

SCOTLAND COMMITTEE OF THE UK NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
UNESCO LITERACY SEMINAR:  
UNDERSTANDING LITERACY IN CHANGING ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

# INTERPRETING THE WORLD THROUGH THE WRITTEN WORD



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Location: GLASGOW

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# Speaker

- ➔ Member of the Commonwealth Advisory Council on Teacher Mobility, Recruitment and Migration.



# Contributions to the Literacy discourse

- UNESCO: The revision of the singular definition of Literacy: FUNDAMENTAL EDUCATION, MASS EDUCATION, FUNCTIONAL LITERACY, And DIVERSITY OF LITERACIES
- John Oxenham: The Defence of Literacy for Development
- Harbans S Bhola: The promise of literacy
- Paul Fordham: The Billion Illiterate populations
- Alan Rogers: Real literacy materials
- Dan Wagner: The training of literacy practitioners



# Contributions to the Literacy discourse

- Lalage Bown: Literacy and Empowerment for Women
- S H O Tomori: The Language for Literacy
- Edwin Townsend-Coles: Literacy Promotion Strategies
- C M B Brann: The Language of Literacy
- J.F.Ade Ajayi: The History of the Translation of the English Bible to Yoruba

# THE WORLD BEFORE THE WRITTEN WORD

- ⇒ The medium for communication among the people.
- ⇒ The spoken word.
- ⇒ The beauty of the pre literate African society: The inculcation of values of integrity, honesty, loyalty, fear of God
- ⇒ Treachery and betrayals were severely punished
- ⇒ Marketing and the women traders encyclopaedic knowledge.
- ⇒ The efficacy of religion.

# THE WORLD AFTER THE WRITTEN WORD

- The Written Word
  - ➔ Potentials of Writing for Development
  - ➔ Long after we have passed away, our written word will continue to impact many other lives.
  - ➔ Let this be written for a future generation that a people not yet created may praise the Lord. (PSALM 102:1)
  - ➔ Jesus was reported to be writing on the ground when the case of the woman caught in adultery was brought to his attention.

# THE WORLD AFTER THE WRITTEN WORD

- Reading the word

- ➔ The influence of what is read: *"You will reap no more than what you have sown"*.

- ➔ The power of content to change values, aspirations and attitudes.

- ➔ Lesson from the film *'Educating Rita'*.

- ➔ The Eunuch of Ethiopia.

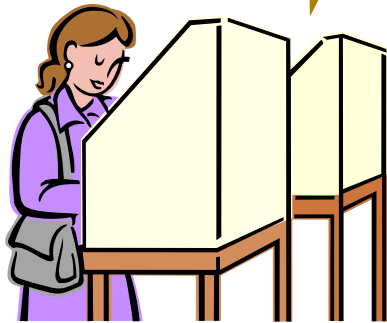


# LITERACY COUNTS

- ⇒ The written, and spoken word, and literacy promotion
- ⇒ “Speech makes us human and literacy makes us civilized” (Olson, 1988).
- ⇒ Literacy as a tool for opening doors to knowledge for humanity;
- ⇒ The foundation of modern civilisation and the religions of the world;
- ⇒ The role played by literacy in an increasing complex world; and
- ⇒ The unprecedented spread of knowledge throughout modern cultures and the challenges it presents.

# Testaments from participants of the University of Ibadan Literacy Project:

*I open my heart in the letters and I write what nobody would know except my friends. When I receive confidential letters, nobody knows my secret except the persons in whom I confide*



# CONTINUING RELEVANCE OF THE WRITTEN WORD

- ➔ The Future of Literacy
- ➔ Tomorrow's literacy policy should accurately reflect the lessons learnt from those of yesterday.
  - Design appropriate strategy that will persuade the most impoverished that literacy is in their interest.
  - Can something more be said here? How can the most impoverished be persuaded that literacy is in their interest, and how would such a solution be implemented?
- ➔ The influence of technology : Accessing helpful of necessary information online, sending email and text messages.
- ➔ Literacy provision for vulnerable minority groups: The special needs of immigrants, refugees and assylum seekers, the poor and the disadvantaged.



# BENEFITS OF LITERACY FOR THE EFFICACY OF THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AND A HEALTHY, FULFILLING LIFE

- ⇒ Application of Literacy
- ⇒ Reading and writing helps one to discover the principles and techniques for living well.
- ⇒ Access to the information on staying healthy at home and at work through reports, newspapers, journals and blogs.
- ⇒ Healthy communal life
- ⇒ The importance of social activities: Literacy and adult learners classes will help fight loneliness and isolation, which is believed to be one of the primary causes of depression.
- ⇒ Brigham Young University research has found that the impact of social isolation on physical health can be equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.
- ⇒ Twice as harmful as obesity and more dangerous than not exercising at all. The literacy skills they learn will enable them to stay in contact with others more easily.

# BENEFITS OF LITERACY FOR THE EFFICACY OF THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AND A HEALTHY, FULFILLING LIFE

- ➔ Awareness of the basic requirements for safe living:
  - ➔ The supply of safe drinking water;
  - ➔ Sanitation; and
  - ➔ Hygiene.



## BENEFITS OF LITERACY FOR THE EFFICACY OF THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AND A HEALTHY, FULFILLING LIFE

- ➔ Instruction on how to pursue a healthy life and share the experiences of others.
- ➔ People are brought HOPE and ENCOURAGEMENT that their illness is not as debilitating as they had supposed.
- ➔ Understanding traditional medicine: Types of diseases, their prevention and cure.

# Cont.d

- Reading prescriptions: the observations of Mrs Idayatu Olaniran:
  - "I NOW INTERACT BETTER IN THE SOCIETY AND I RAISE MY HEAD HIGHER IN THE COMMUNITY. LITERACY MAKES ME CONSCIOUS OF A LOT OF THINGS THAT I DISREGARDED BEFORE. FOR INSTANCE, I NOW TAKE NOTE OF THE INSTRUCTIONS IN MY DRUG PACKS AND I TAKE NOTE OF DRUG LABELS AND OTHER NOTICES. NOW I CANNOT MISAPPLY ANY DRUG. LITERACY IS LIKE A LAMP THAT IS SHOWING THE WAY. IT IS LIKE YOU ARE GOING TO A TOWN AND YOU HAVE THE ADDRESS, SO YOU CANNOT MISS YOUR WAY."
- Information on Lifestyle choices
- Continuing vibrant health and longevity

# SCOTLAND AND AFRICA: SOWING THE WORD IN THE WORLD OF AFRICA: AN APPRECIATION

- David Livingstone: the Stone that lives; and the message of hope; "Fidei Coticula Crux"-The Cross is the Touchstone of Faith. London Victoria Embarkment-
- Importation of literacy and development to Southern and Central Africa
- The young Mungo Park and the exploration of River Niger in West Africa
- The Presbyterian Mission and the planting of educational institutions : the Hope Waddell Institute
- Mary Slessor in Eastern Nigeria and the end to the killing of twins

# Cont.d

- YOUNG AND OLD, MALE AND FEMALE, THEY CAME TO AFRICA, LIVED AND SERVED THERE AND DIED THERE, LEAVING THE LEGACY OF THE WRITTEN WORD.
- The first set of Nigerian medical students were trained in Scotland.
- The 2010 Glasgow Lecture and gratitude to the Scottish Committee of the UKNATCOM for UNESCO, and the organisers.

**THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL.**