



Kemendikdasmen

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Press Release

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On the 60th International Literacy Day, Ministry Calls for Literacy That Makes a Difference

Jakarta, 8 September 2026 — Six decades after the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) proclaimed International Literacy Day (ILD) in 1966, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education is calling for ILD 2026 to serve as an opportunity to broaden the meaning of literacy and strengthen its impact in addressing social and environmental change, digital technology, and artificial intelligence.

Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Abdul Mu'ti said the occasion serves as a reminder that many people still lack access to their basic rights, including the right to learn, understand, and develop. "This is a moment for reflection and concrete action for all of us. Literacy today has a much broader meaning. It is no longer enough to define literacy simply as the ability to read and write," he said in Jakarta on Tuesday, 8 September, during the 2026 International Literacy Day webinar.

According to Abdul Mu'ti, amid social change, the environmental crisis, advances in digital technology and the development of artificial intelligence, people need to be able to assess information critically, reflect on the content they consume, engage in lifelong learning, and use knowledge to improve their lives and the environment.

This year is particularly significant as it marks the 60th anniversary of International Literacy Day. Under the global theme "Literacy for People, the Planet and Prosperity," Indonesia has adapted the theme as "Literacy for People, the Universe and Prosperity."

Director General of Secondary and Special Education at the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Tatang Muttaqin said literacy should empower people, enable them to live together with dignity, help them understand their connection to the environment, and equip them with the skills needed to build better lives. "Therefore, literacy must not be understood narrowly. International Literacy Day is not simply about remembering the past; it is about ensuring that literacy remains a foundation for people to face the future," he said.

Tatang said 60 years of International Literacy Day have shown that as the world changes, literacy must continue to evolve. "In the past, we fought to ensure that everyone could read and write. Today, the challenge is much broader. We must be able to read information, distinguish what is accurate from what is misleading, think critically when using technology, use artificial intelligence wisely when making decisions, and continue learning throughout our lives," he said.

Three words capture the journey of literacy. First, people, because literacy should empower individuals and enable them to live together with dignity. Second, the universe, because we do not only read books; we also need to "read" nature and understand our responsibility to the Earth. Third, prosperity, because knowledge should ultimately lead to greater opportunities, productivity and a better quality of life.



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Santosh Khatri, Chief of Education at the UNESCO Regional Office in Jakarta, said the world has made significant progress over the past 60 years. Today, more than 88% of adults worldwide are literate. However, at least 739 million adults around the world still lack basic literacy skills, and nearly two-thirds of them are women.

“Beyond numbers and words, literacy is also about having the knowledge, skills and confidence to help shape a better world,” Santosh said.

“May literacy continue to open doors to learning, ownership, participation and greater inclusion for the future of everyone in Indonesia,” he said.

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