

Una de cada cinco personas no puede leer este texto

Universidad de Deusto Filología Inglesa

Ariane and Judit

Dear child,

Even though you cannot read or write, we want you to know that you are part of a world full of opportunities. Those impediments you are exposed to are not an obstacle for you to grow as a person. From our developed society we want to keep trying not to lose hope.

The first step has been already taken: become conscious with the cause. Now comes the most difficult part, make societies take side with us. A lot of processes are in progress but they do not seem to act, as we see that poverty still exists; and many children like you, cannot have many privileges like free education, school material, teachers and so on.

Now, however, the project we are going to take part in is going to make hard efforts to increase the number of literate children, promote free education and provide the resources that will make possible a better education for all.

All these reasons show that there is no need to worry because we are committed and concerned. The process has already begun, and your chance will come soon.

Yours sincerely,
Ariane and Judit

**La
Gran
Lectura**



Janire Saez

Dear Lucas,

How are things going lately? And how are your studies going? I hope everything is alright; at least you have the chance to attend to class. Actually, you will wonder why I say this; well, recently I have come from a trip to Ethiopia. I am sorry of what I am going to tell in this letter as it is not as cheerful as other times, but I do not feel happy when thinking about the lack of education in so many countries.

In many societies, parents cannot afford sending their children to school. For most children in the South, childhood is a period of quickly growing into little adults. At the age of 4, girls start to assume housework and have to help their mothers with all kind of tasks. Little boys are sent to work and many times they have to develop risky tasks. This fact has a name, and it is called: children exploitation.

Besides, the fortunate children who have the possibility of attending to school find the following situation: schools run out of materials and teachers. A single teacher, who many times is not well trained, could bear a class of 100 students. We cannot let this happen as this is totally unfair. Moreover, this fact is easy to solve as we can just sent school material to these countries and contribute with their education.

The most annoying thing is that these people have to live like that as a result of our good-living. The world has an imbalance: some societies are living extremely well while other societies are in extreme poverty; and how can we put up with that and keep on going on our journey? I do not know too much about politics, but in my opinion all the countries should contribute to help these “third world” societies until the imbalance decreases and they can afford the basic necessities of their countries.

What astonishes me most is the fact of the importance of education which we do not realize since it is something normal for us. After health, education is the most important thing for which a person must have a right to. I consider education the pillar of everything. Education is everything you see and you get since you are a child, and depending on that you will form your personality and your knowledge, and as a result, your life will be better or worse.

As I conclusion I just want to ask: do you still think that you sometimes live badly? Or do you still think that private schools are necessary? The answer is clear, what is

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necessary is a school for everybody. In order to achieve that, we must contribute to help them in the way that we can or we consider appropriate.

Well Lucas, after all this, I do not expect you to miss class at least for a good while.

Best wishes

Janire Saez

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Lorena Sainz-Maza

29th of March 2009

Dear son,

It is five years since you went to the New World where there are high and modern buildings, four-lane motorways, shops, schools and so forth, and we still miss you more than the first day. We miss your knowledge and your kindness to share every word you learnt in those books you found in the middle of nowhere. You used to spend all day and night trying to figure out what was written down, but there was no way to guess it. However, everything changed when that European woman turned up in your life.

You were all knowledge and wisdom, and there is absolutely no doubt you still are. She encouraged you so effusively to learn how to read and write the English language that I was astonished when I realised how fast you were able to learn. Both, you and Sarah, used to read a passage of an English book to me and your siblings and, then, you always explained what each word meant in order to make us become as smart as you were.

Nevertheless, this was nothing in comparison to what you and Sarah did for our community. You gave life back to the people. I remember it clearly as if it was yesterday. You gathered all the inhabitants of our small village and you read them some pages of a book called *Pride and Prejudice*. Nobody understood anything, but there you were to explain the story and teach us all the curiosities of that weird language. Every Sunday, after assisting the mass, we gathered and you read to us a couple of pages of that book. You were our source of wisdom and for some of us, you were regarded as God. It was as if every week a dose of wisdom ran through our veins and everybody got addicted to the idea of learning.

It was that enthusiasm that motivated all the inhabitants to build a hut which was called "Congo's School" and in which every day you could teach an English lesson with Sarah's help. The day of the inauguration, all the village was dressed up with their best clothes and everybody was singing and dancing cheerfully. Thanks to you, the community became wealthy and achieved the right that every human being should have: Education.

However, this good environment turned into a nightmare when you left the village in order to undertake your adventure to Europe with your fiancée. As you were not here to teach us, people started to leave aside school and they did not pay attention to books and

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literature any more. What is more, some men wanted to burn down the school because they thought the school was breaking up their families.

