

FOOTSTEPS

No.16 SEPTEMBER 1993

LITERACY

FROM THE EDITOR

What does literacy mean?

THERE ARE MANY DEFINITIONS of literacy. However, this is a useful one...

A person can be called literate... if they can read and understand anything which they could have understood if it had been spoken...

and can write, so that it can be understood, anything that they could say.

DR SARAH GUDSCHINSKY

There are estimated to be one billion people in the world unable to read and write, who are therefore described as *illiterate*.

It is often assumed that literacy is a key to development. However, becoming literate does not always

lead to an improvement in development. What poor people need is the opportunity to develop their potential. As people are encouraged to use their initiative and whatever resources they have, often the need for literacy will be realised. They may need to order seed or medicines, keep records or accounts, send applications for funding, find out about new ideas for craftwork etc. At this point, people will be motivated to become literate. Literacy will be of real purpose for their lives.

The subject of literacy is a huge one, but as the case study from EFICOR shows, people do not need to be experts to help their community. We hope that the articles will be of great value in assisting the people you work with to reach their full potential.

An interesting fact discovered from the returned survey forms, is that many groups around the world are using *Footsteps* as part of their literacy

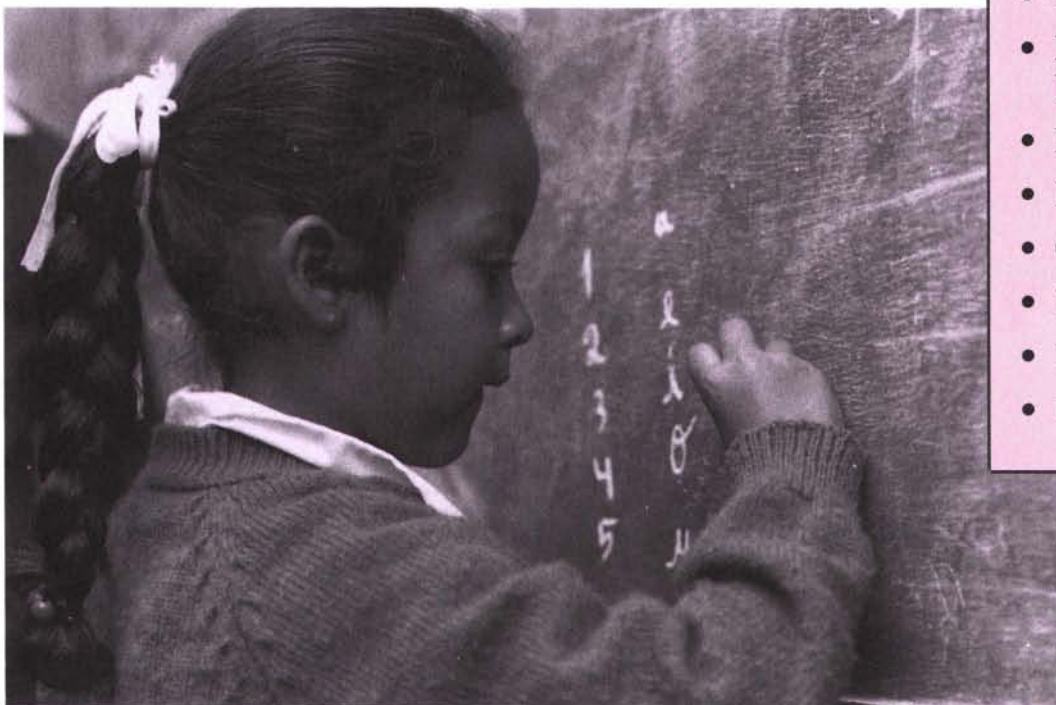
work. Articles are often translated into local languages so that people gain not only from practice in reading, but also from the useful content of the articles.

Do try out and adapt the ideas for fuel-less cooking. Even in northern England in spring, the solar cooker cooks rice successfully! The letters page brings queries and some good ideas to share. In the next issue we hope to share the results of the survey. Your comments and response have been wonderful. Thank you to all who have replied.

Isabel Carter

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Those who are fortunate have the opportunity to learn to read and write while they are young at school. But there are many who miss this chance for a variety of reasons. However, the good news is that it is never too late to learn.

FOOTSTEPS

ISSN 0962-2861

Footsteps is a quarterly paper linking health and development workers worldwide. Tear Fund, publisher of *Footsteps*, hopes that it will provide the stimulus of new ideas and enthusiasm. It is a way of encouraging Christians of all nations as they work together towards creating wholeness in our communities.

Footsteps is free of charge to individuals working to promote health and development. It is available in English, French and Spanish. Donations are welcomed.

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Local Action for Literacy

by Clinton Robinson

LITERACY is certainly not a matter of 'just teaching someone to read'! The first essential is to have a written language. There are still many unwritten languages around the world, so if yours is one of these there is still hope – but a great deal more work will be involved to reach this essential first step.

Literacy always seems a good idea to an outsider who can read. It is tempting to set up campaigns to provide literacy for other people. However, literacy will only last if a community **wants** to read and write and if they take responsibility for spreading literacy themselves. A community must be mobilised for literacy.

We faced this problem in a small community in Cameroon where they speak a minority language. How was literacy to become valued? How could literacy be spread throughout the

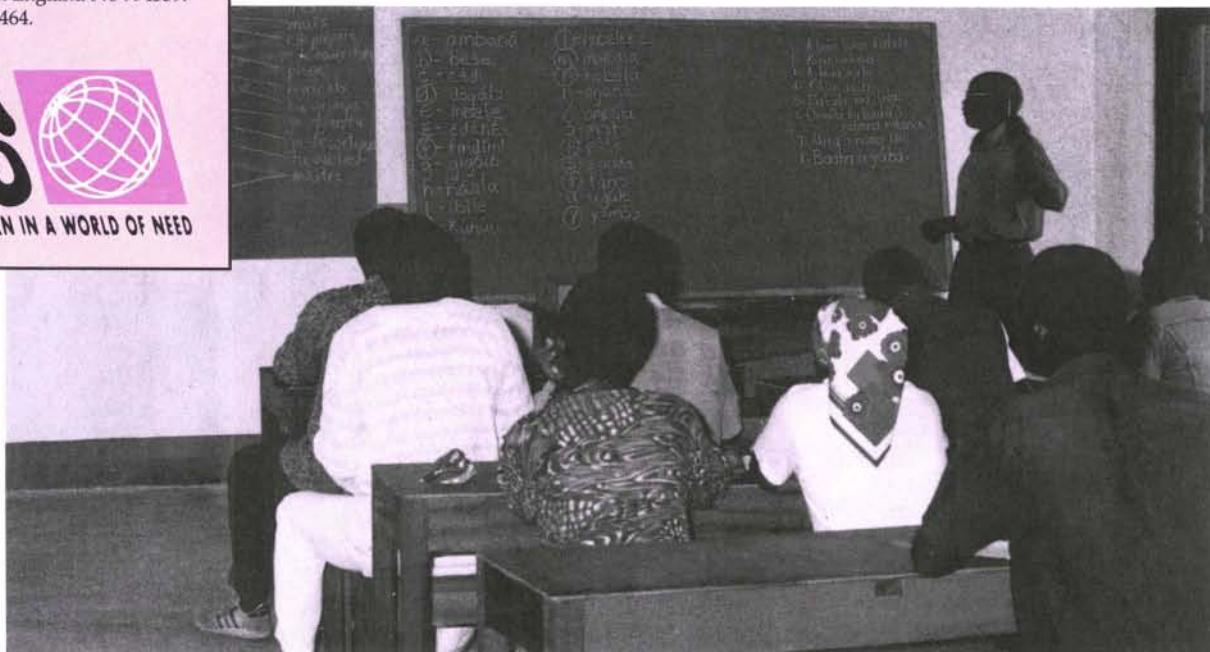
area? Part of the answer lay in forming a local committee to encourage literacy.

