
UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

Announcement, 5 September 2008



International Literacy Day 2008: UIL's activities

This 8 September – International Literacy Day –, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning will be holding a national event in Berlin, which it has organised in collaboration with its partners, the Federal Association for Literacy and Basic Education (BVAG) and the German Adult Education Association (DVV), with the support of the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF). The national celebrations will be held on the premises of the Federal Press Conference, and will pay tribute to the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)'s 30 million-euro initiative promoting research in the area of literacy and basic education. The keynote speaker will be Ursula Howard, former Director of the National Research Development Centre (NRDC), UK, who will talk about the British experience with regard to literacy research and its impact on policy development.

The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning is in charge of sustaining and transferring the results of the BMBF initiative, which contributes to the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD, 2003-2012). UIL has launched a logo ("alphabund") and is currently developing a website for the initiative, which will be launched on International Literacy Day.

From 10 to 13 September 2008, a joint Regional Literacy and CONFINTEA VI Preparatory Conference in Latin America and the Caribbean will take place in Mexico City, which is being co-organized by UIL. The conference, which will be hosted by the Government of Mexico and organized in cooperation with the National Institute for Adult Education (INEA), will be attended by Ministers of Education and other decision-makers, representatives of governments and multi-lateral partners, regional NGOs, private-sector experts and stakeholders, universities, and the media. Under the title "From Literacy to Lifelong Learning: Towards the Challenges of the 21st Century", the conference will merge two major UNESCO initiatives. It will be one of five regional UNESCO conferences to be held in preparation for the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI), which will take place in Brazil in May 2009. At the same time, it will be the last in the series of regional Conferences in Support of Global Literacy organized by UNESCO in 2007 and 2008 in Doha (Qatar), Beijing (China), Bamako (Mali), New Delhi (India) and Baku (Azerbaijan).

International Literacy Day also provides an occasion to put the spotlight on the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE), UNESCO's flagship initiative for the implementation of the United Nations Literacy Decade. LIFE is a ten-year (2006-2015) strategic framework for the acceleration of literacy efforts in 35 countries in which literacy poses a critical challenge. Several LIFE countries have received special support to help them review their national literacy and non-formal education policies and strengthen their capacities for the delivery of good-quality literacy programmes. In the meantime, a number of other countries have adopted LIFE as an overall framework to enhance partnerships and mobilise additional resources for literacy. LIFE has also led to networking and South-South cooperations, as well as enhanced opportunities for the exchange of good practice. LIFEline, an online exchange platform for LIFE stakeholders to share and learn from experiences in LIFE countries will launch its test site at <http://lifeline.unesco.org> on 8 September.

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