Son, I know that I had to tell you this before, but I was scared because I did not want you to feel ashamed of your mother for not knowing how to handle this situation, but now, more than never, I need your help. I need you to do something for our community; we are losing our most important human right, and moreover, as time goes by our knowledge and wisdom are disappearing. Children are no longer reading or learning how to write, they are working the lands again. I feel desperate and nobody wants to listen to me.

Sweetheart, come home, please, help us recover what we developed one day with our effort because we need our Education, as it is the only way to make our country wealthy.

Lots of love,

Your mum

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Estibaliz Vivanco

Great Chief Obama,

Yes, you have finally shown us that you can. However, to be honest, I was absolutely sure that you were to be named president from the very beginning, long before watching it in that vacant, though word full, shallow box which seems to have totally bewildered the mind of our young people making them forget their origins, their ancestors, that is, who they are. Thus, as I say, and as odd as it may seem to you, we knew you would become *Great Chief* even before primary elections were held. Still, we did not find it out in the emptiness of those verbiage-loaded-sheets that you call newspapers, or in those book-infested rooms that you call libraries. We did not hear it in the radio either or were told about it through those artificial satellites that incessantly spin around the defenceless Mother Earth.

The whole civilization on which America is built is, in fact, yet utterly alien to us, the native people of this country; your alphabet, those signs that you draw and understand are absolutely strange and unknown to us. Our language cannot be written with pencils or pens, but on the breeze of the wind, on sea streams; through the flash of a firefly at night, the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime; the little shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset. We understand the language of human beings, and feel the message of the ones you regard as perished, who are not among us any more but who do have a soul.

If the truth be known, your language has only provided us with complications and worries, to the extent of making us feel highly ill at ease in our own fatherland, with no other choice but to lead an uninsured existence, forever trapped between two very different and incompatible worlds. Illiterates, as you call us, cannot even read a restaurant menu, are unable to understand the bank bills, cannot help our children with their homework or read a book to them. We cannot read traffic signs, are incapable of reading product instructions and hardly find our bearings in the city, often seeing ourselves caged in streets with no name.

It was, precisely, a day in which we came out of our reservation in Oklahoma that my life became forever truncated. If only I had followed the wise advice of sage *Sitting Bull* and had not committed the terrible mistake of going to the city and enter that supermarket... I would still be able to see those sparkling, restless green eyes shining on my little girl's face and feel a little less stupid. If only I had not bought that bright-

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coloured can and given it to her thinking that it was a drink... If only I had been able to read the first word of that label of warnings!

And it has all been thanks to your stupid language of incomprehensible signs. I admit that your alphabet is highly important and that, without it, life would happen to be extremely difficult to anyone. Indeed, I am using it in this letter myself, though indirectly, so as to reach you; if the person who is writing this letter for me did not know you, you would never have had news of our people's disgraces. Nevertheless, I am not going to play along and, once the letter writer draws his last sign, I intend to burn this sheet of paper on a full-moon day, since I am certain that our forbears' spirits will raise its ashes high up to the blue ceiling, making all these words come together in a soft gust. Maybe then, you, while staring at the stars at night from the porch of your house, will be able to hear this message I send you, slightly whispered by the delicate whistle of the wind or the rustle of the leaves.

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Ziortza Vivanco

Dear sister,

How are you? I'm fine here in Namibia. I have just started teaching after living here for a month, and now, I know that this is my place, the place that I have been trying to find all this years. Although, in this country there is a lot of poverty, children are very happy with the things that they have and it is incredible the desires that they have for learning more and more; it is very different from where we live.

The first days here where very impressing, but now I'm very happy; if people from where we live would appreciate education as people from Namibia do, things would be totally different; the way they appreciate knowing how to read or write cannot be explained with words. I have been teaching in our country for many years, and I have never seen such happiness in a person face in all my life when they learn a new word, read for the first time or write a phrase; these people really need to learn new things, at least, the basic ones and I'm very happy to teach them those. All the people have the right to have an education.

In this place, education is very important for people, if they would have the opportunities that we have to learn and have a career, they would not take advantage of them; it is incomprehensible how people can appreciate something that many people in our country do not appreciate; that is why we are trying to make all the world realize that we all need to have a basic education that allows as to read, write and count; for this reason, all the help that we can receive is essential. All together, we can make illiteracy disappear.

We have a lot of work here, so I have to say goodbye to you; I will try to write to you as soon as possible.

Lots of kisses,

Ziortza Vivanco

Nerea San Martín Santidrián

To whom it may concern;

I have had a dream. Tonight I have dreamt with a better world. A world of fantasy in which each and every individual enjoyed the privilege of having access to basic education.

A world in which multiple movements succeeded on getting the goal of meeting the learning needs of all children, youth and adults. A world in which everyone could communicate with each other without any single problem; a world in which the word "illiterate" did not have a meaning.

