

OPENING A NEW DOOR; ADULT LITERACY IN MOTHER TONGUE.....

In Bangladesh a large number of adults have limited literacy skills, including many from minority ethnic groups. The Bangladesh Government has initiated many adult literacy programs where members of these communities get the opportunity to learn basic literacy in the national language. However, it can be challenging to acquire literacy skills in a second language.

SIL Bangladesh is known as a multilingual organization, working with ethnolinguistic groups to preserve their languages and cultures and also to help them reach their development goals. As part of this work, SIL Bangladesh has started various development programs with different communities, including adult literacy programs. Recently we have started producing adult literacy materials in the mother tongue for the first time. The goal is not only to develop the learners' ability in reading and writing in their mother tongue, but also to give people access to more knowledge about development issues and to develop their thinking skills.



The Usoi and Kol people want adults to have a chance to learn in their mother tongue. To help fulfill their ambitions, SIL Bangladesh arranged a workshop to develop mother tongue resources in the Usoi and Kol languages. During the workshop, the participants went through their spelling rules and identified words in their mother tongues to be part of their primers.

They also translated texts on development into their languages, trying to follow the spelling rules. Both communities chose ten themes for their adult literacy programs which relate to their cultures and will help them to develop their

“They will be able to interact with those outside their communities, while retaining the beauty of their own languages and cultures.”

For more information on **topics mentioned in this newsletter**, please go to .
[http://https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kol_language_\(Bangladesh\)](http://https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kol_language_(Bangladesh))
<http://www-01.sil.org/silesr/2011/silesr2011-038.pdf>

**... SNAPSHOTS ...
WHAT'S PLANNED FOR
THIS MONTH**

Feb: 12-15 — Leadership and Planning Meeting with GNG Leaders of Kol, Koda, Koch and Mahle Communities.

Feb: 12- 28 — Adult

Literacy groups

evaluations with Kol, Koch and Mahle communities.

Feb: 19- 23 — AL MT Material Development Workshop-4 with Usoi community.

SIL BANGLADESH
LANGUAGE, EDUCATION, AND DEVELOPMENT

SIL

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livelihoods. SIL Bangladesh has been working with the Kol community for many years and they already have a mother tongue primer for children. The materials for this adult literacy program, especially the primer, have been designed to reflect a socio-cultural model of literacy acquisition. Learners are encouraged to become capable readers and writers of the text, participate in activities, use their knowledge, and analyze the main learning from the topic themes. Therefore, in each lesson the learners will read a text, talk about it, ask questions about it, tell others about it, create new texts from it and apply the text to their own lives.

Numeracy is an important part of literacy. SIL Bangladesh is also working to develop a math book for adult learners. The math book, which will be taught alongside the primer, includes topics related to everyday life such as telling the time, reading a calendar, memorizing times tables, adding and subtracting weights and measures and making a budget. Understanding number patterns and memorizing facts can sharpen thinking skills and allow adults to do mental sums quickly in the market place. They will also be able to help their children with their studies.

This adult literacy program in the mother tongue adds a new chapter to SIL Bangladesh's history. As well as promoting multilingual education for children, adults are also going to learn to read and write in their own languages. SIL's desire is to see empowerment in these communities so that adults are able to meet their financial goals and can improve their quality of life. They will be able to interact with those outside their communities, while retaining the beauty of their own languages and cultures.

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***SIL Bangladesh helps communities achieve their development goals while retaining their ethnolinguistic identities.
SIL Bangladesh is an organization in SIL International's LEAD Asia network — Language, Education, and Development.***