

International Literacy Day 2013

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

and Save the Children

On September 8th, 195 member states of UNESCO worldwide, South Sudan included, will celebrate International Literacy Day.

This year, the theme for International Literacy Day 2013 is “Literacies for the 21st Century”.

In South Sudan, literacy is at the heart of peace building and democratic national development. South Sudan will celebrate International Literacy Day on 5th and 6th September 2013. The overall objective of the national literacy day celebrations is to celebrate the efforts so far in improving literacy and to advocate for literacy learning within communities and renew commitment of all stakeholders’, including political leaders, donors, private sector and media to adequately support the realization of the right to literacy for all in South Sudan.

This year Western Equatoria State will host the literacy event, enabling local level experience sharing as well as allowing the involvement of literacy learners and county-level leaders in the strengthening of their efforts to support literacy programmes at the grassroots.

On 5th September 2013, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, together with Save the Children and UNESCO will hold a conference with a total of 120 participants representing all the national and state ministries, education experts, learners and development partners. The purpose of the day will be to validate the Alternative Education Systems (AES) and the Youth and Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning policies. In addition, emphasis will be placed on the role of literacy in peace and nation building; the progress made by the states on promoting literacy learning; the launching of the literacy policy and state level action plans to promote literacy endeavours.

Furthermore, In line to the five-year General Education Strategic Plan (2012-2017), the ten states will work together to design feasible strategies and action plans to equitably improve access of relevant and quality literacy for all groups of learners, children, youth and adults, including learners with special needs.

On 6th September 2013, high level national and state government officials, development partners, national NGOs and literacy learners together with the residents of Yambio Town and its surroundings will celebrate the event with activities taking place in Freedom Square, Yambio. Zain mobile company will be supporting the event by providing prizes to the best achievers.

The public event provides an opportunity to advocate to literacy learners, government officials and development partners the importance of literacy for all. Equally, government officials and donors will share ideas that can shape efforts toward accelerating national literacy learning in all states.

Literacy provides a solid foundation to lifelong learning, helps improve quality of life and promotes development. A peaceful nation is dependent on the development of literate citizens. Currently the literacy rate of South Sudan is 27%, one of the lowest in the world. Further statistics estimate that 2.2 million people aged between the ages of 15 and 40 are illiterate and that only 1 in 10 women are able to read and write. Women are more disadvantaged when it comes to accessing literacy learning opportunities. Hence, South Sudan urgently needs to promote literacy and create a literate environment that will help advance its development goals to all its citizens.

Illiteracy is one of the top national challenges and thus requires political commitment, national mobilization and coordinated action toward attaining the literacy development goals.

On this occasion of celebrating International Literacy Day, it is UNESCO's hope that communities, the Government of South Sudan, development partners and the private sector will join hands in promoting literacy for peace, social and economic improvement, and nation building.

JOIN HANDS TO BUILD A LITERATE SOUTH SUDAN!