Why form a local committee?

Every community is different. The way literacy will be organised will be different too – depending on the local language, development projects and particular needs, such as women's education. A local committee can discuss the best ways to meet these needs and decide their priorities. Above all, when local people take responsibility for literacy work, the programme is theirs – they have an interest in its success.

Who is part of a local committee?

A literacy committee must represent the whole community. It is important that no-one feels left out; the different groups in the community need to feel they are represented by at least one of the committee members. So in many places a committee will have members



A literacy class in the local church in Ombessa, Cameroon.

representing some or all of the following groups...

- men and women
- youth, adults, the elderly
- different villages or village groupings
- the various churches and denominations
- development agencies: co-operatives, village development associations, the local government administration.

A committee may also need a technical adviser at the start, helping for example with producing materials or finalising the written form of the language. The local language should be used wherever possible, even if that means getting more help.

There will often be two kinds of committee members: honorary and working. The honorary members are those who sit on the committee because of their status or role in the area: chiefs, religious leaders, the mayor etc. They give credibility to the committee and can be a big help in promoting the vision of literacy. Working members are those who are actively involved in the literacy process, such as supervisors, teachers and writers. Both kinds of members are necessary if literacy is to spread effectively.

What does a local committee do?

Their most important role is to encourage and supervise the progress of literacy work. Plans must be agreed, decisions made, new materials developed and finances supervised. Here are some of the questions which committees regularly deal with...

PLANNING

- What use will people make of reading and writing?
- What groups need literacy most?
- How many teachers do we need?
- How will they be trained?
- When should classes start?
- How long will instruction continue?
- What help do we need?
- What other organisations might be involved?

Literacy and Health

*'Educate a boy and you educate a man.
Educate a girl and you educate a generation.'*

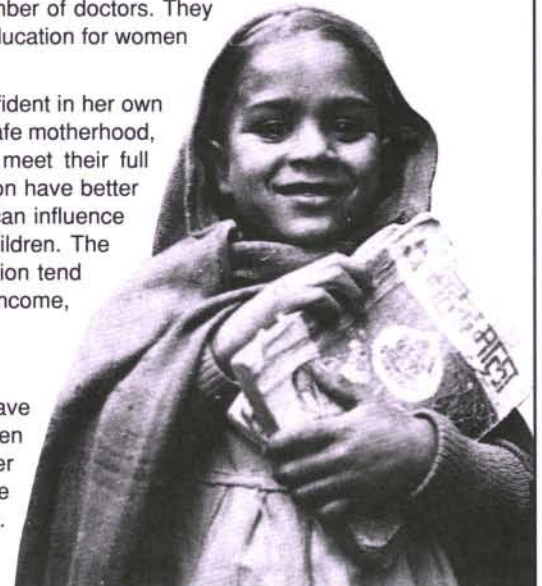
OF THE ONE BILLION PEOPLE worldwide who are unable to read, two thirds are women. In most societies, girls are given less chance to complete their schooling. If money for school fees is short, priority will nearly always go to boys. Parents reason that boys are more likely to find work and continue working than girls, who are expected to marry and have children.

However, surveys have shown that in fact it is the mother's education rather than the father's that has the greater long term effect both on her own health and that of her family.

Research shows that educated mothers are more likely to use health clinics, and are more likely to return to the clinic if their children's health does not improve. Educated women tend to have fewer, healthier children. They also tend to begin their families at a later age. Researchers for the United Nations, studying 46 countries, found that a 1% rise in women's literacy is three times more likely to reduce deaths in children than a 1% rise in the number of doctors. They also found that four to six years of education for women led to a 20% drop in infant deaths.

A girl who grows up healthy and confident in her own ability has a much better chance of safe motherhood, and of raising her own children to meet their full potential. Women with more education have better health and nutrition. They feel they can influence their own lives and those of their children. The families of women with some education tend to have better water and sanitation, income, housing and clothing.

Literacy programmes can therefore have far reaching effects on health. If women are given access to literacy and better education, they will be able to make their own choices to improve their lives.



DECISIONS

- Where should literacy classes be held?
- Who should be trained as teachers?
- What kind of materials should be produced?

INITIATIVES

- What new literature could be developed? Diary? Calendar? Health charts?
- What about a local newspaper?
- How can we use local stories and local history?
- How can we get more people involved?

FINANCES

- What will the programme cost?
- What are the sources of funding?
- Who will manage the money?
- How will we account for what is spent?

When the committee struggles with these questions, the literacy programme will begin to fit the local circumstances and become the property of the local community.

A final word...

A local committee can have a ripple effect – as it promotes literacy at the local level, the community as a whole will begin to understand that reading and writing can help them in their daily lives right there in the village.

Clinton Robinson worked for ten years with the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Cameroon, first in a village literacy and translation project, then as director of SIL. He is currently working in the UK on communication, languages and rural development.



Participants in the recent CEDER nutrition seminar in Zaire.

Vegetable seed request

THANK YOU for *Paso a Paso* (Spanish translation of *Footsteps*). The articles are of great interest for all of us. Issue No 9 on sanitation has been particularly useful to us because our health committee is supervising a programme of latrine-building. The clear examples of the construction of the different types of latrine have been very helpful.

A programme to improve nutrition in our community was begun recently. We were given a donation of vegetable seeds which we have already harvested with very good results. I would like information about any foundation or association which could help us with free vegetable seeds. Please send information to this address.

We hope future issues of *Paso a Paso* will have more articles related to agriculture. We send our greetings to all those who make this magazine possible.

Celso Antonio Rios Mendoza
San Jose del Progreso
Tutepec, Oaxaca
Codigo Postal 72800
Mexico

Editor...

Jim Rowland suggests you could begin by collecting your own seed. Leave a few of the best plants for a second season and collect the seed. (Do not collect seed from hybrid varieties.)

Puppet plays

RECENTLY we held a workshop on making puppets. Some of our health workers have now started a puppet theatre group which we are all enjoying. They make puppets out of local materials such as grass, wood

and scraps of material and write their own stories. At the moment they are using the plays to start discussions about mixing porridge with pounded pumpkin leaves to improve the nutrition of children.

The puppet plays are really good at bringing health ideas to the people in a different way. Both the audience and the players really enjoy puppet theatre. The group have already been invited to perform their plays in the hospital and local schools. The puppets they use are really easy to make and cost nothing. Maybe our experience will give other health workers some ideas.

Marzella Wüstefeld
INRP Nutrition Projekt
PO Box 730098
Kawambwa
Zambia



One of the puppets used by the INRP Nutrition Project in Zambia.

CEDER

CEDER is a Christian group in Zaire, working to educate and animate communities with a range of activities in agriculture, water supplies, natural family planning, nutrition and AIDS control. The copies of *Pas à Pas* which we receive are well used. I enclose a photo of a recent seminar on nutrition which CEDER ran, assisted by Tear Fund Holland.

Mbioka M Malusala
Director of CEDER
BP 46
Tshela/Maduda
Zaire

Disposal of hospital waste

ARE ANY FOOTSTEPS readers able to help our problems over safely disposing of waste? Here in Patan hospital, Nepal, we have over 200 kg of waste material each day, including sharps, needles and biological material. At present we bury this waste material in pits, but we are afraid that sooner or later someone will discover the site of our pits and start recycling the material – with all the dangers of the spread of disease, including AIDS and hepatitis, that this might mean.

