

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 8TH SEPTEMBER 2022 8:00AM BST

UK education non-profit wins prestigious UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize for work promoting science and language literacy

Native Scientist, a non-profit organisation based in the UK, has been awarded the [UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize](#) for promoting science and language literacy among migrant and ethnic minority pupils across Europe. The annual Prize ties in with [International Literacy Day](#) on 8th September 2022, which this year focuses on rethinking the fundamental importance of literacy learning spaces to build resilience and ensure quality, equitable and inclusive learning spaces for all.

Migrant and ethnic minority pupils in Europe (5.4 million in Europe) are twice as likely as non-migrant pupils to underachieve, leave school early or be unemployed. Native Scientist is helping to tackle this educational disadvantage by promoting scientific and language literacy through connecting pupils (age 6-15) with international professionals in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine (STEMM) who share a common heritage and speak the same native language. Since 2013, this innovative approach has organised 300 workshops in 13 different languages across 12 European countries, and created over 20,000 meaningful connections between children and scientists. Native Scientist also trains international STEM professionals to act as educators and communicators.

The UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize was launched in 1989 and rewards the activities of NGOs that display effective results in contributing to the fight for literacy. The Prize gives special consideration to education programmes that contribute to developing, developing and disseminating mother-tongue languages in developing countries. The Prize consists 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 after the Covid-19 pandemic. In the aftermath of the pandemic, nearly 24 million learners might never return to formal education, out of which, 11 million are projected to be girls and young women. Native Scientist's goal is to have established 100,000 meaningful connections between children and scientists by 2030.

Laura Davies, UK Ambassador to UNESCO, said, *“Native Scientist is a powerful example of how science can teach language, increasing the aspirations and self-esteem of migrant pupils across Europe, and supporting them to reach their full potential regardless of their background. Heartfelt congratulations to them for winning the prestigious UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize”*

Dr Joana Moscoso, co-founder and director of Native Scientist, said “We are proud to receive this important recognition. It’s an acknowledgement of the hard work everyone at Native does and of the impact our work has on children and teachers across Europe. A special thanks to Dr Rafael Galupa, a long-lasting volunteer collaborator at Native Scientist who pushed forward and prepared the application.”

James Bridge, Secretary-General of the UK National Commission for UNESCO said, *"Native Scientist winning the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize is an exceptional achievement. It is a tribute to Native Scientist, their partners, and the scientists and pupils. The work will lead to improved educational outcomes for the children across the board and opportunities for them and their community."*

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Notes to editors:

- **About Native Scientist**

Founded in 2012, Native Scientist is a pan-European non-profit organisation connecting underserved children with scientists. It exists to broaden children's horizons and promote scientific literacy. For more information see: <https://www.nativescientist.com/>

- **For more information**

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