Literacy: Current challenges, promising pathways

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Literacy rates have steadily increased but there is the last mile to travel before 2015.
The Asian literacy landscape

- Central Asia
  - 1990: 98.9
  - 2000: 99
  - 2010: 99

- East Asia and the Pacific
  - 1990: 80.2
  - 2000: 86.5
  - 2010: 94

- South and West Asia
  - 1990: 47.5
  - 2000: 55.3
  - 2010: 63
Promises to keep:
Literacy rates in 20 selected countries (1990-2010)
Our efforts have to be more focused:
Women’s literacy should be our priority
(Difference between male and female literacy rates, latest available data)
Promising pathways of thought and action

• **Conceptualization**
  – Vision of literacy and lifelong learning

• **Contextualization**
  – Content, language

• **Institutionalization**
  – Delivering literacy learning, monitoring progress

• **Coordinated decentralization**
  – Community-owned process facilitated/ supported by the State

• **Collaboration**
  – Partnership with Universities, NGOs, private sector
Getting our act together, innovatively

- **Systemic innovation**
  - CLC, Open learning, connection with other sectors, networking with other institutions, national leadership, community ownership

- **Instructional innovation**
  - Self-paced, modular, credit and non-credit based, face-to-face, combined with distance learning, use of community resources

- **Assessment innovation**
  - Flexible, participatory, affordable, recognition, validation and accreditation of prior learning

- **ICT innovation**
  - Producing content for learners and teachers, delivering content, sharing content; using content for initial literacy and reinforcing literacy skills like Mobile phones
Structuring the unstructured

• Creating multi-purpose community learning spaces and centres and improving access to, and participation in, the full range of adult learning and education programmes for women, taking account of the particular demands of the gender specific life-course (Belem framework for action, December 2009)

• From 1998 onwards, this innovative institutional base is taking shape across 24 countries
The present policy environment is conducive for accelerated action

3 RECENT HIGH LEVEL STATEMENTS
Report of the
EU High level group of experts on literacy
September 2012

• A startlingly large number of Europeans do not have a sufficient level of literacy. National and international surveys show that roughly one in five adults and one in five 15-year-olds lack the reading skills they need to fully function in modern society

• Ensure broad and varied access to learning opportunities
  – Provide adults with a variety of personalized learning opportunities, of adequate length and pace, at convenient times, in convenient settings as well as with ICT support, and preferably related to their life or work context
Paris Communiqué on scaling up literacy (UNESCO)

- Adopt a holistic, comprehensive and balanced sector development
- Strengthen existing systems and build new ones to address the learning needs
- Improve information and knowledge systems for improved programme management
- Design and implement effective and efficient literacy programmes
- Ensure the quality of learning across all key settings
- Focus on hard-to-reach areas and populations
- Develop literate environments
- Foster partnerships for stronger mobilization of political will and resources
UN Secretary-General’s Education First
10 Key Actions

• Enroll all children in school
• Sustain education in humanitarian crises
• Ensure all children are literate and numerate
• Train more teachers
• Equip classrooms with books and learning materials
• Prepare students for livelihoods
• Improve child nutrition
• Instill lifelong learning
  – Increase (from 15 to 45% participation in quality early childhood development programmes from marginalized children in low-income countries
  – Provide alternative learning opportunities, including life skills, to all young people who have missed out on formal schooling
  – Halve the number of illiterate adults by 2015, especially women
• Foster global partnership
• Close the financing gap
Community learning centres

- How do we make them more efficient and effective?
- Just connect

“peasant put forth topics, experts offer advice, the centre makes coordination, and townships and villages take application”
(Yushan CLC in Pan’an County’s guidelines for rural community education)
Building a connected world

- Connect courses with the learners’ needs
- Connect literacy with livelihoods
- Connect with other institutions
- Connect with national policies
- Connect foundational literacy to multiple learning pathways
- Connect CLC activities for synergy
Towards an efficient and effective CLC

- **State**
  - Ownership
  - Management (Committees etc)
    - Personnel (Full time/ part-time, volunteers)
    - Programme (Locally determined/centrally mandated)
    - Financial

- **Community**

- **Centre**

- **Learning**

- **Programmes**
  - Basic literacy
  - Skill training
  - Equivalency or certification (Credit Bank, equivalency)
  - Awareness-generation
  - Recreational
  - Income generation, livelihoods-related

Nodal institution for a number of activities
- Conduct all activities on its own premises
- Coordinate and collaborate with other institutions