We have a British-made incinerator, which we cannot afford to run because of the huge cost of diesel fuel. A locally built fireplace burns so badly that it is not even able to burn the waste paper properly! I know of other smaller hospitals and clinics in Nepal with the same problem. Ideas or reference material needed urgently!

Dr Andrew Mason
Patan Hospital, Lagankhel, Lalitpur
PO Box 252
Kathmandu
Nepal

KNOTTY PROBLEMS

A VIEWPOINT ON CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT WORK

The Knotty Problem in *Footsteps No 14* asked for ideas which could help a Christian community development group beginning work in Namibia. Farmers in the area

had lost confidence in their own traditional knowledge and new methods, recommended by extension workers, were no longer bringing good yields. Here, Roger Sharland shares a thoughtful and provoking reply.

This Knotty Problem raises a number of important issues. I believe that, as Christians, we should have a distinctive approach to rural development.

SOME KEY ISSUES...

1 I believe that God has a particular concern for the poor and the needy. We need to be targeting this group in our work. Unfortunately, there are few successful examples to follow, so we often get diverted into other, less helpful work. The rural poor generally have no money in their pockets, but most new teaching involves buying inputs – so the poorest groups are immediately excluded. Many 'improved' varieties of crops and livestock are developed for those with money. These may not help the poorest farmers whose aim is subsistence.

2 Most trained agriculturalists are taught to think of commercial needs (encouraged by the government) before thinking of the subsistence needs of the rural poor. They think about what is best for the crop or the animals before what is good for the farmer. Sometimes this may be the same – but not always.

3 Most agricultural teaching assumes superior knowledge. This has the effect of making farmers feel that they are 'ignorant', 'primitive' or 'backward'. Christians must fight against this kind of teaching. Even the term 'improved' may be misleading.

4 Most development workers feel the need to prove their use by always having something 'new' to teach. If you admit that the local people know what they are doing, you are unable to maintain your status as an 'expert'. For a few of us, including myself, this 'new' message is in fact teaching that farmers already know what they are doing and have a strong base of indigenous knowledge.



SOME RESPONSES...

1 We need to build up a genuine vision of those that we are trying to serve. Some study of the Bible's teaching on the poor and needy may help us to understand God's view and provide us with the motivation to go against our own training and the world's wisdom.

2 We need to question many 'obvious' assumptions about the benefits of commercial agriculture and money. We need to look again at subsistence values, which I believe are very important. Subsistence is a matter of providing for the needs of the family and involves a different way of thinking which is very positive.

3 We need to change our view of those we are teaching. This requires a genuine respect built up by a knowledge and understanding of just how well adapted people are to their situations. It is often easy to get all our opinions from a few, often better-educated, spokespersons, who may not represent the majority. Local knowledge, perception and wisdom is often held by people with whom you cannot communicate with a western language.

4 We need to look again at the role of the teacher and the whole issue of how a teacher maintains status. Our status should come from our ability to get alongside people and understand them. It should be based on who we are as people, rather than on our knowledge and education. Listening is an important part of this.

Once we have sorted out our own thinking, we are then in a position to look at the problems faced in the situation in Namibia.

SOME IDEAS...

■ Start with what the people do know. They may not have confidence in their agricultural knowledge, having been told it is

all wrong, but what about other knowledge, particularly about their environment? Build up their confidence in the areas where they obviously have much greater knowledge than outsiders.

■ Build on the dissatisfaction that people have with the new technology. As stated in this problem, people saw dramatic benefits to begin with, but these have not lasted. Discuss how their traditional ways were long lasting.

■ Try and help the people think about which traditional practices were good and should be brought back and which were unhelpful. Also help them look for new teaching from outside which may have been lacking in the traditional methods and does not depend on inputs. Traditional societies normally have a great deal of knowledge obtained by observation. However, they may lack understanding of what cannot be seen – the spread of diseases and soil pH for example. This type of knowledge can lead to improvements in agriculture without the need for inputs.

A Christian based development project can teach and draw on two very important aspects that other groups cannot...

- motivation to care for the land under stewardship from God
- dealing with unhelpful superstitions based on fear.

Generally the rural poor are poor because they have inadequate land and resources. However they normally do have family labour available. New ideas which require more labour at non peak times may be very appropriate. They have time for care of the soil – its fertility and conservation.

I believe there is a very real need for those of us working in development to reassess our thinking. Are we really targeting the poor and are we willing to be distinctive as Christians?

Roger Sharland is the Director of OAIC/RDE, PO Box 21736, Nairobi, Kenya.

Planning for Success in Literacy

by Pam Hollman



GOOD PREPARATION and planning are essential for a successful literacy programme. The planning stage may take a long time but thoroughness at this point is likely to be rewarded by a successful programme. Clinton Robinson's advice on setting up a village committee is the first important step.

The Literacy Committee must first fully understand the needs of the community as far as reading and writing is concerned. They will need to consider numbers, level of literacy, motivation, timing of teaching and many other important subjects.

The teaching methods and place of learning need to fit with cultural patterns of learning and people's expectations. Reading and writing do not have to be taught in classes. It may be more appropriate to have an individual approach where one person teaches just one person at a time, and then that one person goes on to teach another... and so on.

The Committee needs to have authority to make decisions and decide on the progress of the literacy programme.

Selecting administrators

The secret of a well-run programme is to have efficient administrators who can organise, keep records, handle finances etc. The Committee will need to select people for these tasks. They may need to be full-time. This will

then involve finding funds for salaries.

Supervisors and teachers

The Literacy Committee will need to identify those with suitable skills to supervise reading materials, organise the training of teachers and the setting up of classes. It will be helpful to select people with good communication and organisational skills. A background in teaching would also be helpful.

The supervisors will need to plan where to hold teacher training and the literacy classes. It may be possible to use rooms in school buildings after school hours. If classes are to be held in the evening there will need to be good lighting. The church may have rooms that can be used. However, if the programme is too tied in with the church, non-Christians may see reading and writing as an activity for Christians only, rather than something for everyone.

It is quite possible to hold classes out in the open air under a tree for shade, if nothing else is available. This may even be preferred by people not used to sitting in a formal learning situation.

Food is another area of consideration. If teacher training is to be held over several days and people come from a distance to attend, feeding and accommodation will need to be planned and funding for this made available.

Funding

It is not possible to run a literacy programme without money! There will be costs for paper, pens, blackboards, chalk, printing and distribution of books and also salaries. Ideally the programme should be run and funded from within the community. However, this may be difficult at the beginning. There are some agencies willing to help with printing costs, but the funds have to be applied for – they won't just fall from the sky! So people need to be chosen to look into how the programme can be funded: finding out what funding is available within the community, looking into other possible sources of funds, and applying for these if necessary. Good records must be kept of how the funds are used and reports made regularly to the funding agency. For this position a very responsible, trustworthy person must be selected.

Reading materials

For any literacy programme to be successful there needs to be a good selection of different types of literature available. For the teaching of reading and writing there usually needs to be a series of primers and then a series of easy-reader books for practice. But that is not enough. Too many literacy programmes have been started without a clear idea of how further literature will be developed. Once the primer series is over, if there is nothing else to read, people are unable to continue to practice their new skill. Skills can be forgotten, and that is the same with reading. It is much harder to re-

motivate someone to learn to read a second time. It is very important that right from the beginning the Committee makes plans to produce different types of literature to keep people's interest and to provide practice.

