

Literacy lessons change lives in Morocco
Magharebia 09-09-2009

1 Morocco celebrated International Literacy Day yesterday. Today, according to the national education ministry, 34% of Moroccans aged 10 or over can neither read nor write, compared with 43% in 2004. However, the report from the World Bank's education sector was condemning. Of 14 countries listed, Morocco placed 11th, eight slots below Tunisia and three behind Algeria.



2 Samir Bachir, a teacher, said the government must take action to improve teaching in Morocco if they want to develop the country. "We hope the emergency plan will be more effective than the others have been. It is still too early to judge."

3 Jamila Berdai, a sociologist, said that literacy programmes make it possible for adults to change their lives – often for elderly women, who have shown great willingness to learn to read and write to change their day-to-day lives. "These women are becoming more autonomous and have more confidence in themselves," she said. "They're managing to have a greater effect on their households."

4 Hajja Tamou Jabilou, 62, decided to sign up for the literacy programme in her district of Rabat. After the death of her husband and the marriage of her four daughters, there was no one left to help her. "I couldn't even make a phone call," she said. "If I wanted to speak to one of my girls, I had to disturb my neighbours. When I got a letter from the bank or a water or electricity bill, I felt so ignorant." After two years of literacy lessons, Jabilou can now read and write and take charge of her life.

5 Kebbour Belfaracha, 53, started lessons a year ago, following back-up from one of his two children. He had never thought about taking this initiative, and believed he would never manage to learn. After the first few weeks, he took a fancy to the literacy lessons. "Now I can read. The world has changed around me. I'm starting to read signs and notices. I now have a little time left to master reading the Qur'an," he said.

6 Hayat Maâouni, a 22-year-old housewife, has been taking lessons in a school close to the home of her employers, who have shown great understanding. Previously, she had been working for a family who refused to offer any help. For years, she dreamed of returning to school where she had spent just one year as a girl and left due to the distance between her country home and the nearest school. "I can see my dream becoming a reality," she said, her eyes twinkling with enthusiasm. "I hope to complete the course, if circumstances will allow. I do not want my future children to have an illiterate mother."

I COMPREHENSION (15 POINTS) {BASE ALL YOUR ANSWERS ON THE TEXT}

A Answer the following questions. (4 pts)

- 1 What is the classification of Tunisia and Algeria on the list? (2 pts)
- 2 Why did Jabilou feel so upset when she received a letter or a bill?
- 3 When did Kebbour Belfaracha first go to school?

B Say if the following sentences are TRUE or FALSE? JUSTIFY. (3 pts)

- 1 The World Bank's education report about education in Morocco was encouraging.
- 2 Education policy has been a real failure up till now.
- 3 Hayat Maâoun didn't go to school when she was a child.

C Find in the text words that mean the same as the following: (3 pts)

- 1 to join, to enrol (para. 4):
- 2 started liking (para. 5):
- 3 earlier, before that (para. 6):

D What the underlined words in the text refer to? (3 pts)

- 1 they (para.2):
- 2 she (para. 3):
- 3 who (para. 6):

E Complete the following sentences with information from the text. (2 pts)

- 1 Women have shown great willingness to learn to read and write so that
- 2 Jabilou can now not only read and write, but

II LANGUAGE (15 POINTS)

A put the words between brackets into the correct form. (3 pts)

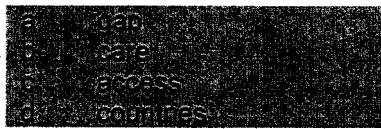
- 1 Moroccan NGOs are struggling to help the country eradicate (literate) in Morocco.
- 2 Does she have any (manage) experience or skills?
- 3 He developed his own program in (partner) with an American expert.

B Put the verbs between brackets into the correct form. (3 pts)

Hayat Al Abdouni, a 15-year-old girl, stopped (study) just after reaching age ten to look after her younger sister but is now determined (make) up for lost time with the help of an NGO. "Nothing will make me (change) my mind," she said to Magharebia.

C Match each word on the left with the one that goes with it on the right to make collocations. (2 pts)

- 1 developing
- 2 health



- 1
- 2

D Put the verbs between brackets into the correct form. (3 pts)

The number of children being taught by NGOs (rise) from 153,218 in 2004 to 225,129 last year. The public sector (make) a similar contribution so far, while the private sector (still / try) to deal with a smaller number at the moment.

E Rewrite the following sentences as suggested. (4 pts)

- 1 The plant is dead. I didn't give it enough water.
I ought
- 2 We need to increase our efforts and involved all sectors of society.
Together with
- 3 I went to the college. I wanted to have an interview with Professor Taylor.
..... for
- 4 She enrolled in her course many years ago. She learned a lot.
..... after

III WRITING (10 POINTS)

One of your relatives or neighbours was illiterate, but he / she has benefited a lot from literacy classes organised by an NGO. Tell the story of that person describing his / her feelings and what he / she has gained as a person and as a member of the community.
(Approximately 150 words)

These suggestions might help you:

- What the importance of NGOs is and how they contribute to the development of Morocco;
- Who the person is (name, age, etc.);
- How he / she knew about and joined the literacy classes;
- Where and when these classes were given;
- Why were these classes important for him / her;
- What he / she gained from these classes (socially, financially and personally);
- Your personal view about how to encourage literacy classes and make them more effective.