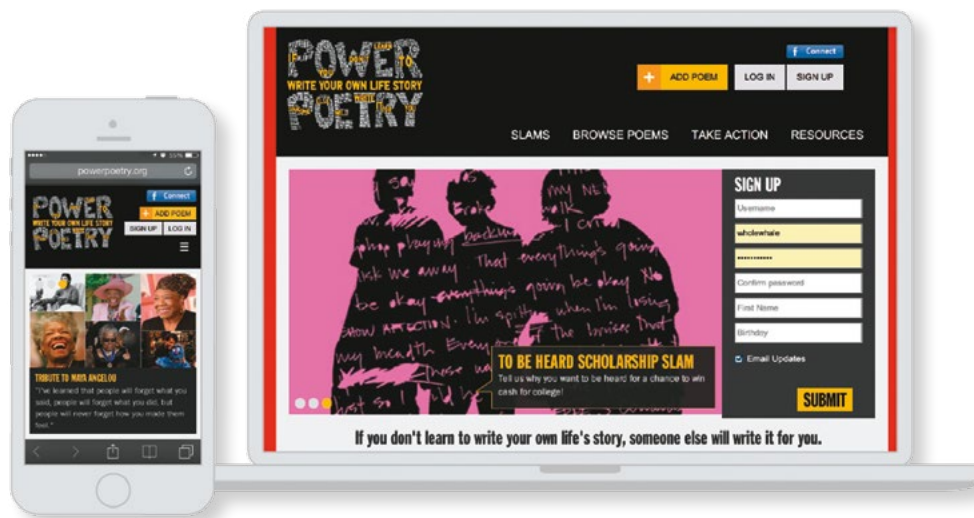
SCOPE:
174,000 users;
171,000 poems

FOUNDED:
2012

POWER POETRY

Power Poetry is an online community that promotes youth literacy and empowerment through poetry. Teenage poets from across the country submit poems and read their peers' work. A system of mentors is available to provide detailed critiques and foster skills development. By making these resources available on mobile devices and through social media, Power Poetry has engaged with more than 174,000 users in two years.

The online community is based on a writing program created in an urban high school 12 years ago. This program uses poetry as a motivational core to get young people to engage with and access literacy and related resources. A study of regular users of the website showed significant improvement in literacy skills.



CALIFORNIA LIBRARY LITERACY SERVICES

California Library Literacy Services (CLLS) is one of the only state-funded, statewide library literacy programs in the country. CLLS operates as a state-local partnership, with communities and private donors contributing approximately 80 percent of the funds for each community. By requiring a buy-in from the community being served, the program encourages long-term investment in a community resource.

CLLS is administered through local library systems and is implemented at more than 500 locations in 97 library systems. Each has staff members dedicated to performing volunteer training and matching volunteer tutors with adult learners. These pairs or small groups then work together to identify and respond to the learners' individual needs.

By customizing the learning experience for each student, the program addresses barriers to learning, including the stigma of falling behind a set curriculum. Additionally, CLLS hosts three intensive leadership institutes for adult learners each year. These focus on encouraging goal-setting, public speaking, networking and other leadership skills.



**CALIFORNIA
LIBRARY LITERACY
SERVICES**

LOCATION:
Sacramento, CA

SERVICE AREA:
California

POPULATION SERVED:
Adult learners

SCOPE:
500+ service locations,
21,000 students/year

FOUNDED:
1984



ENSURING QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION

Ensuring the quality of instruction is a key component of successful literacy programming.⁸ Methods of promoting quality instruction may include the implementation of standard educational practices, use of a structured volunteer program and provision of access to professional development and training. These diverse program components all lead to the same result: more effective teaching of reading and writing skills.

Social learning theory is a standard educational practice that emphasizes the importance of modeling as a teaching technique. One-on-one modeling, in which a trainer demonstrates a behavior for just one or two learners, is especially effective at promoting retention since the learner is more likely to pay attention and receive direct instruction from the trainer.⁹ This can be reinforced by subsequent guided participation, where the learner performs the modeled behavior with the trainer's guidance. A low student-teacher ratio means that each learner can receive individualized reinforcement.

To implement programs that use a low student-teacher ratio, many organizations rely on volunteers. However, volunteers cannot be successful unless they are appropriately trained and supervised. This includes providing many hours of training, a standardized set of criteria for performance and regular feedback.¹⁰ This level of support can allow even those who are not formally trained as teachers to be effective literacy instructors and mentors.



