

## All-female newspaper among winners of UN literacy awards



3 August 2009 – A newspaper produced entirely by women in rural India is among the four winners of this year's Literacy Prizes awarded by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**) in recognition of innovative programmes designed to teach women, adolescents and other marginalized populations how to read and write.

The fortnightly newspaper – distributed to more than 20,000 readers in Uttar Pradesh, northern India – is entirely created and marketed by newly literate "low caste" women who are training as journalists.

The other prizes went to the Tin Tau's reading skills programme in Burkina Faso, which focuses on gender and community development; the Pashai Language Development Project in Afghanistan, which provides literacy, livelihood, public health and nutrition education to about 1,000 ethnic minority Pashai men and women annually; and a continuing education programme in the Philippines, which attempts to eliminate illiteracy in the 49 villages of the Agoo municipality.

An honourable mention also went to a programme in Bhutan for its holistic approach to literacy and its success in reaching remote areas, with an emphasis on literacy as an integral part of the country's "Gross National Happiness," as well as its focus on adults and out-of-school youth, particularly women and girls.

The theme for this year's awards was "Literacy and Empowerment," and the laureates were proclaimed by the Director-General of UNESCO, Koïchiro Matsuura, on the recommendation of an international jury.

The award ceremony will be held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 8 September to coincide with International Literacy Day.