A world in which everyone could arrive as far as he/she wants, make the wanted life choices, get the wanted job, make the desired studies, get good training and fulfill his/her dreams starting by being given an education in ordinary schools and training institutions. A world full of individuals capable of educating all children and young people in their community regardless of physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other differences.

But suddenly, when I woke up I realised that my dream was just that; a dream; a fantasy. It was just a perfect and fair world in which everyone got that right, that right with which we are born and only some privileged and lucky ones get to share and possess, and that is: Education.

We fairly realise how much importance this right has in our lives, how lucky we are to have the opportunity to choose what we want to learn, how we want to learn, where we want to learn, in other words, the chance to choose our future. We hardly realise that this right does not exist for millions of people around the world and that they do not even get the chance to decide whether they want to apply for primary education or not. They do not even get to imagine what has to be to go to University and acquire more and more knowledge in some specific area.

There is a huge number of illiterates in our world and to give each of them a proper minimal education is a great challenge that a lot of us are ready to take, but for that we need economic help, and of course, help from institutions and volunteers.

Nobody said it would be easy, but as I have heard and that imaginary world which I dreamt of showed...impossible is nothing!

Nerea San Martín Santidrián

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Aitor Olivares

To my friend,

I know you are able to read this letter; everybody is able to read, write and understand whatever they want. All of us have to help, have to spent the time to improve the world, and change the problems we see every day.

With a good infrastructure in the undeveloped world, your situation can change; but for that, institutions, the governments and the way of thinking of our society have to change too, because we all have to give little for which few do not give everything.

I do not know exactly why you do not know how to read or write, but I can imagine the reasons of that, and as I said before, this is a job of all the world, so we have to become aware and try to solve your problem for the rest of the children like you, and I think that it is possible, so with the collaboration of everybody, we will improve this world.

I hope that in a short period of time you will be able to read, and to explain to your friends this letter.

Aitor Olivares

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Amaya Pérez

Dear Mary,

How are you? I am writing to talk about the last trip I made to India. I was there for two weeks and I discovered a lot of things. My thoughts of life have changed with this trip. Never before had I stopped to think about the people who live in less developed countries. Now I know how they live, learn and work. What shocked me most is the education that there is. Such education is different from what exists here. There, children do not have enough material to learn and become educated. There are many children who need an education as it is received here in my country.

The people who go to school in India are humble; they wear a distinctive blue uniform across the country. In India it is an exceptional privilege to have an education and because of this 55% of the population can neither read nor write. However, for some centuries, India was very rich educationally speaking. In their universities they taught medicine, astrology and the most varied arts and sciences of the time. Many students travelled from Mongolia, China and other Asian regions to study at their universities.

The reality in India is hard to accept; many schools need basic school supplies such as pencils, notebooks, paper, books etc. Primary education is free and compulsory in India but it does not offer a very high level of education. In addition, many children do not have access to it as they belong to poor families who make them work at a young age. I believe that this problem could be overcome if we all help. What do you think? Therefore I will make myself a member of an association who cares about education of children in less developed countries, so that someday everybody will have the same opportunities.

I look forward to hearing from you soon!
Amaya,

Itxaso Lafuente

Querido desconocido/a,

Mi nombre es Itxaso Lafuente, y el primer encuentro que recuerdo con la lectura es el cuento de caperucita roja. Los números nunca han sido mi fuerte, aún hay momentos en los que me sorprendo contando con los dedos, y siempre que tengo que realizar una operación complicada se me guiña automáticamente un ojo.

Vivo en UN país del primer mundo. Desde pequeña he tenido DOS opciones: estudiar o no hacerlo; pero eso siempre ha sido mi elección, no una imposición. Hablo TRES idiomas. Solo en mi ciudad hay CUATRO centros de educación superior. Leo CINCO libros al trimestre. Llevo SEIS años en la Universidad de Deusto estudiando diversas titulaciones. SIETE de mis amigos están licenciados en varias carreras. He visitado OCHO países. Todo esto me ha sido posible gracias a NUEVE letras: e-d-u-c-a-c-i-o-n, y en tu caso aún una utopía, por otras DIEZ: i-n-j-u-s-t-i-c-i-a.

Ahora ya sabes más cosas de la firmante de esta carta, que ni es un modelo a seguir, ni tiene muchas cosas que le diferencien del resto del mundo, pero que tuvo la gran suerte de que los primeros números y letras que marcaran su vida y porvenir fueran: 43°15'25.07"N 2°55'24.39"W

Y termino ésta misiva de la misma manera que la comencé, con sabiendo y temiendo que el hecho de ser remitente y no destinataria.

Se despide con la esperanza de una respuesta,

Itxaso Lafuente