Progress and Challenges in Literacy & Adult Education in Asia and the Pacific 2003-2008

A regional review to prepare for the second half of the UN Literacy Decade and CONFINTEA VI
Foreword

Home to almost 70% of the 776 million illiterates in the world, the Asia and Pacific region faces major issues in literacy. Progress and Challenges in Literacy and Adult Education in the Asia and the Pacific (2003-2008) provides a review and assessment of the major literacy and adult education activities undertaken in the region during the first half of the UNLD (2003-2008). As the most up-to-date assessment of literacy and adult education in the Asia and the Pacific, the report offers a key reference on the state of literacy and adult education that can be used by governments, policy makers, and practitioners as a tool to develop appropriate interventions and to move more speedily to achieve the EFA literacy goal.

The 8 chapters of this report cover a wide range of literary issues. Chapter one explains the genesis and purpose of the publication as well as information on the key frameworks promoting literacy and adult education in the Asia-Pacific region. The second chapter traces the evolving definition of literacy with expanded vision of literacy from a conventional definition (the ability to read and write), to a functional definition, to a broader contextual definition that recognizes literacy's key role in personal and social development. The third chapter provides an overview of partnerships and activities to promote UNLD at the national and regional levels during 2003-2008. Chapter four reviews the state of literacy globally and in the Asia-Pacific region. The fifth chapter is a review of key areas of literacy programming and action, including notable examples of implementation in the region during the first half of UNLD. The sixth chapter explains the details on Gender mainstreaming and the application of a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) approaches as emerging key principles and tools for achieving EFA and UNLD goals to literacy and the ways in which they have been implemented in the Asia-Pacific region. The seventh chapter tries to see challenges of literacy programmes, including variations in literacy rates and needs among sub-regions and within countries, links between illiteracy and poverty, and links between illiteracy and social marginalization. Following a review of progress in literacy and adult education in the countries of the Asia-Pacific region and an analysis of outcomes from recent major regional conferences, the eighth chapter of the report identified key actions to promote literacy and adult education in the second half of UNLD and in the CONFINTEA VI period.

This publication was prepared by Ms Ellen Boccuzi who worked in collaboration with and guidance from Mr. A Hakeem and Kiichi Oyasu. The publication also benefited from comments and suggestion of NFE staff Darunee Riewpituk, Roshan Bajracharya, as well as from colleagues in some UNESCO field offices. Maki Hayashikawa and Johan Lindeberg provided useful comments on aspects related to gender and HRBA.

We hope the publication would be useful for policy makers, planners and practitioners of literacy in countries in the region to better understand the current situation of literacy and assist them to design and implement more effective and innovative literacy programmes to help improve levels of literacy among the people of the region.

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Director
UNESCO Bangkok
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<tr>
<td>ABE</td>
<td>Adult Basic Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCU</td>
<td>Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADRA</td>
<td>Adventist Development and Relief Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>AEFLA</td>
<td>Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Palau)</td>
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<td>AIMS</td>
<td>UNESCO Assessment, Information Systems, Monitoring and Statistics Unit</td>
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<td>AIOU</td>
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<td>ALE</td>
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<td>AMEP</td>
<td>Adult Migrant English Programme (Australia)</td>
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<td>APHEDA</td>
<td>Australian People for Health, Education and Development Abroad</td>
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<td>APPEAL</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARTC</td>
<td>APPEAL Resource and Training Consortium</td>
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<td>ASPBAE</td>
<td>Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education</td>
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<td>BALS</td>
<td>Bureau of Alternative Learning System</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOU</td>
<td>Bangladesh Open University</td>
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<td>CAMPE</td>
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<td>CBFL</td>
<td>Tata Computer-Based Functional Literacy programme (India)</td>
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<td>CBM</td>
<td>Christian Blind Mission</td>
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<td>Community-Based Organization</td>
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<td>DESD</td>
<td>UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (Philippines)</td>
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<td>GEI</td>
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<td>GER</td>
<td>Gross Enrolment Ratio</td>
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<td>HRBA</td>
<td>Human Rights-Based Approach</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
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<td>IDB</td>
<td>Oklahoma Scoring International Data Base</td>
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<td>KEDI</td>
<td>Korean Educational Development Institute</td>
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<td>Department of Orang Asli Affairs and Jabatan Kemajuan Masyarakat (Malaysia)</td>
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<td>KIA2M</td>
<td>Kelas Intervensi Asas Membaca dan Menulis programme (Malaysia)</td>
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<td>Learning for Community Empowerment Programme</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
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<td>MLE</td>
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<td>NESP</td>
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<td>NFBE</td>
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<td>NFCED</td>
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<td>NFPE</td>
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<td>NFUAJ</td>
<td>National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
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<td>NLAS</td>
<td>National Literacy and Awareness Secretariat (Papua New Guinea)</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>NLM</td>
<td>National Literacy Mission (India)</td>
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<td>NMHFAI</td>
<td>National Movement to Hasten Compulsory Nine-Year Basic Education Accomplishment and the Fight against Illiteracy (Indonesia)</td>
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<td>NPA</td>
<td>National Plan of Action</td>
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<td>NSO</td>
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<td>NTP</td>
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<td>NTU</td>
<td>Northern Territory University (Australia)</td>
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<td>NWFP</td>
<td>North-West Frontier Province (Pakistan)</td>
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<td>ONFEC</td>
<td>Office of the Non-formal Education Commission (Thailand)</td>
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<td>OSY</td>
<td>Out-of-school Youth</td>
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<td>PACADE</td>
<td>Pakistan Association for Continuing Adult Education</td>
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<td>PCE</td>
<td>Philippine Centre for Entrepreneurship</td>
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<td>PCLP</td>
<td>Parliamentarian Caucus on Literacy in Pakistan</td>
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<td>PFM</td>
<td>People's Forum on MDGs</td>
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<td>PL</td>
<td>Post-Literacy</td>
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<td>Post-Literacy and Continuing Education for Human Development project (Bangladesh)</td>
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<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy</td>
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<td>Reaching Out of School project (Bangladesh)</td>
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<td>Self-Employment Assistance Kaunlaran programme (Philippines)</td>
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<td>SEAMEO</td>
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<td>SIL</td>
<td>Summer Institute of Linguistics</td>
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<td>SLA</td>
<td>Standard of Literacy Assessment</td>
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<td>Standard of Literacy Competence</td>
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<td>SMILE</td>
<td>Supporting Maternal and Child Health Improvement and Building Literate Environment project (Nepal)</td>
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<td>UNESCO Institute for Statistics</td>
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<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>UNESCO National Education Support Strategy</td>
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<td>UNGEI</td>
<td>United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative</td>
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<td>Universal Primary Education</td>
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<td>WCEFA</td>
<td>World Conference on Education for All</td>
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<td>WLEP</td>
<td>Women’s Literacy and Empowerment Programme (Pakistan)</td>
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Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter provides background on the genesis and purpose of Progress and Challenges in Literacy and Adult Education in Asia and the Pacific 2003-2008, as well as information about the key frameworks that promote literacy and adult education in the Asia-Pacific region.

1.1 Purpose of the Report

Progress and Challenges in Literacy and Adult Education in Asia and the Pacific 2003-2008 offers a review and assessment of the major literacy and adult education activities undertaken in the Asia Pacific region during the first half of the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2008). The report describes national and regional-level programmes implemented in collaboration with UNESCO, international organizations, NGOs, and governments. It provides an overview of key actions, progress-to-date, successes and on-going challenges, and recommendations for future actions.

As the most up-to-date assessment of literacy and adult education in the Asia-Pacific region, this publication serves a number of important functions. It offers a key reference on the state of literacy and adult education that can be used by governments, policy makers, and practitioners. It provides a regional overview that will inform CONFINTEA VI preparatory work for the Asia-Pacific region. Moreover, the report can be used as a tool for governments, international organizations, and NGOs as they adapt on-going programmes to make them more inclusive and effective, as well as in the design of future programmes at the national and regional levels. For practitioners working on other regions, the report offers an assessment of the important issues and trends in literacy and adult education in the Asian context that can be used to inform comparative work on the global level.

This study draws on a number of national and regional sources, including the Education for All Mid-Decade Assessment reports and National Reports on the State of Adult Learning and Education prepared by the countries of the region. The report also draws from UNESCO publications, as well as seminar and conference proceedings related to UNLD. In addition, UNESCO circulated a questionnaire on national-level UNLD activities and outputs to field offices in the region, and the responses to this questionnaire have been included in the report.

The first draft of the report was prepared within a short, 4-month timeframe. It was based on secondary sources, as there was no opportunity to visit field sites in the research phase. The draft was shared with countries during the Asia and the Pacific CONFINTEA VI preparatory conference in October 2008. Feedback from countries has been incorporated into this updated and revised version. Despite its limitations, it is hoped that the report offers a window onto the wide variety of literacy and adult education activities that have been undertaken in the past five years, many of the successes that have been achieved, and the many challenges that still need to be addressed.

1.2 Background on Education for All (EFA), the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), and the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE)

The Education for All (EFA) movement was launched in 1990, when representatives of the international community met in Jomtien, Thailand, and agreed to universalize primary education and significantly reduce illiteracy by the end of the decade.

As these goals were not fully achieved by 2000, the international community met again at the World Education Forum in Dakar to reaffirm their commitment to Education for All. The Dakar Framework for Action, which emerged from this meeting, set forth six key education goals to be met by the year 2015, including Goal 4, a 50 percent improvement in literacy by the year 2015. The Dakar Framework placed the
primary responsibility for achieving EFA goals on Member States, which would receive support in the development of National Plans of Action (NPAs).

At this time, 774 million people are illiterate globally, and two-thirds of illiterates are women. This constitutes a serious impediment to the realization of human capabilities, as well as social and economic development, particularly for women. In the Asia-Pacific region, UNESCO Bangkok, UNICEF, and the Regional Thematic Working Group on EFA have been working together to assist countries in monitoring and assessing progress towards EFA goals.

In 2003, the United Nations launched the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) to make a sustained effort toward attaining literacy for all in both developing and developed countries. The decision to focus on literacy was a response to the major global challenge posed by illiteracy as a result of the rapid and uneven development of information and communications technologies. On a deeper level, the push toward universal literacy is based on the belief that literacy is a human right and that “creating literate environments and societies is essential for achieving the goals of eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy.” UNLD activities target the poorest and most marginal social groups, including women, and often accompany initiatives to reduce poverty.

At the request of the UN General Assembly, UNESCO has been coordinating UNLD and its international activities.

The UNLD International Plan of Action identifies six pillars for literacy activities:

1. Policy change that encourages local participation and links literacy promotion with strategies to reduce poverty;
2. More flexible literacy programmes, adapted to local conditions, that enable learners to move on to more formal learning opportunities;
3. Capacity-building to help literacy instructors, managers and programmes to function more effectively;
4. More empirical research to support policy change (e.g., on the long-term impact of literacy and improved community participation);
5. Community participation and ownership of literacy programmes;
6. Monitoring and evaluation of programmes to determine more reliable indicators of progress, both in terms of numbers of participants and overall impact.

In 2005, UNESCO launched the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) programme as part of UNLD to target countries with the greatest literacy needs: the 35 countries with literacy rates of less than 50 percent or a population of more than 10 million illiterates. This global strategic framework focuses on adult education as well as literacy programmes for out-of-school children.

1.3 Background on CONFINTEA

The International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) is a global platform for policy dialogue and advocacy on adult education, organized by UNESCO and held every twelve to thirteen years. The first CONFINTEA was held in Helsingor, Denmark, in 1949, and the most recent was in Hamburg, Germany, in 1997. CONFINTEA VI will be held in Brazil in December 2009.

The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) is coordinating the preparation for CONFINTEA VI in cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters, regional bureaux, and the host country, Brazil.
Preparation for CONFINTEA VI included a broad consultative process and partnerships with education stakeholders from Member States, UN agencies, development, civil society, research institutions, the private sector, and learners. The key conceptual unit and advisory committee for this phase was the Consultative Group, comprised of education experts reflecting an institutional, geographic, and gender balance.

CONFINTEA V identified adult learning and non-formal education as indispensable elements of lifelong learning. The Hamburg Declaration and the Agenda for the Future, adopted at the end of the 1997 conference, underscored the important role that adult and lifelong learning play in addressing the global challenges of the 21st century, particularly with respect to democracy, peace and human rights, conflict resolution, economic and ecological sustainability, and workforce development. The Hamburg Declaration notes that the emergence of knowledge-based societies around the world has changed the scope and scale of adult learning, making continuing education imperative in the community and the workplace. The Declaration affirms the role of the state in ensuring Education for All, particularly with regard to vulnerable and marginalized populations. It also affirms women’s right to literacy, education, and training, noting that society depends on the full development and contribution of women to all fields of work and aspects of life.

The Hamburg Declaration explicitly affirms the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with regard to education and gender equality, and promotes education’s role in achieving the MDGs for health. Millennium Development Goal 2, the achievement of universal primary education, is affirmed in the Hamburg Declaration’s call for basic education for all people, including adults. The Declaration states that “Basic education for all…is not only a right, it is also a duty and a responsibility both to others and to society as a whole” (Hamburg Declaration, § 9). Millennium Development Goal 3, the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, is stressed in the Declaration’s call for “women’s integration and empowerment” and the “expansion of educational opportunities for all women, while respecting their diversity and eliminating prejudices and stereotypes that both limit their access to youth and adult education and restrict the benefits they derive from them” (Hamburg Declaration, §13). In addition, the Hamburg Declaration addresses Millennium Development Goal 5 (improving maternal health) and Goal 6 (combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases) through its insistence that “investments in education are investments in health” and by underscoring education’s important role in promoting health, preventing disease, and increasing access to health knowledge (Hamburg Declaration, §16). The Declaration also addresses Millennium Development Goal 7 (ensuring environmental sustainability) through its call for “education for environmental sustainability” and its assertion that “adult environmental education can play an important role in sensitizing and mobilizing communities and decision-makers towards sustained environmental action” (Hamburg Declaration, §17), a goal that resounds with UNESCO’s Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) programme, as well.

The Hamburg Declaration also supports several Education for All (EFA) goals. The Declaration’s affirmation of lifelong learning and the right to (and necessity of) adult education supports EFA Goal 3: ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes. The Declaration affirms EFA Goal 4 (achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults) in its commitment to “ensuring opportunities for all to acquire and maintain literacy skills, and to create in all Member States a literate environment...
to support oral culture" (*Hamburg Declaration, §11*). Finally, the Hamburg Declaration's call for women's integration and empowerment, particularly with regard to education, supports EFA Goals 2 and 5, which affirm girls' and women's access to and equality in education.

These goals for gender equality in education are also in line with the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) goal of narrowing the gender gap in primary and secondary education and ensuring that by 2015 all children will be able to complete primary schooling and have equal access to all levels of education. In its affirmation of the universal right to education, equality of access, and the importance of achieving gender equity in education, the Hamburg Declaration employs a rights-based approach to adult education.

CONFINTSEA VI will expand upon the important work of CONFINTSEA V to highlight the role of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in international education and development initiatives, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), EFA, UNLD, LIFE and the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). In addition, the conference will seek to integrate adult learning and non-formal education within national sector-wide strategies. In so doing, CONFINTSEA VI aims to renew international momentum for ALE and to develop the tools to move from rhetoric to implementation.

The primary programmatic concern for CONFINTSEA VI is literacy. In addition, the conference will focus on the recognition of informal learning and previous qualifications, learning at work, the quality of adult education, and structures and regulations of adult education. Target populations to be discussed at the conference include women, out-of-school youth, rural populations, and others who are marginalized.
Chapter 2

Expanded Vision of Literacy under EFA and UNLD

Over the past 50 years, our vision of literacy has expanded from a conventional definition (the ability to read and write), to a functional definition, to a broader contextual definition that recognizes literacy’s key role in personal and social development. Chapter 2 traces the evolving definition of literacy and its implications.

2.1 The Importance of Literacy

Literacy is a basic human right, and it is guaranteed under the right to education in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Literacy strengthens the capabilities of individuals, families, and communities to develop and to achieve. A lack of literacy is strongly correlated with poverty, and those who can use literacy skills to defend their legal rights have a marked advantage over those who cannot. Literacy thus paves the way for social and gender equity, as well as broader societal development. Women who have benefited from literacy programmes have noted the sense of personal empowerment, economic independence, and social emancipation they have gained through these programmes. In addition, literate mothers are more likely to send their children to school. Promoting literacy among adults thus supports the creation of literate societies and increases the extent to which people play an active role in their personal development and the development of their communities.

2.2 Defining Literacy

Literacy is generally understood as the ability to read, write, and perform calculations, but there is no standard international definition of literacy that captures all of its facets. The first internationally accepted definition of literacy, from the UNESCO Recommendation of 1958, states that a literate person is someone who can read and write (with understanding) a short simple statement on his or her everyday life. While this definition is still used in a variety of contexts, our understanding of literacy has broadened substantially over the past fifty years, as have approaches to literacy education.

According to the 1958 definition of literacy, the population was divided into two categories: literates and illiterates. Mass literacy campaigns were launched to provide the technical skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic in an effort to make illiterates literate. It soon became clear, however, that these binary categories were too simplistic; learners were diverse in their needs, and successful literacy efforts needed to take the contexts of learners into account. Moreover, social and political will were essential to the success of literacy efforts. Literacy thus came to be viewed by the late 1960s within a broader development context, and the concept of “functional literacy” emerged, linking education and literacy with social and economic development.

In 1978, UNESCO defined a “functionally literate” person as someone who can engage in all activities in which literacy is required for the effective functioning and development of his or her self and community. As literacy came to be seen as a set of practices defined within specific cultural contexts, a broader vision of the roles of literacy in everyday life emerged, one that encompassed empowerment and the exercise of political rights.

Literacy is now understood much more broadly as a set of skills and practices that enable one to effectively deal with the challenges of contemporary life, including the vast amount of information to which human beings now have access. ICT literacy, in particular, has become essential as the Internet grows in importance and society makes increasing use of information networks. Ensuring that no one is left out of this emergent information society has become a key goal of the literacy movement, and ICT skills are now seen to be just as important as general literacy skills once were.

The rapidly changing landscape of information means that literacy and skill development have become processes that are undertaken over the course of a lifetime. As such, “lifelong learning” has emerged as a key organizing framework for literacy education. In the context of post-literacy training, continuing education and lifelong learning allow for the retention of new skills and the development of these skills.
Moreover, lifelong learning “empowers and helps individuals and communities to realize their full potential and participate fully in promoting social, political, and economic stability and progress.”

Over the past fifty years, then, there has been an evolution in the understanding of literacy from a conventional view (skill acquisition), to a functional view, to a broader vision of literacy that encompasses human rights, democracy, and social development. Along with this expanded vision has come an awareness that we can no longer speak of “literates” and “illiterates,” but must view literacy as a continuum and speak of “levels of literacy.” The emerging interest in viewing literacy as a continuum has driven demand for much more detailed data on literacy skills and use. Detailed measurement enables a profile of the diverse literacy needs within a community and the development of targeted interventions to address these needs. The World Conference on Education for All and UNLD have been key in underscoring the wider implications of literacy and in generating collective action toward more nuanced and effective literacy efforts.

2.3 Expanded Vision of Literacy under EFA and UNLD

The World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA), held in Jomtien in 1990, established literacy as an important component of lifelong learning, and subsequent international pronouncements have underscored the evolving nature of literacy and its key role in social practices such as citizenship, cultural identity, human rights, and equity.

The definition of literacy employed in the Education for All 2000 Assessment is as follows:

**Literacy**

Literacy is the ability to read and write with understanding a simple statement related to one’s daily life. It involves a continuum of reading and writing skills, and often includes also basic arithmetic skills.

Literacy lies at the core of Education for All, and the effort to develop literate societies provides a link among all six EFA goals. Literacy is at once an outcome (reading, writing, and numeracy), a process (teaching and learning), and an input that paves the way for future development (cognitive skill development, participation in lifelong learning opportunities, and broader societal development).

The **Draft Proposal and Plan for a United Nations Literacy Decade** calls for an expanded vision of literacy:

Literacy policies and programmes today require going beyond the limited view of literacy that has dominated in the past. Literacy for all requires **a renewed vision of literacy**, which will foster cultural identity, democratic participation and citizenship, tolerance and respect for others, social development, peace and progress. It must admit that literacy is not confined to any particular age (childhood or adulthood), institution (i.e. the school system) or sector (i.e. education); that it is related to various dimensions of personal and social life and development; and that it is a life-learning process. Such renewed vision towards literacy for all calls for renewed modalities of operations, monitoring and accountability procedures and mechanisms.

The UNLD view of literacy thus takes political, social, and economic transformations into account and recognizes that people acquire and use literacy for different purposes. It also acknowledges that practices of literacy are embedded in different cultural processes, individual circumstances, and collective structures. This “plural” vision views literacy as itself culturally, linguistically, and temporally diverse.
Because literacy is shaped by cultural, educational, and state institutions, constraints on achieving literacy do not lie only with the individual, but are also embedded in wider social relations.

The Hamburg Declaration and the Agenda for the Future Literacy also view literacy in a broad lens, as “the basic knowledge and skills needed by all in a rapidly changing world.” The Declaration views literacy as a “catalyst for participation in social, cultural, political and economic activities, and for learning throughout life.” (Hamburg Declaration, § 11).
3.1 Advocacy to Promote UNLD

3.1.1 Launch of UNLD at the International, Regional, and National Levels

In December 2001, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution to establish the United Nations Literacy Decade from 2003 to 2012. The Asia-Pacific regional launch of UNLD took place on 8 September 2003, International Literacy Day. UNESCO and the Thai Ministry of Education jointly organized the launch. Approximately 100 international participants from UNESCO Member States and a number of practitioners working in non-formal education in Thailand attended the event. The launch was organized in conjunction with the CONFINTEA V review meeting and the EFA Coordinators Meeting for East and South-East Asia.

Many of the countries of the region have also sponsored launches of UNLD at the national level. Mongolia launched the UNLD on 28 April 2003 during EFA Week. The ceremony was part of a roundtable meeting attended by members of parliament, government representatives, and practitioners working in education and development. Viet Nam’s launch of UNLD on 25 May 2003 inaugurated a busy year of meetings, trainings, and workshops on literacy assessment and community learning centre (CLC) development. The national launch of UNLD in Bangladesh on 8 September 2003, International Literacy Day, has acted as a catalyst for the government and NGOs to renew their commitments to improving literacy and educational opportunities for adults.

In Thailand, the national launch of UNLD took place during the First Bangkok International Book Fair (27 March-7 April 2004), and a number of events were organized in conjunction with the launch. These included an exhibition on literacy programmes in Thailand, a performance promoting literacy and non-formal education, and the screening of a promotional video on UNLD. Pakistan launched the UNLD on 23 May 2004 in Islamabad. In Nepal, the government launched the UNLD on 5 November 2004, expressing interest in becoming part of the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) initiative; Nepal has since been included as a LIFE Round 2 country.

3.1.2 Events to Promote UNLD at the National Level

Throughout the Asia-Pacific region, countries celebrated International Literacy Day on September 8th, and Viet Nam has declared this day “National Literacy Day.” Viet Nam also celebrated Education for All Global Action Week on Education in April of 2007 and 2008, with activities held in Hanoi and 10 other provinces. Bangladesh celebrated Global Action week, as well, in addition to World Teacher’s Day (October 5) and International Mother’s Day (February 21). On International Literacy Day in 2006, Lao People’s Democratic Republic (PDR) held a national seminar for the dissemination and promotion of non-formal education activities in the country. On that day in 2007, Nepal held literacy celebrations where neo-literates shared their success stories.

In Pakistan, events were held to celebrate Education for All Day in April 2008. China celebrated Education for All Week in April and conducted the “Confucius Prizes for Literacy” ceremony in September 2006 and 2007. A celebration was also held in Mongolia in September 2007 to mark the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the country’s non-formal education system.

3.1.3 UNESCO International Literacy Prizes

Each year, UNESCO rewards excellence and innovation in the field of literacy through its International Literacy Prizes. By honouring the work of institutions, organizations, and individuals, UNESCO seeks to support effective literacy
practices and to encourage the promotion of dynamic literate societies. Prizes are awarded at an official ceremony held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on the occasion of International Literacy Day.

Current UNESCO International Literacy Prizes:

- The UNESCO International Reading Association Literacy Prize
  Supporting literacy for all

- The UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize
  Supporting literacy in multilingual contexts

- The UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy
  Supporting literacy in rural areas

A number of organizations in the Asia-Pacific region have been awarded International Literacy Prizes during the first half of the UNLD.

In 2003, the International Reading Association Prize went to the Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), a group in Bangladesh which has promoted informal education since 1980. A King Sejong Literacy Prize went to the International Reflect Circle (CIRAC), a network of 350 NGOs in 60 countries. CIRAC is an unusual candidate for a literacy prize since it is a network. Formed in 2000, NGOs use it to exchange experiences, teaching material and written matter about literacy.

In 2004, the King Sejong Literacy Prize went to the Steering Group of Literacy Education in Qinghai Province, China, for the group’s efforts to respond to the needs and interests of a large and geographically isolated population. The Steering Group of Literacy Education developed an adult literacy programme focused on women and ethnic minorities, combining literacy education with skills training geared toward learners’ everyday needs.

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A number of groups in the Asia-Pacific region won UNESCO Literacy Prizes in 2006. The International Reading Association Literacy Prize was awarded to the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) of Pakistan for its National Literacy Programme, which sought to increase the literacy ratio by the year 2015 to meet Education for All goals. The programme provides literacy classes to adults and out-of-school children, collects data through door-to-door surveys, and recruits village volunteers and schoolteachers to ensure broad community participation in the enrolment of children in school.

A UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy was awarded in 2006 to the Directorate of Literacy and Continuing Education of Rajasthan for its Useful Learning through Literacy and Continuing Education Programme. The Directorate raised literacy significantly among both men and women over the previous decade, while promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment through the development of innovative programming.

In 2006, Honourable Mention of the UNESCO International Reading Association Literacy Prize was awarded to the Literacy Co-ordination Office of Yunnan Province, China for the Programme for the Realistic Reduction in the Number of Illiterate Women. This programme was implemented in the mountainous border province of Yunnan, a poor province that is home to 25 ethnic minorities.

The 2007 International Reading Association Literacy Prize went to the Community Education Administration Centre in China. As part of its literacy programme for women and its programme of poverty eradication through education, the Centre has virtually eliminated illiteracy in Longsheng Autonomous County: nearly 100 percent of young adults in the county can now read and write.
In 2009, out of four International Literacy prizes, three prizes went to countries in the Asia and the Pacific region and one prize went to Burkina Faso in Africa. The countries in the Asia-Pacific region which received the prizes are India, the Philippines and Afghanistan. Pashai Language Development Project implemented by SERVE Afghanistan, a British NGO with support of UNESCO Bangkok and the Municipal Literacy Coordinating Council, Municipality of Agoo, La Union, Philippines, for its Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning Programme won the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy. A newspaper produced entirely by women in rural India also became winner of the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes this year. The Honorable Mention of the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy for 2009 was awarded to the Non-Formal and Continuing Education Programme of the Ministry of Education of Bhutan, for its holistic approach to literacy and its success in reaching remote areas.

3.2 Conferences and Meetings

3.2.1 White House Conference on Global Literacy

Laura Bush, former First Lady of the United States of America and Honorary Ambassador for the United Nations Literacy Decade, hosted the first White House Conference on Global Literacy in New York City on 18 September 2006. A number of the world’s First Ladies attended the conference.

Through panels and informal discussions, the conference provided practical information about successful programmes that promote literacy as a catalyst to advance social and economic participation, human development, and poverty reduction.

The White House Conference, which underscored the need for sustained global and country level leadership in promoting literacy, was the starting point for a major campaign in support of literacy internationally. As a follow up to this conference, UNESCO has initiated a series of Regional Conferences in Support of Global Literacy with the involvement of First Ladies, many of whom attended the White House Conference.

3.2.2 UNESCO Regional Conferences in Support of Global Literacy

Regional literacy conferences are a key means to raise public attention on literacy challenges involving policy-makers worldwide, and establishing links with civil society, the private sector, foundations, academia and prominent personalities. The UNESCO Regional Conferences in Support of Global Literacy are part of a major drive to promote literacy at international and regional levels.

These conferences build upon the work begun at the White House Conference on Global Literacy and are organized in the framework of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) and UNESCO’s Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE). They address literacy challenges specific to each region, advocate for literacy for all, and lay the groundwork for concrete country support. The conferences provide a forum for the exchange of information on effective literacy practices, discussion of challenges, cooperation-building among stakeholders, decision-making on new courses of action, and mobilization of partners and resources for concrete interventions at the country level.

Two regional conferences have taken place in the Asia-Pacific since the start of UNLD. The first was held in Beijing in 2007 and focused on East Asia, South-East Asia, and the Pacific; the second was held in New Delhi later that year and focused on South, South West, and Central Asia:
Literacy Challenges in East Asia, South-East Asia and the Pacific: Building Partnerships and Promoting Innovative Approaches  
Beijing, China, 31 July - 1 August 2007  
The Beijing conference focused on literacy challenges and achievements in the following areas: literacy policies and strategies; costs and financing; monitoring, evaluation and assessment; programme delivery; literacy in a multilingual context; and literacy and rural development.

The conference examined effective practices to improve literacy in four thematic fields: mother-child literacy and intergenerational learning; literacy for health; literacy for economic self-sufficiency; and lifelong learning.

At the close of the conference, participants recommended that follow up actions be carried out at different levels in the sub-region to promote literacy and emphasized the need for a strong political commitment at the highest level and close cooperation between governments and civil society organizations. Participants called for the provision of mother tongue instruction before moving on to literacy in the national language. They also stressed the importance of teaching migrants to read and write.

Advancing Education in the Pacific  
Nadi, Fiji, 1-5 October 2007  
A sub-regional workshop for the Pacific region on ‘Advancing Education in the Pacific’ took place in Nadi, Fiji, from 1-5 October 2007. It looked at literacy, basic and inclusive education. This workshop was the second in a partnership between the PRIDE Regional Basic Education and Literacy Project with other partners. The workshop targeted high level decision-makers/experts from the Ministry of Education and representatives from key NGO stakeholders involved in supporting education. The key objectives of the workshop were: (a) To understand the visions, experiences, practices and challenges of literacy education globally and in Pacific countries; (b) To discuss, explore and investigate future national and regional strategies and actions aimed at strengthening Education within the framework of the Education for All initiative; and (c) To recommend the way forward in regards to charting a new direction for inclusive education at the national level in Pacific Island Countries.

Literacy Challenges in South, South West and Central Asia: Building Partnerships and Promoting Innovative Approaches  
New Delhi, India, 29-30 November 2007  
The New Delhi conference focused on literacy challenges and achievements in the following areas: literacy policies and strategies; costs and finance; monitoring and evaluation in literacy; programme content and delivery; literacy and gender; and coalition and partnership building for literacy and NFE.

The conference also examined effective practices to improve literacy levels in panels on five thematic fields: family literacy and inter-generational learning; literacy for health; literacy for economic self-sufficiency; ICTs and literacy; and lifelong learning.

