



# AHEAD



## Literacy improves quality of life!

**Published by: Action for Health and Employment Access Development (AHEAD)**

*Dieudonne Ruturwa MPH and Humanitarian specialist, CEO*

*Pastor Joseph Mbarushamahoro, Africa Nazarene Ministries, Bangor ME*

*Pastor Yves Ruterera, Africa Nazarene Ministries, Bangor ME*

*Date: May 16, 2025*



## 1. Background

### 1.1. AHEAD



Dieudonne Ruturwa holds a Master's degree in Public Health and Master's degree in International Cooperation & Humanitarian Aid. Mr. Ruturwa has extensive work experience in the health sector, program design, data analysis, education, home care, and providing quality services to populations in need.

Serving as Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Action for Health and Employment access development (AHEAD), Mr. Ruturwa pays attention to quality care, dignity, and respect for every human being. Committed to serving others, Mr. Ruturwa sees everyone's role as essential in the journey towards an equitable society and attainment of countries' sustainable development goals. With AHEAD you learn English much faster through one-on-one tutoring. AHEAD started its programs in Ohio, is now working in Maine, and plans to extend support to different states of the United States of America. Let us join efforts to advance English literacy or English as Second Language (ESL) especially among the immigrant population.

### 1.2. Nazarene church

The Church of Nazarene brings together individuals and families who believe in Jesus Christ.

We serve those in need of salvation and those who have decided to make Jesus as the Lord of their lives, sharing in Christian fellowship, and seeking to strengthen each other in faith development through worship, preaching, training, and helping others. We strive to express the compassion of Jesus Christ to all persons along with our personal commitment to Christ.

While the primary motive of the church is to glorify God, we are also called to actively participate in his mission of reconciling the world to himself.

**1.3. Mission statement:** Evangelism, Sanctification, Discipleship and compassion.

## 2. Evidence on literacy <sup>1</sup>

2.1. Global data<sup>2</sup>: The evidence shows that globally, the overall literacy rate stands at a commendable level. For individuals aged 15 and above, the combined literacy rate for both genders is 86.3%. Males in this age group exhibit a literacy rate of 90%, with females closely trailing at 82.7%. Notably, substantial variations exist between countries. Developed nations consistently boast adult literacy rates of 96% or higher, while the least developed countries struggle with an average literacy rate of just 65%.

Accurate cross-country comparisons of literacy rates face challenges due to two primary factors: irregular reporting practices among countries, and divergent definitions of what constitutes literacy.

---

<sup>1</sup> [2024-2025 Literacy Statistics | National Literacy](#)

<sup>2</sup> World Population review: [Literacy Rate by Country 2025](#)

## 2.2. Literacy in the USA<sup>3</sup>

- a. On average, 79% of U.S. adults nationwide are literate in 2024.
- b. 21% of adults in the U.S. are illiterate in 2024.
- c. 54% of adults have a literacy below a 6th-grade level (20% are below 5th-grade level).
- d. Low levels of literacy costs the U.S. up to 2.2 trillion per year.
- e. 34% of adults lacking literacy proficiency were born outside the US.

**2.3. Language barriers:** One of the pillars of AHEAD is to advance adult education and ESL programs to needy populations in the USA and all over the world.

Evidence tells us that before resettlement, refugees may have spent between 5 and 20 years in refugee camps where they had less opportunities for education.

experience. While I was working with several refugee groups from the Eastern and Southern Africa region in the USA, I found myself constantly impressed and amazed by the great efforts that immigrants are making to get integrated into American society.

You would think that the struggles faced by refugees would be over once they arrived in the USA, a country of their dreams, but it is not because they face new challenges from language barriers that lead to various difficulties.

---

<sup>3</sup> [2024-2025 Literacy Statistics | National Literacy](#)

### 3. Difficulties due to language barriers

- (a) **Difficulty speaking and learning English:** Experience shows that many refugees and immigrants take ESL classes, but finding time between jobs and caring for kids can be difficult, especially if you weren't literate in your native tongue to begin with.
- (b) **Raising children and helping them succeed in school:** One of the biggest obstacles refugees and immigrant parents report is raising their children in a new, unfamiliar culture. Parents often find that their children are quickly "Americanized," which may be at odds with their own culture.
- (c) **Securing work:** While most refugees and immigrants are happy to take whatever job is available when they first enter the country, finding a job and slowly moving up the ladder is incredibly difficult. Refugees and immigrants who are educated and who formerly had good jobs back home, find it frustrating that they can't obtain the same jobs here. Employers typically prefer work experience within the US, and certifications outside of the US frequently don't transfer.
- (d) **Securing housing:** Most newcomers face challenges finding a place to live when they arrive. Some large families choose to live together, creating stressful, noisy environments that are hardly conducive to studying or resting.



