

David Kahler
(- September 2015)

The following is taken from an obituary posted by World Education where he was employed for many years.



David Kahler

David Kahler was an unwavering champion of education who found creative ways to encourage literacy in various forms, integrating learning into everything from integrated pest management in agriculture to anti-human trafficking and child labor elimination programs.

David joined World Education in 1985 as a senior program officer and served as World Education's vice president for Asia programs when he left full-time work in 2009, after a second round of chemotherapy to treat leukemia. He moved to France and continued part-time work while gardening, cooking, and enjoying life. He

formally retired from World Education earlier this year.

David grew up on a farm in Missouri, the fifth of nine children. He studied French at the University of Missouri as an undergraduate, and, a lover of learning, went on to receive an M.Ed and Ed.D in international education from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He also received a Masters in International Administration, School of International Training, in Brattleboro, Vermont.

He began his career as a Peace Corps volunteer in Senegal and then moved to teaching in classrooms at the Lowville Academy in New York and in Honduras between 1970 and 1973. He began a lifelong focus on evaluating integrated literacy programs in 1974, working with the International Institute for Adult Literacy Methods (IIALM), in Teheran, Iran.

With World Education he worked on training and organizational development and adapted World Education's nonformal participatory learning approach to a range of sectors such as maternal and child health, reproductive health, integrated pest management, water management and climate change.

In 2012, he commented, "I've stayed with World Education because there is always something new and challenging about the work. Even with the changes of the past 27 years, the ethos of the organization has remained constant. World Ed is unlike any other organization that I have come into contact with in my 45 years of international development work." David was fluent in French, English, and

Spanish, but also spoke Farsi, learned in his days working in Iran at a UNESCO research institute, and a bit of Mandingue from his time in Senegal.

“David Kahler was one of the true international development heroes who traveled endlessly and tirelessly to bring hope and support to people throughout the world,” said Joel Lamstein, World Education president. “He will be missed.”

When asked in 2012 if he had any wisdom to share with for comrades, David said, “Learn to appreciate the scenery when you are on a detour. What I mean is what you



David Kahler in St. Jean de Luz

don't plan for is often valuable and always a learning experience... Each phase of my life has provided new scenery. It wasn't until I came to World Education that I realized how they could all come together: I can work in development on any continent, in French, in English, in Spanish, as a farmer and/or an educator.

Some of the many comments we have received are below.

David Kahler's work with World Education on Integrated Pest Management in Asia was a major accomplishment for the environment, for rice farmers, and for adult literacy and numeracy. It was a model of nonformal learning at its best. I had the privilege of working with David on a follow-up World Education project in the Philippines with school children who were learning IPM as part of their project-based science learning, an adaptation of a similar project developed in Thailand.

*In my meetings with David I always appreciated his vast knowledge of nonformal education, his extensive experience on a very wide range of projects in Asia, his great humor and charming self-deprecation, and the way he framed a project and its goals and then left the rest up to me. I learned a great deal from David, and from these projects, both of which were among the most worthwhile in my international work. **David Rosen***

*I credit him with guiding me to my former career with UC Cooperative Extension. We did speak a few years back via Skype when he had moved to France. David was a good-humored force of nature and a very generous soul. I'm going to miss him. **Mike Marzolla***

Yes, David was a gem--he had a 'wicked' sense of humor, was very perceptive and so enjoyed his family and friends. I can still hear the laughter coming from a certain office down the hall from CIE's main office after 5 pm!!! He enjoyed a

*good time but was very dedicated to his work. He was definitely a bright light. **Anna Donovan***

*Jan and I had a couple of visits with David in the past five years at his homes in France. Let me just recollect a bit of our most recent times together. When we were with him he made us feel we were the only guests he'd ever had...touring us through the beaches of Normandy, the Chartres cathedral, the environs near Dreux, or his own back courtyard flower and vegetable gardens. Standing by him as he shopped farmer and flea markets with his soft, comforting ease in French, never for show, he engaged all with warmth. I had to pick up breakfast pastries one early morning in Dreux. I know French not a word. I got into the bakery and mentioned the order for my friend Monsieur David. The smile beamed. He crossed all lines. They liked his bantering, joking, remarking about whatever. He was a master cook, making sure his guests had the best without pretense. His wit was incisive, sharp, slicing through to the kernel of the matter, whether immediate or global. I can't recall seeing the combination of talent, social facility, humble compassion, and regard for his friends, whether grocer or lifelong, all wrapped up in one being. He's one not to forget. **Michael Basile***

*David Kahler was a real product of CIE from what he was and from what he has done. He was truly international from CIE. May the Almighty rest his soul in peace, Amen. **Fulgence Swai***

*What a sad loss .. David touched on the life and career of many who crossed his path.. He's a man who truly loved the world and saw its salvation (sic) in education and specifically Adult Education. **Mohamed Ibrahim***

Condolences and expressions of loss were heard from many others, including - **Carol Martin, Jane Benbow, James MacNeil, Konda Chavva, Anna Donovan, Tom Neilson, Patrick Fine, Helen Fox, Mbarou Gassama, Dafter Khembo, Tsoaledi Thobejane, Sherry Russell, Sumon Tuladhar, Anna Swai, Judson Haverkamp, Jennie Campos**