The conference concluded with a number of key recommendations. Governments were called on to acknowledge that they have primary responsibility for providing literacy education while supporting the significant role of civil society organizations in this effort. Conference participants noted that education sector policies should systematically include adult and youth literacy, while addressing gender disparities and targeting marginalized groups. Policies should also emphasize the links between
formal schooling for children and non-formal youth and adult learning programmes. In addition, literacy policies should be based on evidence derived from direct surveys of a continuum of levels of literacy performance, rather than indirect assessment of literacy competence.

3.2.3 Mid-Term Policy Review Conferences

The Sub-Regional EFA Mid-Term Policy Review Conferences aim to translate the EFA Mid-Decade Assessment (MDA) findings into concrete actions by identifying policy gaps and proposing new policies and strategies to reach the unreached groups in education. The sub-regional conferences use the national EFA MDA reports, the respective sub-regional EFA MDA reports and the 2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report as main references. The conferences are organized by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics Regional Office, UIS-AIMS Unit of UNESCO Bangkok, in collaboration with EFA partners in the region.

South-East Asia EFA Mid-Term Policy Review Conference

Jomtien, Thailand, 18-21 February 2008

Representatives from South-East Asian countries, UN agencies, and partners involved in education met in Thailand to prepare policy recommendations that would ensure the achievement of the Education for All goals by 2015.

Using results of the national and sub-regional EFA Mid-Decade Assessment (MDA) reports and the 2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report, the EFA Mid-Term Policy Review Conference aimed to translate findings of the MDA into concrete actions, identify policy gaps, and propose policies and strategies towards reaching the unreached groups in education. Key recommendations from the conference were presented at the Southeast Asian Ministers Organization (SEAMEO) Education Ministers Council Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in March 2008. Recommendations included the following:

- Shift policy attention to children who are not in school, and ensure accessibility of education services and facilities, particularly for the unreached
- Target financial support to disadvantaged children, youth, and adults, including direct support to children of poor families
- Eliminate direct and indirect school fees in basic education
- Implement policies that permit and encourage the use of mother tongue in education
- Adopt clear policy frameworks that identify the potential of youth and their role in achieving EFA
- Expand the budget for pre-schools attached to primary schools so that older siblings can attend
- Institutionalize gender mainstreaming in education

The conference was an opportunity for South-East Asian countries and EFA partners to verify and validate the Insular South-East Asia and Mekong EFA MDA sub-regional synthesis reports. The conference was organized by the AIMS-UIS unit, UNESCO Bangkok, on behalf of the Regional Thematic Working Group on EFA. It was supported by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, UNICEF and other EFA partners.
South Asia EFA Mid-Term Policy Review Conference

*Kathmandu, Nepal, 16-19 June 2008*

Representatives from South Asian countries, UN agencies, and partners involved in education met in Nepal to prepare policy recommendations to ensure the achievement of the Education for All goals by 2015. The conference was organized by the AIMS-UIS unit, UNESCO Bangkok, in close collaboration with the UNESCO Kathmandu office.

Using results of the national and sub-regional EFA Mid-Decade Assessment (MDA) reports and the 2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report, the EFA Mid-Term Policy Review Conference aimed to translate findings of the report into concrete actions, identify policy gaps, and propose policies and strategies towards reaching “unreached” groups in education.

Thematic issues for the conference included gender equality, inclusive education, adult literacy and continuing education, financing of education, language, and diversity. Key conference recommendations included the following:

- Implement policies to improve teacher training
- Governments should promote and ensure free and compulsory education
- Children should have access to mother tongue-based instruction for early childhood education during the first three years of schooling, and in literacy classes
- Programmes for re-entry into the educational system should be established and promoted
- Adequate funding should be allocated to ensure educational access and opportunity for “unreached” groups

Asia and Pacific Regional Preparatory Conference for CONFINTEA VI, Seoul, Republic of Korea (6–8 October 2008, Seoul, Republic of Korea)

The CONFINTEA VI Preparatory Conference for Asia and the Pacific was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, during 6–8 October 2008. It was hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea and organized in cooperation with UIL; the UNESCO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok; UNESCO Beijing; and the National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE) to identify the agenda for CONFINTEA VI. Over 130 international participants attended the conference, representing governments from 28 Member States and eight multilateral agencies and international NGOs, as well as experts and stakeholders from the private sector, universities and the media. The conference was attended by 13 ministers, deputy ministers and secretaries of state.

Through a series of thematic panel presentations, participants discussed the key issues in adult learning and education in the sub-regions. Similarly, six roundtable sessions served to highlight critical areas of adult learning and education, including policy, governance, financing, participation and inclusion for equity. Sustainable development was also a major theme of the meeting. Topics included the quality and relevance of adult education in the learning society; literacy and other key competences to build equitable societies and promote sustainable development; improvement of delivery mechanisms for lifelong learning; and assessment, accreditation and equivalence. The major recommendations included in the Conference Outcome document were:

- To recommit to the vision of adult learning and education in the framework of lifelong learning, confirming the primary responsibility of governments through enacting and strengthening appropriate legislation;
• To increase government and development partnership support to mobilize resources for literacy and adult education;

• To encourage participating nations to develop and implement their own action plans and measurable targets that annually increase accessibility and participation in adult learning and education programmes;

• To prioritize adult literacy and women’s programmes to achieve the Education for All and Millennium Development Goals;

• To ensure the relevance of content and process in all domains such as training, materials development and curriculum, focusing on the context-specific needs of adult learners, and promoting critical awareness towards the social empowerment of adults; and

• To develop and implement a regional or/and global monitoring and tracking mechanism to ensure the progress of adult learning and education objectives towards a learning society.

Due to funding limitations, the action plans formulated by the Regional Resource Team have been carried out by the individual organizations, based on their expertise and in coordination with UNESCO-APPEAL. ACCU has been active in the development of audio-visual and printed materials, while ASPBAE has focused on training, research and advocacy. ARTC has introduced a number of innovative literacy activities, undertaken research, and provided on-going technical assistance to support country programmes. CBM has focused on people with disabilities, while SIL has concentrated efforts on language and ethnic minority issues. Details on these organizations and their programmes during UNLD are provided in Annex I.

3.3.2 UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)

In support of the UNLD, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) is undertaking a range of activities focused on policy-driven research, capacity-building, and advocacy. UIL coordinates the global LIFE programme by fostering enabling and facilitating processes of continuous consultation and communication with all stakeholders. UIL is also engaged in supporting UNLD at the country level through providing, upon request, technical assistance that is tailor-made to specific contexts and needs.

UIL’s activities related to LIFE are based on the proposed LIFE Strategy for 2007-2009. The strategic areas identified in this planning document include: preparatory activities; regional conferences in support of global literacy (the Beijing and Delhi conferences); implementation of LIFE projects within EFA extra-budgetary programmes and within LIFE country action plans; and monitoring and evaluation.
3.4 Reformulating EFA Policy in a Framework of Lifelong Learning

As a follow-up to the Hamburg Declaration and the global discussion on lifelong learning (LLL), there was a regional initiative to recognize literacy as an important part of lifelong learning. Experts from government, academic, and civil society sectors across the Asia-Pacific region met in Tokyo in October 2007 to discuss the relevance of a lifelong learning perspective for more effectively achieving EFA goals. The International Expert Meeting on Educational Policies from a Lifelong Learning Perspective recognized that lifelong learning has great potential to reformulate, reinvigorate, and refocus Education for All, as well as to make it more successful through ensuring the rights to education and learning.

Participants in the meeting prepared a policy note to encourage countries of the region to translate the EFA-LLL vision into policy and practice. The meeting formulated the following recommendations:

- Governments and other influential decision-makers publicly advocate the benefits and necessities of working together across all sectors for creating linkages between different systems of education
- Central administrations in all sectors should pay more attention to empowering local communities to translate and carry out decentralized plans in locally appropriate ways
- State/province and local networks be established for greater collaboration between governments, civil society, private sectors and all providers for the overall empowerment of the individual learner
- In each locality, different agencies and organizations that can directly or indirectly provide learning opportunities meet regularly with one another and with community representatives in community forum, committee, council or other locally appropriate ways, to enable networking among providers and with community leaders as a normal practice
- Development stakeholders and both regional and international organizations should prepare effective platforms for sharing best practices

3.5 Publications, Products, and Resource Materials

3.5.1 UNESCO Publications

Advocacy and communication to promote UNLD is enhanced by UNESCO’s global dissemination of publications such as the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (EFA GMR). The Report for 2006 focuses specifically on the issue of literacy. Entitled Literacy for Life, this report calls attention to the power of literacy to reduce human poverty.

UNESCO has also produced a number of publications since the start of UNLD on topics ranging from ICT use in literacy, to promoting gender mainstreaming and a human rights-based approach in education, to integrating HIV/AIDS education into literacy and life-skills programmes, to reviews of equivalency programmes and lifelong learning. In addition, UNESCO has published and disseminated conference workshop publications and DVDs, including information on workshops and meetings held throughout the region.
3.5.2 Products and Resource Materials at the National Level

The countries of the Asia-Pacific region have produced a variety of materials in support of UNLD. In Viet Nam, the Ministry of Education produced 10,000 guidebooks on literacy teaching. Teacher’s training guides were produced in Bangladesh, along with 10,000 posters to promote literacy. In Pakistan, the Bunyad Foundation produced a number of materials in 2007 and 2008, including ICT training-of-trainers CDs, newspapers, CLC calendars, and HIV/AIDS booklets. The Ministry of Education in Pakistan, in conjunction with UNICEF and UNESCO, has also produced caps, literacy posters, posters about EFA, and a number of other materials since the start of the UNLD.

The Department of Non-Formal Education in Lao PDR produced 1,000 leaflets about non-formal education and 200 handouts for International Literacy Day in 2006. Cambodia has also supported UNLD through promotional brochures for literacy, posters, banners and T-shirts for literacy and NFE. A video spot supporting literacy was also shown in Cambodia. In Mongolia, two documentary films were made in support of UNLD: “10th Anniversary of NRFE: Achievements and Challenges” and “Literacy as Freedom.”

Nepal, too, has been very active in supporting UNLD through brochures and publications, including 10,000 brochures on CLCs and literacy, 2,000 brochures on open schools, 5,000 brochures on non-formal education, and 10,000 posters in support of literacy. The NRC-NFE of Nepal, in coordination with UNESCO Kathmandu, also published a collection of articles on literacy.
Chapter 4

The State of Literacy in the Region and Progress to Date

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the state of literacy globally and in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as a review of key literacy activities in the region during the first half of UNLD. A country-by-country overview of literacy activities is included in Annex II.

4.1 Current Issues in Literacy Statistics

In considering the literacy data that follows with regard to the 2003-2008 timeframe for the UNLD Mid-Decade Assessment, it is important to remember that five years is an extremely short timeframe for a discussion of literacy results. To truly evaluate the effects of UNLD, standardized long-term monitoring and evaluation will be necessary.

In particular, there is a problem of measurement, with significant discrepancies between official literacy rates based on censuses and rates of measured literacy (where these are undertaken). Census numbers for literacy are generally taken by asking the head of the household if members of that household are literate; such numbers therefore often significantly overestimate literacy rates in a country. In Cambodia, for instance, the 1998 National Census found adult literacy rates of 67.3 percent through self-declaration, whereas the 1999 Cambodia Literary Assessment Survey found rates of 37.1 through testing.

The literacy data reported by UIS are obtained from national censuses and surveys that are undertaken during a given reference year (5-year period). However, country literacy rates are sometimes estimated for each year, and thus may show variation when compared to UIS figures, which use one rate for a 5-year period under the principle that there are no significant fluctuations over a short term.

The difficulty in measuring literacy effectively is compounded by the myriad definitions of “literate” that exist among – and even within – countries. Because definitions of literacy are so context-specific, it is also difficult to make comparative evaluations between countries, regions, or sub-regions.

Despite these difficulties, it is clear from the data that progress is being made. Literacy numbers are rising in almost all countries, and new frameworks are being put in place, setting the stage for continued success.

4.2 The State of Global Literacy

There are currently an estimated 774 million illiterate adults worldwide. Between 1984-1994 and 1995-2004, the global adult literacy rate rose from 76 percent to 82 percent, and there were 90 million new literates in this period. This improvement was largely concentrated in East Asia, and particularly in China. The greatest increases in literacy rates between the two periods were achieved in the Arab States and South and West Asia, with 13.8 percent and 16.1 percent increases, respectively. While there have been significant improvements in numbers of literates, regional and national disparities in literacy rates persist according to gender, age, ethnicity, and economic status.

Gender parity remains an important issue for literacy globally. While gender parity has been reached in North America, Western Europe, and the Caribbean, it remains a significant challenge in South and West Asia, the Arab States, and sub-Saharan Africa, which have female/male gender parity indexes of 0.67, 0.74, and 0.76, respectively. Striking gender disparities are evident in Afghanistan, India, Nepal, and Pakistan, where literacy rates for females are less than two-thirds those for males.

4.2.1 Global Literacy Rates by Region

Despite marked improvements in global literacy rates over the past decades, there are still large numbers of illiterate adults in East Asia (124 million), as well as in sub-Saharan Africa (153 million), and South and West Asia (388 million). The number of illiterate adults has actually increased in sub-Saharan Africa.
and the Arab States, partly as a result of high population growth in those regions. Today, literacy rates in South and West Asia (60 percent), sub-Saharan Africa (59 percent), the Arab States (70 percent), and the Caribbean (71 percent) remain well below the world average (82 percent).  

The following graph shows the improvement in literacy rates by region for the period 1990-2005 for youth aged 15-24:

**Figure 4.1: Global Literacy Rates by Region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>% of youths 15-24 who are literate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Asia &amp; Pacific</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe &amp; Central Asia</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America &amp; Caribbean</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East &amp; North Africa</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>females 2005</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>males 2005</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>females 21990</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>males 21990</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Improvements in literacy were more marked in developing than in developed countries during this period. Continued improvements will depend on reducing illiteracy in the most populous developing countries, as over 75 percent of the world’s illiterates are now concentrated in only fifteen countries (with 35 percent in India alone).  

The following tables give the estimated number of adult illiterates, illiteracy rates during 1985-1994 and 1995-2004 for developed and developing countries, and a breakdown by region:

**Table 4.1: Estimated Number of Adult Illiterates by Region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>884.0</td>
<td>774.0</td>
<td>-10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing countries</td>
<td>881.3</td>
<td>764.4</td>
<td>-10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed countries</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>+11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries in transition</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>-61.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>131.0</td>
<td>130.3</td>
<td>+0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab States</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>+3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>-97.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia &amp; the Pacific</td>
<td>227.6</td>
<td>125.6</td>
<td>-44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>220.3</td>
<td>124.0</td>
<td>-45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>+21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South and West Asia</td>
<td>334.1</td>
<td>337.8</td>
<td>+1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America &amp; Caribbean</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>+0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>+22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>+3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. America &amp; W. Europe</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>+4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central &amp; Eastern Europe</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>-28.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Estimated Adult Illiteracy Rates by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (%)</td>
<td>Male (%)</td>
<td>Female (%)</td>
<td>GPI (F/M)</td>
<td>Total (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing countries</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed countries</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries in transition</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab States</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East: Asia and the Pacific</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South and West Asia</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America and Western Europe</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Age 15 or older.
2. Data are for the most recent year available during the period specified. See introduction to statistical tables in annex for broader explanations of national literacy definitions, assessment methods, sources and years of data.

Sources: Annex, Statistical Tables 7A and 12.

4.3 The State of Literacy in the Asia-Pacific Region

The Asia-Pacific region has relatively high rates of literacy overall, but there are key differences among the various sub-regions, as well as at the national and local levels. Illiteracy rates are highest in the countries with the greatest poverty. Moreover, in countries with comparatively low literacy rates, rural-urban disparities are also large. South Asia and West Asia also face significant gender imbalances in literacy.

4.3.1 East Asia

East Asia obtained a relatively high adult literacy rate (92 percent) during 1995-2004, up from 82 percent in the 1985-1994 period. The dramatic increase in literacy in East Asia between these decades is largely attributable to China, where efforts to increase primary school participation and targeted adult literacy programmes enabled 98 million people to become literate. Despite these significant achievements, 124 million adults in the region (71 percent of whom are women) still lack basic literacy and numeracy skills. Countries such as Lao PDR and Cambodia, for example, still face significant challenges in terms of overall literacy (currently 69 percent in Lao PDR and 75 percent in Cambodia) and gender parity (0.79 in Lao PDR and 0.76 in Cambodia).

A number of countries in the region are on track to meet EFA 2015 targets for literacy. These include China (with a current adult literacy rate of 91 percent), Indonesia (90 percent), Macao (91 percent), Malaysia (89 percent), Singapore (93 percent), and Thailand (93 percent).

Table 4.3: Adult Literacy Prospects for East Asia (including South-East Asia)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult Literacy Prospects</th>
<th>Countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High chance of achieving the target by 2015 (moving towards the goal, with steady progress)</td>
<td>China, Indonesia, Macao (China, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low chance of achieving the target by 2015 (moving towards the goal with rapid progress, but further to go)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At risk of not achieving the target by 2015 (moving away from the goal or progress to slow)</td>
<td>4 countries: Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar, Philippines, Viet Nam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious risk of not achieving the target by 2015 (furthest to go and moving towards the goal, but progress too slow)</td>
<td>2 countries: Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EFA GMR Regional Overview: East Asia (2008)

4.3.2 South and West Asia

In South and West Asia, less than 60 percent of the adult population can read and write with understanding. In Bangladesh and Pakistan, LIFE Round 1 countries, the levels are below 50 percent. The regional literacy rate has increased substantially since 1990, when it stood at 47 percent, but the rates for this region are still among the lowest in the world.

South Asia also faces particular challenges with regard to gender equity in education and literacy, with women accounting for two-thirds of the region’s illiterates. There is a correlation in the region between low overall literacy rates
and low rates of female literacy, with the three countries that have the lowest overall literacy rates (Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan) also exhibiting the lowest levels of gender parity (0.62, 0.56, and 0.57, respectively). This gender disparity is directly related to low levels of female participation in formal schooling. While on average 92 girls in South and West Asia are enrolled in primary school for every 100 boys, in Nepal the figure is 89 and in Pakistan, 71.

There are also substantial differences between rural and urban literacy rates in the region. In Pakistan, for example, the rural literacy rate is 44 percent, compared with 72 percent for urban areas. Literacy rates are particularly low in remote rural regions, including areas inhabited by ethnic minority populations.

Two countries in the region, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, have high rates of adult literacy and gender parity. For Sri Lanka, the adult literacy rate for the 2000-2004 period was 90.4 percent, with a gender parity index of 0.96; for the Maldives, the literacy rate for the same period was 96.3 percent, and parity was reached. The Maldives, moreover, is currently on target for meeting 2015 literacy goals.

### Table 4.4: Adult Literacy Prospects for South and West Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult Literacy Prospects</th>
<th>Country/Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High chance of achieving the target by 2015 (moving towards the goal, with steady progress)</td>
<td>Maldives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low chance of achieving the target by 2015 (moving towards the goal with rapid progress, but further to go)</td>
<td>Bangladesh, Nepal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** EFA GMR Regional Overview: South and West Asia (2008).

### 4.3.3 Central Asia

In Central Asia, adult literacy rates are high (99 percent). However, approximately 380,000 adults in the region still lack basic literacy skills; 72 percent of these individuals are women.

In Kyrgyzstan, the number of various literacy and non-formal education providers has been increased. Such programmes are mostly organized in the centres for adult education. A total of 11 centres have been operation in all the provinces of Kyrgyzstan, with about 20,000 enrollments.

Tajikistan provides adult education through both formal education (technical vocational schools, higher education institutions, retraining institutes, etc.) and non-formal education (provided by NGOs, centres for continuous education, etc.). The formal education system for adults includes institutes for professional skill and qualification upgrading, and institutes for post-graduate education at the Ministry of Education, Public Health Ministry, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, and Ministry of Agriculture. A ProfessionalDevelopmentInstituteforgovernmentemployees was established in 2002 to upgrade the professional capacity of government officials.
As the following table shows, a number of Central Asian countries, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, have already achieved universal literacy.

Table 4.5: Adult Literacy Prospects for Central Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult Literacy Target</th>
<th>Central and Eastern Europe</th>
<th>Central Asia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Universal literacy achieved</strong> (adult literacy rate ≥ 97%)</td>
<td>12 countries: Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Ukraine</td>
<td>7 Countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Adult Literacy Prospects** (Adult literacy rate projects made for four countries in Central and Eastern Europe that have not yet achieved that target, extrapolating trends between 1991 and 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central and Eastern Europe</th>
<th>Central Asia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High chance of achieving the target by 2015 (moving towards the goal, with steady progress)</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low chance of achieving the target by 2015 (moving towards the goal)</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Serious risk of not achieving the target by 2045 (furthest to go and moving towards the goal, but progress to slow)</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EFA GMR Regional Overview: Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (2008).

1.1.4 The Pacific

Nearly 1.6 million adults in the Pacific region still lack basic literacy skills. The adult literacy rate for the Pacific as a whole masks important disparities among the few countries reporting data. Nearly all adults in Samoa and Tonga could read and write in 1995-2004 (99 percent), but the adult literacy levels in Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu were 57 percent and 74 percent, respectively, for the same period. Moreover, significant gender disparities were noted in Papua New Guinea, where only 80 adults in every 100 adult men were literate for every 100 adult women. Papua New Guinea is currently at significant risk of not achieving EFA goals for literacy by 2015. Most Pacific countries have yet to seriously address the challenging tasks that EFA Goal 3 entails.

Pacific Island states are mindful that educational policies must provide a functionally literate workforce that is able to contribute to small island economies. Such policies must be geared also towards the informal economic sector. Some countries like Kiribati, Nauru, Niue and Tuvalu do not have substantive export industries and survive mainly from remittances.

There have also been some positive news. Comparative data provided by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) shows that for Period 1 (1990) and period 2 (2000-2004), adult literacy in Fiji had increased for males by 2.7 percent and for females by 5.9 percent. For New Caledonia it was a 1.3 percent increase for males and a 1.6 percent increase for females (UNESCAP, 2008).

Not included in the prospects analysis (insufficient or no data)

Central and Eastern Europe (4): Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia
Central Asia (2): Georgia, Uzbekistan
When examining the prospects for adult literacy in the Pacific, the GMR report shows that only one country (Papua New Guinea) is at serious risk of not achieving the EFA literacy goal.

Table 4.6: Adult Literacy Prospects for the Pacific

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult Literacy Target</th>
<th>2 countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Universal literacy achieved (Adult literacy rate ≥ 97%)</td>
<td>Samoa, Tonga</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult Literacy Prospects</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High chance of achieving the target by 2015 (moving towards the goal, with steady progress)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### 4.3.5 Country Data

The following graphs show the change in literacy rate by Asia-Pacific country over the first half of the UNLD, where data are available:
Significant improvements in adult literacy were made in Pakistan and Indonesia, with rates rising from 43 percent to 51.7 percent in Pakistan, and from 85 percent to 92 percent in Indonesia. Improvements in adult literacy were also made in Cambodia, Viet Nam, and Thailand, with rates rising from 71.5 to 73.6 percent in Cambodia, 89.9 percent to 92.1 percent in Viet Nam, and 92.6 percent to 93.5 percent in Thailand over the 2000-2005 period.

Improvements are also visible in youth literacy rates over the 2000-2005 period for countries where data is available. In Pakistan, the youth literacy rate improved from 62 percent to 66.6 percent over the period, and in Viet Nam, youth literacy rates went up from 93.8 percent in 2000 to 96.6 percent in 2005. Literacy rates improved over this period in Cambodia, Indonesia, and Thailand as well, with rates rising from 81.5 to 83.4 percent in Cambodia, 98 to 99 percent in Indonesia, and 98 to 98.1 percent in Thailand.

### 4.4 Snapshots of Literacy Activities in the Asia-Pacific Region

This section provides an overview of the main programmes, activities, and events to promote UNLD in the Asia-Pacific region during the first five years of UNLD (2003-2008). It details efforts to promote and improve literacy at the country and regional levels.

#### 4.4.1 South-East Asia

A number of events and activities have been held in the region to support the UNLD since 2003. In conjunction with International Literacy Day on September 8, 2006, the Department of Non-Formal Education in the Ministry of Education, Lao PDR, held a National Seminar for the Dissemination and Promotion of Non-Formal Education...
Activities in Lao PDR. Cambodia has held yearly celebrations on this date, declaring September 8th "National Literacy Day" in the country. In April 2007 and 2008, the Coalition for GAW in Viet Nam held the Education for All Global Action Week on Education, with events in Hanoi and 10 other provinces. In conjunction with these activities, T-shirts, posters, brochures, and guidebooks on literacy teaching have been produced to increase awareness of literacy and non-formal education.

The Department of Non-Formal Education in Cambodia has undertaken a number of projects to improve literacy education, including training courses on literacy class management, training courses for literacy teachers, and the provision of equipment and materials for literacy classes. In Lao PDR, the Department of Non-Formal Education conducted a research study on bilingual literacy programmes for minority populations from December 2007 to February 2008. This study found that existing programmes were successful in attracting a diverse range of learners, with 49 ethnic groups participating, but that the programmes face a number of challenges, including a lack of specific national policy and strategy on bilingual education, insufficient financial support, and a dearth of experienced personnel to run the programmes. Viet Nam is also focusing literacy efforts on ethnic minorities through an "Education for Ethnic Minorities in Viet Nam" project (2007-2009) run with the support of ActionAid.

ActionAid currently supports 40 community learning centres in Viet Nam, and there has been rapid expansion of CLCs throughout the country. There has been a strong commitment to literacy and adult education from the government, communities, and citizens, as well as a good understanding of the importance of NFE and literacy at different levels of the administrative system.

Cambodia currently has 68 CLCs: 67 are supported by the government and one is supported by the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan (NFUAJ). A number of CLCs that were previously supported by UNESCO have now been turned over to the Department of Non-formal Education. They are currently supported by the government.

In Lao PDR, there are currently 299 CLCs in operation, 29 of which are supported by the government and 25 of which are supported by UNESCO. In 1999, the government published its NFE Policy on CLC, which was the first guideline for the establishment and management of CLCs. This was revised and expanded in a 2001 guide, Establishment and Management of CLC. Both guides include background on the principles and role of CLCs, as well as information on their activities and management.

4.4.2 South Asia

LIFE Round 1 countries Bangladesh and Pakistan have undertaken a number of literacy-related activities during the first half of the UNLD. In the past year, Bangladesh celebrated International Literacy Day (September 8), International Mother’s Day (February 21), and World Teacher’s Day (October 5), as well as Global Action Week on Education (April 23-29). Pakistan has also held annual celebrations for EFA Global Action Week in April, as well as a nationally coordinated Literacy Walk in federal and provincial capitals. The country has further sponsored a number of media campaigns for literacy. Additionally, Pakistan has held seminars on literacy issues, including the EFA Cluster Experts and Managerial Meeting, the South Asian EFA Forum Ministerial Meeting, the International Seminar on Adult Literacy Curricula, and the Regional Seminar on Adult Literacy.

Pakistan has launched multiple projects to increase literacy, including the Crash Literacy Programme, the Adult Literacy...
Campaign, and the Literacy for All Programme. The Ministry of Education has also developed new curricula for literacy and ECE as well as teacher’s manuals and textual materials for youth and adult literacy. The NEF, in coordination with UNESCO, has undertaken extensive training of teachers and resource persons. A broad network of literacy and non-formal basic education resource centres has been established throughout the country, and there are now over 800 CLCs in Pakistan.34

From January 2005 to June 2008, Lahanti Akhra and Ashrai undertook a project for community mobilization and institution-building in villages, sub-district towns, and district towns in Bangladesh. The Lahanti programme aims to organize tribal communities and develop leadership among them toward securing of rights. Participants form akhra (community meeting places for learning and entertainment) of their own initiative and with their own funds; communities feel a sense of ownership over these institutions, which serve as spaces for problem-solving and learning about rights. Tribal facilitators have been trained and are now contributing to the development of their own communities through the strengthening of civil society, the creation of pre-schools, and other activities. The programme has been successful in achieving community participation, but a lack of technical and financial support has been a barrier to achieving the broader goal of ensuring rights for the community.

Bangladesh also launched the PLEASE project in January 2005, which expanded mother tongue-based education. Supportive factors for the project included a high level of learner and community participation, strong NGO capacity, and successful coordination among development partners. A lack of government support for mother tongue-based education programmes, however, has hindered wide-scale replication of this project.

In Afghanistan, a number of programmes to increase literacy have been underway since the beginning of the UNLD. The Literacy and Non-formal Education Development in Afghanistan programme (LAND Afghan, 2003-2005, then continued through 2007) was designed to help the government achieve EFA goals 3, 4, and 5 by building a technical and structural base for promoting literacy and NFE, with a focus on girls and women. The Literacy Education in Afghanistan project (LEAF, 2006-2008) is working to improve the capacity of the Literacy Department and to expand literacy classes in targeted areas. In addition, the Learning for Community Empowerment Programmes (LCEP, 2004-2006 and LCEP II, 2008-2013) integrate community development opportunities with activities in local governance, adult literacy and numeracy, and economic empowerment. By the end of the first LCEP, the programme had facilitated the growth of 380 democratically-elected community development councils (half of which were female) and 851 self-help savings and investment groups (427 of which were female). LCEP has also trained 16 lead trainers (10 female), 74 provincial and district level trainers (37 female), and 371 village teachers (178 female), the majority of whom have less than a tenth grade education. LCEP II will address two priorities of the National Education Strategy Plan (1387-1392): the establishment of a National Literacy Centre to build capacity within the Ministry of Education and the roll-out of large scale educational initiatives. The National Literacy Centre will help formulate policy, develop standards for teacher credentialing and learner assessment, conduct research on literacy initiatives, and support the Ministry of Education’s advocacy efforts.

Afghanistan has succeeded in mobilizing substantial resources from national and international organizations to support education in the country. With these resources, community learning centres have been established, linking literacy with community empowerment, and awareness has been raised, in general, on the importance of literacy for
national development. Challenges for Afghanistan in the coming years will be sustaining these project initiatives and maintaining the quality of programming in the contexts of rapid expansion and political instability.

Nepal has also been quite active in supporting UNLD. Innovative programmes include the Supporting Maternal and Child Health Improvement and Building Literate Environment project (SMILE, 2007-2008), which recognizes that integrating literacy into maternal and child health education is an effective way to promote literate environments at home while delivering essential health knowledge. The project targets illiterate and neo-literate pregnant women and mothers of children under 5. Since the programme began in late 2007, a number of positive results have already been achieved: an improvement in literacy levels among women learners; the development of reading and learning habits among community members; discussion of problems among group members and in CLCs; and the visiting of health service centres for mother and child care.

CLCs are an important means of educational delivery in Nepal, and the country currently has 557 CLCs, 505 of which are supported by the government. The 10th National Plan (2002-2007) called for the establishment of one CLC in each electoral constitutional area of the country (205 CLCs in total) to provide literacy and non-formal education to community members. The 2007 Village Education Plan then called for the establishment of 300 CLCs in 20 districts where the literacy rate is below 40 percent. This programme will continue, and the government now has a policy to open one CLC in each VDC (about 4000) and in each of the wards in the municipalities (58 municipalities).

4.4.3 Central Asia

Central Asia is currently undergoing rapid socio-economic change, and as a result, literacy and adult education programmes in the region aim to provide training and professional skills to equip the populace for new labour needs. Providing literacy education to ethnic minority populations who speak languages other than the national language is also a challenge in this region.

In Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Public Education has supported the programme “Life Skills Learning through Non-formal Education (2003-2004)” to foster literacy and skills creation through the integrated development of knowledge, values, and attitudes. Specific programmes include: nation-wide training programmes in Latin script literacy (to facilitate the transition from Cyrillic to Romanized script for adults who were trained in the former); management psychology; and basic entrepreneurship. Programmes integrating lifelong learning and HIV/AIDS education have also been introduced in CLCs. In accordance with community needs, the Advocacy Kit on HIV/AIDS was published to improve awareness of HIV/AIDS prevention and to strengthen the capacity of community facilitators and increase their knowledge and skills.

The Ministry of Public Education in Uzbekistan has also carried out research on learning life skills through NFE (2005-2006). Research studies explored the diverse roles of non-formal education in society, including the development of civic society; formation of loyalty and tolerance; support of social and cultural diversity; preserving national cultural and learning traditions; and supporting small business enterprise and economic subsistence.

In Kazakhstan, ALE is geared toward the technical and professional training of adults. Training for unemployed individuals focuses on technical and service positions currently needed in the labour market.
Activities to promote the UNLD in Kazakhstan include the celebration of International Literacy Day and the preparation of a booklet on UNLD. Seven CLCs have also been established in the country, all of which are self-supported through contributions from local government.

**4.4.4 East Asia**

China has held a number of events to promote UNLD, including an International Workshop on Literacy (2007) and the Confucius Prizes for Literacy ceremony (2006 and 2007). The Ministry of Education, in conjunction with 11 other ministries and organizations, released guidelines for strengthening literacy education in December 2007. In addition, the China National Commission for UNESCO has produced the *Capacity-building Handbook for Rural Community Learning Centres* (2005) and the *Resource Pack for Literacy and Continuing Education* (2007), both in Chinese. Community education study manuals (150,000) and rural scientific, cultural, and technological knowledge VCDs (300,000) have also been produced. Projects in Shandong Province include a community education pilot project (2000-2008) and the revitalization of the Rural Education Action Plan (2003-2008) to integrate literacy with rural development issues. Such programmes address the needs of targeted rural populations in China, where illiteracy persists in pockets.

In Mongolia, literacy programmes have targeted illiterates who dropped out of school or did not have the opportunity to attend schooling, as well as girls and women. To engage these populations, programmes have developed learning materials that are relevant to their lives and that expose them to the new possibilities education can offer. The NFDE of Mongolia has been involved in advocacy and awareness-raising, as well. It has produced two documentary films, *10th Anniversary of NFE: Achievements and Challenges* and *Literacy as Freedom*, as well as a literacy clip art CD-Rom and a quarterly newsletter.

**The Pacific Island States**

A regional workshop on adult education practices and literacy materials was held at the University of the South Pacific Lautoka Campus in December 2006. It was facilitated by the UNESCO Office for Pacific Island States, the Asian Cultural Centre for UNESCO and UNESCO Bangkok. Attended by Pacific Island states and NGOs, the workshop reiterated the importance of adult learning and literacy materials as pathways for the sustainable development of Pacific communities. Dame Carol Kidu, representing the Papua New Guinea Government, reiterated the importance of a clear vision for developing user-friendly literacy materials in the vernacular and integrating traditional forms into adult learning practices.

As a LIFE country, PNG has conducted a literacy situational analysis to develop appropriate policies, programmes and activities in literacy and NFE to achieve EFA literacy goals. The situational analysis provides comprehensive information to develop sustainable NFE strategies and programmes.

With support from UNESCO, the National Literacy and Awareness Secretariat (NLAS) of at Department of Education, PNG, convened a four day workshop with a group of representatives from the national government, non-governmental organizations, churches, higher education institutions and the media, in order to critically assess the literacy work in the country, both from policy and practice perspectives, and to put forward a set of recommendations to the Department of Education, the government entity in charge of literacy. The recommendations called for greater
political and financial commitments to create and sustain a literate nation. The workshop recommended the following government action to overcome the country’s illiteracy problem:

- Restructure the Council and the Secretariat with clear mandates;
- Review the National Literacy Policy;
- Establish a taskforce by June 2007 to implement recommendations 1 and 2;
- Include in the terms of reference for the taskforce an assessment of the Provincial Literacy Coordinator (PLC) positions, and the development of guidelines for equivalency programmes to link non-formal with formal education; and
- Recognize the role of literacy as a critical tool for promoting and sustaining development, and take ownership to lead literacy development in the nation under the leadership of the responsible governmental minister.

4.5 Selected Country Experiences in Implementing the UNLD International Plan of Action

This section provides examples of key efforts in the Asia-Pacific region in regard to the six pillars of the UNLD International Plan of Action.

1. Policy change that encourages local participation and links literacy promotion with strategies to reduce poverty

In Indonesia, education has been decentralized since 2001, and an overall strategy of community-based school management has been implemented. This process has increased decision-making at the local level by: a) giving additional powers and responsibilities to school committees, and b) enhancing the authority of local governments, schools, and community groups in deciding how to spend block grants for education.

A number of laws have been implemented in Indonesia to support the EFA process. The Presidential Instruction No. 5/2006, on the National Movement to Hasten Compulsory Nine-Year Basic Education Accomplishment and the Fight against Illiteracy (NMHFAI) aims to ensure that EFA implementation contributes directly to broader poverty reduction and economic growth objectives. The NMHFAI sets out a specific target of making 7.7 million people literate (1.6 million people per year) over the period 2004-2009. In the execution of NMHFAI, the government has strengthened mutual accountability for eradicating illiteracy, applying a vertical approach that mobilizes all segments of society, including heads of villages and neighborhoods who, in turn, galvanize the community as part of this effort. The principle of gotong-royong is applied, meaning that everyone in the community has a responsibility to “pitch in and help out” in the effort to eradicate illiteracy. The plan also uses a horizontal approach that involves intensive cooperation with NGOs, social organizations, religious organizations, women’s organizations, Islamic Boarding Schools, mosques, and others.

Through this approach, the Indonesian Government aims to reach the EFA 2015 target for literacy by 2009, while simultaneously reducing poverty, particularly in rural areas and among women.
2. More flexible literacy programmes, adapted to local conditions, that enable learners to move on to more formal learning opportunities

Thailand has a range of literacy and basic education programmes that target the out-of-school population, including industrial workers; members of hill tribes and ethnic minorities; homeless children and teenagers; military conscripts; and people with disabilities. Section 46 of the Thai Constitution of 1997 contains specific provisions for the rights of “traditional communities” and their cultures, and the National Education Act 1999 guarantees the right to at least 12 years of basic education.

The Northern Pwo Karen Bilingual Education Project at Omkoi District (NPKOM) in Chiang Mai is the first bilingual education programme that the Thai Ministry of Education has supported in a minority language. This programme has enabled children of the Karen ethnic minority to study in their mother tongue and in Thai, thus providing them with the skills to transition to higher levels of education in the Thai school system. The project has been successful in both garnering greater participation among students in the classroom as well as in strengthening students’ language skills and literacy in the national language.

3. Capacity-building to help literacy instructors, managers and programmes to function more effectively

The UNESCO project “Capacity-building for Improving the Quality and Scope of Literacy Programmes in Pakistan,” aims to improve the national capacity to implement literacy programmes, with a focus on poverty reduction and women’s empowerment. The project was launched by Pakistan’s Ministry of Education under the LIFE initiative in 2006. The main components of the project are: capacity-building of non-formal education (NFE) personnel; materials and curriculum development; and piloting community learning centres. The dual goals of women’s empowerment and the promotion of gender equality are cross-cutting themes in this initiative.

This project has generated a set of new materials on management development, post-literacy, teacher training, CLCs and gender empowerment with regard to literacy. It has also strengthened the institutional capacity of various public sector organizations and NGOs, and enhanced the capacity of managers, supervisors, and teachers in supporting various literacy themes.

Moreover, project activities have provided literacy practitioners with a forum to share their experiences and expertise. In this way, project activities have increased coordination among partners, while raising awareness among planners and managers about gaps in existing literacy programmes and needs for future programmes.

5. More empirical research to support policy change

In 2005, APPEAL coordinated a regional research project on literacy in South Asia. Focusing on India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan – countries with large numbers of adult illiterates – the study reviewed policies and practices related to literacy and non-formal education in order to identify strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and innovation. The resulting report, *Strengthening Literacy and Non-Formal Education Policies and Practices: An Overview of The Situation in Three South Asian Countries*, includes recommendations for developing appropriate policies and strategies to significantly reduce illiteracy in these countries.

The Asia Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASBAE) produced a synthesis of the research findings, which were presented at the South Asian Ministerial Forum on EFA. These documents
also serve as a key reference for practitioners and policy makers in the region in the on-going implementation of the LIFE initiative, UNLD, and EFA.

6. Community participation and ownership of literacy programmes

Community learning centres (CLCs) rely on the active participation and commitment of the local community for their functioning. In Bangladesh, CLCs operate in many cases as community entities with no legal status, despite the fact that they may be implemented by international, national, or local NGOs. Community members participate in CLC management through a committee (elected from within the community) that oversees implementation and makes decisions and plans. Day-to-day operations of the CLC are also overseen by community members, or by facilitators recruited from within the community.

CLCs have, in most cases, endeavored to develop relationships with local governments. In turn, union councils have come to see CLCs as indispensable community entities and, as a result, include them in their community initiatives.

7. Monitoring and evaluation of programmes to determine more reliable indicators of progress, both in terms of numbers of participants and overall impact

Despite a target for the inclusion of gender equality having been confirmed as part of EFA and the MDGs, a lack of data in this area persists, both as a baseline for comparison and for monitoring annual progress. Without clear indicators on gender equality in education, countries in the region will be unable to say with certainty the degree to which this goal has been achieved; it is therefore essential to develop indicators for countries to gauge their progress towards realization of these goals.

To this end, UNESCO Bangkok launched the “Developing and Applying Monitoring and Assessment Tools for Strategic Planning Towards Gender Equality in Education (Phase 1)” project in 2006. Jointly initiated by APPEAL, EPR, and UIS-AIMS in partnership with the Ministry of Education, this project brings together technical expertise in the areas of gender, statistics, planning, and management. The project aims to develop tools, methodologies and mechanisms for collecting relevant quantitative and qualitative data on girls and boys in the education system, and to identify policies and strategies to collect this information. Cambodia, Mongolia, Viet Nam, and Sri Lanka are participating in the project.

The development of gender indicators will play a critical role in the achievement of the gender equality goal by 2015. To this end, delegations from participating countries met in Bangkok in September 2008 to review the needs assessments of their respective countries, discuss possible generic indicators for measuring gender equality in education, and develop national follow-up action plans.
5.1 The LIFE Initiative

The Literacy Initiative for Empowerment was launched in October 2005 by Director-General Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura during the 33rd General Conference of UNESCO. It is a collaborative framework for action, in which national governments, NGOs, civil society, the private sector, UN agencies, and bilateral and multilateral agencies work together to combat illiteracy and empower disadvantaged groups (especially rural women and girls). The initiative targets countries with the greatest literacy needs: those with literacy rates of less than 50 percent or a population of more than 10 million illiterates.

The LIFE initiative is being implemented in three phases from 2006 to 2015. Thirty-five countries have been selected to participate in the initiative globally, with nine in the Asia-Pacific region. Two Asian countries, Bangladesh and Pakistan, were selected to participate in the first round of extra-budgetary support for LIFE, which began in 2006. Five more Asian countries will join as LIFE Round 2 countries in 2008: Afghanistan, China, India, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea. Round 3 begins in 2010, with Iran and Nepal in Asia. Each LIFE country receives 1 million dollars in funding toward literacy initiatives.

In both Bangladesh and Pakistan, the LIFE initiative has worked to increase systematization of literacy programmes and coordination among actors. LIFE has assisted in the development of standardised curricula where programmes were previously ad hoc. In addition, LIFE has facilitated cooperation among Asian countries: countries with more developed literacy programmes and greater experience with community learning centres (CLCs) – including Thailand, Viet Nam, and Indonesia – are sharing knowledge with LIFE countries. In this way, the LIFE initiative is building upon regional experience to increase systematization. The CLC workshop in Pakistan in February 2008, for example, worked to establish national guidelines for CLCs (which were previously run by NGOs in an ad hoc fashion). An important success for LIFE in Pakistan has been to significantly increase coordination among the central government, provincial governments, and NGOs with regard to literacy activities.

Bangladesh’s experience of LIFE differs from Pakistan’s as a result of the strong and long-standing NGO presence in Bangladesh. LIFE funds in Bangladesh have helped to support capacity-building, as NGOs now use their expertise to help train the government in non-formal education at both the central and provincial levels. Acknowledging that NGOs have greater capacity for delivery, the Bangladesh government now allows NGOs to become involved in national strategy and policy for non-formal education and literacy training.

5.1.1 LIFE Efforts in Bangladesh

Bangladesh’s Non-Formal Education Policy (2006) was formulated to ensure educational opportunities for all citizens to fulfill their potential as effective members of their families and communities into the 21st century. Within the broad framework of NFE Policy, the Literacy Initiatives for Empowerment (LIFE) reinforces Bangladesh’s national and international commitment to literacy through advocacy and communication, supports the articulation of policies for sustainable literacy within sector-wide and national development frameworks, strengthens national capacities for programme design, management, and implementation, and enhances innovative initiatives and practices to provide literacy learning opportunities.

Assessment of the LIFE Initiative in Bangladesh

The Post-Literacy and Continuing Education for Human Development (PLCEHD-1) project was implemented between
2001-2007. It reached 1.3 million people in 32 districts with the goal of developing human resources through literacy. By enhancing literacy skills among neo-literate and primary school dropouts, this programme sought to enable these individuals to increase their income, improve personal welfare, and participate more fully as citizens. PLCEHD-2 is in the process of implementation to cover another 1.6 million neo-literates in post-literacy and continuing education programmes in 29 districts.

The Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Children (Non-formal Education Project-3) project sought to provide quality non-formal basic education up to the equivalency of formal education grade III (three) to 351,000 urban working children between 8 and 14 years of age in the six divisional cities of Bangladesh.

The Reaching Out-of-School Children (ROSC) project has been in effect since 2005. Its primary objective is to provide access to quality primary education and mainstream out-of-school children through the establishment of community-run learning centres in 60 upazila of the country. As of July 2007, 10,938 centres had been established enrolling 351,874 students.

In August 2007, a third party performance audit was commissioned to give an overall assessment of the results from the PLCEHD-1 project. The audit also reviewed the process for making recommendations for future projects. Following are the highlights of the report:

a). The project provided opportunities for continuing learning practice even after the PL and CE courses through supplementary reading materials, newspapers, magazine, etc. However, the use of the centre for supplementary readings is low, as only 15 to 20 percent of learners attend the centres for reference and supplementary reading. A suitable arrangement for sustainable maintenance of the centres to provide backstopping of the efforts to sustainable lifelong education of the neo-literates was found missing.

b). The project offered skills training on various trade courses, based on the options of the learners. Not all trades, however, were supportive for the learners to acquire additional income. Indeed, only a small percentage (about 20 percent) of the learners could adopt a new trade after completing CE as an income-generating initiative.

c). Targeting and beneficiary selection need more emphasis. Enrollment of primary school graduates and secondary school dropouts in the literacy centres limited the scope of the real target populations in the NFE centres: the neo-literates and primary school dropouts.

d). Selection of implementing NGOs should be based on their track record in implementing continuing education activities. Many CBOs could not demonstrate successful implementation of the skill training and continuing education activities.

e). Efforts for achieving the level of advocacy and dissemination (such as PLCE-1 orientation workshops, PLCE-1 advocacy workshops, and social mobilization) have been very limited.

f). There is limited manpower for programme supervision in the districts where BNFE has a presence. Programme monitoring is also far beyond capacity. BNFE headquarters has limited manpower, consisting of individuals recruited, contracted, and deputed from other departments and ministries. BNFE needs to strengthen its capacity to efficiently support planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes.
At the learners level, the Tracer Study on PLCEHD - 1 (2005) shows that before PLCE, learners were engaged in various occupations: about 73 percent were self-employed; 16 percent wage employed; and 11 percent having no income. After PLCE, the mix changed slightly with the share of the self-employed increasing to 76 percent, the wage employed to 18 percent and no income group down to 5 percent. In effect there was 6 percent increase in employment.

The proportion of learners who used their literacy skills regularly before PLCE was about 11 percent; this increased to approximately 25 percent after PLCE. Moreover, the proportion of learners who never used literacy skills significantly decreased from about 56 percent to 33 percent.

Regarding the assessment of LIFE process, UNESCO National Education Support Strategy (UNESS), Bangladesh, March 2007 has identified the following needs and gaps in the literacy/NFE sub-sector:

- Continued capacity-building of BNFE staff for providing policy guidance, target-setting and research, and NGOs for implementation
- Policy framework preparation and launching of advocacy campaign for partnership with NGOs and CBOs
- Technical inputs and capacity-building for coordination with other organizations and programmes
- Massive financial inputs of the government of Bangladesh and development partners planning and implementation for improvement of literacy
- Continued financial and technical inputs for establishing and updating NFE MIS in addition to UNESCO’s on-going support for NFE MIS
- Capacity-building of NFE staff in monitoring and evaluation
- Continued financial inputs for capacity-building of BNFE and NGO staff in addition to UNESCO’s on-going limited support
- Technical and financial inputs for massive training programme for teachers/facilitators in addition to UNESCO’s on-going limited support
- Financial and technical inputs for curriculum revision and materials development
- Financial and technical inputs for developing comprehensive advocacy policy and campaign in addition to UNESCO’s limited effort
- Preparation and enforcing of a coordination mechanism with other organizations and programmes

5.1.2 LIFE Efforts in Pakistan

The Literacy Initiative for Empowerment started in Pakistan in 2006 when the country was selected for the first batch of interventions. The Ministry of Education formed a Core Group, including representatives from both public and private organizations of all provinces and areas.

The objectives of the LIFE framework in Pakistan are to:

- Assess the literacy situation at the national and provincial levels
- Identify present and future needs in literacy in all important areas: access, quality, management, resources, capacity-building, monitoring and evaluation
- Reinforce national and international commitments to literacy through advocacy and communication
• Support the articulation of policies for sustainable literacy within sector-wide and national development frameworks

• Strengthen national capacities for programme design, management, and implementation

• Enhance countries’ innovative initiatives and practices in providing literacy opportunities

Assessment of the LIFE Initiative in Pakistan

Project activities have provided literacy practitioners a forum to share their experiences and expertise on various issues and challenges of literacy. In this way, project activities have increased coordination among literacy partners, while providing them an opportunity to conduct research and become updated on literacy and continuing education issues. In particular, this exchange has raised awareness among literacy planners and managers about present gaps in literacy programmes and needs for future programmes.

Through the LIFE initiative, the institutional capacity of various public sector organizations and NGOs has been strengthened, and the capacity of managers, supervisors, and teachers has been enhanced with regard to various aspects of literacy. New materials are now available on management development, post literacy, teachers training, CLCs, and gender empowerment.

A number of challenges, however, continue to impact literacy activities in Pakistan, including:

• Adult literacy has suffered due to lack of political will and consistent policy. Only a few projects on adult literacy could be launched during the post-Dakar period, and they had limited coverage (reaching not more than 10 percent of the target group). Scarcity of resources (both human and financial) is also an issue.

• There is no separate budget allocation for adult literacy. Of the total expenditures on education, almost 43 percent is spent on primary education, 24 percent on secondary education, and 23 percent on higher education. The remaining 10 percent is spent on ‘Other,’ a category that includes adult literacy, NFBE, teachers training, madrassahs reform, etc. The low level of utilization of available budget is an area of concern because non-availability of technical staff, delays in the release of funds, late submission of proposals/reports, and a lack of full time project staff all diminish chances for success.

• The absence of a strong, coordinated organizational structure and an institutional mechanism for literacy/NFBE has resulted in weak interaction among the principal actors of the programmes.

• The professional base of adult literacy initiatives remains under-developed due to lack of training of teachers/facilitators, lack of formalized curriculum, and non-existence of effective research in the field of literacy and continuing education.

• The lack of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at various levels adversely affects the internal efficiency and quality of the literacy programmes and projects.

• There is a lack of community and civil society participation, as well as a shortage of donor support.

• Literacy programmes are challenged by the irrelevance and non-availability of teaching-learning material.

• Local language is being ignored in basic literacy and numeracy classrooms, which hinders participation of people in literacy programmes.
The link between basic and post-literacy is missing in existing literacy programmes, resulting in an ad hoc situation on the part of learners and teachers. Post-literacy programmes that support learners/teachers to go beyond reading, writing and numeracy towards achieving income-generating skills and sustainable improvement in their lives are necessary if short-duration literacy programmes are to have a lasting impact on learners.

Organizations working in the field of adult literacy focus mainly on quantitative objectives, paying less attention to the quality and sustainability of programmes.

Public private partnership is also a missing link in literacy/NFBE programmes, and it needs to be streamlined through proper facilitation and coordination.

There is an absence of equivalency and certification of literacy programmes, including synergies between the formal and non-formal education systems.

Political instability and insecurity in the country in past years curtails the timely completion of programmes.

There is scarcity of educationists who possess adequate knowledge of adult literacy and NFBE. Hence, there is a limited choice of resource persons required for the development of literacy material, conducting training workshops, and for any field survey or research work.

5.1.3 Additional Notes on LIFE Grants

Since 2006, when the first LIFE grants were made, a number of unexpected results have emerged. Upon disbursement of these grants, some LIFE Round 2 and Round 3 countries understood that funding for literacy would be made available to them in subsequent years and, as a result, put their literacy efforts on hold as they waited for this money. The LIFE initiative thus produced the inadvertent effect of not embarking on new literacy initiatives in countries named as future beneficiaries.

Another, more positive effect, has been that Afghanistan leveraged its “LIFE Round 2” status to seek literacy funding from outside donors. These efforts were successful, and Afghanistan received a grant of 13 million dollars for literacy activities from the Japanese Government in March 2008.

5.1.4 Lessons Learned

After the first disbursements were made to Bangladesh and Pakistan, it became clear that these countries did not have an immediate plan for how the money should be used, and UNESCO had to rush to plan for implementation. In the future, countries should be selected by criteria for readiness to implement literacy strategies – not simply by need. To this end, Afghanistan, Papua New Guinea, and Nepal have recently undertaken needs assessments so that when they receive LIFE funds, implementation can begin immediately.

Another lesson learned during the first round of LIFE is that the donors’ timelines were unrealistic. In the cases of both Pakistan and Bangladesh, donors under-estimated the amount of time it would take to bring different actors together. As a result the donor confirmed support for the countries for a further period of time to 2.5 years in both countries.

5.2 Equivalency Programmes (EPs)

In order to promote a comprehensive strategy for lifelong learning, it is essential that formal and non-formal educational systems be linked. Equivalency programmes (EPs) support lifelong learning by offering out-of-school children, youth and adults alternative educational programmes equivalent to the formal system. EPs not only provide equivalent curricula and certification to the out-of-school population, but such programmes are also characterized by similar policy support mechanisms, mode of delivery, staff training, and monitoring.
and evaluation. In this way, EPs can develop systematic linkages between non-formal education programmes and the formal or vocational education systems. These programmes thus enable out-of-school children, youth, and adults to continue their education and to receive appropriate recognition and certification for their work. In this way, EPs provide students with the opportunity and incentive to continue learning, and where appropriate, to re-enter the formal education system.

In 2003, the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education, Bangkok initiated an equivalency programme project as part of the Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All, with the support of the Japanese Funds-in-Trust (JFIT). The project strengthens synergies between formal and non-formal education as part of EFA national action plans in order to promote lifelong learning among disadvantaged populations. This includes: identifying good practices of EPs through research and sharing the results of these studies; developing national policy support mechanisms to increase synergy between formal and non-formal education (including accreditation and learning assessment); formulating national equivalency programmes and action plans for their implementation (including curriculum and materials development, capacity-building for NFE/CLC personnel, and accreditation); and strengthening delivery mechanisms for implementing EPs effectively.

A number of activities were undertaken between 2004 and 2006 to achieve these objectives. In 2004, research was conducted in India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand to document equivalency programme practices in these countries. The results of these studies were then shared at a regional workshop in Manila, Philippines, during 25-29 April 2005. The workshop brought together the four research countries, along with six other invited countries to share experiences and formulate joint strategies and action plans at the national and regional levels. These action plans were then revised and tailored at the national level during 2005-2006 to meet the specific needs of each country. In 2006, the APPEAL unit of UNESCO Bangkok consolidated the project experiences and findings of participating countries into a regional guide: Equivalency Programmes (EPs) for Promoting Lifelong Learning.

Indonesia has developed a comprehensive programme of equivalency education that targets children and adults at all stages of the learning process through three “packages”:

- Package A targets learners who are not able to attend primary school because of social, cultural, psychological, economic, or geographical factors, or because the formal school day cannot be fit into their daily schedule. Graduates of the Package A programme obtain a certificate that is equivalent to a primary school certificate.

- Package B targets those who cannot attend junior secondary school for the reasons stated above. Graduates of the Package B programme obtain a certificate equivalent to the junior secondary school certificate.

- Package C is designed for those who cannot, for the reasons stated above, attend senior secondary school. Graduates of the Package C programme obtain a certificate equivalent to the senior secondary school certificate.

These programmes serve two primary groups: school-age children who have limited or no access to formal education and adults who need primary and secondary education certificates, usually as a job qualification.

Indonesia’s educational equivalency programmes are supported by formal mandates and legislation. Package A and Package B have been recognized as equivalent to primary and junior secondary education since 1991, while Package C...
was officially recognized as a valid qualification in 2004. In addition, non-formal education was recognized in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No 20 as being part of the National Education System in July 2003, meaning that the outcomes of NFE are now considered equivalent to the outcomes of formal education upon passing of assessment standards set up by a government-appointed agency.

In practice, however, the validity of these equivalency certificates has been questioned, particularly in the case of the Package C certificate. To combat this public sentiment, the Directorate-General of Out-of-School Education and Youth have launched an advocacy campaign to disseminate information on equivalency programmes and the legal standing of equivalency certificates. This campaign targets the general public, with special emphasis on education personnel and agencies.

Since 2004, the Directorate has also been working to update the curriculum for the equivalency programme. Formal school teachers in Indonesia have a great deal of freedom in selecting learning content, methods, and approaches; despite this, Package A, B, and C programmes had been using materials developed in 1994 that were academically oriented and did not serve the diverse needs of non-formal learners. Efforts are now underway to design new curricula and to update existing ones to make them more suitable for NFE. In particular, the Directorate is designing a new life skills curriculum based on livelihood issues, household management, local economics, and work ethics. This curriculum is designed around local conditions (including subjects such as agriculture and fisheries) and emphasizes life skills that promote the ability to create one’s own work or to work in the business enterprises of others.

One of the central goals of Indonesia’s equivalency programmes is to promote literacy, as the 4.4 million illiterates (aged 10 to 44 years) represent a serious challenge for the country. Package A and B address basic literacy, and 2004 data from the Directorate of Community education indicate that the Package A programme served 71,758 learners, while Package B served 344,561 learners. Indonesia’s EPs are thus notable for the high number of learners served and for the country’s comprehensive approach to eliminating illiteracy.

Mongolia has also made notable progress in recent years with regard to equivalency programmes. In particular, new amendments on non-formal education and equivalency programmes were included in the Education Law in 2001. Article 8.1 guarantees access to education to all citizens by either formal or non-formal means. Article 8.2 alludes to EPs specifically:

Primary, basic, and upper secondary education can be obtained through Equivalency Programme of Non-Formal Education for retraining a certain term education, self-learning, and learning skills for employment. The content and regulation of the Equivalency Programme shall be developed and implemented by a State Central Administrative Authority in charge of education.

These amendments to the Education Law were drafted upon a review NFE development and EPs in 2001, taking into account experiences of other countries through information sharing. The amendments were then discussed and finalized through stakeholder review meetings and submitted to the Education Standing Committee of the Parliament for final approval.

The inclusion of a specific policy regarding equivalency programmes in the Education Law has led to widespread promotion of non-formal education in Mongolia. This has supported the goals of education for all by broadening the scope of learning to include a variety of learners at different levels. While the main target groups for non-formal education are vulnerable groups (including children and adults) who did
not have access to education at the proper age, equivalency programmes have also reached groups including the employed (who could not attend school due to scheduling issues), those who live in remote areas, herdsman and mobile populations, and others.

5.3 Community Learning Centres (CLCs)

Community learning centres (CLCs) are local educational institutions outside the formal education system, usually set up and managed by local people. These grassroots organizations aim to increase participation in literacy and continuing education, particularly among the poor. CLC activities also cover a wide range of community-based development programmes in health, agriculture, education and entrepreneurial skills for out-of-school children, youth, women, the rural poor, and other vulnerable populations. CLCs thus promote human development by providing a range of opportunities for lifelong learning to all people in the local community. They are increasingly seen as a key modality for socio-economic development at the village level.

CLCs provide education and training, community information and resource services, community development activities, and coordination and networking. Through these services and activities, CLCs support empowerment, social transformation, and improvement in the quality of life of community members. In Indonesia, for example, participation in CLC literacy programmes has enabled community members to obtain employment in industrial companies, security services, and small home industries.49

APPEAL began its Community Learning Centre project in the Asia-Pacific region in 1998 with financial assistance from Japan and Norway. The main focus of the project has been to develop effective community-based learning through non-formal approaches and delivery mechanisms. The project has also promoted the institutionalization of CLCs within the framework of national education policies and EFA plans throughout the region. Countries participating in the project include Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste, Uzbekistan, and Viet Nam. The CLC project has been executed differently in each participating country based on the local situation and needs.

To support the efforts of participating countries, APPEAL has coordinated regional forums, developed resource materials, conducted research studies, and facilitated interregional cooperation:

Regional forums

Joint planning: To initiate the project, APPEAL organized joint planning meetings in 1998-1999 for participating countries to review community based education programmes, to examine the concept of CLCs, and to formulate goals and action plans to initiate pilot projects. A generic framework of CLCs was developed as a guide for participating countries to implement national level activities.

Sharing experience: APPEAL organized regional forums in to share the experiences of CLCs among participating countries. These forums (held in 2000, 2001, 2004, and 2005) reviewed delivery mechanisms for literacy, continuing education, and community development programmes, while linking these to national policies and strategies of education and development.

Training: A series of training workshops on CLC management, material development, the role of facilitators, and networking were organized to
strengthen the capacity of key CLC personnel. The training programmes also covered development issues including ICT use, life skills, gender, income generation, mother tongue-based literacy, HIV/AIDS, and equivalency programmes.

Resource materials
APPEAL, in cooperation with experts in the region, developed resource materials to strengthen CLC operations and implementation of literacy and continuing education programmes. Key resource materials include a series of handbooks on CLC management, NFE facilitators, literacy material development, and implementation of continuing education. These materials have been distributed to the countries of the region for adaptation and for the development of local resource materials.

Research studies
APPEAL has coordinated a number of research studies on the effective implementation of CLC activities and the impact of CLCs, as well as on the establishment of networks and linkages. These research studies provide EFA stakeholders with evidence for strengthening and institutionalizing CLCs within the framework of the EFA plan. Evaluation studies have been undertaken in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Mongolia, and Nepal.

