WORLD EDUCATION

Engage, Educate, Inspire

1951-2011
We are pleased to present this report and timeline highlighting sixty years of World Education’s work improving the lives of the poor through education. Over that time, we have grown in size and scope from a teacher training center in India to an organization well known for its work in education and economic development around the globe.

We pride ourselves on our staff and the unflagging passion, energy, and commitment they bring to their work every day. This report highlights some of their achievements.

Our training programs have helped refugees fleeing civil wars prepare for life in the United States and other countries. Here in the United States, we are increasing literacy among adult refugees.

Our staff have had a long relationship with people and communities in Nepal, where the literacy rate has tripled since we arrived, and where we have focused on girls’ access to a foundation of literacy skills. We’ve worked to reduce child labor in Cambodia, and to help send those children to school. In Kenya, we have provided training to help women develop small businesses.

So much has changed since World Education got its start with one school in Uttar Pradesh in 1951. Today more than 450 World Education employees bring hope through education to an estimated half a million children and adults in 22 countries. We would certainly not be the organization we are today without the support of partners, supporters, and friends like you.

One of the things we are most proud of is an early decision to focus on education for girls and women, which is one of the most effective ways to improve the lives of individual families as well as to bring economic development to poor communities worldwide.

Thank you,

Joel H. Lamstein, President

Louis Kaplow, Board Chair
World Literacy, Inc.,
was incorporated
in New Jersey
and based in New York.

With funding from World Literacy, 73-year-old Welthy Fisher founded Literacy House in India. Literacy House trained teachers from Pakistan, Nepal, Tibet, Burma, and Cambodia using nonformal education methodology.

World Literacy was renamed World Education, Inc., on June 24, 1957.
“America is my country; the world is my home; humanity is my family.”

—WELTHY HONSINGER FISHER

1959

1960

World Education was awarded its first multi-year grant for work in India. Over the next five years, World Education trained more than 25,000 teachers.

25,000 teachers trained

1962
World Education received its first USAID grant and developed an integrated literacy model combining literacy and family planning in India. Since then, the model has been replicated worldwide.

Richmond Mayo-Smith joined World Education’s board after returning from India, where he had met Welthy a decade earlier. A career-long educator, Dick has served on the board ever since.

I came to World Education to start the National College Transition Network (NCTN). World Education already ran the successful New England Adult Basic Education (ABE)-to-College Transition project, and NCTN was a leap of faith that we could meet a similar need—helping adult educators prepare their students for the challenges of college and careers—at a national level. NCTN has been going strong ever since.

These days, I split my time between managing professional development programs and preparing Massachusetts frontline health care workers for the challenges of college. I was really attracted to both of these projects because I started college late, after my three kids were old enough to go to school themselves. I know how difficult it is to manage a family, a full-time job, and school—but people have so much to gain from higher education!

My work at World Education combines activities in the office and meeting with people from our programs wherever they happen to be teaching and learning. It makes our efforts tangible and keeps me going. Of course, I’m sort of addicted to education; I’m also a registered nurse and a doctoral candidate in higher education administration. I hope to use my EdD to influence policy and practice so that many more adults in the United States have the opportunity to go to college.

Cynthia Zafft
Education Director of the Health Care Learning Network, Boston
World Education employee since 2004
The U.S. Division launched *Focus on Basics*, a journal that created a national forum for discussing research and innovative practices in adult education. By 2008, when the last issue was published, the journal had informed the practice of thousands of teachers and administrators in the U.S.

Tom Keehn who, with his wife, Martha, joined World Education in 1969 after meeting Welthy in India in 1954, was elected president of the organization. Tom remained on the World Education board until his death at the age of 93 in 2009.

The **Integrated Family Life Education Project of the Ethiopian Women’s Association** advanced World Education’s successful model—with a specific focus on women and girls—combining literacy with important daily life skills. Ten thousand adults learned about health, nutrition, agriculture, family planning, and increasing financial security while learning to read.
1979

Welthy Fisher, 101, died at home in Connecticut. “If I do say so myself,” Welthy wrote in her autobiography, To Light a Candle, “I am a fair organizer and a bit of a hustler.” After her death, Welthy was honored by the Indian government, which issued a stamp in her likeness. She was an intellectual, activist, and a feminist—a woman decades ahead of her time.