For those who are dedicated to literacy instruction, professional development and training can hone existing teaching skills, offer exposure to new techniques and provide context for literacy practices. Additionally, connecting to peers can help instructors build a network of colleagues with which to address practical problems on an ongoing basis. Intensive training can provide practitioners with new skills and confidence as well as ensuring their effectiveness in the classroom.¹¹

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING CAN HONE INSTRUCTORS' EXISTING TEACHING SKILLS, OFFER EXPOSURE TO NEW TECHNIQUES AND PROVIDE CONTEXT FOR LITERACY PRACTICES



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 among 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.



PARENT-CHILD HOME PROGRAM

LOCATION:
Garden City, NY

SERVICE AREA:
National

POPULATION SERVED:
Children ages
16 months – 4 years

SCOPE:
7,000 families enrolled

FOUNDED:
1965

The PCHP has been replicated in 300 high-need communities in 12 states. National and regional staff 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 national database for evaluation purposes.





READING PARTNERS

LOCATION:
Oakland, CA

SERVICE AREA:
National

POPULATION SERVED:
Low-income elementary school students

SCOPE:
7,000 students/year;
140 partner schools

FOUNDED:
1999

READING PARTNERS

Reading Partners uses a structured volunteer program to provide one-on-one literacy tutoring in partner schools. Schools provide a dedicated space that is turned into a reading center to host student-tutor pairs for two 45-minute sessions each week. Reading Partners provides a standardized training program for volunteers and an AmeriCorps site coordinator to staff the reading center and support the tutors. Tutors base their assistance on an individualized reading plan created for each student and use research-based lesson plans that align with the Common Core standards.

Reliance on volunteer tutors has allowed the program to expand to widespread cities across the country including Washington, New York, Dallas and Charleston, S.C. Each community supplies local volunteers who are trained using a standard curriculum to provide reading

assistance to children in their area. This type of community engagement also leads to local funding opportunities as the volunteers encourage others to become involved.



LITERACY ASSISTANCE CENTER

The Literacy Assistance Center (LAC) provides professional development training to adult literacy educators and providers in New York City. It offers workshops for teachers and tutors focused on teaching innovative and effective practices in adult reading, writing and math instruction, as well as other related subjects. In addition, it hosts gatherings of program administrators to facilitate understanding of emerging national, state and local policies.

LAC also provides intensive instruction to literacy providers through its LAC Academy. This program combines up to 45 classroom hours with up to 120 hours of online learning to give teachers the best chance to develop high levels of competence. LAC also offers “study circles” in which groups of teachers collaborate to learn how to integrate a particular concept, such as health literacy, into their instruction. Additionally, it has created and maintains an online data management system to allow the state and local programs to collect and analyze data on attendance and educational outcomes.



Literacy Assistance Center



LITERACY ASSISTANCE CENTER

LOCATION:
New York, NY

SERVICE AREA:
New York City

POPULATION SERVED:
Adult Literacy Providers

SCOPE:
2,100 participants / year

FOUNDED:
1984



INCREASING AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM OF ILLITERACY

One of the most difficult problems in literacy promotion is the general lack of attention paid to the problem of illiteracy. Many people are unaware that there is a serious literacy problem in the United States and worldwide. This lack of awareness can cause difficulties on both the individual programmatic level and in shaping national and international policy.

Literacy promotion organizations need to have community support to raise funds, recruit volunteers and create useful partnerships. To provide such support, members of the community must understand that illiteracy has a significant impact in their area. Campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of literacy promotion can encourage greater community involvement, raise program funds and lead to new partnerships.

On a national and international level, increasing the focus on literacy and reading can lead to large-scale policy shifts. Government agencies that direct education and workforce training funds need to understand the social and economic impact of illiteracy if they are going to support literacy programming. One effective way to work for this sort of change is for direct service providers to join coalitions focused on literacy advocacy. In addition to engaging directly with national entities, such coalitions can work to increase public understanding of the need for literacy services. This can lead to increased donations and volunteers for local providers as members of the public seek ways to become involved.

MANY PEOPLE
ARE UNAWARE
THAT THERE
IS A SERIOUS
LITERACY
PROBLEM IN THE
UNITED STATES
AND WORLDWIDE



BEANSTALK

Beanstalk is a volunteer-based literacy organization that provides one-on-one support to children ages 6-11. Volunteer tutors work consistently with the children they are paired with, meeting twice a week for the entire school year to read, play and talk together. Children are referred for this enhanced support by their teachers because they are struggling with reading in the classroom. By creating a less structured environment, without consequences for perceived failure, tutors are able to help the students engage with and enjoy reading and learning.