Interregional cooperation
In view of the growing interest from regions outside of Asia to learn from the Asia-Pacific community learning centre experience, APPEAL has engaged with representatives from the Arab and African regions for study visits to selected Asian countries, participation in regional workshops, and adaptation of APPEAL resource materials. CLCs have proved successful in the Asia-Pacific region not only in increasing literacy levels among the “unreached” – particularly those with low educational attainment who live in remote areas – but also in generating discussion among these groups around a number of health and social issues, including HIV/AIDS and gender equality. Moreover, the success that these centres have had in promoting literacy and skill development among women has led to an increase in earning capacity and empowerment of female participants. In Bangladesh, for instance, 89 percent of women participants surveyed indicated that their participation in CLC activities had improved their status in the family. Through CLC programmes that incorporate gender-mainstreaming principles, then, female literacy and women’s empowerment have been effectively promoted. In particular, CLCs provide an effective means of bringing women access to development resources and services from government and other agencies.

An important lesson that has been learned in the monitoring and evaluation of CLCs in the Asia-Pacific is the benefit of institutionalizing CLC learning programmes as a joint effort of the community and an external agency (or agencies). While the organization and management of CLCs vary considerably by country, it is clear that cooperation among stakeholders and a sense of “community ownership” over the CLC are central to its effective functioning. A Thai research team found that:

- CLCs operated by local people are always short of financial resources, while the CLCs supported by the state always lack continuous support and cooperation from local people.
- Support from the state is always useful. Successful support is support that assists or fulfills what people lack, not support with a set purpose that compels people to follow its directions.
- People’s participation is the main factor for ensuring sustainable development in the long run (and the area of
people’s participation at the present time is highly related to vocational activities that increase family income).

- CLCs operated by local people still need the state’s help in developing curricula, strengthening management and facilities, and giving them a chance to share their experiences with others throughout the country. However, the state must form a partnership with the people.51

Thailand’s CLC experience has been notable for its diversity of activities and responsiveness to local target groups. As of 2005, there were 8,057 CLCs supported by the Office of the Non-formal Education Commission (ONFEC) in all 76 of Thailand's provinces.52 These centres serve a wide variety of functions depending on the readiness, needs, and context of each locality. Thus, in Thailand, we find CLCs with focuses ranging from basic literacy to ICT use.

The main activities implemented in Thailand’s CLCs are as follows:

**Education and Literacy**: functional literacy; basic education; non-formal education focused on adult learning; and promotion of lifelong learning

**Training**: income-generating programmes and skills training; quality of life programme training; health and sanitation; health promotion programmes; camping for democracy training; camping for environmental training; ICT training

**Community and cultural development**: local and traditional activities development; enhancing local wisdom and working with older persons; community development projects; poverty alleviation

**Coordination and networking**: coordination and building up networks among governmental organizations, NGOs, and private organizations; linking human resources and social capital at the local level; learning networks between academic institutions and the community; coordination of social groups inside and outside of the community53

In Viet Nam, the government has instituted policies to promote CLC development as part of the effort to realize the country’s EFA goals. In 2003, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 06/2003/QD/TTG on the Action Plan of the Government: “The MOET, in coordination with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Viet Nam Learning Encouragement Association, the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs, and People’s Committees of provinces is assigned the task of developing a project for the expansion of CLCs.”54 According to the Amended Law of Education, CLCs are now institutionalized as part of the Viet Namese national education system.

As a result of these policies to establish and expand the CLC model at the national level, CLCs have developed very quickly in Viet Nam. In 1999, there were 15 CLCs in Viet Nam. By June 2006, this number had grown to 7,384. Many provinces and cities have established CLCs in all communes/quaters.55 Together with the expansion of CLCs, the number of people provided with continuing and lifelong learning opportunities has dramatically increased in from 250,000 in 2001 to 6,297,194 in 2005.56

Table 5.1: Number of Learners in Theme-based Programmes at CLCs (2001-2006)

<table>
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<tr>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>416,667</td>
<td>2,333,656</td>
<td>4,114,994</td>
<td>6,297,194</td>
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</table>

Source: Continuing Education Department, MOET

The institutionalization of CLCs as official continuing education institutions in Viet Nam has provided an effective means of reaching unreached groups and dramatically increasing the number of learners for literacy and life skills programmes.
5.4 Mother Tongue-based Literacy and Multilingual Education

More than 2000 languages are spoken in the Asia-Pacific region, but only 45 of these are national or official languages. As a result, even speakers of languages such as Wu Chinese (with 90 million speakers) or Javanese (with 75 million speakers) are taught in languages other than their own.

Ethno-linguistic minorities who have insufficient comprehension in the language of literacy and instruction learn differently from those who are proficient in that language. Educational systems that use the national language as the sole language of instruction thus place ethno-linguistic minority students at a disadvantage in the learning process. Because such students have difficulty understanding the lesson at earliest levels of education, they are at risk of falling behind very quickly.

A solution to this problem is mother-tongue based multilingual education. In such programmes, the learners’ first language is used as the language of instruction for as long as possible, at least in the pre-primary and primary levels. The official or national language is then taught as a second language, using appropriate second-language teaching methodology. As students progress to the higher grades of the primary level, the national language is used for instruction and the mother tongue is taught as a subject. A similar process can be used for adult members of ethno-linguistic minority communities in mother-tongue based literacy and adult education programmes.

Through the use of mother tongue-based instruction, the broader goals of literacy under EFA and UNLD can be achieved, including literacy to achieve the learner’s goals, develop their knowledge and potential, and enable them to participate fully in their community and society. If members of ethno-linguistic minority groups are to participate fully in their communities, they need literacy in the community language; at the same time, in order to participate fully in the broader society, they must be literate in the national or official language. Providing multilingual education thus better enables such learners to achieve their personal and community development goals.

In an effort to increase literacy rates among ethnic minority communities and to improve the quality of life and preserve traditional culture through the provision of relevant and comprehensive literacy programmes, UNESCO-APPEAL is supporting pilot projects in twelve Asia-Pacific countries under the “Mother Tongue/Bilingual Literacy Programme for Ethnic Minorities.” Coverage of target groups varies by country, depending on community needs. Partner organizations in each country (GOs, NGOs, or both), together with local community members, share responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating the programmes. These organizations have carried out a wide range of activities, from the development of orthographies for minority languages, to the creation of teaching materials, to the development of transition plans from mother tongue to national languages. APPEAL has assisted countries and local partners in these efforts through a number of supporting activities:

Research: APPEAL has supported research on mother tongue-based literacy at the country level. Research findings were then shared with governments and other stakeholders to raise awareness on the importance of mother tongue-based literacy in achieving EFA goals and in improving the quality of education.

Workshops and Trainings: APPEAL has organized regional workshops and trainings to develop the capacity of governments and NGOs. Five regional workshops have been conducted on mother tongue-based literacy. These workshops...
have addressed a range of issues, including materials development, capacity-building, quality improvement, and the development of transition plans from mother tongue to the national language.

**Resource Materials:** APPEAL has also developed a number of resource materials on mother tongue-based literacy and has disseminated manuals, case studies, and tool kits.

**Forging Networks:** APPEAL has worked to forge networks and increase coordination among national and regional agencies working for the promotion of mother tongue-based literacy. This has included the sharing of resources and project achievements across countries and with other regions.

**Methodology and Advocacy:** APPEAL has promoted evidence-based policy advocacy among governments in the region. To this end, it has helped countries set up effective mechanisms for documenting programme activities, including process, progress and achievements, and issues and challenges.

One such project supported by UNESCO is the “Action Research on Literacy and Curriculum Development in Mother Tongue for the Oraon Community of Northwest Bangladesh,” launched in 2002 by ASHRAI, a local NGO. The purpose of the project was to develop a curriculum and educational materials in the Sadri language (the first language of most Oraon) and offer basic education for Oraon children in this language.

When the project began, there was no written form of the Sadri language, so the Oraon community developed Sadri orthography using Bangla script as part of this project. In addition, key community members were identified to teach and to contribute to action research and materials development. Training workshops were organized for these individuals, and a writers’ group was formed to produce lesson materials based on real-life situations relevant to the Oraon community. In addition, parents’ committees were formed to supervise the schools and contribute to research activities.

As of 2007, Sadri curricula and learning materials have been developed for grades 1 and 2, and teachers’ guides have been prepared. Supplementary reading materials have also been produced and provided to the children to broaden and reinforce their learning. In addition, materials for grade 3 are currently being produced, as is a Sadri dictionary.

The pilot project is currently providing Sadri language education in seven schools, with approximately 200 Oraon children as beneficiaries. An evaluation has shown that the achievement of Oraon students in these schools is better than that of Oraon students in government schools.\(^60\) Ongoing challenges, however, include a lack of resources hindering expansion of the project and the absence of clear national policies to support the use of minority languages in education.\(^51\)

In Nepal, a similar pilot programme has had success in bringing mother tongue-based literacy to adults. World Education Nepal, in conjunction with its local partner NGO, Backward Society Education (BASE), have undertaken a pilot project in Tharu mother tongue-based literacy that seeks to provide an opportunity for Tharu youth and adults to build literacy and numeracy skills through their first language so that they can improve their standard of living. Members of the Tharu ethnic minority have historically been exploited as bonded labourers, and are ranked below most ethnic groups in Nepal in terms of education and socio-economic indicators. The pilot project thus aims to decrease vulnerability among this group through literacy and education about issues relevant to the Tharus’ daily lives.
Four villages were selected as sites for literacy classes, and illiterate Tharu adults aged 15 to 45 participated in the project. In conjunction with community members, World Education and BASE produced a textbook for use in the course. A six-day training was then conducted for facilitators to help them guide the learning process in conjunction with this new textbook.

The project has been particularly successful in its ability to bring together older and younger community members, with older community members contributing knowledge of Tharu traditions, words, and concepts to the project. The Tharu project has also been successful in opening up discussion on a wide range of social and economic issues, from gender discrimination, to income generation needs, to basic human rights. This reflects a wider success of the diverse multilingual literacy programmes throughout Asia, which have facilitated the participation of ethnic minorities in socio-economic activities and strengthened connections with the larger community beyond the local sphere.

5.5 Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are recognized as important tools of development, not only for training of learners, but also for progressive social change, the strengthening of human intellectual capacity, and the formation of modern lifestyles. In a lifelong learning context, ICTs provide learners with the changing skills and knowledge they need in our globalized world.

ICTs increase access to knowledge about ways to improve the quality of life. With an understanding of ICT use, learners can access information and services that empower them to bring about change in their own lives and communities. This is most likely to occur if ICT opportunities are tailored to local needs, priorities, and circumstances. If the digital divide is to be overcome, then, efforts must be made to target economically disadvantaged individuals living in rural, remote, and isolated areas and to ensure that they benefit from effective ICT programmes.

In 2002, UNESCO-APPEAL launched the ICT-NFE project to explore the effective delivery of education and skill training using ICT for quality of life improvement, poverty alleviation, and community development through Community Learning Centres (CLCs). The project supported four countries – Indonesia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Uzbekistan – in implementing strategies for community empowerment through ICT.

The Sri Lanka project, “Multi-purpose Community Telecentres for Community Development,” has been implemented at 18 sites (village banks and CLCs) under the administration of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, a leading Sri Lankan NGO. The project supports village entrepreneurs by enabling them to use ICT in the marketing and selling of their products. Project activities include ICT training, the development of a community database, the dissemination of information through the Mobile Multimedia Unit, an entrepreneurial skills development programme, and computer training for village bank staff, volunteers, and CLC officials. Each telecentre is equipped with a computer, printer, scanner, photocopier, and binding machine for community members’ use.

In the preparatory stages of the project, the NGO identified a number of challenges for the application of ICT in rural communities: poor infrastructure; lack of computer literacy; and inadequate funding to support the technology. Sarvodaya decided that the best approach would be to provide “a single computer for many heads.” They then trained a group of...
village youth in ICT use, and the youth in turn shared their knowledge with the community.

Although many rural people in Sri Lanka are involved in agribusiness, few are self-employed. Sarvodaya has established village banks at the community level linked to telecentres and village information centres that disseminate information on micro-credit. ICT use enables villagers to find out the current market prices of products, minimizing the chance that producers will be cheated by intermediaries. Through Internet use, community members can also access information that enables them to improve their marketing and business plans, and to communicate with other businesses.

The Multi-purpose Community Telecentres for Community Development project has helped community members develop literacy and technical skills through ICT use. It has also extended the network of small-scale entrepreneurs, enabling them to share information and be better informed in the buying of raw materials and selling of their products. Moreover, a number of the youth who underwent the ICT training programme are marketing their ICT skills as they search for new employment opportunities.65

In India, the Tata Computer-Based Functional Literacy (CBFL) programme uses ICT to develop literacy. Reading skills are taught using computer software, animated graphics, and multimedia presentations. Lessons are based on materials developed by the National Literacy Mission and are carefully researched and formulated. Computers deliver the lessons in multimedia form, and then lessons are supplemented with textbook work. Audio voice-overs explain how letters combine to give structure and meaning to various words and to enhance pronunciation (which is particularly useful for languages such as Tamil, where a letter can be pronounced differently depending on the context). Lessons are designed to be visually stimulating and entertaining. The process can be tailored to the learner’s needs and learning speed. Under the project, a number of learning centres have been established. Each centre has a computer and an instructor. Because the project relies on computer programmes, it has less need for highly trained teachers, which is an advantage in areas that lack teachers. A typical class has between 15 and 20 people and is held in the evening hours.66

Innovative ICT for literacy projects have also been undertaken in China. In 2001, the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), in cooperation with UNDP, established rural community Internet information centres in five provinces in central China. These centres function as information hubs and online libraries. Each centre has computer terminals with Internet access, a phone and fax machine, and a VCD player. VCDs provide information and training on farming techniques and other subjects related to community needs. The centres also provide lessons in typing, computer operations, and Internet use. Each centre has a staff of 2-5 people, one of whom manages the centre while others provide training and assist users in searching for information online.67

Projects in China have successfully contextualized literacy programmes using ICT in order to make them relevant to the agricultural communities they are serving. Programmes simultaneously develop literacy skills and knowledge of improved agricultural techniques. The learning needs of farmers and women were identified, and learning materials were developed, including six VCDs on agricultural and vocational subjects, health, environment, and other topics. The visual and computer-assisted learning materials have proved successful in motivating learners, as they are dynamic media and convey skills directly relevant to learners’ lives. If at any time learners have questions when applying these new skills in the field, they can return to the ICT centre to review the material.68
Using the Power of ICT Tools to Help Learners Become Literate

ICT has the potential to address diverse learning needs. It offers tools to create content that can be personalized, contextualized and more meaningful to the learner.

In a CLC in a remote village in Madurae, Tamil Nadu, illiterate learners were assisted by a facilitator to create their own personalized content.

Learners were trained to use a digital camera (available at the CLC) to take photos of their relatives and friends, as well as food items, clothes, and other things in their homes. The pictures taken by learners then form the basis for literacy learning in the mother tongue – this differs considerably from the use of traditional literacy primers, whose content can be far removed from the lives of learners.

With the help of the facilitator, associated images and letters were compiled into digital slide presentations. For example, the letter “a” was paired with a photograph of the learner’s ‘amma’ (mother). These slide presentations were then stored on the CLC’s computers, learners’ own CDs, and in printed format. Learners could then use these to practice and build their basic literacy skills, regularly adding additional content with the help of the CLC facilitator.

When people produce texts through this process, they naturally use their first language - the language they know best and use on a daily basis. If they are from minority communities, this language is most likely not the predominant language of education and literacy.

UNESCO-APPEAL supported this activity through a Japanese Funds-in-Trust regional project on the application of ICT through NFE to help poor and disadvantaged people empower themselves.

5.6 Life Skills

Education means developing one’s potential, personality, and strengths. Effective education should provide a balance between academic education and practical skills development, including technical and vocational education. To prepare young people for life and work in a rapidly changing world, education and training systems are now being re-oriented to impart a broad range of “life skills,” the competencies and inner capacities that enable an individual to make the most out of life. These skills cut across fields and include ICT competency, the ability to work independently and in teams, communication skills, problem solving, ethical entrepreneurship, civic responsibility, and awareness of diversity and multiculturalism.

Jacques Delors has identified the following life skills:

**Thinking abilities:** problem-solving, critical thinking, decision-making, understanding consequences

**Personal abilities:** managing stress and feelings, self-awareness, self-confidence

**Social abilities:** communication, negotiation, assertiveness, teamwork, empathy

**Manual skills:** practicing know-how required for work and tasks

In today’s world all these skills are necessary, and they are interrelated. They enable the individual to continue learning and adapting, and in so doing, to face rapid social change.

In Kazakhstan, the transition to a market economy has driven demand for non-formal education classes that enable learners...
to develop skills they can use in the labour market. As a result, life skills development has focused on the technical and professional training through CLCs. For individuals who do not have sufficient funds to undertake non-formal education in training centres, CLCs serve an important purpose, providing access to necessary skill development programmes at a low cost to the learner or free of charge.

While the vast majority of learners have sufficient literacy skills, approximately half do not have specific professional knowledge or skills, so the problem of employability is critical. A needs assessment conducted by CLC facilitators and EFA experts in Kazakhstan concluded that the primary needs are as follows: computer skills; technical training, retraining, or upgrading of qualifications in one’s current occupation (hairdressers, crane operators, designers, stylists, electricians, metal workers, barmen); and general educational needs (foreign languages, health, psychology, and communication). CLCs have therefore taken an approach whereby psycho-social skills are integrated into professional and vocational training.

The following table provides an overview of CLC programmes in Kazakhstan, demonstrating the ways in which professional and psycho-social skill development are integrated. Projects aim for a holistic approach that simultaneously develops literacy and vocational skills, while enhancing self-confidence and self-management skills.

Table 5.2: Development of vocational and life skills within the framework of CLCs training programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme of CLCs training programmes</th>
<th>Result of integrating skills in the framework of training programmes implemented by CLCs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. PC user (all CLCs)</td>
<td>Computer literacy. Extends access to electronic information and improves employment opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Job search, employment skills, and skills to start one’s own business (all CLCs)</td>
<td>Basics of legal and entrepreneurial culture. Avoid negative life stereotypes that hamper making specific choices. Increase skills for finding a job or starting one’s own business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sewing, embroidery (all CLCs), and knitting skills (Nogaibai CLC)</td>
<td>Professional competence in sewing, knitting, and embroidery in combination with entrepreneurship. Possibility of employment or starting one’s own business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Skills for making cheese and diary products at home (all CLCs).</td>
<td>Skills for making diary products, allowing for increase in household funds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Skills for medical massage, make up, body care, and herb therapy (Karaganda, Taraz, and Karabulak CLCs).</td>
<td>Competence in taking care of one’s appearance and health, increased motivation in communication, optimism and self-confidence. Possibility for rendering services to fellow villagers and relatives. Preparation for starting one’s own business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Skills for planting greenery and growing trees (all CLCs).</td>
<td>Competence in growing and taking care of plants. Possibility for marketing gardening services. Broadened communication with flower growing amateurs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Occupational training and retraining for unemployed workers (Almaty, Karaganda CLC)</td>
<td>Extends access to information, including through the Internet. Enhances communication skills and increases employability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. English language skills (Sortobe CLC)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
11. Dancing skills (Nogaibai, Karabulak CLCs)  
Increases knowledge of dance traditions and culture. Improves physical and moral health, increases motivation, communication, and self-confidence.

12. Hairdresser skills, record keeping (Karabulak CLC)  
Professional competence in modern technologies of hairdresser arts, taking care of one’s appearance and health. Increases self-confidence. Possibility to find a job or start one’s own business.

13. Tourism and study of local lore (Taraz CLC)  
 Increases awareness of and interest in one’s home environment. Increases readiness to orient oneself in unfamiliar circumstances. Improves physical and moral health. Improves self-confidence and communication skills. Possibility for employment or to start one’s own business.

14. Skills of psychological adaptation to new circumstances and decision making (Taraz and Amanbokter CLC)  
Develops self-confidence and skills in self-management and situational behaviour. Avoid negative life stereotypes. Increases employment opportunities and possibility for starting one’s own business.

Source: Action research on effective implementation of life skills to strengthen NFE programmes in Kazakhstan (2006)

In 2004-2005, over 4000 people participated in CLC programmes in Kazakhstan, and a significant percentage of CLC graduates found employment.**70** Other positive outcomes included:

- High interest demonstrated by members of local communities in training;
- Support of CLCs by local authorities, including departments of employment and centres for training and retraining unemployed;
- Networking and partnership with government structures and local authorities, who host CLCs, allocate premises, cover the cost of public utilities, salaries of teachers/trainers;
- Extending participation of CLCs in tenders, competitions for winning grants and orders for training;
- Strengthening cooperation with training and business sectors.**71**

The Philippines has also hosted a number of successful life skills programmes since the start of UNLD:

**BALS-DepEd** programmes work to develop communication skills, critical thinking and problem solving, sustainable use of resources, development of self and a sense of community, and an expanded world vision. BALS-DepEd programmes include: a community-based literacy programme for illiterate out-of-school children, youth, and adults; an accreditation and equivalency programme; an indigenous people’s education programme; life skills short term courses; and a programme that provides out-of-school adults the opportunity to earn an equivalent secondary education.

**Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)** supports the Continuing Labor and Employment Education Programme (CLEEP), a proactive strategy to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of workers, local enterprises, and the economy as a whole. The programme includes technical education and skills training, occupational safety and health, reintegration programmes for overseas Filipino workers, and employment development programmes for women workers.

**TESDA** supports technical, vocational, and entrepreneurial skills training for the unemployed, those requiring upskilling or reskilling, students, and OSYs. Programmes include the Training for Work Scholarship Programme (TWSP), which provides skills and competencies to job seekers through
training programmes directly connected to existing jobs for immediate employment; school- and centre-based TVET programmes; community-based livelihood programmes targeting poor and marginalized groups who cannot access formal training programmes; and a Language Skills Institute that develops workplace language skills and cultural orientation. In addition to English language instruction, the Language Skills Institute offers workplace language training in Spanish, Korean, Mandarin, Japanese, Arabic, and other languages spoken in the destinations of Filipino overseas workers.

CHED provides equivalency and accreditation programmes. The Ladderized Education Programme facilitates transition and progression between TVET and higher education, while the Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Programme (ETEEAP) offers comprehensive educational assessment at the tertiary level that recognizes, accredits, and gives equivalences to knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values gained through relevant work experience.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) supports a variety of programmes, including the Self-Employment Assistance Kaunlaran (SEA-K) which aims to enhance the socio-economic skills of poor families to establish and manage a community-based micro-credit organization for entrepreneurial development; the Access to Justice for the Poor Project, which enhances the ability of the poor (particularly women and children) to pursue justice; and the Parent Effectiveness Service, which supports early childhood development and bolsters the capabilities of parents and caregivers to educate the child and steer the child’s growth and development.

The Technology Resource Centre (TRC) supports technology-based programmes for livelihood and entrepreneurship skills development. These include a television magazine on technology and livelihood promotion that is aired twice a week and Technology and Livelihood Development Centres (TLDCs) that provide easy access to training, market linkages, project development and packaging at the grassroots level.

The Philippine Centre for Entrepreneurship (PCE) works to build entrepreneurship skills for youth and aspiring entrepreneurs through curriculum and materials development, training, research, and advocacy. This includes television programmes, newspaper columns, and publications that popularize and demystify the essentials of entrepreneurial success.

Adult learning and education programmes in the Philippines are guided by the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 2004-2010, which affirms that education is the right of every Filipino. They aim to achieve poverty reduction and economic development and are led by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo’s objective that “by 2010, ten million jobs shall have been created. Three million entrepreneurs shall have been supported, giving them loans and helping them become good managers, thereby establishing a deep foundation for a broad middle class.”

5.7 Integration of HIV/AIDS Education in Non-Formal Education

The Asia-Pacific region has one of the fastest growing HIV/AIDS epidemics in the world. In accordance with the revised UNESCO Global Strategy on Preventive Education (2004) and the UNESCO Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS in Asia and the Pacific 2003-2007 encourages governments of the region to provide effective education with regard to HIV/AIDS. This means equipping youth and adults of the region with the
skills they need to prevent HIV infection, while fostering non-
discriminatory attitudes toward those affected by HIV/AIDS.

In 2006, UNESCO launched the “HIV/AIDS through CLCs”
project in nine countries in the region with the support
of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. This
project recognizes the key role that CLCs can play in the
region in promoting HIV/AIDS education and in diminishing
the stigma around the disease. CLCs function as centres for
health-related information (including HIV/AIDS, drug abuse
prevention, reproductive and sexual health), while providing
preventive health education within communities. CLCs thus
play an essential role in fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic at
the grassroots level.

The Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) in Bangladesh has
mobilised the community through a staff of dedicated
workers. Enrollment rates are high, and the community is
motivated to learn, particularly women and girls who have
been denied other educational opportunities. Programmes
focus on poverty reduction, adult literacy, and vocational
training. A number of HIV prevention messages have been
integrated into the curriculum, and students are aware of
the disease and how it is transmitted. Challenges for the
programme include fostering greater participation among
males in the community and securing adequate financial
support from the government.

Since 2006, Lao PDR has been integrating HIV/AIDS education
into CLCs as part of UNESCO’s regional project. Activities
include:

1. The development of a handbook for the training of
   facilitators, village heads, and the head of the Lao Women
   Union and Youth Association on HIV/AIDS

2. The development of educational materials on HIV/AIDS,
   family health, and environmental sustainability, including
   a textbook, posters, an audio cassette, and a VCD

3. Three trainings on HIV/AIDS for villagers, members of the
   Lao Women Union, and members of the Youth Association

4. Training of key individuals in each organization on use of
   the handbook and HIV/AIDS education

Through these activities, the Lao project aims to increase
knowledge of HIV/AIDS and drug abuse prevention at the
village level as well as the capacity of village leaders to
educate others on these issues.

The Lao PDR pilot project is also working to integrate HIV/
AIDS education into the existing literacy and basic non-formal
education curriculum. This curriculum, which was developed
in 1992, is now being updated to include HIV/AIDS education
as well as gender, environmental, and human rights issues.
The integration of HIV/AIDS into the non-formal curriculum
is of key importance, as those who lack the opportunity to
attend formal schooling in Lao PDR are among those most at
risk of infection.

In Uzbekistan, UNESCO cooperates with Kamolot, a national
NGO, in the areas of HIV/AIDS and drug abuse prevention
in formal and non-formal educational settings. HIV/AIDS
education is taught at all Community Learning Centres,
with 20 to 60 hours per year allocated for such instruction.
Learners use practical manuals on HIV/AIDS written in local
languages.

The 2006 activity plan for HIV/AIDS education through NFE at
CLCs in Uzbekistan was as follows:

Table 5.3: Uzbekistan Activity Plan for HIV/AIDS Education
through NFE (2006)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity name</th>
<th>Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publishing/Reprinting the existing Advocacy Kit (prepared by UNESCO Office in Tashkent) for use in local contexts</td>
<td>200 copies printed and disseminated through CLCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing information posters and brochures on HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>200 copies printed and disseminated through CLCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer education: Summer Youth Camp (40 participants from CLCs take part in the annual youth summer camp with 100 participants from the formal schools of Uzbekistan)</td>
<td>Improving knowledge, attitudes, behavior, and skills among youth from CLCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity building training for CLCs staff on HIV/AIDS programme (2 day workshop)</td>
<td>CLCs staff capacity increased</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1 Gender Mainstreaming

The education of women and girls remains a significant challenge in the Asia-Pacific region. Over two-thirds of out-of-school children and illiterate adults are female. Female illiteracy is higher in developing countries of the region, and the situation is particularly acute in South and West Asia. In Afghanistan, India, Nepal, and Pakistan, literacy rates for females are less than two-thirds the rates for males.

Literacy is a key tool in establishing gender equality. In order for women to participate equally in society, they must be literate. Literacy and basic education open the door for women to articulate their own rights, needs, and interests; to participate in social, economic, and political development; and to shape decisions that affect themselves and their communities.

Educated women marry later, have fewer children, and receive better prenatal care. Children of mothers who have been to school are healthier, better nourished and more likely to attend school (and succeed there) than children of mothers who did not go to school. In addition, literacy enables households to improve nutrition and childcare, better manage health problems, and plan for the future.

Basic education is a preventive tool: education decreases an individual’s vulnerability to trafficking, child labour, and HIV/AIDS. It also increases awareness about health, hygiene, and sustainable environmental practices.

Gender mainstreaming and the application of a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to literacy work have emerged as key principles and tools for achieving EFA and UNLD goals, as well as broader rights and development goals. Chapter 6 provides details on these approaches and the ways in which they have been implemented in the Asia-Pacific region.

Gender mainstreaming and Human Rights Based Approach in Literacy Work

Chapter 6

Goal 2: Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

Goal 4: Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

To achieve these goals, UNESCO advocates a strategy of gender mainstreaming in literacy programmes. Gender mainstreaming ensures that women and men benefit equally from instruction and resources spent on programmes and facilities. This strategy calls for project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation that promote gender equality. Rather than simply seeking to increase the number of girls and women in literacy programmes, this multi-dimensional approach engages women and men toward the long-term goals of women’s empowerment and gender equality.

UNESCO recommends a number of actions toward effective gender mainstreaming:

- Incorporate practical efforts into policies to address societal challenges such as poverty, child labour, and the low status of women;
- Integrate a practical policy framework for adult basic education and literacy into overall education policy, employing a long term vision of empowering women;
- Ensure that community participation (from both women and men) informs the development of literacy frameworks;
- Make curricula and learning materials relevant to learners, and especially to women’s needs;
• Recognize that women’s empowerment is a holistic and multidimensional issue, and move from individual empowerment to collective empowerment;

• Offer practical ideas and guidance to policy makers and managers of education in using gender sensitive education statistics and indicators to effectively monitor progress and set policies and plans in favor of gender equality.

Non-formal education and Community Learning Centres (CLCs) play an important role in mainstreaming gender for literacy in Asia, as many girls and women are not reached by the formal education system. Moreover, CLC programmes, which often integrate literacy learning into broader learning on health, civil rights, and other issues, have proven particularly effective in increasing the number of literates. Viet Nam, Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Nepal have all been successful in using a “gender lens” and indicators to ensure successful gender mainstreaming through CLCs.

UNESCO’s Gender in Education Network in Asia (GENIA) project promotes equality networks to strengthen advocacy, share information, and build technical capacity among units in gender mainstreaming at the national and regional levels.

Pakistan, a LIFE Round 1 country, has committed to mainstream gender in its literacy efforts. The gender disparity is wide in Pakistan, with male literacy over 65 percent and female literacy under 40 percent.78 Pakistan’s National Education Policy (1998-2010) views adult literacy and basic education as necessary conditions of national development and acknowledges female literacy as an essential part of this process. The current policy includes a special provision for female literacy, with a focus on functional literacy for rural women and calls for a pilot project promoting income generating skill development among 15-25 year-old rural women to be replicated on a nationwide basis.

Women’s Legal Literacy: The Association of Women of Science Tajikistan

Enhancing women’s legal literacy is crucial so that women can defend and further their rights and opportunities in all areas of social, political, and economic life. To address the low level of legal literacy and awareness of rights among women in Tajikistan, the Association of Women of Science Tajikistan (AWST) launched a project to raise rural women’s legal literacy through a series of workshops and publications. Eight women were involved in the project (two lawyers, one psychologist, one sociologist, and three local specialists) and undertook the following activities:

• Acquainting women with basic international legal documents and national legislation concerning their rights;

• Determining the influence of violence and conflict on the moral and physical wellbeing of women;

• Identifying key causes of gender-based conflict and violence in order to develop mechanisms to reduce them;

• Training women in basic conflict resolution techniques.

