

Adult Learner Week Launch Gala Dinner 24 July 2008.

PRESENTATION BY PROF VERONICA MCKAY

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Honourable guests, on behalf of the KRG Mass literacy Campaign, I wish to thank the organizers of the Adult learners week, for giving KRG an opportunity to address you tonight - at this launch of the 2008 Adult Learners' Week. It is indeed an honor and also a personal pleasure for me to be here tonight to share with you the good news of KRG. I would like to begin by referring back to the keynote address given by Prof Aitchison at the same event which was held on the 5 July last year.

In order to refresh your memories, I wish to refer specifically to what Prof Aitchison referred to as the spirit of carnival. He referred to the carnival as a time when those on the outside and those who were marginalised had the opportunity speak and to bring to society a different point of view and a different way of seeing the world. He indicated that it was only at carnival time that the voices of the marginalized came together with those in the centre to join in the free and frank interaction with those at the centre to make things happen.

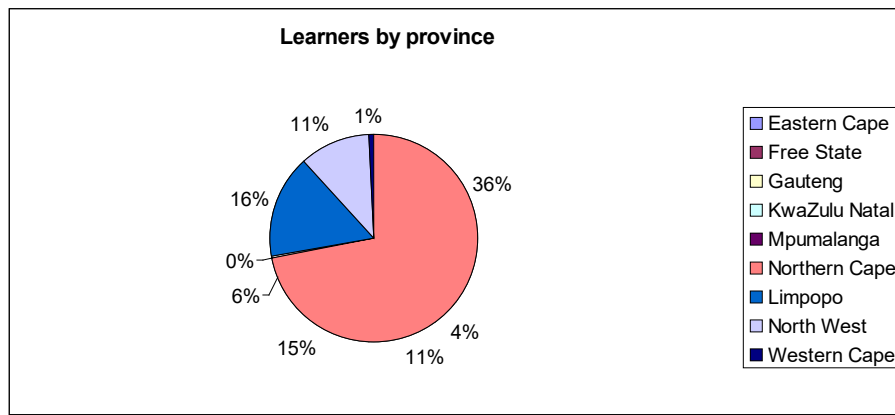
Last year, in his address, Prof Aitchison hinted about the KRG when he mentioned that we are bouyed up because of rumours of progress (however slow) towards a new mass literacy campaign.

I would like tonight to share with you how these rumours have now become evidence as KRG rapidly becomes the carnival in which more than 300000 of the marginalized and voiceless participate in the co-creation of their own learning. In my talk tonight, I will talk about how, and again I quote Prof Aitchison, "the broad mass of people who are illiterate, poor and marginalised have moved to the centre of their learning, and indeed the carnival has begun.

Power point slides

The aims of the campaign

- To teach 4,7 million people to read and write in mothertongue.
- To use spoken English.
- To develop a basic number concept and apply arithmetic operations to everyday contexts.



The initial impact of the campaign

- Community cohesion
- Local economic development (via catering and local book distribution).
- Addressal of poverty
- Service by the youth
- Service to the aged and disabled

Some statistics on the outreach

- 21% of the learners are youth
- 66% of the educators are youth
- 79% of the learners are women
- 80% of the volunteer educators are women
- 16% of the learners are above the age of 60
- 10% learners are above the age of 70
- 7.8% of the learners are disabled.

The development of 62 items of learner and educator support materials.

- Literacy primers in 11 official languages
- Numeracy books in 11 official languages
- Assessment portfolios in 11 official languages
- English for Everyone: An English oral and reading programme

- Literacy primers in Braille in the 11 official languages
- Numeracy books in Braille
- Assessment tools in 11 languages in Braille
- Volunteer’s manual
- Teacher’s lesson plans for mothertongue, English and Maths
- Coordinator’s manual

UNESCO DEFINITION OF LITERACY

Literacy as the use of reading, writing and numeracy skills in relevant contexts, including those of

- active citizenship
- health
- livelihoods
- ongoing lifelong learning.

Campaign teaching literacy across contexts

- I am learning
- My family
- My community
- My health
- Mother nature
- The world of work
- Our country and the world around us.

Concluding comments

- I would like to conclude by thanking our hosts this evening. But also by thanking those who have made a contribution to the KRG Campaign. Mostly I will be thanking people in their absence.

- I would like to begin with a special thanks to DDG/S Ms Gugu Ndebele who moved heaven and earth to ensure that the campaign was up and running at the date determined by our Minister Pandor.

- None of this would have been possible without the research, planning and design undertaken by the Ministerial Committee on Literacy. They are to be applauded for their hard work in envisioning a plan that has successfully come to fruition - with of course inevitable adaptations.

- I would like, at this event to thank the Adult Learning Network who mobilized volunteers from among its network. Also, to thank the most wonderful coordinators who with their supervisors volunteer their time and expertise to deliver service to the Campaign.

- The 24000 volunteer educators - including those who are deaf and blind themselves - who are the foot soldiers and indeed the main role players in the learning carnival.

- I need to thank all the African Language writers who ensured that we have world class linguistically and culturally sound materials.

- I also need to thank the small staff of the KRG unit in the DoE – in particular I wish express my gratitude to the COO Mr Mzwandile Mathews – who has ensured the integrity of all the campaign systems.

And a final word of thanks to Minister Pandor who after all conceptualized the idea of a Mass Literacy Campaign for South Africa.