In 2011 Beanstalk launched a campaign called “Get London Reading” to raise awareness of the importance of reading and literacy and galvanize public support for literacy promotion efforts. In order to reach a wide audience they partnered with the London Evening Standard to create and feature articles on the state of children’s literacy, character studies of those affected by illiteracy and calls to action. Followup articles then focused on people who had subsequently become reading mentors and the students they were helping.



The “Get London Reading” campaign was extremely successful, netting 1,000 new volunteers for Beanstalk, raising over £1 million and establishing relationships with companies and charitable trusts. The success of the London campaign has led to its replication across the United Kingdom, with programs including “Born and Read in Brum” and “Get Leeds Reading.” Additionally, Beanstalk is now working with organizations in other European cities to replicate this project.



BEANSTALK

LOCATION:
London, England

SERVICE AREA:
England

POPULATION SERVED:
Children ages 6-11

SCOPE:
2,400 reading mentors,
7,300 students/year

FOUNDED:
1973





PROLITERACY

LOCATION:
Syracuse, NY

SERVICE AREA:
International

POPULATION SERVED:
Adult Literacy Providers

SCOPE:
1000+ member organizations

FOUNDED:
1955

PROLITERACY

ProLiteracy is a membership organization for adult literacy organizations and educators. It comprises more than 1,000 member programs in the United States and 50 partners in 34 developing nations. By focusing on curriculum and materials development, advocacy and professional development, ProLiteracy ensures that adult literacy groups do not have to duplicate their efforts and can all access high-quality training and advocacy materials. In addition, it provides books and materials to local literacy programs that would otherwise be unable to access them, and its advocacy for literacy on the national level led to the creation of a U.S. House of Representatives Adult Literacy Caucus.

International programs such as Literacy for Social Change and Women in Literacy focus on specific community development issues and include manuals for teaching the vocabulary, key concepts and possible questions related to each topic. ProLiteracy also supports international programs through microfinance projects that include literacy as a primary or secondary goal, and through capacity building with local organizations.



READING AND WRITING FOUNDATION

The Reading and Writing Foundation (RWF) is a social mobilization organization founded by Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands (below, right). Its mission is to engage in literacy advocacy and awareness-raising. Partnership programs are key to the success of RWF. Three primary partnership networks allow RWF to reach different stakeholders and effectively advocate for literacy. More than 500 partner organizations work with RWF to combat illiteracy through direct service and education. A group of 28 Dutch

celebrities are committed advocates for the importance of literacy and promote it to the general public, creating a broad social movement. Finally, Language Ambassadors who have benefited from literacy programming speak out about their struggles and successes. They work to reduce the stigma associated with illiteracy and encourage others to improve their literacy skills.

In 2011, RWF piloted the Language for Life program, which offers one-on-one reading help through trained volunteers.

To identify potential learners RWF reaches out to organizations such as hospitals, employers and prisons. Once learners are identified, they are provided with one-on-one literacy tutoring by trained volunteers.



READING AND WRITING FOUNDATION

LOCATION:

The Hague, Netherlands

SERVICE AREA:

European Union

POPULATION SERVED:

Literacy providers

SCOPE:

500 partner organizations; support from EU, UK, Netherlands

FOUNDED:

2004



PROMOTING GENDER EQUITY AND MATERNAL LITERACY

Of the estimated 774 million illiterate adults worldwide, two-thirds are female; of the 130 million out-of-school youth, 70 percent are female. These rates have remained steady despite gains in the total literacy rate.¹² In some countries and regions this disparity means that up to 85 percent of the female population is unable to read or write.¹³ This difference in male and female literacy rates limits women's ability to advocate for themselves and participate fully in economic and civil society. On average, each additional year of schooling that a woman receives increases her individual earning power by 10 to 20 percent¹⁴ and reduces the number of children she will have by 10 percent.¹⁵ Both of these results are correlated with

improved health and economic outcomes. Increased female literacy rates also affect the health, education and development of children. Maternal literacy has been shown to reduce infant mortality, predict the educational attainment of children and improve health and nutrition outcomes



CHALLENGING CULTURAL ASSUMPTIONS DEVALUING FEMALE LITERACY CAN HELP GIRLS AND WOMEN REMAIN ENGAGED WITH EDUCATION AND LEARNING

for infants and children. For example, each extra year of schooling that a mother receives reduces her probability of postnatal infant mortality by up to 10 percent.¹⁶ Increasing female literacy rates improves the lives of women and girls, their families and their communities.