When a literacy programme is using a local language, there may be little material already printed. It may then be necessary to prepare books. One way of doing this is to plan to hold a Writers' Course where six to eight people can come together for two to three weeks to learn the principles of how to write stories and other writing styles. It may be necessary to bring in someone with experience the first time to teach this course. Trainees may be asked to write the first necessary books to get the literacy programme started. Not everyone is gifted in writing, but there are many tasks involved in a literacy programme. It is often possible to identify in the Writers' Course those who will be good proof-readers and editors: tasks that are every bit as important in book production as the writing itself.

Printing literature

The Literacy Committee will need to plan where the first reading books and literature will be printed. They need to decide what type of quality they want – depending on the funding available. A simple production unit could be set up with the use of a hand duplicator and wax stencils, if they are available in the country. It is also possible to make use of silk screens. This type of printing is very acceptable for trial editions. It is extremely important to test out all new books, and not to print a large number of copies before discovering where the possible mistakes and problems are.

Once books have been printed, a good system of distribution is important. A storage shed may be needed, and a responsible person put in charge of recording stocks – knowing how many books there are, of what sort, and keeping track of where they go.

Depending on the local situation, it might be difficult to obtain enough paper for much printing of books or the printing itself may be difficult. It

is possible to begin a literacy programme with stories on charts that can be used again and again. Learners can also be encouraged to have simple exercise books and copy down these stories. This helps them to build up their own story books and the writing reinforces the learning to read process. Another popular idea is to make 'Big Books'. These are made on large sheets of paper or card, and are big enough to be read by the whole class – so long as there are not more than about 20 people. This cuts down the number of books that need to be printed. Of course, nothing can really substitute for learners having their own books, but it is better to 'make do' and share than have nothing at all.

Evaluation

After some time it is important to look at the programme and see whether it is achieving the original aims. The programme should have been set up in such a way that it is possible to ask such questions as...

- How many people are learning to read and write?
- Where are they having problems?
- Is the teaching method suitable, and how can it be improved?
- Are there enough new books being developed to provide practice and keep people interested?

- Are the contents and reading levels of the books suitable?
- Are the various administrators, writers, supervisors and teachers working well? Do they need more help?
- Are there sufficient funds?
- Is local funding beginning to be developed?
- Have funds been wisely spent and good records kept?

For a large number of reasons including eyesight and age, it is not realistic to suppose that everyone who tries will be able to learn to read. It is reasonable to expect that about two-thirds of those who start learning to read will actually become good readers.

Setting up a literacy programme is not easy and involves so many aspects! But to see the joy on the face of new readers and to see the new dignity and self worth that literacy can bring is certainly reward enough for all the hard work involved!

*Pam Hollman has worked with the Summer Institute of Linguistics for many years in Southern Sudan with literacy programmes. Her current address is:
SIL, PO Box 44456, Nairobi, Kenya.*

*Other helpful agencies are...
SIL, 7500 W Camp, Wisdom Road, Dallas, TX 75236, USA.
SIL, Horsleys Green, High Wycombe, HP14 3XL, UK.
SIL, 1 rue d'Orgemont, 93800 Epinay-sur-Seine, France.*



The offices of SLC in Nairobi, where training manuals, hymnbooks and teaching aids are prepared for use in Sudan.



Cooking without fuel

TRADITIONAL cooking methods, using firewood and charcoal, prove more and more time consuming for women around the world as reserves of fuel trees are used up. Women find they either have to walk further to collect enough wood for cooking the family meal, or else buy expensive paraffin. The use of fireless cookers is not a new idea, but often the ideas are presented in ways which seem alien to people. Fireless cookers are unlikely to replace traditional methods of cooking, but they can be

a very useful supplement. Here we provide some ideas for cookers which will cost almost nothing to make and have many uses.

As supplies of firewood decrease, there is one form of energy which is nearly always available, free of charge in unlimited quantities, in most countries. This is the energy of the sun. Solar cookers use the heat of the sun to cook food.

A problem with solar cookers is that sunlight is hottest at midday, but many people traditionally eat in the evenings. However, their use can be adapted to fit

in with people's way of life. For example, the cookers can be used to sterilise water for drinking or to cook beans, maize or rice ready for adding to the evening meal. Meals can be prepared in the early morning which can cook slowly during the day and be quickly re-heated at night. If dogs are a problem, find a way of placing the cookers on the roof of the house.

People will need to see these ideas in use before they will even begin to consider using them themselves. Demonstrate their uses at clinics or grinding mills while people are waiting their turn.

Insulated Cookers



Insulated cookers prevent heat loss from pans of boiling food so the food continues to cook very slowly for several hours. A pot of food is brought to the boil on a stove. This pot is then quickly placed in a very well insulated box or basket.

A strong box is lined with insulating material. All kinds of material can be used to provide insulation – polystyrene granules, waste cloth, dried grass, wood chippings, foam rubber or crumpled paper. A lining of tough cloth or sacking is sown, glued, stapled or nailed to hold the insulating material in position. Two cushions are then made out of cloth. It is a good idea to make a smaller one and a larger one. These are filled with more insulating material.

Women in Kenya have adapted this method by using traditional palm leaf baskets which are readily and cheaply

available. They place insulating material in the baskets and sew this into place with material. The baskets are strong and long-lasting and, of course, easy to carry. This means that hot food, tea or porridge prepared for breakfast can be carried to the fields to provide hot food at midday.

Insulated cookers are excellent for cooking beans and grains. The pan of food (with plenty of water) is brought to the boil and placed quickly in the box or basket to finish cooking. Soybeans take hours to cook on the stove, so that although they are higher in protein than any other bean, many people do not use them because they need too much fuel to cook. For a good flavour, soybeans should be placed in boiling water (adding the soybeans slowly so that the water does not stop boiling). They will then cook well in the insulated box or basket. You may need to boil them a second time after three hours.



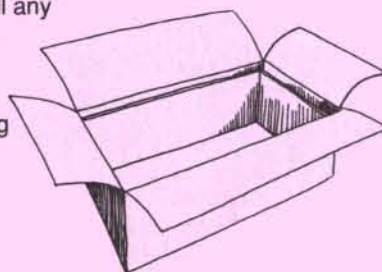
Allow two or three times the usual cooking time. Avoid checking food as there will be a huge heat loss.



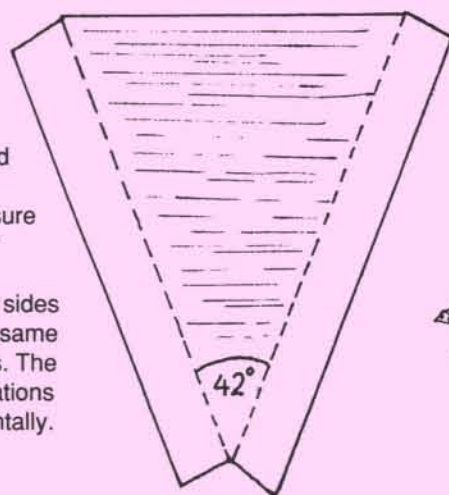
Solar Cookers

There is a great variety of solar cookers. Here we look at one model, designed by Anna Pearce, which is easy and cheap to make and simple to use.