World Education 1951-2011: Celebrating 60 Years

1980

World Education began its long relationship with people and communities in Nepal by designing an integrated literacy program, which is now the basis for Nepal’s National Literacy Campaign. Between 1981 and 2009, Nepal’s literacy rates nearly tripled—and increased five-fold for women.

1980

100,000 refugees prepared

A training program in Thailand prepared refugees from Indochina for life in the U.S. The initiative trained 10,000 Thai teachers to offer classes in English, cultural and work orientation, and preparation for American schools. More than 100,000 refugees were trained between 1980 and 1995. World Education continues its refugee work today with education programs for refugees and migrants who have fled civil war in Burma and resettled in Thailand.

“If I do say so myself, I am a fair organizer and a bit of a hustler.”
I oversee many of World Education’s programs along the Thai/Burma border. The border can be a dangerous place, and Burmese migrants live quite poorly. We train migrant school teachers to give migrants the skills they need to get along in Thai society. In addition to teaching, I help connect migrants with other trainings, like employment and financial skills. You have to work hard to gain people’s trust, respect, and understanding, but when you do, it is very rewarding.

I have a very special team. We are always coming up with ways to make our services more interesting and effective. We write workplans, exchange ideas, and help each other get things done, but we also keep track of one another on a personal and caring level. In some ways we are an extended family.

I have an at-home family, too. When I’m not at work, I love playing with my four children. But I also enjoy reading and studying for my own professional development in my free time. Working at World Education is like being in school for life. It’s fun!

Po-Ke Chanaphaopooree
Program Manager, Thailand
World Education employee since 2002
World Education launched the **Kenya Rural Enterprise Programme (K-REP)**, which provided grants, training, and technical assistance to small, primarily women-run businesses. Five years later, K-REP became a Kenyan-managed nongovernmental agency, providing microloans to thousands of poor Kenyans. By 1990, K-REP had invested $3.3 million dollars in microloans and had created more than 8,000 jobs. In 2006, then-Senator Obama called K-REP a “wonderful model that should be replicated in many parts of the world.”

In response to identified needs, World Education combined literacy with training farmers in **integrated pest management (IPM)**—an ecological approach to farming—in the Philippines. World Education went on to manage IPM efforts in Cambodia, China, Nepal, Indonesia, and the Philippines, contributing to the development of the Farmer Field School approach that has been used to train several million farmers throughout the world.
Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis launched the **Commonwealth Literacy Campaign** and contracted World Education to develop innovative trainings for volunteers to teach U.S.-born and immigrant adults to read and write.

**1989**

Supporting south-south capacity building, World Education collaborated with **Tototo Home Industries** to help thousands of Kenyan women in small-business development. World Education trained Tototo field staff who then went on to train other women from Swaziland, Mali, and South Africa in small-business management.
The Massachusetts Department of Education established the **System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES)**, a statewide staff-development system. World Education became—and remains—the SABES Central Resource Center, which develops teacher trainings and coordinates the work of five regional SABES centers located at four community colleges and the University of Massachusetts Boston.

In 2004, I had just graduated from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard when I saw a job for a Ghana program officer at World Education. I was very excited because I am from Ghana and thought it would be a perfect fit, but I didn’t have enough experience. So I took a different position, and within a few months, I was promoted to program officer of the Ambassadors’ Girls’ Scholarship Program. I have since moved back to Ghana, held the position I initially applied for, and have served as acting country director as well. World Education has truly nurtured me. The time I spent working in the home office gave me a strong sense of the organization’s culture and ethics, and I have brought them to our work in Ghana.

For the past couple of years I’ve been working with cocoa farmers. At World Education, we listen to the farmers’ needs—or girls’, or teachers’, depending on the project—and work with them to create meaningful programs. In many ways, what I do at World Education parallels the other aspects of my life. I spend time with my family, but I also am part of my community. I teach Sunday school and I volunteer with an organization called Beautiful Soul, helping social entrepreneurs succeed. Giving people the education and skills to live fulfilling lives is what fulfills my life!

