

# TV Film

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United Nations • Nations Unies

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**ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS**

**LITERACY**

(Video - 18 minutes 00 seconds)

Five continents. One problem. Illiteracy. Over one quarter of the world's population cannot read or write.

A young television actor talks about the importance of education in his life and how the United Nations, along with governments and other organizations is taking action to solve the problem of illiteracy worldwide, with the goal of substantially reducing illiteracy during the next decade.

Presenter	Josh Blake
Design	Clive Helfet
Sound	John Alberts

A production of the  
United Nations  
Department of Public Information  
and  
Shelley Productions

**For the United Nations**

Executive Producer - Tina Jorgensen  
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**For Shelley Productions**

Producer/Editor - Scott Shelley  
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**ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS**

**LITERACY**

VIDEO

AUDIO

MONTAGE/MAP  
ANIMATED SERIES TITLE  
ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS  
PROGRAMME TITLE  
LITERACY

(MUSIC)

VILLAGE ON MOUNTAINSIDE

NARRATOR (VOICE-OVER):

The people in this remote Asian village suffer from health problems--since they haven't been able to learn about clean water and basic sanitation. (7)

WORKERS IN FIELD

In West Africa, young men with no way of knowing about modern farming techniques have been forced to abandon the land and drift to overcrowded cities. (8)

MAN TALKING/CLASSROOM SCENE

In Western Europe and North America, poorly educated young people lack the basic skills to find jobs in a complex work environment. (8)

CROWD/POLICE OFFICER

In the newly independent African nation of Namibia, a lack of reading skills posed special problems in the voting process. (6)

STREET KIDS

And in Latin America, those without schooling cannot benefit from helpful social programmes. (4)

VIDEO

AUDIO

GRAPHICS/MAP

NARRATOR (VOICE-OVER):

Five continents. One problem.  
Illiteracy.

(3)

ILLUSTRATION/STREET SIGN/  
DETERGENT AD/NEWSPAPER HEADLINES

If you were illiterate this is how you would see the world - a combination of confusing symbols. It would be a struggle to find out even the most basic information. Only through literacy does the picture become unscrambled.

(12)

MEN CHANTING/WOMEN IN FIELD

Over one quarter of the world's people cannot read or write. Women are the most disadvantaged. One woman in three compared to one man in five is illiterate. But the United Nations, along with governments and other organizations, is taking action to solve the problem in all parts of the world. The goal is to substantially reduce illiteracy during the next decade.

(26)

NARRATOR ON CAMERA

SYNC:

"What does "literacy" actually mean? A literate person is one who is able to read and write, and knows enough mathematics to function in his or her community."

(9)

VIDEO

AUDIO

NARRATOR ON CAMERA

SYNC:

"I'm Josh Blake. And not only am I a television actor, but I'm also a member of Club Ed, a group of young actors reaching out to help some 30-million school age children. Our message is: Get the most out of your education now--so you can do whatever you want later on."

(16)

NARRATOR ON CAMERA

"I really don't know where I'd be today as a television actor had I not been literate. When I receive a script, I'm expected to read it and I'm also expected to memorize all of my lines in that particular show. Had I not been able to read, I'd be out of a job."

(14)

FARMER READING BOOK

NARRATOR (VOICE-OVER):

Without literacy people are unable to get the information they need to cope in a complicated world. A farmer needs to learn to rotate his crops, a mother must understand that unclean water can give her child dysentery and it is difficult for people who cannot read or write to take part in political activities.

(19)

WOMAN CASTING BALLOT

VIDEO

AUDIO

PEOPLE WAITING TO VOTE

NARRATOR (VOICE-OVER):

This problem was clear in Namibia. At the time of independence, many Namibians, voting for the first time, were incapable of reading the names of the candidates - much less learning about their qualifications. In order for most of the people to vote, pictures and symbols, representing political parties, were placed on the ballot. (20)

CU SAMPLE BALLOT

RURAL/URBAN CHILDREN

It is alarming that over 100-million children of primary school age in poor countries are not able to go to school. At the same time, in each part of the world, people are discovering solutions to illiteracy. (13)

GRAPHICS/MAP OF AFRICA

In Africa, more than half of the people cannot read or write or understand simple arithmetic. (4)

PEOPLE WORKING IN FIELD

In the West African nation of Sierra Leone, men drift to cities in search of jobs. Since so many of them are illiterate, employment is difficult to find. The UNESCO assisted Bunumbu Project aims to tackle two problems-- illiteracy and urban overcrowding.

