

International Literacy Day

Since 1967, International Literacy Day has been celebrated around the world on September 8. It is a reminder to all of us that literacy is an important tool for creating a more just, peaceful, and sustainable society.

Global adult literacy is about 86.3% for ages 15+, but with significant variation, while developed countries have rates over 96% and least developed countries around 65%. In Canada, nearly half of adults (49%) have literacy skills below high school level, affecting their ability to function in daily life and the economy.

This year, International Literacy Day (ILD) will be celebrated under the theme of **"Promoting literacy in the digital era."** "While digital tools can help expand learning opportunities for marginalised groups ... this digital shift also risks creating **double marginalisation** – exclusion not only from traditional literacy learning but also from the benefits of the digital age. Digitalisation also raises other concerns, including privacy issues, privacy, digital surveillance, reinforced biases, ethics, the risk of passive consumption, and environmental impacts."

(<https://www.unesco.org/en/days/literacy>)

How can we create a culture of literacy?

- Publicly celebrate reading by organizing events like books launches or community reading nights
- Volunteer to be a "reading buddy" to younger ones
- Start a book drive: collect new or gently used books and donate them to local schools, libraries or literacy organizations in need
- Volunteer as a tutor to community members
- Advocate for literacy by raising awareness through social media and community discussions

Literacy is a means to a solidarity that require us to actively commit to fostering a culture of compassion and interconnectedness, moving to a social commitment for the common good. In the words of Pope Francis: "Solidarity, as a moral virtue and social attitude born of personal conversion, calls for commitment on the part of those responsible for education and formation."

Submitted by Sue Lubowitz, OPC Service Chair