**Tawiah Agyarko-Kwarteng**  
Project Director, Ghana  
World Education employee since 2004
The New England Literacy Resource Center (NELRC) was established at World Education through an inter-state agreement signed by all six New England states’ governors. The Center helps the region’s adult education programs to improve their effectiveness. Today, NELRC continues to advance its mission in collaboration with adult education policy-makers, staff developers, and practitioners, enabling adult learners to realize their goals as workers, parents, and community members.

In the United States, Health Education and Adult Literacy (HEAL) integrated early cervical and breast cancer detection with literacy instruction. HEAL involved teachers and adult learners in developing materials that address women’s emotional and cultural needs in addition to increasing their health knowledge and reading and writing skills.

Local organizations in Mali recruited World Education to help mobilize parents to improve the quality of primary school education. By 2007, World Education had trained teachers, school administrators, and parents’ associations in more than 700 schools across Mali, and thousands of out-of-school children—especially girls—entered school. World Education has replicated the model in nine countries across Africa and in Nepal.
Featuring adult learners’ writings, interviews, and illustrations, *The Change Agent* magazine teaches basic skills and critical thinking in the context of relevant social issues, including the economic crisis, immigration, and the environment.

World Education launched a major initiative to **study the impact of girls’ and women’s education** in Bolivia, Benin, Honduras, Nepal, and Peru. The studies showed that investing in women’s and girls’ education improves the lives of women and their families.

World Education implemented the **Girls’ Access to Education (GATE)** Program in Nepal. GATE equips adolescent girls with foundational literacy skills and knowledge about personal safety, health, sexuality, HIV prevention, and gender issues. The ongoing program reaches more than 6,000 girls per year.

With funding from the U.S. Department of Education, World Education partnered with Harvard Graduate School of Education, Portland State University, Rutgers University, and the University of Tennessee to form the **National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL)**. NCSALL informed policy and practice and World Education disseminated publications.

[www.nelrc.org/changeagent](http://www.nelrc.org/changeagent)
I’ve lived and worked in Africa since 1965. Growing up in Iowa, where almost everybody is of European descent, I was strangely interested in African history, and took it up in college. I signed up for the Peace Corps and spent three years in Cameroon running a handicraft cooperative, which heightened my appreciation of African culture. I came to World Education to start a project to increase parental involvement in education in Benin by strengthening parent/teacher associations (PTAs), which existed but were not functioning. We helped them become a recognized force in school management at the primary level, but women were hardly participating. We heard about a project involving school mothers’ associations in neighboring Burkina Faso, so I sent a recognizance team there.

Back in Benin, we worked with government, teachers, NGOs, and parents to create a real, made-in-Benin model that sets up mothers’ associations in accordance with each locality’s design. Today there are parents’ associations in 650 schools. The involvement of mothers helps keep girls in school and improves the school environment. It’s so simple, yet has been such an eye-opener for me. It is the model of today, and it’s the model for the future.

I have worked in many countries with many organizations, but World Education is the best. It’s a great people-to-people organization, top-to-bottom.

Al Miller
Benin Country Director
World Education employee since 1994
World Education partnered with John Snow, Inc. to mitigate the HIV epidemic in Uganda through the AIDS/HIV Integrated Model District Program. The program strengthened Uganda’s ability to meet the needs of people living with HIV.

In Ghana, Strengthening HIV/AIDS Partnerships in Education gave students easy-to-understand information about sexual health so they could make informed choices. World Education’s HIV & AIDS curriculum became the national standard at teacher-training colleges.

World Education and Mercy Corps began the Community Action Investment Project (CAIP) in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. CAIP engaged youth in community projects that developed employment skills and increased their social and economic productivity.

In Guinea, where school retention rates for girls and rural children were low, the PACEEQ Project increased community and parental participation in basic education to improve education quality and access for their children and increase student retention. PACEEQ also developed country-wide rural radio programs, adult literacy trainings, and strategies to prevent and mitigate the spread of HIV.

I’ve always felt strongly about social justice. I grew up in a university town in Uttar Pradesh, India. My parents were academics and my brother was a progressive student activist. I’m also really interested in technology and media; I’ve produced and edited documentaries and built websites. But I wouldn’t be happy at a dot.com.

The good news is that at World Education, I love my job because it combines social justice with technology and training. I spend a lot of my time developing distance-learning tools, but I also go out and deliver trainings and workshops. I think that’s the best part of my job because I see how enthusiastic people are about learning, and I get to help them do it. I’m face-to-face with people who are eager to learn and teach, and they tell me how much our trainings and resources help them do that.