In total, 90 women received legal education through three-day workshops. During the workshops, women participated in a number of small group exercises designed to assist them to relate their internationally and constitutionally guaranteed rights to their everyday experiences at home and work. AWST also prepared a number of publications that were distributed to workshop participants on their rights and on conflict resolution.

Source: http://www.adb.org/gender/working/taj001.asp
The primary focus of Pakistan's National Plan of Action on Education for All (2001-2015) is girls' primary education and literacy. It sets a target of 86 percent adult literacy by the year 2015. Toward achieving this goal, more than 85 percent of the adult literacy centres and more than 80 percent of Non-formal Basic Education Schools are geared toward girls and women. The teachers in these literacy centres and schools are also female, acting as important role models of successful, literate women for the learners.

As part of this effort, the Sindh Education Foundation's Women's Literacy and Empowerment Programme (WLEP) works toward providing disadvantaged adult women with educational and personal development opportunities. The programme operates through 40 Women's Literacy and Empowerment Centres (WLECs) in under-served areas of Karachi, Sehwan, and Tando Allah Yar. Teachers are hired from within the community and are provided with training as well as on-going pedagogical support. Regular meetings are carried out with community members to ensure participation, involvement, and ownership at the grassroots level. Awareness-raising sessions on health, nutrition, early childhood development, cleanliness, and hygiene are conducted with learners and with the wider community. In addition, women's organizations have been established at each centre through democratic processes; these organizations bring together women from the community in an effort to promote harmonization and sustainability of efforts as well as to strengthen community relations.

As a result of these gender-mainstreaming efforts, progress has been made toward Pakistan's female literacy goals during the UNLD period:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas/Gender</th>
<th>1997-98</th>
<th>2006-07</th>
<th>Increase % in 10 Years</th>
<th>Per year increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>1.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Development and State of the Art of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) for Pakistan (2008).

6.2 Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA)

The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights declared: "democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing." This holistic perspective soon led to the establishment of the human rights-based approach (HRBA) to development, which Mary Robinson, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights from 1997-2002, has described as "the operational expression of the inextricable link between development and human rights."

The human rights-based approach involves guiding all stages of the developmental process by internationally accepted human rights standards and norms. This approach enables development processes to become an opportunity for the poor, marginalized, and vulnerable to claim their human rights. UN agencies, NGOs, and development cooperation agencies are increasingly recognizing the value of adopting a rights-based approach and implementing it in their programmes.

Literacy is a basic human right, an essential part of the right of every individual to education, as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In turn, literacy is an important means of achieving other rights. Those who can use literacy...
skills to know and defend their rights have an advantage over those who cannot. Indeed, illiterates are among the most vulnerable groups of society, at great risk of numerous rights violations.

While the right to literacy is recognized at the policy level, in practice citizens are often unaware of their right to literacy or how to claim this right. Governments and the international community must fulfill their obligation to promote literacy for all, in part by building the capacity of duty-bearers (including parents, communities, teachers, and civil society organizations) to increase literacy.

The HRBA is an essential component in achieving Education for All goals, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Girls’ right to literacy and education is more effectively secured when measures are also implemented to address their right to freedom from discrimination, protection from exploitation, and abuse, and access to a decent standard of living. Securing the right to literacy in turn promotes girls’ empowerment and their achievement of other rights.

In Thailand, a pilot project has been implemented to promote a rights-based approach to non-formal education through the CLCs in close collaboration with the UNICEF Child Friendly Schools project. Involving students and community members, the project was designed to facilitate and initiate post-literacy activities through a HRBA at the local level.

The selected test site for the project was the CLC in Ban Buphai village in northeastern Thailand. This CLC was viewed as a model for other village and districts, as it has active community participation and strong links to sub-district and district authorities. A situational analysis was undertaken in the village at the start of the project, in which awareness was raised on human rights instruments in the context of Thailand, and villagers identified unfulfilled rights in their own community, including:

- Some youth in the community were not completing compulsory education (grade 9)
- There were a number of illiterate adults
- Vocational training was needed for poor families
- Cleanliness and hygiene issues were potentially impacting family and community health
- Some families had no land for farming and were struggling to earn a living

Based on these findings, community members developed the following pilot projects:

1. **The One Rai* Self-sufficiency Project:** This project provides land for eight previously landless families by designating one rai of public land per family for vegetable plantation as a starting point for further support.

2. **The Prevention of School Drop-outs Project:** To address the issue of community youth who drop out of school due to poverty, pregnancy, or marriage, this project implements activities to prevent students from leaving school prior to completion of their secondary education. This is accomplished through a combination of home visits and peer-to-peer support in encouraging and supporting students to continue their education.

3. **Vocational Skills Training Project:** This project provides vocational skills and business planning training for disadvantaged and poorer members of the community.

4. **The Community Loves Cleanliness Project:** This project aims to improve the physical environment of the village by eliminating waste and dirt in the home and in public spaces, thereby increasing awareness of hygiene issues and improving sanitation in the village.

* 1 rai = 1600 square meters
In implementing these projects, Ban Buphai CLC members framed their work in accordance with human rights principles. Child rights principles, including the safeguarding of children from harm and provision of an education that enhances the child’s development to the fullest, underpin the Community Loves Cleanliness Project and Prevention of School Drop-outs Project. Rights with respect to non-discrimination, access to appropriate economic resources, and empowerment are at the heart of the ‘One Rai Self-sufficiency Project and Vocational Skills Training Project.

The above “Rights Claiming” projects were implemented with significant support from the local community, government, and civil society. The projects were made possible by strong pre-existing community networks, the clear sense of programme ownership by community members, and innovation among the community.

One initial challenge for the pilot project, however, was actively engaging disadvantaged groups in solving their own problems; self-confidence was an issue among these groups. Significantly, the involvement of community members from the outset in deciding which issues should be addressed encouraged greater commitment and confidence among the group.

Another challenge was the initial perception among community members that adopting a human rights-based approach meant assuming a confrontational attitude toward the government. This issue was overcome by clarifying the Thai Constitution’s role in guaranteeing these rights. The community became more comfortable with the concepts and language when they came to see rights in Thailand as rooted primarily in the national Constitution rather than international conventions.

With regard to connecting human rights at the community level with policies supporting human rights at the national level, significant progress has been achieved through this pilot project. HRBA principles have been introduced into the National NFE Development Plan, and the district is currently examining means to embed human rights concepts in local NFE curricula. In addition, the Office of the National Human Rights Commission will conduct a pilot project in collaboration with Provincial NFE Centres in each of the five regions. HRBA principles will be introduced and integrated in the pilot project of at least one centre and will form the basis of work carried out there.
Chapter 7

Trends and Challenges for Literacy in the Asia-Pacific Region

Policy makers and practitioners working in the field of literacy must address a number of issues and challenges to achieve EFA and UNLD goals in the Asia-Pacific region. Chapter 7 provides details on these challenges, including variations in literacy rates and needs among sub-regions and within countries; links between illiteracy and poverty; and links between illiteracy and social marginalization. Gender disparities are also of particular concern in many parts of the region. Programmes must take account of these issues in order to make literacy efforts relevant and effective for the diverse communities involved.

7.1 Accurate Measurement

Accurate measurements of the literacy situation are essential if we are to implement effective strategies to improve literacy. Currently, a variety of survey methods are being used at the local and national levels (see section 4.1), with varying levels of accuracy. Moreover, it is difficult to compare this data across regions.

To address this challenge, UIS-UNESCO has developed the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP) in partnership with other international agencies and technical experts. LAMP measures five levels of literacy and numeracy skills through an innovative combination of household survey methods and educational assessments conducted on a five- to ten-year cycle.

To ensure that test questions reflect socio-cultural and linguistic circumstances, LAMP works closely with participating countries to design appropriate instruments and ensure that each assessment is tailored to the specific needs and requests of national policy-makers. Through this collaborative approach, countries strengthen local capacities to conduct their own surveys while collected the data needed to focus on real needs and to better target resources.

7.2 Regional Variation

The regions of the Asia-Pacific face particular challenges with regard to literacy. In South Asia, which has high rates of illiteracy and a significant gender imbalance, the challenge is to help large numbers of people, particularly women, make the transition from illiteracy to literacy. Literacy efforts in many South Asian countries have traditionally been driven by NGOs rather than by the government, and this has led to a situation where literacy provision has been somewhat ad hoc. LIFE initiatives are particularly important in South Asia, then, as they work to increase systematization and coordination among government and non-government actors.

In South-East Asia, literacy initiatives tend to be government driven and more systematized. The countries of South-East Asia have comparatively more experience with literacy programmes and more resources to put toward them. The higher levels of literacy in South-East Asia overall mean that the challenge in South-East Asia is not to bring basic literacy to a large number of citizens, but rather to increase the overall level of literacy from basic to functional literacy.

China has achieved high rates of literacy overall, but the country’s large population means that there are still approximately 87 million illiterate Chinese. Most of these individuals are concentrated in a few remote provinces. China’s primary literacy challenge is therefore to improve literacy among these pockets of the unreached. Mongolia faces similar challenges of reaching illiterates in remote areas. While official literacy levels are high, these numbers are based on self-declaration, and so likely hide a substantial number of functional illiterates.

In Central Asia, challenges are linked to rapid socio-economic change, which is driving a need for lifelong learning on the part of the workforce to keep apace of new knowledge and technology. In addition, the adoption of a Romanized alphabet in Uzbekistan means that many adults who are literate in Cyrillic script must undergo training in the new alphabet.

7.3 Socio-economic Variation

Throughout Asia, illiteracy is concentrated in populations that are marginalized from the mainstream national population socially and economically. These include individuals of lower caste, border peoples, tribal groups, immigrants, and migrants.
If high rates of illiteracy among these groups are rooted in histories of social exclusion, poverty tends to compound this trend. Many of these groups live on daily wages or low wages, and their economic vulnerability means that they often do not have the means to break the cycle of illiteracy (because they cannot pay school fees or because they cannot spare working hours for education). Reaching these remote and disadvantaged groups is thus the overarching challenge for increasing literacy in Asia.

7.4 Access to Education among Ethnic and Linguistic Minorities

Throughout mainland South-East Asia, highland populations have lower enrolment rates and higher levels of illiteracy. In Myanmar, the lowest enrolments for primary level age groups are in eastern Shan, Karen and Arakan states, where there are high percentages of ethnic minorities.85 Ethnic minority children in rural Myanmar are at greater risk of being denied their right to education because of poverty, distance to school, and armed conflict.86

In Cambodia, the Khmer Lue highland minorities not only have significantly lower enrolment rates than Cambodians in majority areas, but they also show a gender gap of 17 percent.87 The main barriers to education among these groups are poverty (opportunity cost of sending students to school and hidden costs such as notebooks and pencils), language barriers, and distance to school.88

The physical geography of South-East Asia makes the delivery of education services to remote populations difficult. In the Philippines and Indonesia, communities living on small, remote islands are among the poorest of the population. In some cases, these populations exhibit low enrolment rates even where school facilities exist. Extreme poverty acts as a barrier to educational attainment, as families are unable to pay for school supplies and materials, school projects, transportation to school, and other related expenses. Child labor emerges as a related issue in these communities, as parents send their children to work rather than to school in an effort to boost their family’s meager income.

Ethnic minorities in Thailand also face significant challenges in access to education. The mountainous region of Northern Thailand is home to approximately twenty hill tribes, including the Karen, the Akha, the Lahu, the Hmong, the Yao and the Lisu, each with a distinct culture and language. Because of their swidden agricultural practices and cultivation of opium, they have historically been viewed as a threat to national security and the natural environment.89 Many of the hill tribes are poor and lack citizenship.90 The combination of poverty, lack of schooling in remote areas, and language barriers presents serious obstacles for the education of hill tribe children—a fact that is reflected in lower enrolments and literacy rates among these populations.

Peace and order problems also represent a significant obstacle to education in some areas of Asia. Escalating conflict in Thailand’s southernmost provinces has increased barriers to literacy in a region that is already poorer than much of the country and where the state’s provision of education, health and social welfare has long been inferior to the quality of services provided in the centre.91 In the Philippines, too, armed conflict has impacted the delivery of basic education services in Muslim areas. This trend is worsened by the recruitment of children into the armed movement.92
7.5 Ethnic and Linguistic Minorities and Mother Tongue Instruction

A significant barrier to attaining literacy among ethnic minority groups is language. South and South-East Asia are regions of tremendous ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity, with an estimated 388 languages spoken in Mainland South-East Asia and at least 586 languages spoken across South Asia. Some countries of South Asia, including India and Pakistan, have large numbers of people who speak a language other than the national language as their mother tongue. Despite this, many speakers of minority languages are denied access to education in their mother tongue, and over one third of children in South Asia attend schools where instruction is in a second language. Many of these individuals are members of indigenous groups. The low social status that is afforded these groups and their native languages complicates the issue of access to education in an appropriate language.

While UNESCO and other international organizations promote the use of mother tongue and multilingual education, many of the countries of the region are ambiguous in both policy and practise. Instruction in the national or official language has been seen as a unifying factor central to nation building in many countries, so there has been a reluctance to encourage the use of other languages in schools.

Policy and practice varies greatly among the countries of South Asia. While Nepal now has a positive policy to promote mother tongue and multilingual education, the actual extent of provision is still quite limited. In Bhutan, with more than 18 languages, the medium of instruction in schools is primarily English with some classes conducted in Dzongkha, the national language. India, with at least 430 languages, has provision for education in the state language in many areas as well as in English and in Hindi, the national language. Although not yet widespread, there is an increasing use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction for indigenous and other minority groups. There are currently a number of multilingual education programmes being developed where the medium of instruction is initially mother tongue with a gradual transition to second and third languages. Mother tongue is maintained for a long as feasible and at least until the end of the primary cycle. In Pakistan, a multilingual country with 6 major languages and at least 57 other languages, the national language Urdu is spoken as a first language by only 8 percent of the population; despite this, Urdu is used as the medium of instruction in most government schools. In Bangladesh, where 98 percent of the population speaks Bangla as a first language, there is no provision in government schools for using minority or indigenous languages as a medium of instruction. Recently, however, a number of innovative initiatives have been undertaken by NGOs to promote the use of mother tongue.

In Asia, millions of children attend schools that ignore their mother tongue and do not encourage the development of multilingual skills. There is substantial research that indicates the importance of children’s having the opportunity to learn in their first language, and multilingual education is now recognized as a positive factor in children’s overall social and academic development. A number of changes may be necessary to promote multilingual education in Asia and to see such policies put into practise. Attitudinal changes, acknowledgement of linguistic diversity, comprehensive data on the linguistic make-up of countries, and national and local planning based on the situation on the ground are all key factors for taking forward the agenda of multilingual education.
7.6 Access to Education among Migrants, Refugees, and Displaced Persons

Migrants, victims of trafficking, refugees, and displaced persons also face limited access to education. In Thailand, the majority of migrants are economic migrants and political asylum seekers from Myanmar. There are also migrants from Laos, Cambodia, and China. Migrant workers tend to work in fisheries, factories, plantations, orchards, the service sector, and in households as domestic workers. In an effort to regularize and monitor migration, in 2004, the Thai Ministry of Interior launched a foreign worker registration drive. As a result, 1,280,000 workers from neighbouring countries registered, making them eligible to enroll in health insurance plans and apply for work permits. Of those who registered, over 93,000 were children under the age of 15, including 63,000 Burmese children under the age of 12. While children of registered migrants are legally entitled to enroll in Thai schools, a recent study found that only 13,500 children out of a total of 93,000 were attending Thai schools.

There are also substantial numbers of unregistered migrants residing in Thailand, including child labourers and victims of trafficking. Given their irregular status and the clandestine nature of their entry into Thailand, there is no reliable data about the actual numbers of such migrants. In an effort to improve access to education for these vulnerable populations, the government passed a resolution in July 2005 mandating that schools accept all children regardless of their legal status (household registration, birth registration certificate, or Thai citizenship). There is still no reliable data, however, as to whether this policy has been implemented at the local level.

The issue of education and literacy among migrant communities is an important one for China as well, which has a floating migrant population of over 100 million persons. The government has had to meet the challenge of ensuring basic education and literacy for children of migrant workers in their temporary destinations. Another challenge has been providing continuing education and literacy training for those rural-urban migrant workers who eventually return to their origin locations.

7.7 Child Labour and Access to Education

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that approximately 352 million children between the ages of 5 and 18 are economically active, with 179 million engaged in the worst forms of child labour. The Asia-Pacific region has the largest number of child workers, approximately 127 million, in the 5 to 14 age group. It is estimated that in Asia there are 104 million children aged 5 to 17 working, and that 62 million of them are engaged in work considered hazardous. Based on data from surveys in South Asia, UNICEF estimates that 15 percent of girls and 14 percent of boys in that region are involved in child labour activities.

Efforts to achieve EFA and the progressive elimination of child labour are inextricably linked. There is generally a consensus that the most effective way to prevent children from entering the labour market is to extend and improve access to schools, particularly schools offering good quality education. At the same time, child labour is one of the main obstacles to achieving EFA. Involvement in child labour usually occurs at the expense of a child’s education. It is therefore vital to understand the interplay between child labour and education and to simultaneously and comprehensively address both issues.
7.8 Gender Disparities

In South Asia, there are a number of gender specific issues that serve as barriers to girls’ education and literacy. These include early marriage, sexual harassment, malnutrition, and the low proportion of women teachers. Combined with other constraints common to both girls and boys, these additional barriers often mean that girls, even if they manage to complete basic education, do not progress to higher levels. In nearly all of the countries of the region there remains an imbalance in female and male students at upper secondary and tertiary levels.

In Myanmar, ethnic minority girls and women face the greatest challenges in acquiring education because they are less likely to leave their villages to attend schools and because they are faced with language barriers in the classroom. Eldest daughters in some communities are also expected to drop out of school to take care of younger siblings and earn income to support the family.

Despite impressive improvements across the educational sector since 1999, Cambodia faces a host of challenges regarding gender parity in education and literacy. There continues to be a gender gap of 2.4 percent in primary enrolment rates and 2.5 percent in lower secondary enrolment rates, with girls likely to drop out of school earlier than boys. Female dropout rates generally correspond to the onset of puberty, when girls are expected to assume domestic roles in the household. Another factor contributing to lower female enrolments is the unwillingness of parents to invest in their daughter’s education, particularly where school fees are charged. This gender gap is particularly pronounced in remote areas, where the gap between male and female primary enrolment is 6 percent.

While great attention has been paid to gender equity and the provision of literacy for children over the last five to ten years, literacy campaigns for adults have not kept pace. The disparity between youth and adults demonstrates the need to reach adults with literacy training. The low gender parity levels for the adult group show that adult literacy programmes should be targeted toward females in particular. This group of women includes mothers of school-aged and pre-school-aged children; their attainment of literacy will likely have a positive impact on that of their daughters.

In Indonesia, the gender parity index for adult literacy appears, in fact, to be worsening: it fell from 0.56 in 1990 to 0.49 in 2006. A focus on improving female adult literacy rates is therefore a priority, especially for those over 25 years of age.
**Actions for governments:**

**Policy**

- Governments should acknowledge that they have the primary responsibility for providing quality literacy learning opportunities, while supporting the significant role of civil society organizations and community-based associations (and creating space for productive partnerships with them);
- Education sector policies should systematically include the needs of adult and youth literacy based on the right to literacy both as a basic learning tool and as a means of personal development;
- Policies should emphasize the organic and mutually beneficial links between formal schooling for children and non-formal adult and youth learning programmes, as well as linkages between ECCE, primary and secondary education;
- Literacy policies should address gender disparities based on a clear analysis of data which are further disaggregated along other axes of disadvantage, for example, caste, ethnicity, minority status, disability, etc.;
- Governments should adopt policies that are informed by an assessment of the current literacy situation and the changing demands for literacy;
- In communities where the national language is not spoken at home, bilingual education should be considered for the first three years of schooling in order to provide the foundation for literacy in the national language;
- Governments should develop clear and comprehensive multilingual education (MLE) policies and guidelines to inform mother tongue instruction initiatives;
- Governments should support articulations and synergies between formal, non-formal, and informal modes of learning so that learners can easily access lifelong learning opportunities, gain equivalency, and validate their knowledge; and
- Governments should adopt a comprehensive teacher education policy that lays down norms and standards for all aspects of teacher education in the country.

**Capacity-building**

- Governments, in coordination with civil society organizations and the private sector, should make effective use of new technologies to reach groups with special needs and in less accessible areas for literacy programmes;
- Governments should give particular attention to the quality of literacy learning by supporting the development and use of quality learning materials and the professional capacity of facilitators.
- Transparent governance and efficient management should be reinforced by on-going capacity development as these support literacy efforts.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Assessment, monitoring, and evaluation need further development to inform planning and account for results; methods and indicators should be adapted to the diversity of programmes and contexts, and the results of this process should be made public in a timely manner;
- The evidence on which literacy policies are based must be derived increasingly from direct surveys of a continuum of levels of literacy performance rather than indirect assessment of literacy competence; this will include adding further questions on literacy to household surveys;
• Policies should be put in place to strengthen accountability for efficient and effective utilization of resources for EFA;
• Governments should consider adopting benchmarks for literacy as the basis for policy formulation and programme design, and use them as a monitoring and evaluation yardstick.

Advocacy
• Policy makers at local and national levels should recognize and promote the importance of literacy as a key tool for poverty eradication.

Research
• Governments should identify and map disadvantaged areas and groups (including mobile groups) in order to design more targeted programmes for the “un-reached”;
• Governments should draw from innovative practices at the local and international levels to inform policy for literacy provision.

Networking and Partnerships
• Given the complex and diverse links of literacy with other sectors, governments should facilitate inter-ministerial collaboration as well as collaboration with and within civil society to ensure complementary – not duplicative – actions;
• Governments should seek input from local stakeholders in the planning and implementation of literacy programmes in order to build on existing community-based structures and to address relevant learning needs;
• Networks should be strengthened among the countries of the region for the exchange of good practices and lessons learned, including on financial management of literacy programmes; such exchange could take place through the establishment of a regional resource centre or through the development of a university network on literacy.

Funding
• In the context of achieving the benchmark of 6 percent of GNI in funding education in general, adult and youth literacy policies must be supported by adequate budgetary allocations, in line with the benchmark figure of 3 percent of national education budgets;
• Governments should ensure increased and rational allocation of financial resources for the “un-reached” and underserved on a vertical equity basis.

Actions for the international community:

Actions
• Where international frameworks do not explicitly address adult and youth literacy, international partners and donors should recognize the essential need for literacy efforts for poverty reduction and the achievement of the MDGs;
• International partners and donors should give high priority to adult and youth literacy, and support programmes, capacity development, assessment (including through household surveys), monitoring, evaluation and research;
• A literacy component should be integrated into all social sector programmes, including health, agriculture, environment, etc.
Capacity-building

- Professional training and adequate remuneration should be provided for literacy facilitators, as voluntarism is likely to be unsustainable.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Adequate documentation and dissemination of literacy work, based on sound monitoring and evaluation, will provide the evidence for innovation, scaling up, lesson-learning, and the improvement of literacy efforts.

Advocacy

- Gender and literacy should remain high on the agenda of the international community;
- As an EFA financing and support mechanism, the EFA Fast Track Initiative should raise awareness that it can be used to support adult and youth literacy and should actively work to increase its funding in this area;
- Leaders and well-known personalities should be mobilized to raise the public profile of literacy efforts and investment in literacy.

Research

- Further research, backed by adequate resources, on the nature and challenges of literacy in the region (with special attention to gender issues) should be promoted; this will provide evidence and analysis for the design of policies and programmes, and lead to innovation.

Networking and Partnerships

- As part of “Delivering as One,” UN agencies should enhance their cooperation in literacy as part of their common programming;
- Exchange of information should be promoted using the lessons of effective literacy programmes to inform and scale up efforts for other groups, taking account of variation in context.

Funding

- International donors should allocate 3 percent of their education aid to adult and youth literacy;
- Donors and literacy providers should invest in long-term efforts within a framework of lifelong learning, as evidence shows that short-term literacy programmes do not produce sustainable literacy competence and use.

Actions for literacy practitioners:

Policy

- Literacy learning should be linked with clear development goals, such as improvement in livelihoods and the promotion of health, life skills, and income-generating activities; it should also be linked with awareness of community, national, and international issues;
- Where appropriate, literacy learning should enable learners to gain equivalency with and transfer into the formal system;
- A certificate should validate literacy learning.
Delivery

• The use of languages in literacy learning should reflect the way languages are used in communities;

• Literacy learning opportunities should be delivered in flexible ways (timing, place, duration, etc.) that match socio-cultural diversity and occupational patterns, and which take gender relations into consideration;

• Literacy materials and their content should be gender-sensitive and reflect the concerns and cultures of learners, who should contribute to their elaboration;

• Practitioners should promote a rich and diverse literate environment, including support to local authorship and publication, in order to maintain literacy practices (particularly for neo-literates);

• Programmes of family literacy and inter-generational learning should be considered as ways of integrating and strengthening child and adult literacy.

Capacity Building

• Information and communication technologies should be harnessed appropriately to enhance the quality of literacy learning and improve the training of facilitators;

• Community ownership and participation in literacy efforts must be enhanced; this can be accomplished through community learning centres and other initiatives;

• Capacity development for facilitators and programme personnel should be on-going in order to reinforce the quality and sustainability of literacy efforts;

• Education personnel should be sensitized and trained on the issue of inclusive education so that they have the knowledge, skills, and attitude to respond to the diverse needs of learners.

Research

• Pilot programmes should be undertaken in multilingual approaches to literacy with initial learning in the mother tongue;

• Partners in literacy provision should make innovative and appropriate use of new technologies in order to reach groups with special needs and in less accessible areas.
CONFINTEA VI Preparatory Conference in Asia and the Pacific provided an opportunity to review adult education challenges in the region and to collectively discuss and reach agreement on key actions that were needed in the region. The recommendations agreed by Member States are contained in the Conference Outcome Document entitled “Asian Statement on Building Equitable and Sustainable Societies in Asia and the Pacific”.

Contexts and Challenging Issues

The resurgence of adult learning and education

1. The new millennium has brought about a renewed appreciation of adult learning and education (ALE) as central in addressing the critical development challenges in Asia and the Pacific. The rapid pace of change, and the rise of knowledge economies and learning societies in a globalised world, highlights the importance of ensuring that all adults have access to high-quality learning and education opportunities.

2. At the same time, unresolved socio-economic problems, in particular extreme poverty, unemployment and exclusion, and the challenges created by internal and cross-border migration, as well as massive environmental degradation, are best addressed with a holistic education framework based on a human-rights approach which promotes social transformation and peace.

3. ALE is a core element of lifelong learning, and contributes enormously to the generation of creativity, innovation and new ideas necessary for building equitable and sustainable societies. ALE is central to advancing individual and community well-being, social justice and gender equality and to propelling productivity and economic growth.

4. ALE has indeed assumed a new urgency in Asia and the Pacific, flourishing with a multiplicity of learning pathways. We hereby reaffirm the critical role of adult learning and education in expanding human capabilities, freedom and choice.

Development challenges in the region

1. Countries in Asia and the Pacific are rich in cultural and linguistic heritage. The region is home to four billion people or 60 percent of the world’s population, living in only 29 percent of the land area. Differences and disparities are more prominent features than the common geographical space that the countries share. There are, for example, over 3,500 languages spoken in the region, a fact which illustrates the scale of the practical issues involved in emphasizing education in mother tongues.

2. Asia incorporates five of the E-9 (high population) developing countries of the world – Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia and Pakistan. They account for half of the world’s population and three quarters of the world’s illiterate adults. Ten countries in East Asia and the Pacific and four in South Asia have Least Developed Country status, with high levels of poverty and dependence on external assistance. The region also has the largest concentration in the world of people in extreme poverty, and the majority of the world’s two billion people who live on US$2 or less daily.

3. Access to high-quality literacy and adult learning – especially for women – is a major challenge in the region, attesting to the lack of integrated policies, innovative strategies and adequate financial allocations. In some countries, less than one percent of the education budget is allocated to adult learning and education, including literacy programmes.
4. Migration and the displacement of populations, language diversity and structural shifts in the economy from farming to industry and services, as well as rapidly-changing labour markets, add to urgent social and individual needs for learning and upgrading occupational skills. Globalisation and the knowledge economy are exerting great pressures to adapt to new workplace environments, and there is a premium on continual upgrading of knowledge and skills. However, despite these pressures, and although there has been an increase in the commercialisation of adult and non-formal education, affordable opportunities for enhancing skills are limited and insufficient efforts are being made to promote adult learning and education in the sub-region.

5. These challenges are aggravated by high population growth, large numbers of non-enrolled children and early primary school-leavers. People living in urban areas have greater access to formal schooling, higher-quality education and non-formal education programmes, although the exception to this is urban slums where the poor are concentrated.

6. While the region is home to newly-emerging democracies, many countries are affected by political instability, conflict and violence.

7. Environmental degradation, whether in the form of rising sea levels or climatic change, has the potential to have a serious effect on the lives and livelihoods of vast numbers of people across Asia and the Pacific.

8. Consequently, the major development challenges in the region are to reduce poverty, to strengthen inclusive and participatory democratic processes based on peace, justice and human rights, and to promote equitable and sustainable development.

**Advances and constraints in adult learning and education**

1. While progress in adult literacy has been the fastest in Asia and the Pacific among all regions of the world (Global Monitoring Report, 2008), overall progress in adult learning and education has been constrained by the lack of specific policies and strategic implementation plans. Quality in adult learning and education is hampered by the weakness of organizational structures, by low levels of professionalization and by insufficient involvement of higher education institutions.

2. At the same time, several countries in the region are beginning to develop systematic approaches to adult learning and education, guided by a policy framework. Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea have achieved close to universal primary and secondary education and beyond. They now prioritize post-secondary vocational and technical upgrading of the workforce. They need to consolidate and deepen the gains they have made and place adult learning and non-formal education firmly within a progressively comprehensive framework of lifelong learning.

3. There is an increasing proportion of older, retired or semi-retired people, in particular in Central and East Asia and in developed countries in the region. Lifelong learning for the older age-group is assuming new significance, as it prepares them for new types of work and social and community services and leisurely pursuits.

4. A special concern in meeting lifelong learning aspirations in the region is to recognize and take into account the diversity of cultures, languages and economic development and the geographical dispersal of island states. It is important to ensure culture-specific responses, drawing on traditional
or indigenous knowledge and values and upholding cultural identities within the global economy. Against this background, adult learning and education, including literacy and learning in mother-tongues, deserve much greater priority in Asia and the Pacific.

**Recommendations, strategies and benchmarks**

**Policy**

17. We acknowledge that adult learning and education can provide people with the necessary abilities, skills, awareness and creative competencies to exercise and advance their rights, to end poverty, to contribute to equity and inclusion, and to build equitable and sustainable societies. We believe that it is urgent for governments to:

- reaffirm and create full conditions for the exercise of the right to learning and education for all and by all.
- recommit to a vision of adult learning and education within a perspective of lifelong learning and to confirm the primary responsibility of governments to enact and strengthen appropriate legislative frameworks.
- ensure that adult learning and education policies are designed with sector-wide approaches and lifelong learning frameworks and integrated with EFA, MDGs, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and national development plans.
- ensure that adult learning and education policies are implemented through adequately financed programmes which are reviewed and evaluated against pre-determined benchmarks.
- provide high-quality learning opportunities for all throughout life, to build learning communities and societies.
- enhance the capacity of relevant ministries to implement policies and to monitor progress at regular intervals.
- promote international cooperation and policy dialogue.