- (e) **Accessing services:** Difficulty speaking English, trouble taking off work, and limited transportation makes life difficult.
- (f) **Accessing mental health services:** Mental health issues are especially problematic. Many times, refugees and immigrants have been exposed to violence, rape, even torture, but they may not know how to seek help. Furthermore, mental health issues are taboo in many cultures, creating an additional barrier for those in need.
- (g) **Transportation:** Like language barriers, trouble with transportation is an issue that affects nearly every aspect of life for refugees and immigrants. Obtaining a driver's license, whether documented or not, is extremely difficult for a variety of reasons. For those who don't speak English, a translator is needed, and they aren't easy to come by. Also, the driver must be literate in order to pass the written exam.
- (h) **Cultural barriers:** Again, just like transportation and trouble speaking English, cultural barriers transcend each and every aspect of life for refugees and immigrants.

**4. Tutoring:** This approach of education is a proven method that contributes to improving learners' performance and helps them feel equipped with the knowledge they need to excel in the area they are focused on. As a **person-centered approach**, tutoring offers the advantages of being flexible to the schedule of the learner and teacher. With a tutoring approach, the student has the opportunity to express his/her feelings and gaps are closed to make him/her comfortable and effective in his or her area of work.

AHEAD has noted that tutoring builds confidence in the learners and prepares them to succeed.



*Launching of the ESL program at Nazarene Church Bangor ME May 10, 2025*

**5. Identification of Tutors:** As a charity organization, AHEAD promotes volunteerism. In the State of Maine, AHEAD has built partnerships with Literacy Volunteers of Bangor and Nazarene Church to advance literacy, adult education, and ESL. Volunteers are encouraged to contact us for enrollment and orientation sessions.

**6. About GED/HiSET:** HiSET stands for High School Equivalency Test. Just like the GED, passing the HiSET exam will allow you to obtain a high school equivalency diploma.

(a) **How many subjects?** *The HiSET is composed of five subjects:*

- ☐ **Math**
- ☐ **Reading**
- ☐ **Science**
- ☐ **Social Studies**
- ☐ **Writing**

You will take five separate tests that together make up the entire HiSET exam. You can schedule them one at a time as you are ready to take them. AHEAD and its partners can help you get a tutor to help prepare for the test. In Maine, HiSET exams are in English only.

- (b) **Who Can Take the HiSET Exam?** In order to take the GED, you can't be enrolled in a high school adult education program and must be at least 16 years old. If you meet these qualifications, you are eligible to take the test.
- (c) **How Do You Take the HiSET /GED Exam?** The HiSET exams are administered in-person at an official HiSET testing center. In preparation for your tests, you will enroll with a local adult education program and prepare with online and print materials and practice tests with your tutor.
- (d) **Earn Your HiSET Today:** Earning your HiSET is possible—more than 20 million people have received theirs and you can too! The doors and opportunities it will open for you will be life-changing.



The **Senior Pastor Joseph Mbarushamahoro** of Africa Nazarene Ministries is dedicated to help community members in the state of Maine. Talking about education, he cited the word of God that says:

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” – Proverbs 22:6

“We have decided to partner with charity organizations to ensure that our church members have access to social services. Improving English skills is among top priorities,” reiterated Pastor Joseph.



**Past Yves Ruterera** says we are grateful to Nazarene Church for any support rendered to Africa Nazarene Ministries. *He reiterated by saying, “True education in faith starts with revering and honoring God. Without the fear of the Lord, knowledge and wisdom become meaningless. Understanding the importance of submission and humility opens the doors to acquiring true*

*knowledge.” We are grateful to AHEAD and Literacy Volunteers of Bangor for such an important program to advance literacy and English learning for our church members and community members in Bangor, ME.*



## Literacy Volunteers of Bangor

has helped immigrants in this region learn English, understand American customs, and provided a pathway for U.S. citizenship for more than 55 years. Its staff understand the critical importance that improved literacy provides an immigrant in areas of education, employment, family,

health, and community. As its name implies, Literacy Volunteers trains volunteers from the community to work individually with its student immigrants so that they can improve their literacy and their lives. Our staff (Denise Lilly, Heather McCarthy, Kandi Robinson, and Mary Marin Taylor) look forward to our partnership with **AHEAD**.