Priyanka Sharma
National College Transition Network Coordinator, Boston
World Education employee since 2005
Adapting its methodology for building civil society organizations, World Education began a groundbreaking effort to unite community, military, government, and traditional leaders to end 20 years of civil war in the Casamance region of Senegal. World Education's innovative combination of cultural weekends, diplomacy, and locally-managed community investment continues to foster conflict resolution in the region today.

Engaging communities in Indonesia, World Education implemented a series of projects to protect orangutan habitats. To reduce pressure on the forest and the orangutans living there, World Education worked with farmers to introduce sustainable ways to cultivate fields, improve water management, control forest fires, and improve stewardship of the natural resources upon which their livelihoods depend.

With funding from the U.S. Department of Labor, the Brighter Futures Project in Nepal used education to reduce child labor. By 2009, approximately 43,291 children had been removed from exploitative labor, and more than 150,000 had been given the opportunity to continue their education. Ten years on, this effort continues.
The **OPTIONS Project** improved access to quality education to address the worst forms of child labor in Cambodia, combatting trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of girls in particular. With funding from the U.S. Department of Labor, the McKnight Foundation, and UNICEF, **OPTIONS reached more than 17,000 vulnerable and exploited children** over four years.

In collaboration with local NGOs and USAID, World Education launched the **Ambassadors’ Girls’ Scholarship Program**, which focused on the poor, disabled, or orphaned. By the end of its seven-year run, AGSP had enabled more than 73,000 girls and boys from 13 West African countries to remain in school.
With its own funding matched by the Lumina Foundation, World Education launched the National College Transition Network (NCTN). The NCTN works with adult education programs, professional development providers, and policymakers to enable adult learners to succeed in college and compete for jobs that pay family-sustaining wages. Today, with more than 2,500 individual and institutional members in all 50 states, NCTN also develops and delivers online courses and publications, documents promising practices, and organizes an annual national conference. The adults who ultimately benefit from NCTN’s services are typically first-generation college goers.

www.collegetransition.org

I specialize in community participation and natural resources. Even though the two go hand-in-hand—the community depends on its natural resources after all—more often it seems the two are at odds. My job is help both thrive. That can only happen if a community’s basic needs are being met. What I value most about World Education is that we work with people to figure out how to respect people’s need to have a healthy life, preserve their cultural values, and protect the environment around them.

I’ve been with World Education for quite some time, and I’ve worked on dozens of projects. I’m especially proud of the work that we did over the years to protect the orangutan habitat in Indonesia’s Tanjung Puting National Park. We were able to do that by finding alternative ways for the people who live around the park to earn a living. Now, instead of making money from illegal logging, which destroys the orangutan habitat, the community helps protect the forest from fires and has learned more efficient methods of agriculture and livestock management.

In this photo, I am with Faisal, an orangutan who was orphaned when his mother was shot. When Faisal was an adult and strong enough to take care of himself, he was re-released into the wild. I miss him, but I still get to live with my three (human) children and my lovely wife.

Handoko Widagdo
Acting Country Director, Indonesia
World Education employee since 1992
Our part of Cambodia, Prey Vong Province, is near the border with Vietnam. Many people here are poor and uneducated and have to migrate to find work. In fact, migration from our province is the highest in Cambodia. So we have lots of activities in the community to make sure that youth who are migrants or potential migrants are prepared as best they can be. We teach basic literacy and life and work skills to help them improve their learning and life outcomes.

Another thing about living near the border and in such a poor province is that girls are especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation and trafficking. Much of our work over the years has focused on teaching girls how to protect themselves from exploitation. As we educate them in basic academic skills, the girls also learn how to take care of themselves and avoid those who would do them harm. Education gives the girls confidence and teaches them to ask questions and think critically and creatively. The more they learn, the better their chances for safe and healthy lives.

I share what I learn at work with my family and friends. When I’m not at work you can find me in my garden or in the company of my neighbors, relatives, and kids. World Education helps us live safely and in harmony with each other.