**Financing**

18. Adult learning is an investment, and not merely an item of expenditure from the national budget. Significant financial investment is needed to meet the diverse and complex challenges of adult literacy, adult education and lifelong learning for all the citizens of Asia and the Pacific. Therefore:

- governments should recommit themselves to the CONFINTEA V agreement to allocate 6 percent of GNP to education. Allocations to adult learning and education/lifelong learning, at least 6 percent of the education budget, should be increased through advocacy to national finance and planning ministries.
- adult education activities which are outside the budgets of education ministries should be recognized, acknowledged and tapped into, and their funding allocations should be increased.
- governments should seek to liberate new resources for literacy and adult education by improving management and accountability, including decentralisation to local community levels for decision-making in resource allocation and spending.
- development partners should, without condition, increase and prioritise aid (including debt swap or debt cancellation) to adult literacy and life skills for youth and adults in ways which are responsive, transparent and participatory.
development partners should fulfil their commitment to filling the financing gaps in EFA by contributing at least US $2.5 billion to ensure the achievement of the EFA goal of improving adult literacy levels by 50 percent by 2015.

• the EFA Fast Track Initiative (FTI) should include adult education, non-formal and literacy component, and ensure efficient and prompt delivery of financing support.

Quality

19. Recognizing that individuals and communities must be empowered to face developmental challenges in this diverse and rapidly changing region, and in order to build equitable and sustainable societies, it is imperative to assure the quality of adult learning and education. We therefore recommend:

• the development and improvement of curriculum, materials and pedagogy, in order to ensure the relevance of ALE content in all domains to meet social and individual needs, taking into account different contexts

• building the knowledge base on adult learning and education through systematic interdisciplinary research for innovation, replication and mainstreaming

• that governments assess and develop human resource capacity for professionals in ALE in partnership with research and higher education institutions

• that governments establish and strengthen equivalency frameworks through national quality accreditation and quality standard-setting

• that Governments establish networks and partnerships among ALE providers and supporting organizations at national and local level, to enhance institutional capacities and strengthen professional development

• that UNESCO facilitates international networks for collaboration and sharing good practice among Member States.

Participation and inclusion

20. To build equitable and sustainable societies in Asia and the Pacific requires the participation of as many actors as possible, whether governmental or non-governmental, public or private, individual or collective. To combat marginalization, poverty and unemployment, the need to expand adults’ access to literacy and learning has become ever greater and demands urgent action. Every participating nation is encouraged to develop and implement their own action plan to ensure multi stakeholder partnerships at national and local levels to secure recognition, commitment and active involvement of different government agencies/departments, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, local communities, formal/higher education institutions and the private sector in planning, financing and monitoring ALE. We recommend that:

• Member States should establish multi-pronged affirmative action strategies to address inequality issues such as gender, poverty, age, disability, ethnicity, displacement through conflict and migration. There should be a systematic focus on women and disadvantaged groups in all educational policies and approaches.

• Member States establish a national high-level oversight body in the form of an Adult and Lifelong Learning Council or Commission to mobilise and coordinate the efforts of all ALE stakeholders.

• accessible ALE programmes should be created that are free or subsidised by government, with incentives for learning, including paid study leave for ALE.
strong partnerships should be built between government and NGOs, CSOs, as well as ALE providers with community-based organizations and strengthen the capacity of communities for involvement in planning and implementation of ALE programmes.

networks of multi-purpose community-based learning centres should be established to form a base for offering ALE.

ALE should be integrated with income generation programmes and innovative community development projects.

free assessment services should be provided and labour market information disseminated to motivate potential learners.

local wisdom, knowledge, methodologies as well as mother-tongues should be valued and applied in ALE programmes.

Monitoring

21. The lack of reliable data and evidence makes it difficult for governments, their partners and other stakeholders to track progress in policy implementation. Adult education is not exceptional in this regard. Regular collection of information, at both national and international levels, will help governments and stakeholders to follow the progress of policy and financing in ALE and lifelong learning. We recommend that:

- Member States should be encouraged to establish and strengthen data collection and information management systems at local and national levels. Such systems should have the collaboration of academia, government and NGOs be developed with a common framework that allows comparisons at regional and global levels.

- governments, working with key stakeholders, should coordinate the mapping of adult learning and education, to generate disaggregated information on the learning needs and appropriate approaches to reach the neediest and most disadvantaged groups.

- a regional and/or global monitoring and quality assurance mechanism, including both quantitative and qualitative ALE indicators, should be developed by UNESCO/UIL and implemented to check progress in meeting CONFINTEA VI targets.

- an Asia-Pacific Commission, comprising key stakeholders and experts, should be formed to monitor progress in adult learning and education initiatives in the region.

- a Global Report on Adult Learning and Education should be produced more frequently, and should include regular national reporting and assessment on ALE.

- a substantial Mid-Term Review should be conducted in 2015 (coinciding with the EFA and MDG timelines) to report on national implementations of CONFINTEA VI initiatives.
Partnerships and Advocates for Literacy

UNESCO builds partnerships with governments, NGOs and international agencies as well as the private sector, the media, academia, trade unions, foundations, civil society and prominent personalities.

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)

In support of the UNLD, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) is undertaking a range of activities focusing on policy-driven research, capacity-building, and advocacy. UIL’s coordinates the global Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) by fostering enabling and facilitating processes of continuous consultation and communication with all stakeholders. UIL is also engaged in supporting UNLD at the country level through providing, upon request, technical assistance that is tailor-made to specific contexts and needs.

UIL’s activities related to LIFE are based on the proposed LIFE Strategy for 2007-2009 in the strategic areas of preparatory activities, Regional Conferences in Support of Global Literacy (the Beijing and Delhi conferences), Implementation of LIFE projects within EFA extra-budgetary programmes and within LIFE country action plans, and monitoring and evaluation.

The Regional Resource Team

Drawing upon existing networks in the region, UNESCO Bangkok has formed a regional resource team to assist Asia-Pacific countries in carrying out activities to promote the UNLD. The team is comprised of the following members: Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU); APPEAL Resource and Training Consortium (ARTC); Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE); Christian Blind Mission (CBM); SIL (Summer Institute of Linguistics) International. The membership of this team is reviewed every two years.

The following section describes specific programmes and activities undertaken by members of the regional resource team to support and promote the UNLD:

Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU)

The Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), a Japanese NGO that works with local partners throughout Asia, has set up a regional network of Literacy Resource Centres (LRCs) dedicated to the promotion of literacy for girls and women. Each LRC is managed by the ACCU partner literacy organization. The aims of each LRC are: to collect and provide information and materials to other NGOs and field workers; to develop innovative literacy learning materials and strategies; and to offer training opportunities to literacy workers in various fields.

ACCU has undertaken three major activities related to the UNLD:

- The publication of a poster: “The ACCU-LRC Network for the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012).” This poster briefly explains the network’s efforts toward achieving the Decade’s goals.
- In cooperation with the Research and Training Centre for Literacy Education, the ACCU organized a regional workshop for LRCs on “Literacy and Gender,” the UNLD sub-theme for 2003-2004. The workshop was held at the Southwest China Normal University in Chongqing from April 8 to 14, 2004. Participants discussed possible contributions of the resource centre network to the UNLD and attended a special session on ways to improve gender sensitivity in literacy programmes.
• ACCU is preparing a special issue of the quarterly Literacy Grassroots Breakthroughs on the UNLD. This newsletter reports on recent projects, news and trends in the field of literacy and non-formal education (NFE) in the Asia-Pacific region. The special issue on the UNLD will feature articles on the Decade's origins and current activities as well as contributions to UNLD by the LRC network.

**APPEAL Resource and Training Consortium (ARTC)**

Founded in 1997, the APPEAL Resource and Training Consortium (ARTC) provides technical support and assistance to APPEAL toward reaching the goals of Education for All (EFA) and lifelong learning in the Asia-Pacific region.

The ARTC provides education professionals with technical expertise to effectively promote EFA and lifelong learning; it serves as a resource and training base for collaborative programmes; it conducts action research and case studies on critical areas of EFA and lifelong learning, with an emphasis on grassroots participation; and promotes the sharing of experiences among member institutions of the consortium. The consortium is comprised of the following institutions in member countries:

- Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), Japan
- Bunyad, Pakistan
- Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), Bangladesh
- Indian Institute of Education
- Indonesian Department of National Education
- Institute for Rural Advancement, Ministry of Rural Development, Malaysia
- The International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (INRULED), China
- The Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI)
- Literacy Resource Centre, National Resource Centre for Non-Formal Education, Nepal
- National Observatory of Kazakhstan/Association of “Education for All in Kazakhstan”
- The Northern Territory University (NTU), Australia
- SEAMEO Regional Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology (INNOTECH), Philippines
- Sirindhorn Institute for Continuing Education and Development, Thailand

During the UNLD, the consortium is working to improve the relevance and quality of education services, foster community participation and ownership of educational activities, and contribute to the alleviation of poverty through education. Specifically, consortium members are involved in the following activities to promote the UNLD:

- Preparing a summary the principal strategies of the UNLD International Plan of Action for dissemination among NFE institutions in member countries
- Sharing and disseminating country experiences in developing National Action Plans on the UNLD and integrating them with EFA National Action Plans
- Preparing a summary of innovative projects on literacy in rural areas of member countries for dissemination among national and local level NFE professionals
- Designing and developing programmes and materials for self-education of rural adults in essential life skills
• Supporting community learning centres (CLCs) in knowledge management, project management, training, and needs assessment

• Training NFE trainers to teach others how to collect information on the number of child and adolescent dropouts and how to monitor and assess the learning outcomes of NFE programmes

• Initiating research studies to forecast literacy needs in member countries

• Conducting a comparative case study among rural and urban adolescents on the topic: “What does being literate mean to me?”

Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE)

The Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE), established in 1964 is an association of over 600 organizations and individuals working on both formal and non-formal adult education in 30 countries of the Asia-Pacific region. Members work with and through government agencies, universities, NGOs, community groups, trade unions, indigenous people’s and women’s organizations, the media, and other institutions. The ASPBAE is committed to ensuring that different development and education policy frameworks are attentive to issues of adult education and learning, particularly for the most marginal groups in the region.

To support adult literacy and education, the ASPBAE membership engages in research and advocacy; the forging of strategic partnerships and collaborations; and capacity-building and leadership development.

During the UNLD, the ASPBAE has organized study exchanges, workshops and conferences, training of trainers, research on adult education, and documentation of innovative practices, including the publication of case studies on adult literacy. Specific programmes and activities to support UNLD include:

• The Bureau helped organise a regional training workshop for adult education facilitators and trainers in Chiang Mai, Thailand (September 29 to October 3, 2004). The workshop trained participants to track progress on policy commitments to girls’ and women’s education and literacy. The workshop targeted women trainers and facilitators in particular in an effort to strengthen the leadership capacities of women and expand the pool of women leaders in the ASPBAE.

• In commemoration of its 40th anniversary, the ASPBAE organized the “Festival of Learning” in Yogyakarta, Indonesia (December 11-16, 2004). Emphasizing the theme “Learning is Freedom,” the festival showcased innovative adult education practices in the Asia-Pacific region and served as a forum for discussion and debate about adult education issues, concerns, and new forms of action.

• In conjunction with UNESCO New Delhi and UNESCO Bangkok, the ASPBAE is coordinating a project entitled, “Ensuring the Integration of Literacy and Continuing Education in EFA Programmes: Policy Dialogue among South Asian Countries.” The project reviews literacy and NFE policies and practices; trains researchers to recognize relationships between gender, literacy and other variables; publishes and disseminates country case studies to assist countries in developing policy related to literacy and NFE; and develops indicators for tracking progress toward EFA goals.

• The ASPBAE has also been involved in information technology and NFE projects. In partnership with UNESCO, the ASPBAE is setting up a website for NFE practitioners that
includes a virtual library of UNLD in Asia and the Pacific, an online NFE directory, and a forum for the exchange of views. The Bureau has contributed workshop reports, case studies, and other materials to the virtual library and will moderate electronic discussions among community service organizations throughout the region.

• The Bureau is also updating a 1998 publication, Bridging the Gap Between Intention and Action that describes measures to promote girls’ and women’s access to education and literacy in South Asia. It is also preparing an advocacy brief intended to help community service organizations in South Asia draw government and donor attention to the 2005-2015 gender targets for girls’ and women’s literacy.

Christian Blind Mission (CBM)

Christoffel Blindenmission/Christian Blind Mission (CBM) is an independent aid organization of Christians of various denominations dedicated to serving eye patients, vision impaired individuals, and those with disabilities in developing countries throughout the world, regardless of nationality, race, gender or religion. In 2003, the CBM supported 273 projects for the education and/or rehabilitation of the visually impaired in 87 countries. These projects included schools, integrated education programmes, teacher training centres, and nursery schools. The activities and projects of the CBM are founded on the belief that children and youth with visual or hearing disabilities are no less deserving of opportunities for basic education than other young people. A number of the CMB’s efforts to serve children and youth with visual or hearing disabilities thus support the objectives of the UNLD:

• In South Asia, the CBM supports the training of special education teachers and community-based rehabilitation workers. The Mission also upgrades residential schools so that they can better serve the visually impaired.

• CBM programmes in South Asia promote inclusive education for the hearing impaired, with girls a particular priority. Projects help children with hearing aids transition into regular upper primary classrooms and prepare young people who are incurably deaf to enter higher education.

• In the Philippines, the CBM runs a summer (in-service) training course for teachers of the deaf in partnership with the Department of Education. The CBM also supports sign language training and national congresses for educators, school administrators and local education officials.

Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) International

SIL International is involved in a number of activities to promote and support basic education and literacy, especially in language minority communities. Activities contributing to UNLD objectives include trainings, the provision of expert consultants on education issues, publishing and disseminating information, and organizing conferences, symposia, and workshops.

• SIL conducts training workshops at the local, provincial, national and international levels focusing on the following areas:
  - Conducting preliminary research, which is necessary for planning community-centred programmes
  - Developing writing systems for previously unwritten languages
  - Developing graded reading materials
  - Developing curriculum and instructional materials
  - Programme evaluation
SIL experts serve as consultants for minority language communities, governments, multilateral agencies and NGOs in the Asia-Pacific region. They work with language minority communities in developing orthographies as well as in producing reading and instructional materials for minority education programmes. Currently, SIL International is collaborating with the Asian Development Bank and the Philippines Government in conducting a study on the feasibility of expanding the Government’s “Regional Lingua Franca” programme to cover various minority languages in the country. With the support of the World Bank and the government of Viet Nam, SIL specialists are assessing the progress of the government’s primary education project among the J’rai people of the Central Highlands. A similar project in Cambodia involves assessment of a non-formal bilingual education programme for speakers of four minority languages in Ratanakiri Province. SIL experts are also working with UNICEF in Lao PDR and Viet Nam to clarify policy issues related to language in education. In Bangladesh, SIL International has joined BRAC (a national, private organization) in planning its “Education for Indigenous Children” programme as part of a nationwide NFE initiative.

- SIL publishes and disseminates information, including resource materials and academic articles on innovations in language development and multilingual education.

- In November 2003, SIL International, UNESCO and Mahidol University organized the “Conference on Language Development, Language Revitalization and Multilingual Education in Asia.” The purpose of the conference was to bring together policymakers, academics, and practitioners from minority language communities to learn about current practices and explore possible cooperative future efforts. In May 2004, SIL International held a symposium on community-based inclusive education for language groups in Nepal with the Ministry of Education and Sports (Nepal).
Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Definition of Literacy

Literacy has traditionally been defined in Afghanistan as the ability to read, write, and use numbers. More recently, the understanding of literacy has broadened to include the ability to think critically and understand better the context of one’s life—to use words, numbers, technology, and new knowledge and attitudes to make informed decisions about productive and financial matters, family and community health, to resolve conflicts and, in Muslim cultures, to better understand the teachings of the Holy Qu’ran.

Afghanistan: Programmes and Strategies

Afghanistan’s constitution (January 04, 2004) guarantees the right of every citizen to an education. It also provides for equal rights and full participation of women through the prohibition of discrimination between citizens of Afghanistan. The constitution also calls for programmes to balance and promote education for women, improve education among Nomads, and eliminate illiteracy in the country (Article 44). In addition, the constitution requires the state to provide for teaching native languages in the areas where they are spoken.

To address these concerns, a National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) has been developed with 8 priority programmes, including literacy and non-formal education. To support the NESP’s goals and objectives, the Afghan Ministry of Education requested Director General of UNESCO to include Afghanistan in the second phase of LIFE from 2008 and to provide technical and financial support for its preparation in 2007. LIFE will contribute to the achievement of the EFA Goals, in particular Goal 4 (a 50% improvement in adult literacy rates), Goal 3 (meeting the learning needs of all young people and adults) and Goal 5 (achieving gender equality in education). It will also support the achievement of the Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on poverty reduction, women’s empowerment, HIV/AIDS and education for sustainable development.

The overall goal of LIFE in Afghanistan is to contribute to the attainment of literacy goals set in the NESP through the empowerment of illiterate population, especially women and out-of-school girls and their families in underserved rural areas.

LIFE will link with other development programmes such as life skills, income generation, livelihood, HIV & AIDS and sustainable development. It will draw on existing national, regional, and international expertise relevant to the locally identified needs. Within the overall framework of the NESP, LIFE seeks to achieve the National Literacy Goals through:

• Advocacy to create national and international momentum
• Enhancing partnership among all the literacy stakeholders
• Reinforcing national capacity in literacy policy, strategy and programme development
• Enhancing delivery in literacy learning
• Facilitating the consultation and sharing of information to improve policies and practice

Under the NESP, a National High Commission for Literacy has been planned that will be responsible for ensuring policy implementation by all governmental ministries and stakeholders. Its role will be as follows:

• Confirmation of political will.
• Advocacy and communication at the national and international levels
• Raising awareness at the national level
• Coordination of literacy programmes
• Monitoring and evaluation
• Approval of national strategy for literacy
• To encourage and ensure policy implementation by all related ministries and other stakeholders at all levels

Following the finalization of the LIFE Needs Assessment, a National Literacy Action Plan will be developed in 2008 in response to the goals and targets set in the NESP.

**Afghanistan: Progress to Date**

Afghanistan currently has no census, so accurate literacy statistics are unavailable. According to Afghanistan’s Millennium Development Goals Report (2005), the estimated literacy rate of those aged 15 and above was 34% in 2004 (50 percent for men and 18 percent for women). In rural areas where 74 percent of all Afghans live, an estimated 90 percent of women and 63 percent of men cannot read, write, and do a simple math computation, with numbers only slightly higher in urban areas. At least 11 million Afghans age 15 and above are currently in need of literacy and numeracy skills development.

Most existing literacy programmes operate in cities. In the rural areas, where there are high rates of illiteracy and poverty, people have less access to literacy programmes, and they are less likely to participate if they do not see the relevance of these activities to their daily lives. Insecurity in some areas of the country is also an obstacle to participation in literacy initiatives, particularly for women.

The Literacy and Non-formal Education Department currently supports a nine-month literacy programme for those 15 to 45 years of age who did not previously have access to education and who are not literate. The following tables below present the number of enrolled students (male and female) and the number of graduates (male and female) from 2002 to 2007.

**Annex Table 1: Enrolled Male and Female Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1381/2002</td>
<td>180,723</td>
<td>161,361</td>
<td>342,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1382/2003</td>
<td>199,447</td>
<td>157,891</td>
<td>357,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1383/2004</td>
<td>271,938</td>
<td>174,959</td>
<td>446,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1384/2005</td>
<td>190,728</td>
<td>195,713</td>
<td>386,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1386/2007</td>
<td>96,825</td>
<td>207,693</td>
<td>304,518</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Annex Table 2: Graduated Male and Female Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1381/2002</td>
<td>92,389</td>
<td>86,713</td>
<td>179,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1382/2003</td>
<td>115,824</td>
<td>91,888</td>
<td>207,712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1383/2004</td>
<td>111,036</td>
<td>821,84</td>
<td>193,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1384/2005</td>
<td>52,937</td>
<td>67,168</td>
<td>120,105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1385/2006</td>
<td>40,647</td>
<td>63,214</td>
<td>89,348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1386/2007</td>
<td>20,274</td>
<td>25,942</td>
<td>46,216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The first six months of the literacy training uses a formal curriculum and textbook. Following this initial period, participants can choose from two options for an additional three months of supplementary training:

**Literacy supplementary schools:** These schools cover the materials presented in Grades 4-9 of the formal system. The focus of these courses is 40% vocational subjects and 60% literacy subjects.

**Labor supplementary schools:** These schools are designed for graduates of the literacy programme who are employed
by the private sector or government. Participants in these schools can earn up to a ninth grade equivalency and are able to attend night school to earn up to a Grade 12 certificate.

The Literacy Department also supports vocational supplementary schools designed for graduates of the accelerated learning programme. The focus in these schools is 60% vocational subjects and 40% literacy subjects and is equivalent to Grades 5-9.

Programmes supported by the Literacy Department to date have focused on grade equivalency, but the Ministry’s emphasis during the course of this strategic plan will be functional literacy and skills-based learning relevant to the lives of adult learners.

Australia

Australia: Definition of Literacy

113 Literacy is not only about skills acquisition but the application of these skills in multiple environments for multiple purposes. Language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) are crucial underpinnings to learning to learn and generic skills and essential skills for the Australian population. Adequate LLN skills allow adults to participate fully in the labour force, use literacy skills at work, participate in adult education and training, and use literacy at home and in the community.

Australia: Programmes and Strategies

The Australian Government is currently implementing its Skilling Australia for the Future policy. The policy advocates an investment in lifelong learning to ensure Australia’s workforce maintains and improves their skills in a dynamic work environment. Providers approved to deliver training are required to integrate literacy and numeracy skills and employability into their delivery.

In the UNLD period, there has been on-going implementation of a number of programmes and projects intended to improve the language, literacy and numeracy skills of the Australian population. These include:

- The Adult Literacy National Project (ALNP) aims to fund and promote research, resources and projects in the field of adult literacy. The ALNP Innovative Projects are grants allocated to successful applicants to develop pioneering approaches to language, literacy, and numeracy resource development and programme delivery with national applicability. ALNP Targeted Resources are allocated to strategic projects of national significance and relevance to adult literacy across Australia.

- Language Literacy Numeracy Programme (LLNP), including Innovative and Research Projects that support LLNP objectives through additional research, specialist services and post-programme monitoring. The programme seeks to improve jobseekers’ language, literacy and/or numeracy with the expectation that such improvements will enable them to participate more effectively in training or in the labour force and lead to greater gains for society in the longer term.

- The Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP) which is available for refugee and humanitarian entrants, victims of torture and trauma and other recent immigrants, providing up to 810 hours of English language tuition.

- The Workplace English Language Literacy (WELL) programme funds LLN training for employees. WELL also allocates funding to strategic projects with a national scope that support LLN training across one or more industry sectors. WELL funding is also available for the development
of resources, including training materials, assessment and reporting methods, and professional development resources for industry trainers/assessors. In 2006–2007 more than 16,000 people were trained through WELL projects. The 2006 WELL evaluation found it to be a unique programme providing workplace-based LLN training embedded in vocational training, and tailored to the needs of individual businesses.\textsuperscript{114}

The Australian Government’s two main adult literacy programmes seek to provide open and supportive environments for adult learning by moving the classroom into the workplace setting and establishing “literate environments” through these trainings:

- WELL training projects contextualize literacy learning by shaping it around tasks that the employee undertakes in the workplace and by tailoring the overall training to the needs of the organization.
- The LLNP seeks to improve clients’ language, literacy and/or numeracy skills with the expectation that such improvements will enable them to participate more effectively in training or labour force and lead to greater gains for society in the long term.

These programmes provide literacy training to a number of vulnerable groups. The AMEP targets refugee and humanitarian entrants, victims of torture and trauma and other recent immigrants. Young males and isolated females are included in the LLNP’s target groups. In addition, some LLNP providers are able to offer Complementary Training (CT), which allows more flexibility for providers to create courses that are parallel to the core delivery of the Initial, Basic and Advanced streams of training. CT is intended to target disadvantaged client groups, including indigenous people, young males, people with disabilities, isolated female clients, and/or cases of age-based workforce exclusion.

Although WELL projects are not specifically targeted to any particular demographic group, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people of non-English speaking background were over-represented in WELL courses, proportionate to the mainstream population (2006-2007). In 2007, DEEWR established a key performance indicator designed to measure and increase indigenous participation.\textsuperscript{115}

Adult education in Australia will serve a number of key objectives in the coming years:

- Respond to the skill shortages that have emerged as a result of the country’s period of sustained economic growth and the overall ageing of the population
- Adjust to advances in information and communication technology by re-skilling older workers and retraining adults who are returning to the workforce
- Developing language, literacy, and numeracy skills in adults, particularly those from non-English speaking backgrounds

To these ends, adult education and literacy programmes must streamline skills development through a range of approaches, including the recognition of prior learning. Programmes should also seek to increase social inclusion by engaging marginalized populations in formal and non-formal learning.

\textbf{Australia: Progress to Date}\textsuperscript{116}

The 2006 Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey of Australians aged 15 to 74 years assessed prose literacy (e.g. ability to read newspapers), document literacy (e.g. ability to use bus schedules), as well as numeracy and problem-solving skills, and the ability to understand health-related information (e.g. first aid advice). Approximately 17 percent (2.5 million) of people were assessed at the lowest prose literacy level (down from 20 percent in 1996), while 18 percent (2.7 million) were
assessed at the lowest document literacy level (down from 20 percent in 2006).

The survey found that:

- Just over half (54 percent) of Australians aged 15 to 74 years have the prose literacy skills needed to meet the complex demands of everyday life and work. Results were similar for document literacy (53 percent) and numeracy (47 percent)

- Women had higher scores for prose and health literacy, while men had higher scores for document literacy and numeracy

- Across all the different types of literacy, people with jobs were more likely to be assessed as having the skill levels needed to meet the complex demands of everyday life and work than were the unemployed or those not in the labour force

- The median weekly income for people assessed with the highest level of prose literacy was $890 compared to $298 for those assessed at the lowest level

- People who had completed a qualification generally had higher scores

- Fifty percent of recent migrants whose first language was not English had the document literacy skills to meet the demands of everyday life and work, compared with 32 percent a decade earlier.

**Bangladesh**

**Bangladesh: Definition of Literacy**

Literacy is defined as the ability to read, understand, interpret, communicate and compute in verbal and written forms in varying contexts. It involves a continuum of learning that enables individuals to develop their potentials and knowledge base and to participate fully in community affairs and wider social and developmental context.

**Bangladesh: Literacy Programmes and Strategies**

Bangladesh’s Non-Formal Education Policy (2006) was formulated to ensure educational opportunities for all citizens to fulfill their potential as effective members of their families and communities into the 21st century. Within the broad framework of the policy, Literacy Initiatives for Empowerment (LIFE) reinforces Bangladesh’s national and international commitment to literacy through advocacy and communication, supports the articulation of policies for sustainable literacy within sector-wide and national development frameworks, strengthens national capacities for programme design, management and implementation, and enhances innovative initiatives and practices to provide literacy learning opportunities.

**Issues and challenges**

The challenges before Bangladesh in ensuring education for all are significant. Currently, there are approximately 52 million adults and adolescents who do not know how to read and write.
Some of the core issues and challenges are as follows:

1. A strong demand exists for livelihood training in the areas of income-earning skills, but an efficient structure is needed for meeting this demand successfully on a large scale.

2. Besides the literacy objective, a wide spectrum of learning objectives, complementary to basic literacy, are necessary for sustaining and improving literacy skills. These should be served by non-formal and continuing education programmes.

3. Management of literacy, continuing education and non-formal education needs to be based on government/civil society partnerships and decentralized enough to make it responsive to local conditions and accountable to the community.

4. It is necessary to specifically target the disadvantaged and marginalized sections of the population with strategies that address their specific needs.

5. A coordination mechanism must be established to look after the progress of achieving EFA, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) with access, equity, and quality.

6. Attention and commitment of DPs are important for allocating necessary funds to implement large-scale literacy activities linked to Life Long Learning (LLL).

**LIFE Efforts in Bangladesh**

- **Advocacy and communication make literacy a priority agenda:** In May 2006, in Bangladesh a sub-regional advocacy workshop was organized by UNESCO Dhaka, jointly with Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), to examine the current situation of NGO driven advocacy efforts and activities as reflected in policy and programmes for adult literacy and learning at national level and sub-national levels. The workshop formulated a number of advocacy strategies and action measures for adoption at national and sub-national levels to promote adult literacy and learning as a means for human development, sustainable economic growth, and social progress. One of the key recommendations from the workshop was to set up a national level advocacy team for adult literacy with the participation of representatives from government, the private sector, NGOs, CBOs, civil society, communities, universities and research institutions. As follow-up, CAMPE is developing a multi-stakeholder network to promote the cause of adult literacy.

  - **Civil society initiatives for advocacy:** As a civil society organization, CAMPE undertook a number of initiatives, including:
    - CAMPE initiated a study to review the status of adult education in the country. CAMPE's Education Watch Report provides necessary data and information to the policy makers about the need for quality education at the primary and NFE levels.
    - CAMPE undertakes collaborative efforts to observe International Literacy Day each year with the government and other civil society organizations.
    - CAMPE and member NGOs lobbied for free textbooks and tax rebates for investing in education.
    - CAMPE's Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) seeks to strengthen the capacity of civil society and policy makers in Bangladesh to help the government ensure that poor and marginalized children are enrolled and complete quality primary education.
    - CAMPE organises constituency advocacy with MPs for influencing educational policy and strategy.
In November 2004, the People’s Forum on MDGs (PFM) in Bangladesh was formed as a civil society platform to reflect on the state’s progress towards the achievement of the MDG Educational Goals through a consultation process represented by civil society organizations, sectoral networks, development partners, media and relevant government agencies. The People’s Forum has developed a broad based coalition of 134 organizations representing networks, umbrella bodies, professional groups, women’s groups, human rights organizations, and NGOs. CAMPE works as secretariat of the forum.

Development of Policies for sustainable and empowering literacy: The Second EFA National Plan of Action (2003-15) was formulated with the goal of establishing a knowledge-based and technology-oriented society. It seeks to ensure that children have access to primary education and that the learning needs of youth and adults are met in both formal and non-formal sectors without discrimination. Specific national targets have been set for each category of learners to attain the policy goal of reducing the population of illiterates by 50 percent. LIFE related programme focusing on the NPA II include:

- Basic education for out-of-school children, adolescents, and adults
- Continuing education programmes for life-long learning
- Training in vocational, entrepreneurship, and employment related skills

Capacity Building for delivering quality literacy programmes: A set of broad strategy is outlined in the NPA II for the implementation of literacy and continuing education programmes. Key features of the strategies are as follows:

- Development of a field level community-based network of learning centres
- Development and maintenance of Non-Formal Education Management Information System (NFE-MIS) by BNFE
- Developing need-based curriculum and programme package and continuously updating these
- Development of national testing system to support standardized learner assessment procedure
- Institutionalizing a decentralized operation system of NFE programmes

Promoting Innovation: One of the objectives of UNESCO’s cap-EFA project is to promote innovative pilot literacy/skills training for rural illiterates for sustainable development. To this end, a number of new CLCs were established and existing CLCs were strengthened.