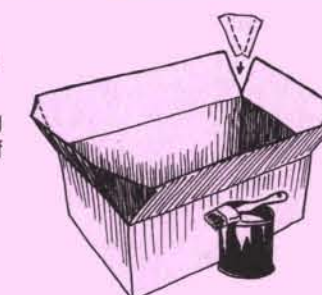
1 Find a large strong box with flaps and another slightly smaller box. This should fit inside the outer box and be about 1cm lower when fitted inside the box. A gap of 1cm is needed between the outer and inner box on one long side so a pane of glass can be stored safely when not in use. Fill any small spaces between the two boxes with insulating material.



2 To join up the flaps, cut out four of these triangle shapes from the cardboard pieces, using a protractor to measure the 42° angles (or copying the angle shown). Make the sides of the triangle the same length as the flaps. The cardboard corrugations should run horizontally.

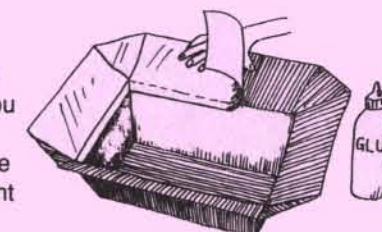


3 Use a spoon handle and ruler to press down carefully along the two long sides of your corner pieces until you can bend them forwards.



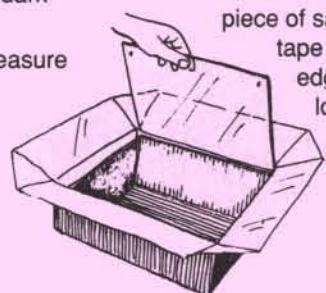
5 Glue silver card or aluminium foil to the inside of the top flaps down to the inner box. Include the corner pieces so that they will also reflect the sun.

4 Attach the corner pieces to the outer box flaps. You can glue them or use paper fasteners. Paint the whole box with white paint if possible.



Materials needed

- Two large, strong cardboard boxes with flaps
- Cardboard pieces
- Piece of glass cut to size
- Insulating material (see *Insulated Cookers*)
- Sacking or strong dark material
- A protractor (to measure angles)
- Silver card or aluminium foil
- Glue (wood glue is best)



6 Now comes the only difficult part! You need to obtain a piece of glass to fit exactly into the outer box, resting on the ledge made by the inner box. Smooth the edges with a piece of sandstone. Glue tape round the edges, leaving loops so that you can lift it easily.

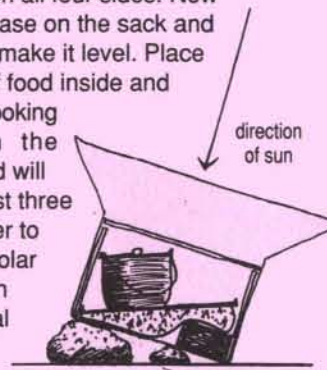


7 Cut out a piece of wood or metal from an old paraffin tin to fit loosely inside the box cooker to make the base. Paint this black or use smoke and grease to blacken it.

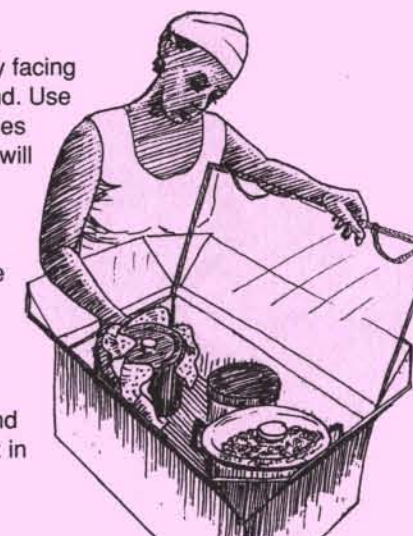


8 Fill a small sack or bag with insulating material and lay this bag at the bottom of the cooker. It is also a good idea to put a heavy stone inside the bottom of the cooker to stop it from blowing away.

9 Place the box so it faces the sun, propping up one long side with stones until the box's shadows are equal on all four sides. Now place the base on the sack and adjust it to make it level. Place the pans of food inside and cover the cooking area with the glass. Food will take at least three times longer to cook in a solar cooker than on a normal stove.



10 You can move the cooker occasionally to keep it directly facing the sun. Avoid shade and wind. Use thin-sided pans with black sides and black or glass lids. Food will cook more quickly without added water and if cut into small pieces. Several small pans will cook faster than one large pan. Remember to include a pan of water each day to provide safe drinking water. When removing food, lift the glass with the tapes and stand it upright inside the box in the space allowed for it.



Try out and adapt these ideas. Maybe your group could even produce cookers to sell?

If you have other ideas for using fuel-less cookers – or particular recipes which work well, let us know and we will include them in a future issue.

Anna Pearce has spent many years developing fuel-less cookers – particularly in South Africa. She would be interested to hear from groups who are working with solar or insulated cookers and would like to develop their work further. Write to...
Box Aid
11 Hilltop Lane
Saffron Walden
Essex
CB11 4AS
UK.



'Pick up your water-pot one will help you put it on your head!'

LIKE ALL THE PEOPLES OF AFRICA, the Lyélé of Burkina Faso often use proverbs to give expression to the values and the wisdom handed down from their ancestors. To take the first step oneself, to rely on one's own resources, is a fundamental principle of Lyélé society – and a principle that should also be at the centre of all development activity.

The Lyélé are a group of about 200,000 people living in the savannah lands of Burkina Faso. There are some fifty language groups in Burkina Faso and the government stresses literacy in the mother tongue as a very important part of development in the rural areas. At present, fifteen languages are being used for literacy. In the last three years the number of literacy centres and the number of people receiving training in literacy have both increased threefold, indicating the commitment of the government to literacy.

We asked M Tiassaye Ziba, Provincial Director of Basic Education and Mass Literacy, to describe briefly for us some of the ways in which the national literacy programme is helping the Lyélé...

Q How do the centres operate?

We now have 89 permanent centres for Literacy and Training, 27 of which have been opened by the missions, churches and other private organisations. These centres provide initial literacy and basic follow-up training.

Initial literacy lasts for 300 hours and includes reading, writing, arithmetic and management of small businesses. Training is provided in one of three ways...

Intensive	48 days
Semi-Intensive	75 days
Extended	100 days

Literacy campaigns take place during the dry season, when people are more or less free from work in their fields.

Follow-up training normally lasts five weeks and seeks to reinforce and develop

further what was learnt during the initial phase.

Q How do you encourage the setting up of training centres and motivate people to enrol?

We have a committee including members of the various technical services in the province, non-governmental organisations, and church officials. Members of this committee visit villages which have village associations or other economic groups. The local people are shown the advantages of literacy through explanation and demonstrations at meetings and also by special occasions, such as national literacy week, provincial literacy days, celebrations marking the end of a literacy campaign etc.

Q How do you recruit and train teachers?

Teachers are recruited from among the members of organisations and churches which are involved in encouraging literacy. We provide training for them at a provincial centre.

Q How are literacy materials produced?

Several groups combine to produce materials, including the National Literacy Institute, the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), the Mass Literacy Department and a Dutch group. Recently trained people are also encouraged to help produce new materials as part of an annual competition which we organise, to encourage the writing of articles in their own language.

We also produce a quarterly newspaper with help from SIL.

In order to encourage self-sufficiency in every stage of the production of written materials, all the post-literacy materials are produced locally by speakers of the language.

Q What is the role of the churches and missions in literacy?

The missions and churches run the official literacy programme in their centres. We train the teachers and supervisors which they choose and we arrange for the final evaluation of their centres each year. The churches and missions equip their centres and pay their teachers and supervisors according to their means.