**Kim Sok Sroeng**  
Program Manager, Cambodia  
World Education employee since 2002  

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Using technology to provide more learning options for adult educators, World Education formed a strategic partnership with ProLiteracy to develop the online training site, ProfessionalStudiesAE.org. By 2011, it had 61 facilitated and self-paced courses. More than 1,000 adult educators had taken classes ranging from reading and persistence to math/numeracy and multiple intelligences.
In the wake of AIDS, recognizing that children faced significant hardship, World Education created **The Bantwana Initiative** to support orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC) and families in Africa. Bantwana partners with communities and governments to support children both in- and out-of-school to access education, health, social protection, and other critical services.

In 1992, my family fled the civil war that was ravaging our home country of Bosnia and settled in Germany. Although I had been an accountant in Bosnia, my time in Germany was spent in cleaning jobs and learning German while raising our two young children.

We emigrated to the United States in 1999 and I found a midnight-shift food-service job at the airport. After work, I would go straight to English-as-a-second-language and computer classes. No matter what my background—in my case accounting—from the beginning I knew that English was the key to a better future. As my English improved, the organization where I studied hired me as their program assistant, and that's when I heard about SABES, the Massachusetts system for professional development for adult educators.

My work with SABES led me to my job at World Education, where I apply both my professional financial skills and my personal experience as an adult English language learner. I am so proud that my work helps other people learn how to speak English, find work, pursue citizenship, and contribute to the cultural, political, and economic richness of this society as I do.

**Ruzica Banovic**
SABES CRC Program Coordinator, Boston
World Education employee since 2006
The Batonga Foundation, begun by internationally-known singer and girls’ advocate Angelique Kidjo, selected World Education as its partner in supporting girls’ education through secondary school and beyond. Batonga provides 305 girls from Benin and Mali with access to education through scholarships that covered school fees, uniforms, and scholastic material. Batonga also trained mentors to protect the welfare of the scholars and provide them with life skills and career training.

World Education developed a career planning curriculum guide and initiated trainings to help adult educators improve adults’ understanding of different career options. The trainings served more than 1,200 adult learners in 22 states.
World Education partnered with UNICEF and the Government of Nepal on Schools as Zones of Peace to ensure that children in Nepal not miss school as a result of conflict, school closures, or intimidation. The ongoing program works in conflict areas to improve the quality of education at 650 regional schools and assures that more than 300,000 children are able to attend them safely.

World Education’s National College Transition Network and Jobs for the Future cofounded the National Accelerating Opportunity Initiative encompassing 11 states and their adult education and community college systems. Funded by a consortium of national foundations led by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, this initiative aims to dramatically increase the number of low-skilled adults in the U.S. who complete college credentials with labor market value.
Recognizing that 85% of cocoa farmers in Ghana have a mobile phone, World Education implemented the CocoaLink project to connect cocoa farmers to information about farming, child labor prevention, safety, crop disease prevention, and post-harvest production via mobile technology.

The Bantwana Initiative’s multisectoral school health assessment initiative works with clinics, communities, and schools to bring health and nutritional services to 14,000 children in Tanzania through the USAID-funded Pamoja Tuwalee project.
I first came to World Education through the AIM project in 2003, where I managed programs for orphans and vulnerable children and people living with AIDS. I left in 2005 to lead the Uganda Women’s Effort to Save Orphans (UWESO), a local organization with an international reputation for helping orphans and vulnerable children. I found myself working with World Education again, on a joint proposal for USAID. Toward the end of my tenure, World Education invited me to come to Zimbabwe as country director for a new Bantwana program.

It was an offer I couldn’t refuse, and in 2008, I left my home country of Uganda to open the third office for Bantwana, the USAID-funded project for orphans and vulnerable children. We started the project during the most difficult time in Zimbabwe’s modern history. Despite hyper-inflation and scant access to basic social services, we have developed a program that ensures access to education, health, and protection for an average of 70,000 children every year.

I love children—I have four of my own—and I love writing. Years ago, I taught primary school. Story time was the one lesson we all enjoyed, so I started writing children’s fiction, and wound up getting published and winning an award! I don’t have time for that anymore, but I don’t mind because at Bantwana we write real-life stories for children every day!

Susan Kajura
Bantwana Country Director, Zimbabwe
World Education employee since 2003
More than 450 World Education employees bring literacy to over half a million children and adults in 22 countries.
...and still going...