- Promotion of equivalency between formal and non-formal education, as envisaged in the NFE Policy, is being explored. Some NGOs are experimenting on a small scale to cover grade three to five of primary education and grade six to eight of secondary education. A joint venture of NGO and Bangladesh Open University (BOU) is also trying out a Junior Secondary Course for primary education graduates.

- Primary role of NGOs and CBOs in implementing programmes while the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME) through the Bureau of Non-formal Education (BNFE) would function for policy development, target setting, standard setting, quality control, monitoring and coordination
- Development of policies and programmes for the delivery of quality literacy and continuing education programmes.
At the initiative of CAMPE and with support from UNESCO, diverse innovative models of basic education with particular focus on literacy and life skills have been documented. Analysis of the documented models show that these diverse models strengthen access of the disadvantaged people to basic and continuing education. There was a common urge to continue documentation and dissemination of the innovative practices to facilitate mutual learning and mainstreaming of good practices.

The UNESCO-DAM study on good practices for adult literacy/skill training in Bangladesh (2007) was undertaken to analyze the effectiveness of practices and to draw the attention of the GO and NGO authorities to good practices for preparing and imparting adult literacy programmes. The study highlights the following as examples of replicable good practices in the country: NGOs’ participatory approach; community involvement in planning and monitoring; recruitment of female facilitators; learning assessment tools; and monitoring by field visit.

Information Management: To get an overall picture of the NFE situation, information are being collected from all types of NFE providers in a national initiative - NFE Mapping. Under the leadership of the BNFE, this is GO-NGO collaborative initiative to document all on-going NFE activities in the country. GIS presentation in the NFE mapping Report will enable planners and programme implementers to undertake NFE activities in a coordinated and mutually supportive manner.

**Overall Assessment of LIFE Process in Bangladesh**

Assessment of the LIFE process reflects both results and the process relating to implementation.

The Post-Literacy and Continuing Education for Human Development (PLCEHD-1) project was implemented between 2001-2007. It reached 1.3 million people in 32 districts with the goal of developing human resources through literacy. By enhancing literacy skills among neo-literates and primary school dropouts, this programme sought to enable these individuals to increase their income, improve personal welfare, and participate more fully as citizens. PLCEHD-2 is in the process of implementation to cover another 1.6 million neo-literates in post-literacy and continuing education programmes in 29 districts.

The Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Children (Non-formal Education Project-3) project sought to provide quality non-formal basic education up to the equivalency of formal education grade III (three) to 351,000 urban working children between 8 and 14 years of age in the six divisional cities of Bangladesh.

The Reaching Out of School (ROSC) project has been in effect since 2005. Its primary objective is to provide access to quality primary education and mainstream out-of-school children through the establishment of community-run learning Centres in 60 upazila of the country. As of July 2007, 10,938 centres had been established enrolling 351,874 students.

In August 2007, a third party performance audit was commissioned to give an overall assessment of the results from the PLCEHD-1 project. The audit also reviewed the process for making recommendations for future projects. Following are the highlights of the report:
a. The project provided opportunities for continuing learning practice even after the PL and CE courses through supplementary reading materials, newspapers, magazine, etc. However, the use of the centre for supplementary readings is low, as only 15 to 20 percent of learners attend the centre for reference and supplementary reading. A suitable arrangement for sustainable maintenance of the centres to provide backstopping of the efforts to sustainable lifelong education of the neo-literates was found missing.

b. The project offered skills training on various trade courses, based on the options of the learners. Not all trades, however, were supportive for the learners to acquire additional income. Indeed, only a small percentage (about 20 percent) of the learners could adopt a new trade after completing CE as an income generating initiative.

c. Targeting and beneficiary selection need more emphasis. Enrollment of primary school graduates and secondary school dropouts in the literacy centres limited the scope of the real target populations in the NFE centres: the neo-literates and primary school dropouts.

d. Selection of implementing NGOs should be based on their track record in implementing continuing education activities. Many CBOs could not demonstrate successful implementation of the skill training and continuing education activities.

e. Efforts for achieving the level of advocacy and dissemination (such as PLCE-1 orientation workshops, PLCE-1 advocacy workshops, and social mobilization) have been very limited.

f. There is limited manpower for programme supervision in the districts where BNFE has a presence. Programme monitoring is also far beyond capacity. BNFE headquarters has limited manpower, consisting of individuals recruited, contracted, and deputed from other departments and ministries. BNFE needs to strengthen its capacity to efficiently support planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes.

At the learners level, the Tracer Study on PLCEHD - 1 (2005) shows that before PLCE, learners were engaged in various occupations: about 73 percent were self-employed; 16 percent wage employed; and 11 percent having no income. After PLCE, the mix changed slightly with the share of the self-employed increasing to 76 percent, the wage employed to 18 percent and no income group down to 5 percent. In effect there was 6 percent increase in employment.

The proportion of learners who used their literacy skills regularly before PLCE was about 11 percent; this increased to approximately 25 percent after PLCE. Moreover, the proportion of learners who never used literacy skills significantly decreased from about 56 percent to 33 percent.

Regarding the assessment of LIFE process, UNESCO National Education Support Strategy (UNESS), Bangladesh, March 2007 has identified the following needs and gaps in the literacy/NFE sub-sector:

- Continued capacity-building of BNFE staff for providing policy guidance, target-setting and research, and NGOs for implementation
- Policy framework preparation and launching of advocacy campaign for partnership with NGOs and CBOs
- Technical inputs and capacity-building for coordination with other organizations and programmes
- Massive financial inputs of the government of Bangladesh and development partners planning and implementation for improvement of literacy
Continued financial and technical inputs for establishing and updating NFE MIS in addition to UNESCO’s on-going support for NFE MIS

Capacity building of NFE staff in monitoring and evaluation

Continued financial inputs for capacity-building of BNFE and NGO staff in addition to UNESCO’s on-going limited support

Technical and financial inputs for massive training programme for teachers/facilitators in addition to UNESCO’s on-going limited support

Financial and technical inputs for curriculum revision and materials development

Financial and technical inputs for developing comprehensive advocacy policy and campaign in addition to UNESCO’s limited effort

Preparation and enforcing of a coordination mechanism with other organizations and programmes

**Future Directions in Literacy for Empowerment in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh’s history of non-formal education stretches back many decades. NFE developed in Bangladesh as a homegrown device to meet the learning needs of the people. As a result, a variety of approaches exist across the country, which is a great strength. To gain optimum benefit from these programmes, it would be strategically important to link these through a national framework in line with the national NFE policy.

To increase effectiveness of the on-going programmes, NFE providers in Bangladesh would need to take care of the following programmatic issues:

1. Shift of focus from mere literacy to poverty reduction and development goals
2. Widening of scope to bring diversity into learning package
3. Target setting to reach priority groups
4. Planning programmes for low coverage districts
5. Revisiting curriculum and materials to ensure convergence of national needs and local needs
6. Organising classes with multi-grade setting to suit learners’ level of competency
7. Promoting an interactive and joyful teaching-learning process based in learning by doing

To achieve the programmatic results, it is necessary to increase efficiency in implementing GO, NGO, and NFE programmes. The required systemic improvement measures should aim at:

1. Promoting local level planning and implementation
2. Scope for continuous professional development of NFE personnel at all levels (Teacher to Manager)
3. Developing partnership with other education providers to deliver diverse NFE programmes
4. Creating scope to support further education
5. Community participation in micro-level planning and management of NFE programmes
6. Setting national standards for assessment of achievements
7. Promoting and emphasizing mother tongue/language education
Strategic actions need to be planned for reducing the number of illiterates by at least 50 percent as a first measure. The measures presently being discussed include calculating the absolute number of existing illiterates and formulating a massive programme to reach them through a Division-wide programme. Simultaneously, there would be special measures to reach people in remote locations, tribal people, people living in urban slums, and people with physically disabilities.

Besides targeting quantitative achievements, equal emphasis would be given to quality assurance as stipulated in NFE policy. Measures at the national level would determine the current state of literacy levels and levels of knowledge as well as identify the learning needs of the target people. Based on the needs assessment, core national competencies for various learning programmes can be set. In setting competencies, there would be scope to accommodate local/regional learning needs. Other efforts include developing mechanisms for mainstreaming of NFE graduates, establishing equivalency between formal and non-formal programmes, and capacity-building measures for NFE providers.

The diverse learning needs of a community cannot be met by single programmes. To support learners at various stages of learning and to facilitate their learning as per needs, there should be flexibility in entry and exit to the programmes. Special efforts should be made for coordinated support of the Development Partners to the NFE sub-sector programme as well as institutionalizing functional networking with other development ministries, departments, projects and institutions at both local level and national level. Decentralized planning and implementation of the programmes will gradually be institutionalized to support the interface between core learning needs and local learning needs as well as flexible implementation of the programme to suit local context.

Based on 2006 population figures, a broad-based sub-sector programme is being developed targeting 25 million illiterates, of which 5 million will be 10 to 14 years of age and 20 million will be of the 15-35 age group. It is expected that the proposed project will contribute to increase the literacy rate of the country to achieve the national goal of EFA as envisaged in the National Plan of Action. Because of intensive project interventions, the literacy rate in the target 32 districts is predicted to increase by approximately 12 percent by 2013. As a consequence of increased literacy combined with improved livelihood skills, the options for people’s participation in diverse economic activities will be widened and the percentage of active workforce in the country will be increased.

**Bhutan**

**Bhutan: Definition of Literacy**

A literate person is defined as someone who can independently read and write for communication and solve new problems using literacy skills.

**Bhutan: Programmes and Strategies**

The national goal is to eradicate illiteracy by the year 2012 and to make the adult population aged 15 years and above functionally literate and numerate in the national language, Dzongkha.

The Royal Government of Bhutan places a very strong emphasis on providing education opportunities for all Bhutanese people. It aims to provide nine years of education free of charge and to ensure that all Bhutanese receive a basic education. Basic education in Bhutan is understood to be that which improves quality of life, allows successful
living in society and provides knowledge and skills for application in work and general living, with the provision of basic literacy programme in Dzongkha to adult population receiving top priority. Past experience has shown that the best way to succeed with literacy programmes is to have active involvement of the local authorities and to guide their involvement in the right direction.

Non-formal education is provided by the Non-Formal and Continuing Education Division (NFCED). The focus during the plan period 2002-2007 was to expand the NFE programme using existing teachers and space in primary schools, recruit promising NFE graduates to teach in the NFE with appropriate remuneration, include NFE education in the pre-service education course, and foster greater collaboration with other ministries to support post literacy programmes. Efforts were also made to increase the number of participants in the non-formal education programme from 1,000 to 4,800 every year.

The responsibilities and strategies of the NFCED are as follows:

- Develop curricula and effective NFE programmes that address disadvantaged populations
- Train teachers and volunteers in teaching methods
- Provide teachers with support and materials to enhance their teaching
- Establish community learning centres and post-literacy centres with reading corners and vocational training facilities.
- Establish NFE centres in different Dzongkhas
- Plan and monitor NFE programmes
- Mobilise individuals from all segments of society and from diverse communities, GOs, NGOs, monastic bodies, private sectors, etc. to participate and assume responsibility for providing non-formal education with the support of resources in the Department’s networks.
- Make NFE programmes responsive to the needs of learners so they can take part in programmes relevant to their knowledge and experiences. Learning and teaching methods must be made more flexible and diverse to enable learners to seek knowledge continuously throughout their lives.
- Place special emphasis on post-literacy and continuing education for neo-literates so that they can avoid relapsing into illiteracy
- Continue full-cycle development of non-formal education by using research and development to improve quality of every unit of the NFE Division
- Use information technology in management and development of learning and teaching processes to provide equal opportunity for the acquisition of qualitative and standardised education. Such technology should also be used to enable students to learn by themselves in today’s information society

Wherever there is a group of twenty learners an NFE centre can be set up. The Dzongkhag authorities, after consulting with the people, send a request for the establishment of a learning programme to the NFE Division, Ministry of Education. At the moment, this identification of centres is left entirely to the Dzongkhag and Geogs, and the NFE Division supplies free books for the centre.

The recruitment of an instructor is also left to the Dzongkhag officials, though approval is needed in order to sanction the budget needed for the centre. It has been difficult to get NFE instructors from within the same localities who have passed Class XII. Employing local instructors has a number of
advantages: they are known to local people, and they can be engaged in alternative employment while NFE classes are not running. Further, local instructors can demonstrate skills like raising poultry, growing vegetables, and health and sanitation that are taught as part of the course and ensure that the impact is felt by the community.

**Bhutan: Progress to Date**

The national adult literacy level is currently 54 percent. By both regional and international standards, and even allowing for significant national variations in assessing literacy levels, an adult literacy rate of 54 percent for Bhutan is low. South Asian countries as a group have the lowest reported adult literacy levels in the world, but Bhutan's adult literacy level is below the regional average of 57.6 percent and only marginally above the Least Developed Countries (LDC) average of 52.5 percent.

Marked differences also exist across gender, districts, and rural/urban areas. The gender and rural-urban differences are most striking: literacy levels in urban areas are 80 percent, compared to rural areas, where the rate is only 33 percent. Female literacy levels are similarly much lower than for males, though this figure has improved. The low level of female literacy assumes particular importance since it is widely regarded as perhaps the most significant factor in development.

The Bhutan 2020 Vision document projects eradicating adult illiteracy by 2017. Given the current low levels of adult literacy, however, attaining the goal of literacy for all in the next 12 years will be a major challenge and require a massive, sustained effort on the part of both the Royal Government and local communities.

The literacy information was updated when, in 2005, a comprehensive population and household census was taken. This showed that 74.4 percent of 15 to 24 years olds were literate, with 68 percent female and 80 percent male. There was also an urban-rural discrepancy, with 84 percent literacy in urban areas, as compared with 68 percent in rural ones.

The rate for adult literacy (15 years and above) was 53 percent, with 39 percent female and 65 percent male. The rate for urban literacy was 72 percent, compared with 44 percent for rural areas. See

While providing universal primary education is considered the fundamental basis for imparting literacy, the growing numbers of out-of-school illiterate youth and adults in the country have created a great demand for alternative forms of learning. Non-formal education in Bhutan was initiated in 1992 with very modest beginnings as a pilot activity, but has since grown exponentially and constitutes a critical programme area for the Ministry of Education. In addition, the eradication of illiteracy through the NFE programme constitutes a strategic education policy direction.

While formal education has made significant inroads in the younger generation and helped to increase the literacy level, for those who have dropped out of school and those who had no opportunity to attend school, NFE represents the only hope for attaining basic literacy skills. These target populations are mainly in the 15 to 40 year age bracket.

NFE has been spearheading the drive towards the eradication of illiteracy. They have grown by leaps and bounds and the number of learners has also increased through the years. In 2000, there were 146 centres with 5,372 learners but by 2006 the centres had quadrupled and the learners had tripled to 18,550 people. There are NFE centres located in both urban and rural areas, but the rural areas have seen the greatest concentration of centres and have benefited most from this programme.
Challenges in realizing EFA goals:

- Ensuring full adult literacy by 2012 will pose a major challenge as the numbers of female illiterates in rural areas in particular continues to be fairly high. As a large proportion of the illiterate population resides in rural, often remote areas of the country and the number of NFE instructors is limited, service delivery for providing non-formal instruction poses significant challenges.

- Tackling adult illiteracy will not only require a significant expansion of and qualitative improvements to the existing NFE programme, but also a renewed national effort in a campaign mode to meet the target goals.

- Numerous basic literacy campaigns and drives would be required to target ‘hidden illiterates’ and regular monitoring through timely surveys and studies. These will need to be complemented by improving the quality and efficiency of primary-level education, reducing school dropouts and supporting out-of-school and lifelong education. Considerable efforts and initiatives have already been undertaken in this regard but require greater social mobilization to translate into the significant gains needed.

- The Adult Literacy programme would require substantial dedicated resources. Given that the current total expenditure on the adult literacy programme is less than 0.5 percent to the total expenditure in Education Sector, resource mobilization will be a crucial dimension of moving in the direction of achieving the EFA goal.

### Brunei Darussalam

**Brunei Darussalam: Definition of Literacy**

Literacy in Brunei Darussalam is defined as the ability of a person to read and write a simple letter or to read a newspaper column in one or two languages.126

The adult literacy rate in Brunei Darussalam is the percentage of persons aged 15 and over who can read and write.

**Brunei Darussalam: Programmes and Strategies**

The Compulsory Education Order, 2007 under the Constitution of Brunei Darussalam provides a nine-year compulsory education for children above age 6 who have not yet attained 15 years of age. This is a major step in increasing the country’s literacy rate.

National Vision 2035, a 30-year development framework, was implemented in 2007. Education is one of 8 main strategies for the framework. The directions for the education strategy are as follows:

- Investing in early childhood education
• Adopting international best practices in teaching and learning

• Having first class secondary and tertiary education, including vocational schools, that produce experts, professionals, and technicians required in commerce and industry

• Strengthening the competency in ICT for students, teachers, and educational administrators including the integration of ICT in school curricula

• Devising programmes that promote lifelong learning and widen access to higher education

• Promoting research, development, and innovation in government-funded institutions and through public-private in international partnerships

• Adopting cost-effective methods of education through the use of technology

• Improving the management of educational institutions

Brunei Darussalam: Progress to Date

The literacy rate age 15 and above in Brunei Darussalam was 92.7 percent (95.2 percent for males and 90.2 percent for females). UNICEF gives the total adult literacy rate for 2000-2005 as 93 percent (with female literacy rates at 95 percent of those for men). According to the Brunei Darussalam Ministry of Education, the literacy rate has improved steadily since then. With the expansion of formal education and the recent enforcement of the Compulsory Education Order, 2007, efforts are being made to reach a literacy rate of 100 percent. The literacy rates for youth are currently high, with rates of 99 percent for males and females aged 15-24.

Cambodia

Cambodia: Definition of Literacy

Cambodia defines literacy as the ability to read and write (with understanding) in any language. A person is literate when he can read and write a simple message in any language or dialect. A person is considered illiterate if he can read only his own name or number or if he can read but not write. Children aged 0-9 are treated as illiterate by definition, regardless of whether they can read and write.

Cambodia measures literacy in Khmer and English.

Cambodia: Programmes and Strategies

A number of programmes providing literacy training and other non-formal education programmes for disadvantaged groups are available:

• Adult functional literacy programmes to deliver of literacy, numeracy and essential life skills to the target group, including problem-solving, critical thinking, information gathering, decision-making, communication, negotiation, and learning how to learn

• Community Learning Centres (CLCs) which offer and support adult functional literacy and family life improvement, income-generation skills and entrepreneurship, primary and lower secondary equivalency for children and youth, post-literacy and continuing education materials and information, and family education for early childhood development

• Flexible, part-time “equivalency” programmes aimed at the primary and lower secondary levels to meet the needs of out-of-school youth and children, allowing possibilities for both further study and/or entering the world of work
• Short-term re-entry programmes aimed at bringing recent primary school dropouts back into the formal primary system, focusing on children aged 10 to 14 years, who have recently dropped out of primary school

• Bilingual literacy programmes with ethnic minorities as target beneficiaries

The objectives of non-formal education are to provide learning opportunities primarily to people who are poor, lacking of any assets, or living in rural and remote areas. Past experience has shown that districts where the local authority is concerned about issues such as education and health care tend to mobilize the community to participate in non-formal education programmes such literacy classes and training skills courses.

Cambodia: Progress to Date

Total education recurrent expenditure has been increased from 13.9 percent in 2000-2001 to 18.5 percent in 2006-07.

Primary school enrolment rose from 2,408,109 to 2,558,467 nationwide between the academic years 2000-01 and 2005-06, with an increase of 20.1 percent in Pailin and 15.5 percent in Ratanakiri, the remote area provinces. Despite these increases, these provinces still remain under the national target, while the other 11 provinces are above the national target.

There has been rapid progress towards universal enrolment and gender parity at the primary level. The net enrolment ratio gender parity is feasible in Odor Meanchey, Pailin, Kampong Thom, Takeo Kampong Chhnang, Kandal, and Sihanouk Ville.

The cost of schooling remains a major obstacle to education for children and youth from poor families despite the abolishment of primary school tuition in 2000.

An increasing number of international, regional and national assessments report low and unequal learning outcomes, reflecting the extent to which poor education quality is undermining the achievement of EFA. Government and donors have favored formal primary schooling over early childhood, literacy, and life skill programmes for youth and adults—despite the direct impact of these on achieving universal primary education and gender parity.

Literacy remains the primary challenge to overcome. Obstacles to increased literacy include irregular attendance of literacy classes due to home and work obligations, low salaries (and delayed payment of salaries) for literacy teachers, and lack of classroom space and educational materials for literacy classes.

Significant disparities in adult literacy exist by region. On the high side of the literacy scale, Phnom Penh and Svay Rieng both have male literacy rates of over 90 percent. The total adult literacy rate for males and females (15 years and above) in Phnom Penh is 88.8 percent and in Svay Rieng is 79.5 percent.

On the low end of the literacy scale, the remote, mountainous provinces of Kratie, Mondulkiri, Preah Vihear, Ratanakiri and Stung Treng with significant ethnic minority populations have a combined adult literacy rate of 61.2 percent. Siem Reap is only slightly higher at 64.5 percent and Kampong Chang at 66.4 percent. These provinces are in dire need of efforts to improve adult literacy rates that would move them towards the national average of 73.6 percent.

The combined figure for the literacy rates of school aged children in the provinces of Kratie, Mondulkiri, Preah Vihear, Ratanakiri and Stung Treng are distinctly lower than the literacy rates for adults in this combined province area (56.9 percent for children, compared with 61.2 percent for adults). The area is predominantly forested hill country, populated by
ethnic minority peoples. The challenge remains to bring the advantages of primary education and literacy to the children of this area. In terms of EFA goals, these children are the “unreached” who must be given proper attention in the next half decade.

Three other provinces show marginally lower literacy rates for the young group aged 6-14 than for the adult group aged 15 and over. They are Pursat (young 68.8 percent, adult 70.5 percent), Kampong Speu (young 69.5 percent, adult 70.8 percent), and the combined Koh Kong and Sihanoukville area (young 75.9 percent, adult 76 percent). These disparities are smaller than those noticed for the remote provinces but also need attention.

All other provinces show literacy rates for the young that exceed the literacy rates for adults in 2004, verifying the general effectiveness of the reach of primary education in the country.

The significance of this finding is that equity of access to literacy (presumably by access to primary school) by males and females is well established in Cambodia, even though there are still areas where school-aged children face barriers to literacy, presumably because of obstacles to their attainment of the first six years of basic education.

While great attention has been paid to gender equity and the provision of literacy for children over the last five to ten years, literacy campaigns for adults have not kept pace. The disparity between youth and adults demonstrates the need to reach adults with literacy training. The low gender parity levels for the adult group show that adult literacy programmes should be targeted toward females in particular. This group of women includes mothers of school-aged and pre-school-aged children; improving literacy rates among these mothers will likely have positive effects on these girls.

The primary challenge remains to reach adults, particularly adult females, with training in basic literacy and numeracy skills. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to streamline the budget, as fluctuations in funding disbursals for literacy programmes as well as fluctuations in the actual level of funding available each year makes planning difficult.

China

China: Definition of Literacy

In urban areas: literate refers to a person who knows a minimum of 2,000 characters. In rural areas: literate refers to a person who knows a minimum of 1,500 characters. 134

China: Programmes and Strategies 135

Henan Province 136

The primary targets for the elimination of illiteracy in China are between the ages of 15 to 50. The government encourages these illiterates to receive education and requires primary and high schools to offer compulsory education to them.

The illiterate population (aged 15 to 50) in Henan province was 0.884 million in 2000, 74 percent of whom were females.

According to the requirement of “Two Basics Breakthrough Campaign,” Henan provincial government proposed that the literacy rates in developed areas (mainly cities at county level) should be consolidated or improved to 99 percent or above between 2004 and 2007, and that in rural areas illiteracy among individuals aged 15 and 24 who are capable of learning should be eliminated and the illiteracy rate should be kept under 2 percent.
Jiangsu Province

Mechanisms for literacy work in Jiangsu Province:

- Planning and annual working group meetings at the provincial level
- Budgeting at provincial, municipal and county levels
- Organizing various literacy activities at the grassroots level
- Distinguishing the *de facto* literates from the registered illiterates through testing
- Arranging literacy tests for learners participating in literacy programmes and certifying their new educational level
- Conducting regular check-up and reporting to higher officials about the status quo

Yunnan Province

Annex Table 3: Main education projects of Yunnan in 2000-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>Funds (RMB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>“Three free” education (free miscellaneous fees, books, and stationery)</td>
<td>18.95 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To subsidize the special minority areas and ethnic groups</td>
<td>18.00 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To establish 60 schools</td>
<td>25.00 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To support 25 No. 1 middle schools in border counties</td>
<td>8.00 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>To provide the second free-education project to 40 counties, and provide free-teaching material</td>
<td>370 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


China: Progress to Date

Henan Province

Annex Table 4: Literacy campaign and skill training for youth and adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>Funds (RMB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>The renovation of dilapidated buildings project for primary and secondary schools</td>
<td>750 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expand the scope of “three free” education</td>
<td>51.67 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase 600 new semi-boarding schools</td>
<td>52.00 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction of border school projects</td>
<td>65.94 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Renovation of dilapidated buildings</td>
<td>142 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Compulsory Education Project</td>
<td>111 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Expand the “three free” grants range</td>
<td>72.62 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Taibao Hope School, Middlebury Elementary UNDP403 project, southwest England, and other basic education projects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows the successful reduction of illiteracy in all populations. Targeted efforts from 2001-2004 to reduce female illiteracy also successfully improved the gender disparity in illiterates.

**Jiangsu Province**

Jiangsu largely wiped out illiteracy among youth and middle-aged adults in 1996. This success, coupled with the realization of universal 9-year compulsory education, laid the foundations for the modernization of the education system.

The 2000 census report revealed, however, that there were still 500,000 young and middle-aged illiterates in the province. One reason for this high number of illiterates was laxity among the local government and education authorities after the initial success in 1996.

The year 2002 was a turning point for literacy work in Jiangsu. Since that year, a network of literacy workers has been reestablished and a monitoring system set up. Literacy work has gained new momentum. From 2002-2005, the number of illiterates among youth and middle-aged adults dropped to approximately 300,000. As the remaining are geographically scattered, however, the on-going literacy campaign will be a tougher task.

**Yunnan Province**

There were 4,822,533 illiterates in Yunnan Province in 2000, 11.39 percent of the province's total population. By 2006, this number had been reduced to 3,555,559, or 7.93 percent of the province's total population. The literacy rate in the province has declined to less than 5 percent from 23.9 percent in 1990.

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**Democratic People’s Republic of Korea**

**Democratic People’s Republic of Korea: Programmes and Strategies**

In the post-WWII era, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched a massive literacy campaign, creating 2.3 million new literates in the years 1946-1949. The government has continued to develop the education system and adult education programmes so that all citizens can acquire knowledge to the level of secondary school graduates.

The National Plan of Action aims to:

- Achieve the 6 goals of the Dakar Framework for Action
- Consolidate the successes gained through 11 years of compulsory free education and adult education
- Improve the quality of education and ensure life-long education

According to the Ministry of Education, the universal 11-year compulsory education system has enabled all citizens to reach secondary school level educational attainment. As a result, adult education endeavors to bring the overall level of educational attainment to that of a college graduate.

Efforts have also been made to increase the number of factory and farm colleges in industrial as well as agricultural areas. The state aims to improve the content of education for factory, farm, and fishermen's colleges and to enhance the scientific and theoretical level of education as required by the IT age.

The government also plans to expand and develop on-the-job higher education and introduce opportunities for distance education.
Democratic People’s Republic of Korea:
Progress to Date

According to the Ministry of Education, illiteracy was virtually wiped out in the anti-illiteracy campaigns of 1946-1949. Since then, efforts have centred on achieving secondary and tertiary level education for the populace.

India

India: Definition of Literacy

A person aged 7 and above who can both read and write (with understanding) in any language is considered literate.

India: Programmes and Strategies

In 2001, the overall literacy rate in India was 65.38 percent, (75.85 percent literacy among males and 54.16 percent among females).

Regional variations in literacy are significant. According to the 2001 census, 81 of 591 districts had literacy rates equal to or less than 50 percent. In terms of absolute numbers of illiterates in 2001, the top 100 districts are found in 11 states – Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. These districts are home to 120.03 million illiterates (around 40 percent of the illiterates of the country).

Female illiteracy is more than 50 percent in 253 districts mostly located in Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. These districts have 104.62 million female illiterates, accounting for 54.51 percent of the female illiterates in the country. In 17 districts, more than three quarters of females are illiterate. The national commitment to girls’ education gained momentum through several initiatives in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The first generation basic education programmes, such as the Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP), Lok Jumbish, Bihar Education Project and the Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project, all emphasized the focus on girls’ education. The District Primary Education Programme made female literacy rate a selection criterion for project districts and set goals of reducing gender disparities in enrolment, retention and learning. The clear emphasis on girls’ education has drawn the attention of planners, implementers, and programme managers alike. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has reiterated the need to focus on girls’ education to equalize educational opportunities and eliminate gender disparities.

The National Literacy Mission (NLM) has fixed the following two goals for achievement of EFA targets:

- To achieve a sustainable threshold level of 85 percent literacy by 2011-12 and to achieve a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015.
- To expand continuing education programmes to cover all districts by 2007

NLM aims to:

- Bring non-literates to a level of self-reliance in the three R’s
- Provide them with facilities for skill development to improve their economic status and wellbeing.
- Enable them to imbibe values of national integration, preservation of the environment, women’s equality, and observance of small family norms
- Facilitate participation in the development process
Functional literacy, encompassing all of the above, is the overall goal of NLM. A special programme has been launched to target low female literacy districts. It is also proposed to expand to Jan Shikshan Sansthas to provide access to life skill programmes for neo-literates.

**India: Progress to Date**

Over the last five decades, there has been impressive growth in literacy in India. In 1901, a little over 5 percent of Indian population was literate. This number increased to around 16 percent in 1950. In the post-independence period, growth in literacy began to show substantial progress. In 2001, almost two-thirds of India’s population (65.38 percent), and around three-fourths of males (75.85 percent) and more than half of females (54.16 percent) were literate. The specific progress since 2001 is difficult to compute, due to the short time frame, but it is clear that sustained increases in adult literacy depend on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of elementary schooling.

The goal of universal elementary education appears to be certainly achievable. At least three factors seem to support such optimism. First, the demographic change unfolding across several states is reassuring. With falling birth rates, the reduction in demand for school places is clearly visible. This is amply evident from the estimates on the projected trajectory for achieving universal elementary education by 2015. With this comes the hope that mobilizing necessary infrastructure and human resources is not beyond the realm of possibility in the near future. The second major factor supporting such a positive view is the current state of Indian economy. The fast growing economy has offered enough leeway in planning development programmes using domestic resources. This is a far cry from the situation 15 years ago, when dwindling foreign exchange reserves made it necessary to seek external assistance. The third factor is the groundswell created through mass mobilization during the last 10-15 years. People’s participation – those who seek education as well as those who support educational activities – has grown to enormous proportions.