We owe much to the missions and churches in the spread of our literacy activity. They contribute to the creation of awareness, they support post-literacy, they support the policy of relying first on one's own resources.

Q Relying first on one's own resources would seem to indicate that you expect the community to help in funding literacy training. What is your own experience in this area?

It's a matter of choice on the part of those responsible for encouraging literacy. During the discussions before the opening of a centre, the village people and the team from the provincial committee sign a contract. The village association agrees to pay part – usually 20% – of the support for the teacher in the centre. The association is also responsible for finding or constructing a building to house the literacy centre and for organising the feeding of the students. The students buy their own stationery – exercise books, pens, pencils, rubbers, rulers etc.

The government or other groups involved are asked to pay the rest of the support for the literacy teachers, the costs involved in producing teaching materials and for the supply of desks, benches and blackboards for the centres.

We leave the missions free to organise themselves according to their means. All we require of them is respect for the national literacy programme.

I would also like to add that our first contact with Footsteps has been very instructive. The themes developed in Footsteps are simple, clear and understandable; realistic and practical too, I would say. We want to take another step forward in the search for solutions to development problems with Footsteps through this issue.

Q What about those who take part in the literacy activities themselves? How do they see the value of what they are doing?

Here are messages of encouragement given recently by two lady literacy teachers...

'Fathers, mothers, sisters, let us unite for the progress of reading in Lyélé. Let us devote the time needed for learning how to read in Lyélé, how to write and how to do arithmetic. Why? Because we know that being able to read Lyélé helps us in everything. It opens our eyes and our understanding and it lifts up our heads. We know that there are some Lyélé people who think that the learning of Lyélé cannot help them.'

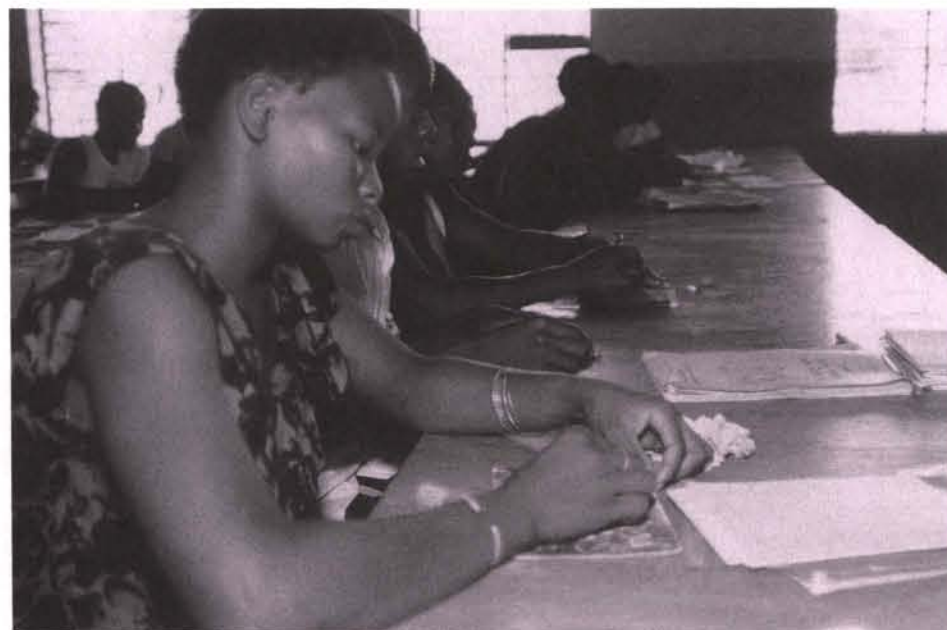
Let's do all we can to give such people sound advice, so that their understanding can be opened up and that they can learn the value of learning to read Lyélé.'

SOPHIE KANDO

'To write and read one's own language is a good thing for everyone. Before learning to read Lyélé we didn't know anything. Our minds were closed. But now we have had a change in our way of thinking. For all of this, it is you who have taught us written Lyélé who have helped us to become people of understanding. We didn't know that our language could become recognised. But God has caused you people of understanding to recognise that it is a very good thing if someone can write and read their own language. We are no longer as we were before. We have changed and can help the one who is lost to return to the path.'

GEORGETTE KANKO

Compiled by Ron and Lyn Stanford who have many years' experience in Bible translation and literacy work. They are at present working with the Summer Institute of Linguistics, BP 50, Réo, Burkina Faso.



A recent literacy class. M Ziba is second from right in the front row, and the instructor is on the right.

Cartoon Strips

by Rosalyn Rappaport

WHEN I SAY I have written a handbook of *Crop Protection for Africa*, eyes glaze over. When I add that it includes a lot of cartoon strips, my listener usually wakes up.

The comic strips in my book have a particular reason for being there. **Other agricultural advice books make the process they are explaining the central point.** In illustrations the farmer is seen as a pair of hands doing something with a tool or hoe. In photographs the farmer is

seen carrying out instructions as an example. The advisor is seen as the hero bringing new ideas.

This becomes a problem when advice presented is not believed. 'Who is this man?' the farmer may ask. 'Does he know the land? Is he a farmer himself?' At the back of the farmer's mind is the doubt about whether any outsider, however expert and well meaning, really knows the local situation.

In Mauritania, after my cartoonist Mohammed and I had produced our first story page showing farmer Ali and his wife Miriam, the drivers on our project gave their response. We were, they said, very sensible at last to be asking the right people about the job we had come to do. 'These people', said Alesane, banging a forefinger on Mohammed's drawing, 'really know about the work.' **The cartoon strips are central to the book because they place the farmer at the centre of the advice and information process.**

But the farmer does not act alone. Family, neighbours and experiences far and near influence farmers. So the strip is based on the household, a working unit where the father is sometimes hero, sometimes fool. The cartoons show what is happening to technical advice when it gets out into the village. Should it be used as given or adapted – and who does the adapting? Are happy accidents useful? Do good ideas come from regional offices of agriculture or farms? Who should be lecturing and who listening?

Comic strips lend themselves to all kinds of story-telling. The characters are like us. They worry about money and life. Yet birds and insects talk to them and to each other. Without any effort,



comic strips can include all kinds of scientific facts in amusing ways.

Comic strips have other uses. They can help extension agents start visits on an entertaining note. They help fix a fact or technique in people's memory. Maybe a story will encourage other stories. If a farmer is not literate, the children of the house might be at school. There is often someone around who can read.

Do you have people in your community who may be able to draw cartoons? Think of ways in which your work could make use of cartoons. The cartoons in Rosalyn's book (reviewed on page 16) come with permission to photocopy them for teaching purposes.

Rosalyn Rappaport has worked as an extension agent for USAID (United States Agency for International Development) and as a horticulturalist in Zambia and Mauritania. A second comic strip book is planned on Crop Storage and Processing.

