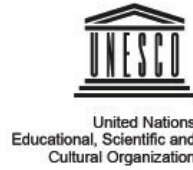




united world schools
teach the unreachable



**United Kingdom
National Commission
for UNESCO**

For immediate release

Education charity wins prestigious UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize for work with ethnic-minority children in Myanmar

[United World Schools](#), a global education NGO based in the UK, have been awarded the [UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize](#) for their work in improving literacy rates in remote regions of Myanmar. Their innovative programmes target ethnic-minority children who cannot attend government schools as they do not speak the national language, Burmese, in which the curriculum is taught. United World Schools provides primary education to these children by employing and training local teachers who can speak ethnic-minority languages.

The UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize was launched in 1989 and rewards the activities of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) displaying merit and achieving particularly effective results in contributing to the fight for literacy. It gives special consideration to the creation, development and dissemination of mother-tongue language education programmes in developing countries. United World Schools is the first UK-based organisation to win the award. The prize consists of a sum of US\$20,000, a silver medal and a certificate.

The prize comes at a crucial time as education providers worldwide grapple with how to continue schooling during the Covid-19 pandemic. United World Schools have been providing low-tech distance education to children in Myanmar while schools have been closed. They are now providing local-level support to ensure the safe reopening of schools.

Matthew Lodge, UK Ambassador to UNESCO, said “On behalf of the UK Delegation to UNESCO, I would like to offer our heartfelt congratulations to United World Schools on winning the prestigious UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize. This is a fitting recognition for their community project in a remote part of Myanmar. United World Schools have been undertaking this project in close cooperation with the local government, in order to provide the tools so that local children are able to receive their basic education in their native language. This project opens up new opportunities for children, and is an excellent example of how dedication, partnership and commitment can help in the battle against illiteracy and in the protection of indigenous languages, traditions and culture.”

Dr Kay Khaing Win, United World Schools Myanmar Country Director, said: “We are honoured UNESCO have recognised our work in Myanmar and the tremendous impact of our locally-recruited teachers. Thanks to them, thousands of children who speak minority languages are able to access a quality education. We hope this prize will make them feel even more proud of the amazing work they are doing and motivate them to continue delivering mother-tongue based education.”

Ends



united world schools
teach the unreached



**United Kingdom
National Commission**
for UNESCO

Notes to editors:

1. About United World Schools

United World Schools (UWS) is a UK-based charity working in some of the world's poorest regions to give every child access to free education. They partner with local communities and supporters around the world to establish schools and teach the unreached. Since 2009, they have reached over 35,000 children across Cambodia, Myanmar and Nepal.

2. United World Schools' work in Myanmar

In Myanmar, United World Schools have built 61 schools that provide 3,800 previously out-of-school children from ethnic minority communities in Myanmar's Shan State with access to primary education. They collaborate with parents and local leaders to form governing bodies who support hiring community teachers. By employing and training community members as teachers, they help communities to overcome the barriers presented by the Burmese-only national education system, allowing children to learn in their mother tongue while bringing employment and capacity building opportunities to the teachers. As the students' levels of Burmese improve, they also begin taking lessons with Burmese-speaking teachers provided through United World Schools' partnership with local governments. Through this approach, they provide highly vulnerable and historically marginalised communities with a life-changing opportunity to access the national education system and learn to read, write, and count.

3. For more information, images or quotes, please contact Helen Packer at helen@unitedworldschools.org or call her on +44 (0) 7815287237.