(16)

VIDEO

AUDIO

CLASSROOM SCENE

'CLEAN WATER' CLASS

NARRATOR (VOICE-OVER):

The programme deals with literacy in a way that relates to individual and community needs. When lessons focus on topics important to students, they will understand that literacy means improving their lives. (14)

TEACHER WITH CHILDREN IN BLUE

Teachers are trained to blend reading and arithmetic classes with advice on working the land. Going out into the fields with their pupils, the instructors show how to apply agricultural theories. (10)

BOY AT BLACKBOARD

Zimbabwe - a rural classroom where a child learns mathematics. (4)

BOY WRITING

Zimbabwe's dedication to literacy has had a positive outcome. The country's economy has risen dramatically in recent years, following the government's full-scale education efforts. (10)

GRAPHICS/MAP OF ASIA

The literacy campaign is just as strong in Asia. (2)

VIDEO

AUDIO

HILLSIDE VILLAGE

NARRATOR (VOICE-OVER):

A study of Nepal's distant, hilly areas underscored the extremely harsh living conditions. There was a shortage of food; one in fourteen infants died, and those who did live to adulthood rarely survived past age forty. A plan was developed by the United Nations to help put an end to these problems. (20)

YOUNG VILLAGE GIRLS

As in many other regional literacy programmes assisted by UNESCO, females were given special attention. In Nepal's Seti Zone, parents traditionally have not educated girls, believing that after marriage, they could no longer contribute to the household. As part of the programme called Cheli Beti - the local term for "young girl" - students not only learn reading and writing skills to prepare them for life outside the village, but also are given much needed information about health care, clean water and basic hygiene. (32)

KIDS IN CLASSROOM

In Bangladesh, lessons include reading, writing, arithmetic and social studies. This song explains the most productive way to plant rice. (10)

VIDEO

AUDIO

KIDS CHANTING

NARRATOR (VOICE-OVER):

The BRAC programme - targeted to children 8 to 10 years old from the poorest families, includes 2,500 village schools.

(7)

KID WRITING

Remarkably, the cost is only \$15 per student a year.

(3)

KIDS LEAVING SCHOOL

As in other United Nations programmes, organizers of BRAC - the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee - hope the youngsters bring important information from the classroom home, becoming their parents' teachers.

(12)

GRAPHICS/MAP OF EUROPE  
AND NORTH AMERICA

In Western Europe, one out of every 20 persons is illiterate. The picture is even more grim in the United States - which has one of the highest illiteracy rates of any industrialized country. Twenty three million adults cannot read or write above a fourth grade level.

(16)

VIDEO

AUDIO

WORKERS ARRIVING AT WORK

NARRATOR (VOICE-OVER):

Although the vast majority of those who are illiterate are hard-working and law-abiding, some three quarters of all prison inmates, most of whom are under 25, are illiterate.

(10)

MAN IN PRISON CELL

Glen, who learned to read in prison, believes he would not have resorted to crime, had he been literate.

(5)

GLEN ON CAMERA

SYNC:

"I didn't ... like go out and get jobs and stuff, because I knew I couldn't fill out the applications and I'd just pick up jobs that I knew I didn't have to fill out the applications ... and then I wasn't making enough money so I did other stuff and ended up getting into trouble."

(20)

TUTOR AND GLEN

NARRATOR (VOICE-OVER):

When Glen leaves prison, he will be better prepared to begin a new life.

(4)

VIDEO

AUDIO

WOMAN AND CHILD WALKING

NARRATOR (VOICE-OVER):

Teresa is a 28-year-old Kentucky mother with four children. She dropped out of school when she married at age 13. She doesn't want her children to make the same mistake.

(11)

TERESA AT COMPUTER

Now, Teresa pursues a high school diploma through the PACE programme, which educates mothers and their pre-school children at the same time.

(7)

CHILD PLAYING GAME IN CLASS

While Teresa improves her reading skills, her four-year-old daughter Holly, attends classes down the hall.

(6)

She is being taught to express herself clearly and intelligently.

(3)

TEACHER ON CAMERA

SYNC:

"We have a lot of children that don't talk very much. At home their moms would probably let them get away with pointing and grunting and we don't do that. We encourage that they use words here."

(10)

VIDEO

MOTHER READING TO DAUGHTER

AUDIO

NARRATOR (VOICE-OVER):

Research demonstrates that the literate mother is best able to educate her children.

(5)

NARRATOR ON CAMERA

SYNC:

"In a society where educational choices are available, students are leaving school in alarming numbers. Drugs, family problems and teenage pregnancy are three of the most common contributing factors to the drop-out rate in the United States. But it doesn't take long on the street to realize the disadvantages of having an incomplete education. Fortunately - at schools like New York City's Satellite Academy - students are offered a second chance."

(28)

CLASSROOM SCENE

NARRATOR (VOICE-OVER):

The Satellite Academy's 200 students all had problems which forced them to leave school. Now these students are committed not only to receiving an education, but succeeding in later life.