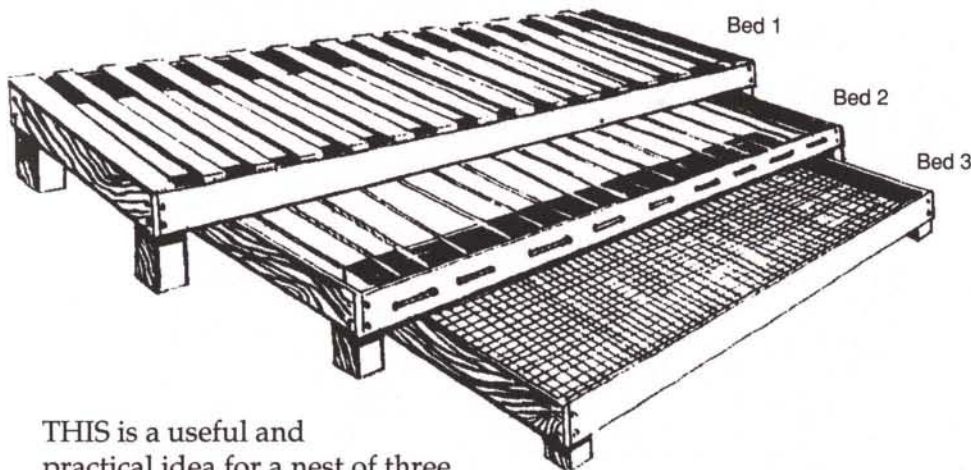
Chloroquine abuse

Following a recent eye health tour in Uganda, a group of experts (Drs Sandford-Smith, Hall, Waddell and Mattus) have been concerned to discover the abuse of chloroquine. Most health workers keep stocks of chloroquine to treat malaria. The drug is cheap, easy to obtain and very effective. However, what is not so widely known is that if high doses of this drug are taken over a long period of time, then eyesight is damaged. The damage is very gradual and slight at first. However, there is **no treatment** to reverse this damage (known as chloroquine retinopathy). It is permanent, and if high doses of chloroquine continue to be taken, vision can be severely affected.

Dr Brian Fleck comments that health workers who are giving out the correct doses of chloroquine to patients with malaria need have no fear. Chloroquine is an excellent drug – but, like any drug, it can be abused. People should be aware that it should only be taken for short periods at the correct dose. Unfortunately the team discovered that in Uganda people were using it to treat all kinds of illnesses just because it is so cheap and readily available. The team recommended that, in future, bottles should contain a warning label: **EXCESS USE CAN DAMAGE THE SIGHT.**

Adapted from an article in *Community Eye Health* Issue No 9.

A NEST OF LOW COST BEDS



THIS is a useful and practical idea for a nest of three beds. It will save space in a small room during the daytime because it only takes up the space needed for one bed. The beds are low in cost and easy to make from local materials. The measurements used are approximate and may vary according to the wood available.

All the beds are the same width but the length and height of each bed varies so that they fit under each

other. The nest of beds can then be used as a sofa in the daytime.

Nail the legs to the ends of the shorter lengths of wood. Then nail on the longer lengths of boards to make the framework. The drawing shows three different materials that can be used for making the springs – wood (Bed 1), chicken wire (Bed 3), or strips of inner tube or rope passed through holes drilled in the frame and tied tightly (Bed 2).

Timber required

Large Bed (Bed 1)

2 boards 2.5cm x 7.5cm x 183cm
2 boards, 2.5cm x 7.5cm x 91.5cm
4 legs, 5cm x 5cm x 51cm

Middle-sized Bed (Bed 2)

2 boards, 2.5cm x 7.5cm x 168cm
2 boards, 2.5cm x 7.5cm x 91.5cm
4 legs, 5cm x 5cm x 38cm

Smallest Bed (Bed 3)

2 boards, 2.5cm x 7.5cm x 153cm
2 boards, 2.5cm x 7.5cm x 91.5cm
4 legs 5cm x 5cm x 25cm

Adapted from an article in the VITA Technology Handbook with kind permission. This very useful book (430 pages) costs \$19.95 from...

VITA
PO Box 12438
Arlington
VA 22209
USA.



Teaching people to read and write...

THREE CASE STUDIES

1 THE RENDILLE, NORTH KENYA

Bible Translation and Literacy is a group working with Bible translation, literacy and analysing languages so they can be put into written form. They work with isolated language groups who often have little ability to communicate with the outside world, with all the isolation, lack of resources and difficulties that may result. The group believes that literacy, adult education and community development can strengthen these communities so that they can resolve their own problems.

The Rendille are a nomadic group of about 30,000. Work began in 1981, but soon afterwards a severe drought meant that efforts were put instead into helping with famine relief and restocking animals for a year or two.

In 1985 the literacy activities restarted. Cassette recordings of folk tales, songs, camel husbandry, Bible stories and community based health care were used at first to introduce the value of recording and sharing information. Elders stated their priorities – each cassette should contain first animal health, followed by human health and then anything

else of interest. Each manyatta (community) now has its own cassette player with many recordings of the voices of respected elders in their own community.

A Literacy Training Centre was built at Korr. The elders were invited to choose respected community members to receive training. 26 men and women were trained – first to become literate and then to teach others how to read. Teaching an illiterate person to teach others to read and write proves that literacy is for all. These trainers then returned to their communities to teach others.

The programme is succeeding because of the respect and sensitivity to the Rendille culture, appropriate teaching materials and the high degree of motivation among the leaders, trainees, church workers and the wider community. Careful programme planning and evaluation has been very important. The programme has now expanded to include animal health training, health care, restocking, water and craft-work. A real success story!

*Micah Amukobole
Bible Translation & Literacy
PO Box 44456
Nairobi
Kenya*

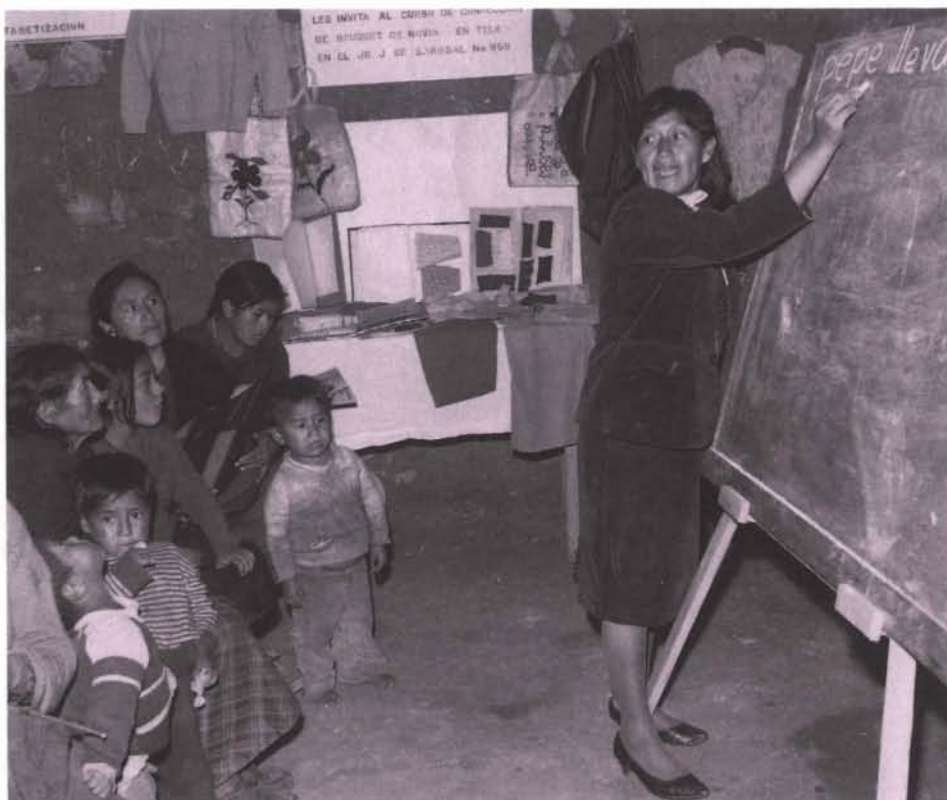
2 SUMUCAJ, PERU

This is a Peruvian group which began working with women in 1989 in the mountainous area around Cajamarca. The leaders are increasingly aware of the need to combine literacy and education with training in crafts, to enable women to provide for their families.