## *Did you know that ...*

- ☐ “There is no end to education. It is not that you read a book, pass an examination, and finish with education. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning.” — Jiddu Krishnamurti
- ☐ “Don't be afraid to ask questions. Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. I do that every day. Asking for help isn't a sign of weakness, it's a sign of strength. It shows you have the courage to Barack Obama
- ☐ “We now accept the fact that learning is a lifelong process of keeping abreast of change. And the most pressing task is to teach people how to learn.” — Peter Drucker
- ☐ “Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.” — Mahatma Gandhi
- ☐ “Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.” — Benjamin Franklin
- ☐ “Develop a passion for learning. If you do, you will never cease to grow.” — Anthony J. D'Angelo

- “One hour per day of study in your chosen field is all it takes. One hour per day of study will put you at the top of your field within three years. Within five years you’ll be a national authority. In seven years, you can be one of the best people in the world at what you do.” — Earl Nightingale
- “You don’t understand anything until you learn it in more than one way.” — Marvin Minsky
- “He who laughs most, learns best.” — John Cleese
- “Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young.” — Henry Ford
- “Change is the end result of all true learning.” — Leo Buscaglia

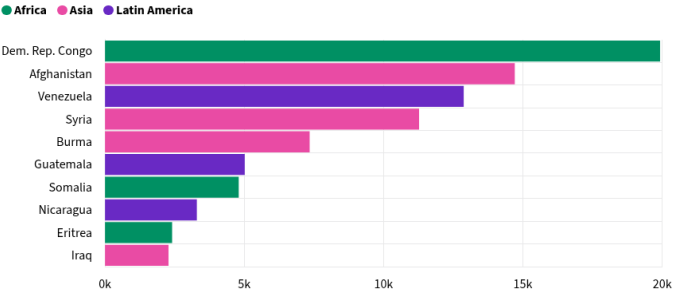


**Leadership of Nazarene Church, Bangor ME lead a talk on advancing Literacy, ESL and Adult education.**



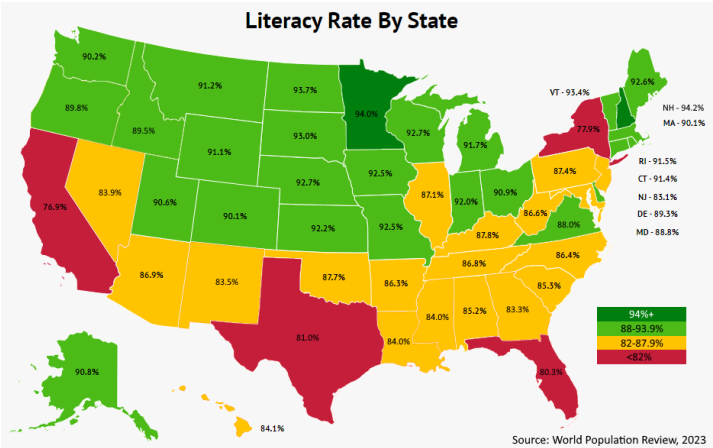
The largest group of refugees came from Dem. Rep. Congo in 2024

Refugee admissions by country in fiscal year 2024



Source:

USA FACTS



Nazarene Church, Event of April 26, 2025 Prayer for needy population

English & HiSET (GED) Tutoring Available

**Action for Health and Employment's  
Access Development  
AHEAD**

Tel. 937-344-6916

Email: [actionforhealth4@gmail.com](mailto:actionforhealth4@gmail.com)

Web site: [aahead.org](http://aahead.org)



- Action for Health and Employment's Access Development (**AHEAD**) is a charity organization dedicated to help and **advocate for peace, education and bright future for all.**

AHEAD is an IRS 501 (C) (3) nonprofit organization

- AHEAD empowers needy population to improve quality of life through education, financial literacy and facilitation to access social services
- AHEAD values partnerships with Faith-based, human -rights, humanitarian organizations and health institutions in order to enhance quality of life and provide a pathway that benefits both our families and our workforce.



To advance adult literacy, ESL HiSET /GED you can donate @

Scan QR code:



Your donation is most welcome @  **AHEAD**

➤ A Cheque @: [Action for Health and Employment Access](#)

➤ Wright - Patt Credit Union