One of the greatest challenges to educating women and girls is that many of them are engaged in home care or economic activity from a very young age and are unable to attend traditional classroom-based programs. Providing community-based literacy services to women and girls at the locations where they are already spending time allows them to continue to complete vital tasks while still becoming literate. Girls who do attend school are more likely than boys to drop out or be removed by their parents.¹⁷ Programs that challenge cultural assumptions devaluing female literacy can help girls and women remain engaged in both traditional and nontraditional learning initiatives.



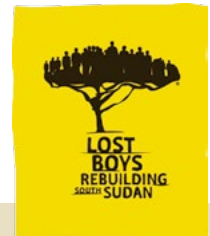
LOST BOYS REBUILDING SOUTH SUDAN

The primary project of Lost Boys Rebuilding South Sudan (LBRSS) is Literacy at the Well. This is a literacy program that uses a nontraditional structure to provide literacy education to girls and women by reaching them where they spend the most time—waiting in line for water at communal wells. The group trains South Sudanese teachers from the community and provides backpacks full of waterproof teaching materials for them to use. Because the instructors are community members they have a long-term investment in the success of the project, as this is linked with their standing in the community. These teachers also train teaching assistants, who in turn may become teachers if they have the aptitude.

Although the program was initially implemented only at the water lines, it has expanded to include other community spaces where women gather,



including markets, community centers and prisons. The curriculum is based on phonemic awareness and phonics and is assessed using the Early Grade Reading Assessment developed by USAID. In addition to the Literacy at the Well project, LBRSS has built a learning center in Malualkon, South Sudan, to provide education to all community members.



LOST BOYS REBUILDING SOUTH SUDAN

LOCATION:

St. Charles, IL /
Malualkon, South Sudan

SERVICE AREA:

Northern Bahr-El-Ghazal

POPULATION SERVED:

Women and girls

SCOPE:

8 program sites; 2,000+
individuals served

FOUNDED:

2008





Dr. A.V. Baliga Memorial Trust

DR. AV. BALIGA MEMORIAL TRUST

LOCATION:
New Delhi, India

SERVICE AREA:
New Delhi

POPULATION SERVED:
Residents of slums and resettlement areas

SCOPE:
50,000+ individuals served

FOUNDED:
1976

DR. A.V. BALIGA MEMORIAL TRUST

The Dr. A.V. Baliga Memorial Trust (DAVBMT) provides literacy services through resource centers that it has established in slums, resettlement areas and unauthorized colonies throughout New Delhi. Many of its programs focus particularly on the education and empowerment of women and girls. At more than 300 adult education centers, groups of 30 to 150 learners come together to improve their literacy skills. Creating a cadre of students that progress together through the course materials provides community support for learning and growth and is particularly effective at retaining female learners. This model is also employed to organize self-help groups

that train members on financial and health literacy topics as well as general functional literacy. In the area of financial literacy the Banking on Change program includes more than 790 subgroups serving more than 4,200 women in the Mangolpuri Resettlement Area alone.

In addition to promoting adult literacy, DAVBMT has also worked to get working children back into school, retain students through remedial support and provide early childhood literacy services. Although the program originally focused solely on returning out-of-school youth to mainstream schools, it now works to increase retention of at-risk students and

prevent them from dropping out. Programs that teach academic competencies concurrently with art, music and sports provide both the skills and incentive for children to remain in school. Similarly, an early childhood program called Balwadi Centers encourages school readiness in 3- to 5-year-olds so that they have the skills to succeed in their education and remain in school.



ENDNOTES

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- ¹⁵ “Education Counts’ Towards the Millennium Development Goals.” *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.* Paris: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2011.
- ¹⁶ *Id.*
- ¹⁷ EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011. Rep. UNESCO Publishing, 2011





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THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS LITERACY AWARDS

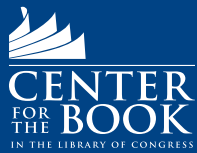
Through the generosity of David M. Rubenstein, the Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program honors organizations that have made outstanding contributions to increasing literacy in the United States or abroad. The awards also encourage the continuing development of innovative methods for combating illiteracy 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 combating illiteracy.

ABOUT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

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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.



www.Read.gov/LiteracyAwards



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