They teach various skills – sewing (often making use of old clothes), knitting, embroidery, improved nutrition and health. Until craft products can be standardised – using the same sizing and pattern – they cannot be produced in quantity and marketed. Literacy is therefore very important so that women can read and follow patterns and develop skills in marketing. The teachers travel from village to village with a blackboard, holding classes in basic literacy and teaching craft skills. They encourage the women in their work and faith.

By concentrating on literacy, SUMUCAJ is able to make a difference to the lives of many rural women. Not only could sales opportunities open up, but the women will have access to a whole range of public information previously denied them through illiteracy – not least the Bible.

*Ingrid Hanson
Tear Fund*



*SUMUCAJ –
Women's literacy class
in Samana Cruz.*

3 NEHRU PLACE SLUMS, INDIA

Some years ago, David Selveraj became friendly with two street lads in Delhi, who would guard his motorbike while he worked. He began to build up a close friendship with these boys and some of their friends. They began meeting in a tea shop each week. If they were ill or in trouble, his genuine Christian concern for them meant he would follow them up, sometimes visiting their homes in the nearby slum. They formed a youth group of 15 members – Youth for Action. One of their first activities was to conduct a survey of the slums – gathering information and finding out people’s priorities. 3,200 families were surveyed. Their main priorities were found to be education and employment. Health was not seen as a priority, though immunisation was considered important.

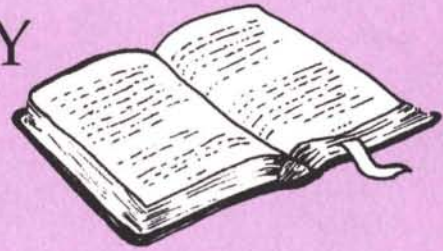
On completion of the survey they decided to begin literacy and education programmes, supported by EFICOR. Two crèches were started to release older children who often had to stay at home to look after younger children. All ages are catered for – younger children are helped so they are able to catch up and begin school. There are two classes for older boys. Women are visited and taught in their homes. As David’s friendships with slum families grew, he took the radical step of moving into the slum. His house and two others (all with two small rooms) are rented. All the classes, the crèches and a small clinic are held in these cramped conditions. David and some of the original members of the youth group now do most of the literacy teaching.

A revolving loan fund was set up to help people establish small businesses. So far all the loans (usually very small) have been repaid. Paper bags, bicycle repair, rubbish recycling, fruit stalls, street food vendors – these are examples of the kind of successful projects people have begun.

This story is an example of how small beginnings can have far reaching results...

BIBLE STUDY

Literacy and the Word of God



by Ron Stanford

GOD HAS ALWAYS COMMUNICATED WITH PEOPLE – not just through the spoken word and through the Prophets. He has also made sure that his communication was put in written form so that it is not forgotten or used wrongly. When he spoke either through Moses, through the prophets, through Jesus or through the Apostles, his words were always put in writing in the Bible.

Read Deuteronomy Chapter 6:1–9 and Chapter 31:9–13. What did God expect his people to do with his laws? Notice that he not only expected people to be able to talk about them but also to be able to write them down.

The kings and priests of Israel were expected to read and study the written laws. Over the centuries following the giving of the laws, few actually did this. Eventually the laws were mostly ignored. In the reign of King Josiah the Book of the Law was rediscovered. **Read about the story in 2 Kings Chapter 22–23:3.** Here we read of how the ability to read and write meant that God’s law was kept safely until it was rediscovered, when its reading had a great effect on his people.

What difference has your own ability to study God’s word made to your life? How much do you appreciate the way in which the Bible brings together the history of God’s communication with people?

There are many other references to reading and writing in the scriptures. Jesus was certainly literate (Luke 4:16–21). The ability to study the scriptures is often assumed in the Bible, indicating that the ability to read and write is part of God’s plan for everyone. For Christians, the main motivation for literacy may be their desire to read God’s word.

Discuss the levels of literacy within your own community. Are there steps which you as a group could take to encourage literacy? Pray together for wisdom to know how best to help all those who lack the ability to read the Bible for themselves.

Philip, one of the members of the original Youth for Action group, helping children to catch up with maths so they can enter school.



RESOURCES

Cooking with Hayboxes

The Aprovecho Institute has a lot of information about cooking with insulated cookers – or 'hayboxes', as they call them. They will send details of construction, insulation materials and recipes. Write to...

Aprovecho Institute
80574 Hazelton Road
Cottage Grove
Oregon 97424
USA.

Solar Box Cookers

This American group have plenty of information available on solar cooking. They have various designs for solar cookers, recipes, and a newsletter. Write to...

Solar Box Cookers International
1724 Eleventh Street
Sacramento
CA 95814
USA.

Controlling Crop Pests and Diseases

A Tropical Agricultural Extension Handbook

by Rosalyn Rappaport

Macmillan £5.99 112 pages
ISBN 0-333-57216-5 paperback

This practical handbook gives details of pests and diseases and the kind of damage they cause. It contains information on how to use a knapsack sprayer safely and apply both chemical and naturally occurring pesticides. It gives a good balance between the use of chemicals and natural products. There is also a useful section on protection against larger animals and wind, with information about growing and maintaining strong hedges. Of particular interest are the comic strips and diagrams where the farmer is placed at the centre of the exchange of new ideas.

Manual De Hortalizas

(Basic Guide to Gardening)

by Traugot Horsh

This book, written in Spanish, is a complete guide to gardening aimed at agricultural extension workers. Reasons for gardening, preparation of land, insect and disease control and soil types are all covered. The emphasis is on organic gardening.

The book costs \$7.00 including postage. Order from...

Departamento de Comunicaciones del CEPAD

Apartado Postal 3091

Managua

Nicaragua

Central America.



Newsletters on Literacy

There are many newsletters on literacy. These are a few which have been recommended...

THE SPIDER NEWSLETTER is aimed at groups within Africa working in literacy. It is available free of charge in French and English.

Write to: *The Spider*, AALAE, PO Box 50768, Nairobi, Kenya.

KAEA NEWS is a free newsletter in English for those working with literacy in Kenya and nearby countries.

Write to: KAEA, PO Box 56708, Nairobi, Kenya.

READ is published in English in Papua New Guinea with a focus on literacy work in the Pacific. It costs \$5 for a year's subscription.

Write to: *SIL*, PO Box 233, Ukarumpa via Lae, Papua New Guinea.

LIGHT is a free newsletter for Christian literacy workers in Africa and Asia. It comes out three times a year in English.

Write to: Mr A H Dyson, 3401 Hillsboro Road, Nashville, TN 37215, USA.

NOTES ON LITERACY comes out eight times a year in English and is highly recommended. It has plenty of practical, field based, readable articles. It costs \$25 for an annual subscription plus postage.

Write to: *SIL*, 7500 West Camp, Wisdom Road, Dallas, Texas 75236, USA.

A free newsletter called **LITERATI** is available from the same address.

For information about the help which *SIL* (The Summer Institute of Linguistics) could give your own literacy work, write to the local *SIL* Office in your own country. If you cannot find this out, write to the *SIL* Headquarters in USA and ask for details (address above).



Published by

TEAR FUND



CHRISTIAN CONCERN IN A WORLD OF NEED

100 Church Road, Teddington TW11 8QE, UK

Editor: Isabel Carter 83 Market Place, South Cave, Brough, N Humberside, HU15 2AS, UK