(11)

VIDEO

AUDIO

DAY CARE CENTER

NARRATOR (VOICE-OVER):

Young mothers do not have to worry about finding a babysitter while they learn because the Satellite Academy has a day-care facility. Mothers drop off their children and go to class knowing that their children are well cared for.

(12)

TWO GIRLS ENTER SCHOOL

Nancy Reyes and Miriam Cruz are both Satellite Academy students with young daughters. They were out of school when their children were born, and have now chosen to return.

(9)

I asked Nancy and Miriam why they went back to school.

(2)

NANCY ON CAMERA

SYNC:

" ... so my mother would always tell me "go back to school - you need your education if you want it for the future for you and your daughter." So I started thinking and I said "it's true" ... if I want a good future for my daughter, I have to first get my education and have a future for myself."

(15)

VIDEO

AUDIO

MIRIAM ON CAMERA

SYNC:

"I was pregnant at the time in school, then I left, and I used to do pretty much the same thing Nancy would do ... stay home, watch soap operas and it used to be like ... it was so boring. The days would just drag by and I figured its better that I do go to school so that I can have something to teach my daughter. It was really necessary that I came back to school for my well-being as much as hers."

(24)

GRAPHICS/LATIN AMERICA

NARRATOR (VOICE-OVER):

In Latin America, illiteracy hinders progress. Brazil—with some 20 million adult illiterates—is a typical case.

(8)

STREET KIDS

To prevent the country's seven million homeless children from joining the ranks of illiterate adults, the Brazil Street Children Project goes into the slums and alleyways with a useful message - "with the right skills, you do not have to remain homeless forever."

(14)

WOMAN FETCHING WATER

In Tinaja de Negrete, Mexico, hundreds of young adults are using literacy skills to improve the quality of their lives.

(6)

VIDEO

AUDIO

WOMEN IN CLASS

NARRATOR (VOICE-OVER):

This programme is sponsored by Laubach Literacy International, one of the many private educational organizations which promote literacy.

(8)

WOMAN IN CLASS

Maria Vasques Venegas nearly lost her first child because she was unable to read the instructions on a bottle of medicine. Through the programme, Maria learned literacy and health care skills that eventually allowed her to open a small clinic in her home, and provide midwife services to her community.

(18)

CHILDREN'S COMPUTER CLASS

Costa Rica does not have an army. Instead, funds are used to promote literacy ... unusual in a world where about \$20,000 each year is spent on one soldier and only \$350 on a child's education.

(14)

BLACK AND WHITE NEWSREEL

In 1980, Nicaragua showed that a well-planned literacy campaign could have dramatic results.

(5)

VIDEO

AUDIO

BRIGADISTAS IN BOATS & TRUCKS

RURAL LITERACY CLASSES

TEACHERS & PUPILS WRITING TOGETHER

NARRATOR (VOICE-OVER):

The National Literacy Crusade mobilized more than one hundred thousand volunteers to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic to illiterate farmworkers. The volunteers lived in remote villages, places that had never had a school or teacher. Not only children, but also grandparents were given their first opportunity to learn to read. In less than one year, Nicaragua's literacy rate rose from about fifty to over eighty percent.

(32)

TWO WOMEN WALKING

In Guatemala, rural women do not have time to go to school. They're expected to perform countless tasks, the most time-consuming of which, is grinding the daily corn by hand. But in this village, a corn mill provided by the United Nations, shortens the workday and allows the women to attend classes.

(25)

RADIO PROGRAMME

A radio education programme sponsored by UNICEF uses many of the regions' local languages.

(5)

VIDEO

AUDIO

STUDENTS LISTENING TO RADIO

NARRATOR (VOICE-OVER):

Radio is particularly helpful in teaching literacy to people in remote places. Since in 1950's, several million people in different parts of the world have learned reading through radio and television.

(12)

PLUS/LIVE AT 5/TED KOPPEL

The media has alerted the public to the problems caused by illiteracy--while encouraging viewers to seek help through available literacy programmes.

(8)

LINWOOD JOHNSON ON CAMERA

SYNC:

"It took a lot of guts for me to walk into this building and say ... "I can't read ..."

(8)

NARRATOR ON CAMERA

SYNC:

"As we've just seen, without education, people, especially young people, are at a severe disadvantage. More than 40 years ago, the UN declared education a basic human right."

(14)

VIDEO

AUDIO

YOUNG BOY LISTENING

NARRATOR (VOICE-OVER):

An event to encourage children and families to read together was held at the UN on International Literacy Day, 1989. Among those who took part was US First Lady Barbara Bush ... the event marked the beginning of a ten-year campaign to promote literacy worldwide.

(17)

LEARNING TO COUNT W/ BOTTLECAPS

All of us ... students, teachers, parents and governments ... can help. Everyone should be able to read and write ... everyone has the right to education.

(10)

CREDITS

(MUSIC)