As increase in literacy rates are closely linked to elementary school participation, and if the rate of increase in literacy rate in recent years is any indication, the Dakar goal for literacy will likely be achieved, with the exception of a few States.

**Indonesia**

**Indonesia: Definition of Literacy**

In Indonesia, three levels of literacy are defined (referring to literacy in the national language, Bahasa Indonesia):

- **Level 1**: Basic reading, writing, and numeracy skills
- **Functional Level**: Level 1 plus life skills
- **Advanced Level**: Level 1 plus academic and professional skills

**Indonesia: Programmes and Strategies**

The 1945 Constitution guarantees all Indonesian citizens the right to education, and there is a national movement toward the achievement of universal nine-year compulsory basic education. Indonesia seeks to hasten the eradication of illiteracy per Presidential Instruction 5/2006. Literacy programmes are provided through non-formal means for those who are unable to participate in formal education (Article 26 of Law 20/2003).
year 2009—six years in advance of the international goal. Achieving this goal will require making approximately 7.6 million people literate within a six-year period through aggressive and effective literacy programmes.

The political commitment to achieving this goal is clear in the Presidential Instruction No. 5/2006 on The National Movement to Hasten Compulsory Nine-Year Basic Education Accomplishment and the Fight Against Illiteracy (NMHFAI). Priority groups for literacy programmes are ethno-linguistic minorities, migrant groups, the rural poor in island and border regions, the urban poor, traditional Islamic boarding school students in *dayahs* and *salifayahs*, and tribal/indigenous groups.

Although Bahasa is the standard for literacy in Indonesia, local languages are used in non-formal literacy programmes in some locations: Bugis is used in South Sulawesi; Sundanese in Banten and West Java; Central Javanese in Central Java and Jogjakarta; East Javanese in Surabaya; and Maduranese for the Maduras in East Java.

Indonesia has implemented the following strategies toward the Dakar goals:

- Strengthened provincial targeting, prioritizing regions with the highest rates of illiteracy so that short term targets regarding numbers of new learners can be reached. At the start of UNLD in 2003, nine provinces accounted for 81 percent of all illiterate persons and 108 municipalities/regencies accounted for 76 percent of all illiterate persons.

- Concentrating on high demand areas, Indonesia has applied a “block strategy,” with efforts toward illiteracy eradication starting from the areas with the most densely populated numbers of illiterate people and continuing to neighboring districts.

- Strengthening mutual accountability in the collective effort to eradicate illiteracy by applying *gotong-royong* principles: communal cooperation in which all individuals have a responsibility to “pitch in and help out.”

- Encouraging the development of networks and partnerships among NGOs, social organizations, religious organizations, women’s organizations, youth organizations, Islamic boarding schools, mosques, and others to conduct literacy education.

- Collaboration with universities and academics, mobilizing students to become involved in illiteracy eradication through community service.

- Standards setting and quality assurance through a Standard of Literacy Competence (SLC) and Standard of Literacy Assessment (SLA).

**Indonesia: Progress to Date**

The illiteracy eradication programme in Indonesia, which began in the 1970s, has shown significant success since the 1990s. In 1970, 39 percent of Indonesians (aged 15 and over) declared themselves illiterate. This number has declined steadily to 31 percent in 1980, 21 percent in 1990, 15 percent in 1993, 14.6 percent in 2000, 10.2 percent in 2003, and 9.6 percent in 2005. As of June 2006, this figure stood at 8.4 percent.

This reduction is mainly due to improved access to basic education and a programme of targeted interventions to address a legacy of inequitable access to quality education.

The gender parity index for adult literacy, however, appears to be worsening: it fell from 0.56 in 1990 to 0.49 in 2006. A focus on improving female adult literacy rates is therefore a priority, especially for those over 25 years of age.
There are significant disparities between urban and rural areas in adult literacy rates: in 2005 these were 95 percent and 88 percent respectively. A key target group for literacy programmes remains the rural poor, especially women. Much of this disparity is due to a legacy of inequitable access to basic education in rural areas over past decades. Even among young people, however, urban/rural literacy gaps persist (with literacy rates approximately 1 to 2 percent lower in rural areas) due to higher rates of non-attendance and dropout in primary education in rural areas.

Between 2000 and 2005, adult literacy rates have improved across all poverty quintiles. In the poorest quintile, literacy rates have risen from 83 percent to 87 percent, while in the wealthiest quintile, literacy rates have risen from 92 percent to 95 percent. This too reflects historical legacies in differential access to basic education, including the colonial legacy of discouraging education among farmers. The Indonesian government is therefore adopting a poverty-targeted approach to adult literacy provision.

Islamic Republic of Iran

Islamic Republic of Iran: Definition of Literacy

The Statistic centre of Iran defines a literate person as someone who can read and write a simple text in Farsi or any other language whether she/he has a certificate or not.

The Literacy Movement Organization (LMO) offers a broader vision: “Adult literacy in Iran is the precondition of all other learning processes [that] link the skills acquired by an adult person and [is] located on a continuum of adult education and lifelong learning. Literacy is an opportunity for the development of people and communities. Literacy also acts as the prerequisite of active and effective social participation and a means for empowerment at the individual and social levels.”

Islamic Republic of Iran: Programmes and Strategies

For the past three decades, literacy has been consistently formulated as a national policy and action priority. The most recent set of laws regarding Iran’s social, economic, and cultural plan commits to promoting equal access to education and improving the quality of education for those living in less developed regions and for girls (Item “Y” of article No. 52).

During session no. 595 of the supreme council of the Cultural Revolution, a 12-article resolution was approved calling for measures such as:

- Expediting literacy activities through building partnerships with relevant ministries
- Setting up provincial literacy headquarters headed by the governor-general
- Implementing the strategic plan for literacy by the end of the fourth five-year development plan for the age group 10-29 years and by the end of the fifth five-year plan for the age group 10-49 years

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, a wide range of governmental organizations and ministries as well as non-governmental and private institutions are actively involved in delivering public education, cultural, technical and vocational education, specialized training, job and skill development training and especially training aimed at youth and adolescents. One of the most active organizations at the national level is the Literacy Movement Organization (LMO), which is affiliated with the Ministry of Education and is responsible above all
for delivering literacy education to adults. The Directorate is spread over 31 provinces of the country, and the organization also has 300 offices at the township level. Presently more than 3500 Community Learning Centres (CLCs) are providing literacy education services across the country.

Each year, the LMO assesses results from the previous year to review its work plan and incorporate lessons learned. LMO examines educational textbooks, evaluations from learners (and their satisfaction as participants in the programme), and evaluations from group leaders.

The group also organizes literacy celebrations in villages where the literacy rate has reached 97 percent. This year, approximately 6000 villages will be included in this programme.

The Literacy Movement Organization has implemented a number of innovative literacy programmes since 1998:

- **Corresponding Services Project**: This project was designed to promote continuing education through distance education. This programme targets learners who are at the third stage of continuing literacy groups, as well as holders of final and fifth grade certificate or those with equal level education who did not continue formal education. Goals of this programme include:
  - Strengthening self-learning
  - Promoting public and inter-sectoral partnerships
  - Enriching the learning environment of learners and cultivating a culture of book reading
  - Empowering learners
  - Promoting a society committed to learning

- **Reading with Family Project**: This project aims to promote self-learning and self-reliance among learners at various levels while ensuring that they still have access to an instructor. It is a book-based educational programme in which the instructor acts only as an observer and guide. The programme targets learners and their families.

- **Community Learning Centres (CLCs)**: These centres were established in 2000 with support from UNESCO Office for Asia and the Pacific. The centres’ activities include programmes that combine literacy education and life skills, continuing literacy groups, workshops that teach job skills, and diverse social activities. The centre’s main objectives are to:
  - Create the conditions for Iranians, particularly women, to benefit from educational opportunities
  - Improve the quality of education among villagers
  - Help local institutions intervene in community affairs during all stages of education
  - **Basic Literacy education through television broadcasting**: This programme has been tested in the province of Hamedan. A number of factors led to the design and conceptualization of this programme: the geographical dispersion of adult learners, a shortage of educational buildings, rising educational costs, the wide scope of media coverage, and the accessibility and repetition of television programmes.

**Islamic Republic of Iran: Progress to Date**

According to the 2007 national census, 54,064,275 people (aged 6 and above) are literate and 9,834,755 people are illiterate. Based on this census, some 15.4 percent of the population is illiterate. The literacy rate for those under 30
years of age is 96.4 percent, and 91.2 percent for those under 50 years of age.

Out of the total number of literate people, 28,835,000 (88.7 percent) are male and 25,247,000 (80.3 percent) are female. In 2006, approximately 1,347,000 people were enrolled in literacy programmes.

Annex Table 5: Gender and Rural-Urban Differences in Literacy (2006 census)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy rate (male)</th>
<th>Literacy rate (female)</th>
<th>Female/Male literacy difference</th>
<th>Literacy rate (urban)</th>
<th>Literacy rate (rural)</th>
<th>Rural/urban literacy difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>80.3</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>75.1%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistic centre of Iran (2006).

While rural-urban and gender disparities in literacy persist, community learning centres have been effective in promoting parity, and, as a result, have garnered support from government offices and departments as well as UNICEF and UNFPA.

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan: Definition of Literacy

The 1989 population census in Kazakhstan defines a literate person as someone who can, with understanding, both read and write a short, simple statement on his or her everyday life.

Kazakhstan: Programmes and Strategies

Adult education in Kazakhstan aims to satisfy the lifelong educational needs of the populace in accordance with socio-economic change. According to article 140 of the Labour Code, employers determine the necessity and volume of professional training, retraining, and improvement of professional skills.

Professional and technical training of adults is usually held at training centres of national and foreign companies and is directed toward the support of production, technical services, and organizational development and interpersonal interactions, including communication skills, conflict resolution, strategic management, etc.

Training of unemployed individuals focuses on technical positions needed in the labour market (drilling technicians, welders, operators of boiler equipment, metal workers, electricians, plasterer-painter, drivers, etc.), as well as service specialties (including customer service, public catering, accountancy, hairdressers, barbers, cooks, secretaries, computer operators, etc.).

Kazakhstan: Progress to Date

According to national statistics for 2007, the over 15 literacy rate in Kazakhstan is 99.5 percent, with rates of 99.8 percent for males and 98.3 percent for females.

In 2007, 27,800 unemployed individuals benefited from adult education and training. This includes 18,200 who were taught for the first time and 7000 who were retrained. One thousand three hundred people mastered two related professions.

Of 27,800 people trained, 24,500 secured jobs and 922 people started their own businesses.
Kyrgyz Republic

Kyrgyz Republic: Definition of Literacy

The generally accepted definition of literacy in the Kyrgyz Republic is the ability to read, write and count. Functional literacy is understood as literacy for rising professional qualifications and employment, literacy in information and communication technologies, information literacy (including media skills), legal literacy, and scientific and practical literacy.

Kyrgyz Republic: Programmes and Strategies

Adult education programmes in the Kyrgyz Republic have the following aims:

- Enhancement of management skills
- Strengthening technical, organizational, and operational capabilities
- Social mobilization of local population
- Creation of different groups of self-help and mutual aid
- Development of skills in profit making activities
- Enhancing legal literacy
- Enhancing professional knowledge and skills

Within the framework of the Education Forum established by Central Asian countries and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan is a team leader for the thematic group on adult education whose aim is to achieve EFA goals 3 and 4. The focus has been on issues faced by adults in the Kyrgyz Republic as a result of new socio-economic conditions, declines in employment among the adult population, decrease in per capita incomes, and the decreasing level of access that their children have to education. In response to these challenges, the group has developed a model strategic document for Central Asia on adult education: the Law and Adult Education Development Strategy.

A network of non-governmental structures providing informal adult education for functional literacy is also actively being developed. Twelve adult education centres currently operate throughout the country and offer courses for completing basic education as well as communication and other personal development training; these centres also provide services for single mothers, pensioners, and unemployed women. The Kyrgyz Adult Education Association (KAAE) was established in 2007 and is implementing a number of programmes for adult literacy.

With the support of UNESCO, community learning centres have also been established at the local level. They seek to integrate education and training in wider development frameworks and in this way to build the capacity of local communities to participate in development issues. The primary target groups of these centres are: farmers; women; the poor; youth; and children.

Kyrgyz Republic: Progress to Date

According to national statistics for 2007, the over 15 literacy rate in the Kyrgyz Republic is 98.7 percent, with rates of 99.3 percent for males and 98.1 percent for females. The population has a high level of education. Of the total population aged 15 and older, only 2.4 percent has attained less than a secondary level education, while 47.9 percent has completed secondary education, 10.3 percent has completed primary professional education, 32.8 percent have attained higher education levels than this. However, there are significant discrepancies in education between rural and urban areas.
Despite high levels of adult literacy, there are still problems with access to basic and continuing education in the Kyrgyz Republic. Successful achievement of EFA goals in Kyrgyzstan will depend on their realization in rural areas. Sixty-five percent of the population is rural, but 75 percent of children not attending school live in rural areas.\textsuperscript{162}

Ironically, the high level of educational attainment in the Kyrgyz Republic, combined with changing socio-economic conditions in the Kyrgyz Republic, is creating conditions for out-migration.

In 2007, more than 5000 unemployed were sent to professional education. Forty-eight percent of trainees received professional training in vocational schools, and 52 percent received training in other organizations. Of these, 81 percent secured jobs after the training.\textsuperscript{163}

Lao PDR

**Lao PDR: Definition of Literacy\textsuperscript{164}**

There is no single agreed-upon definition of literacy in the Lao PDR. There have been several different approaches to literacy assessment, including self reported literacy, tested basic literacy, and tested functional literacy.

**Lao PDR: Programmes and Strategies\textsuperscript{165}**

Lao PDR is employing the following strategies toward attaining the EFA literacy goals:

- Development of a comprehensive non-formal education (NFE) policy, strategy and plan
- Strong political commitment to organising advocacy campaigns to motivate youth and adults to participate in NFE literacy and adult vocational skills training programmes
- Revision, development, and production of sufficient national and local NFE curricula adapted to the specific needs of target groups
- Establishment of a standard system for training NFE staff, trainers, facilitators and teachers
- Establishment of a non-formal schooling system for school dropouts and children not attending formal primary schools
- Provision of non-formal primary education to children and youth in disadvantaged areas
- Raising the literacy rate of the adult population

**Lao PDR: Progress to Date\textsuperscript{166}**

In recent decades, literacy rates have risen considerably among the population. This is largely a consequence of rising participation in primary education but to some extent also a consequence of adult NFE programmes. Gender disparity has also fallen.

The 1995 population census estimated the literacy rate at 73 percent for males, 48 percent for females, and 60 percent for the overall population.\textsuperscript{167} The 2005 census estimated the literacy rate for persons aged 15 and over at 82 percent for males, 63 percent for females, and 77 percent for males and females combined. This would suggest that from 1987 to 2005, illiteracy has declined by an average of some 1.5 to 2 percentage points per year. This development represents the combined effects of rising school enrollment ratios and literacy programmes conducted by the Ministry of Education Department of Non-formal Education.
The National Assessment of Student Learning Outcome Primary Grade 5 (August 2007), which looks at Grade 5 pupil achievements in 362 schools (covering 3750 pupils and 459 teachers) found that:

- 65% of pupils were deemed to be at the pre-functional level
- Most pupils had very few books at home, so reading opportunities were limited
- There was a lack of supplementary reading materials, wall maps, and access to a Lao dictionary in the schools

Universalization of primary education will gradually lead to increases in literacy rates, but sustained literacy will remain a challenge for many years to come. Low quality of primary schooling leads to low levels of secured literacy, and in an environment in which reading material is not widely available, relapsing into illiteracy is a risk. Efforts are being made to promote a “culture of reading,” but such a culture can only thrive in an environment where interesting and attractive reading materials are available for work, public information, and leisure enjoyment.

There are considerable differences in literacy rates among the different ethno-linguistic groups in the Lao PDR. For all forms of literacy (self-reported literacy, basic literacy, functional literacy, and secured functional literacy) the Tai-Kadai scored far better than the Austro-Asiatic, Sino-Tibetan, and Hmong-Yao ethnic groups. These figures provide evidence of the challenge that the Lao education system faces. With high percentages of the population aged 15 to 59 illiterate in the Lao language, many children in the Lao PDR are not “home schooled” in the basics of Lao before they enter the school system. The lack of understanding of the official educational language, Lao, is one of the major factors leading to high repetition and dropout rates in grades 1 and 2.

For the sake of nation-building and social, economic, and cultural integration, it is important that children and adults of ethno-linguistic minority groups learn to read, write, speak, and understand spoken Lao. Given the demographic, linguistic, and pedagogical complexities involved, it is not likely that any one approach to second language learning will suit the needs of all communities. The communities themselves should be included in the process of assessing the most appropriate approaches.

Malaysia

Malaysia: Definition of Literacy

Malaysia has adopted the 1978 UNESCO definition of adult literacy as the ability to read and write with understanding a simple statement related to everyday life. Malaysia uses UNESCO’s definition of the literacy rate as the percentage of population aged 15 years or over who can accomplish this task.

To determine this percentage, the Department of Statistics during the 2000 census defined the literacy rate as the percentage of population aged 10 years and over who were currently attending or had attended school. The Malaysia Labour Force Survey (MLFS) conducted in 2005 adopted the definition of literate persons used in the 2000 Census but age coverage was raised to 15 years old and over.

Malaysia: Programmes and Strategies

In 2000, Malaysia had 1.7 million adult illiterates. The overall strategy adopted by the government to improve the literacy rate of the population is to enforce free and compulsory basic education. The government has also invested substantially in programmes to ensure quality, equity, and maximum
opportunity for all children to achieve literacy. Among these is the Kelas Intervensi Asas Membaca dan Menulis (KIA2M) programme, which provides extra tutoring for children having difficulty learning to read in Bahasa Malaysia. Another initiative is the “Reading Habit is the Key to Knowledge” programme, which consists of various activities to promote and encourage reading.

The Action Plan for Educational Development for Indigenous People 2001-2010 (Cabinet Paper 2/2001) aims to increase the literacy rate among indigenous communities from 51 percent (2001 figure) to 70 percent by 2010. The Department of Orang Asli Affairs and Jabatan Kemajuan Masyarakat (KEMAS) provide programmes to increase literacy among indigenous groups and the rural poor, particularly in the states of Sabah, Sarawak, and the indigenous regions of Peninsular Malaysia. The Women Motivator Programme fosters awareness and skills among parents to encourage children’s reading habits.

Literacy-related initiatives for persons outside the formal education system are pursued mainly to raise the capacity for knowledge and innovation and to address socio-economic inequity. For children from indigenous communities who may experience difficulty in becoming literate in the Malay language, an option for an additional year of study to focus on language and literacy between Years 2 and 3 is offered. The same transition year is available for students who complete their studies in a primary school where Malay is not the main language of instruction. The objective of this transition year is to strengthen the literacy skills of students before they begin lower secondary school. The Ministry of Education has also developed a new primary school syllabus for indigenous children incorporating elements of indigenous culture.

Literacy-related initiatives in Malaysia focus on expanded functional critical skills consistent with the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006–2010). These goals include:

- Moving the economy up the value chain
- Raising capacity for knowledge and innovation and nurturing a “first class” mentality
- Addressing persistent socio-economic inequalities
- Improving the standard and sustainability of quality of life
- Strengthening institutional and implementation capacity

The Education Development Plan supports these goals through the following strategies:

- Offering greater opportunities and access to quality education, training and lifelong learning
- Strengthening national unity and developing a progressive society with exemplary values
- Increasing incomes for the lowest 40 percent of households through human capital development to improve productivity
- Bridging the rural-urban divide among states and territories through sustainable income generation and improved access to basic needs, including education

**Malaysia: Progress to Date**

Malaysian adult literacy has increased from 82.9 percent in 1991 to 88.7 percent in 2000. This improvement is largely due to the high rate of participation in basic education. The overall literacy rate for persons 15 years and older in Malaysia has improved about 1 percent since 2000 and the estimate of the absolute number of illiterates in Malaysia has fallen by about 200,000 persons.

High enrolment and survival rates in primary school have resulted in more than 98 percent of 15 to 24 year olds meeting
Malaysia’s definition of literate (currently attending or having attended school). If Malaysia is to increase literacy rates from the relatively high current level, the country will need to identify the characteristics of those failing to become literate and develop targeted initiatives to address their needs.

In 1991, the gender parity index showed females at a disadvantage in Malaysia, with a GPI of 0.87. Latest GPIs, have demonstrated movement towards parity at 0.092 (2004) and 0.93 (2000) GPI.

The 2000 census showed that literacy rates in the rural areas of Sabah and Sarawak were much lower than the national average, at 79 percent and 72 percent, respectively. To address this gap, the largest share of public resources for literacy training since 2000 has been dedicated to these two states, and approximately 85 percent of the 1,977 new literacy programmes/centres since 2005 have been established there.

To further deliver effective adult literacy programmes, Malaysia needs to strengthen literacy networks and partnerships among government agencies, NGOs, women’s organizations, tribal groups and other community groups as well as develop mechanisms and incentives to sustain such networks and partnerships.

Another challenge is to better target literacy initiatives and establish appropriate benchmarks for measuring progress. This would facilitate comparative analysis with other countries and cooperative exchange of information and practices.

Maldives

Maldives: Definition of Literacy

Literacy in the Maldives is defined in terms of the national language, Dhivehi, using the Thaana script.

Maldives: Programmes and Strategies

The system of education prevailing in the Maldives today has its roots in a traditional system of schooling that has existed for hundreds of years. These traditional schools, known as edhuruge, makthab or madrasa, are privately owned or operated by the island communities and are usually self-financing. These schools have contributed towards achieving many educational objectives, including a high rate of literacy and the preservation of national culture and tradition.

In 1990 Maldives had adult literacy rates significantly higher than the 2005 regional averages. A nation-wide programme called Asaase Thauleem (Basic Education) to eradicate literacy from the country was first launched in 1980. The intended programme was launched with a literacy rate of 81.5 percent (19,215 illiterates). This clearly shows the relatively high literacy rate even before the programme. The programme aimed to make up for lost opportunities, improve self-development, create love and interest for work, improve healthy living, and improve social development.

The programme was conducted through a community based volunteer campaign. Classes were organized and attended primarily by females as the men were away fishing. Over ten years, the programme achieved a literacy rate of 98.6 percent.

As the Dakar goals related to adult literacy and eliminating gender disparities has been achieved in the Maldives, the
post-Dakar EFA plan in the Maldives has not endeavored to address literacy and gender goals specifically. Instead, the Maldives has viewed these as embedded and cross cutting all the other 4 EFA goals. There have been efforts, however, to enhance the sustainability and development of earlier achievements.

**Maldives: Progress to Date**

As per the 2000 census, females and males both attained 99 percent literacy. The situation of women in Maldives continues to improve. They have achieved parity in both primary and secondary education, and almost all are literate in the Dhivehi language. Women and girls still lag somewhat when it comes to using the English language (the language of instruction for most of subjects in schools), but they are making rapid progress.

The uniqueness of the national language, Dhivehi, means that Maldivians also need to learn foreign languages – whether to communicate with the outside world, obtain higher education, or to support the tourism industry. The most useful language for this purpose is considered to be English.

Progress in English-language knowledge, especially among young adults, has moved at a rapid pace. The atoll population, in particular, has made rapid progress. In 1997, English was spoken only by around half of the young adults of the island population. By 2004, more than three quarters of them spoke English. Among older people, however, the rise has been slower, from 10 to 20 percent. People in Male, the capital, have also made progress. In 1997, almost all young adults spoke English, but only 55 percent of older adults did so; by 2004, that proportion had risen to around 70 percent.

**Mongolia**

**Mongolia: Definition of Literacy**

The Population and Housing Census of 2000 defines literacy as the ability to read and write a short simple statement in Mongolian or any other language (with understanding).

For research purposes, the following definitions are used in Mongolia:

An **illiterate** person cannot read and write. In Mongolia, the majority of illiterates can perform simple mathematical functions relevant to daily life.

**Neo-literate** refers to a person who is able to perform basic tasks like reading a sentence word by word and making a copy of what is written without fully understanding its meaning. The term refers to a person who has learned the basic principles of reading, writing, and numeracy, but who is unable to continue further training without an instructor.

A **functionally literate** person is one who is able to take advantage of his or her acquired skills in daily life.

**Mongolia: Programmes and Strategies**

The government has adopted several National Programmes to promote literacy education. The most important is the Government Action Plan, which is adopted every four years. The Action Plan of 2004-2008 includes a commitment to support civil society initiatives towards the provision of compulsory education to school dropouts and to adults who did not have the opportunity to study in school.

The National Programme on NFE Development (1997-2004) aims to improve the literacy level of the population. The objects of the programme are to establish and develop an
educational structure that enables each citizen to engage in a lifelong learning process. Programme pillars are:
1. Provide literacy education
2. Provide retraining
3. Improve general knowledge in legal, health, environmental, and other education
4. Provide vocational education
5. Assist people to enhance creative activities and life skills
6. Help people learn independently

The National Programme on Literacy Education (2004-2012) was adopted within the framework of UNLD. It promotes literacy education in Mongolia with the following objectives:
- Eradicate illiteracy by reaching a 99.9% adult literacy rate by 2008
- Reach a gender balance in literacy
- Reach 99% school enrollment by 2012
- Set up an effective mechanism for monitoring and evaluation based on existing data and survey results
- Strengthen partnerships among stakeholders and increase public participation; enhance international cooperation
- Create a favorable social and cultural environment to promote literacy
- Conduct a wide range of studies and surveys related to literacy issues
- Develop relevant training materials
- Organise a wide range of trainings and capacity-building

The Master Plan to Develop Education of Mongolia in 2006-2015 aims to support NFE with the following objectives:
- Provide continuous educational services in conformity with the need to study and live; improve access to non-formal and adult education services
- Improve the quality of technical education and vocational training to meet market demands
- Improve policy and strategy with respect to non-formal education and develop relevant information and financial systems

In addition, the 2007 Strategy for NFE Development institutionalizes an Equivalency Programme (EP) for NFE. It has been decided that the final examinations for EPs should be the same as those administered in formal institutions.

Mongolia: Progress to Date

The 2000 census found adult literacy rates of 97.9 percent. However, the survey used self-declaration, and no specific test was used. In January and February 2005, the National Centre for Non-Formal and Distance Education (NFDE) conducted a literacy assessment survey among poorly educated adults aged 15 and above. The survey found that 44.7 percent of 1030 people surveyed were illiterate, 28.0 percent were neo-literate, 17.0 percent were literate, and only 10.3 percent were functionally literate.

The Literacy through Distance Learning programme, which has been implemented for the past three years, has been successful at reaching illiterates who dropped out of school or never had the opportunity to enroll. The programme targets these individuals by designing literacy programmes that meet their needs and are directly relevant to their work and daily lives. Basic literacy textbooks and post-literacy learning materials are centred around such topics as conserving fruits and vegetables, making kimchi, sewing, and tending to animals. Through these lessons, students improve their literacy while learning life skills.
Myanmar

Myanmar: Definition of Literacy

In Myanmar, basic literacy is defined as sufficient command of the mechanisms of reading, writing, and elementary arithmetic to afford access to the written or printed word.

Myanmar: Programmes and Strategies

To meet the national EFA target of increasing overall literacy to 99 percent by 2015, the Ministry of Education states in its policy guidelines that the 149 townships with literacy rates of at least 97 percent will achieve 100 percent literacy in 2007/08, while the remaining townships will also try to increase their literacy rates.

A number of non-formal education programmes are geared toward disadvantaged groups. Until the mid-1990s, NFE was primarily focused on literacy acquisition. In 1994, the concept of community learning centres (CLCs) was introduced with UNESCO assistance. Starting from a very small pilot of only seven centres, the approach has spread to more than 70 centres in 11 townships, creating new opportunities for youth and adults to continue learning. At present, CLCs represent the strategy of choice to achieve the Government’s vision of a learning society for the 21st century. Outreach extends to village communities as well as to disadvantaged urban communities, particularly through CLCs. A special 3Rs programme has been instituted for border areas. Along with basic literacy programmes, continuing education programmes such as post-literacy, income generation and quality of life improvement have been implemented. CLCs also conduct development of community information and resource services; outdoor and indoor games (sports); capacity-building via lectures, debates, short-term courses and skills-based training; and promotion of skills and experience in income-generating groups (poultry farming, food preservation, and localised cottage industries).

More than 54,700 libraries have been opened as dynamic catalysts for the formation of the Myanmar learning society. For those who have obtained basic literacy, post-literacy programmes can be provided through reading circles.

Strategies to achieve EFA Goal 4 are as follows:

- Continue the Basic Literacy programme in all states/divisions
- Develop Continuing Education programme activities alongside training in the management of CLCs
- Raise awareness about literacy and NFE programmes among prospective learners
- Develop learner-oriented literacy programmes along with income generation and upgraded Life Skills programmes
- Develop an NFE database and network with the support of active partners
- Develop functional literacy materials by local groups.

Strategies to reach the unreached include:

- Expand regular Basic Literacy programmes in all townships
- Expand special 3Rs programmes to reach the unreached, particularly in remote and border areas
- Continue the Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) programme
- Develop the capacity of literacy and continuing education personnel
• Systematically develop a database system for literacy and continuing education

**Myanmar: Progress to Date**

The 2005 data show that all indicators for national EFA targets with regard to literacy and continuing education have been achieved:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Target (%)</th>
<th>Actual (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Literacy Rate (15 years and above)</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>94.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Rate (15 to 45 years)</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>96.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Gender Parity Index</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>99.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Literacy Rate (15 to 24 years)</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>96.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Annex Figure 2: Progress in Achieving Literacy Goals (2005)**

The Special 3Rs Programme for Border Areas is a critical undertaking for reaching the unreached because these areas are very remote, and transportation and communications are rather difficult. Initiatives for literacy in these areas are therefore much more challenging than in urban areas. The programme has been implemented since 1996 under the strong political commitment of the State Law and Order Restoration Council. In the initial stage of the programme, only seven townships in the border areas of Kokant, Wa, Kyaingtong (East), and Rakhine were covered. The programme has since expanded significantly, and more than 65,000 people in these disadvantaged regions have gained literacy and numeracy skills as a result. The programme has been reviewed and modified yearly, taking into account local needs.

Between 2000 and 2006, nearly two-thirds of 595,000 learners who completed Basic Literacy programmes were women. The literacy gender parity index increased from 96 in 2003, to 97 in 2004, to 99 in 2005.

Major challenges in implementation of non-formal education activities include data collection difficulties, over-estimation, scant studies of the relationship between literacy and development activities, and the need to improve methods and procedures by redefining literacy. With regard to CLCs, outcomes of the CLC survey indicate that challenges have arisen in the provision of needed materials by village communities, advocacy and organising of community partnerships, finding donors and organising trainers, finding volunteer instructors, operating generators donated by well-wishers, flexibly harmonizing timetables with workers’ free time and giving a suitable amount of funds directly to children who work so that they may attend classes.

A 2005 research survey of 216 CLCs, largely in rural areas, found that key problems faced included the following, all of which must be addressed:

Economic issues
- Lack of funds
- Limited space
- Mismatches in time between when workers are free and when classes start
- Difficulty of access to teaching-learning materials
- Difficulty in obtaining full-time instructors

Nepal

Nepal: Definition of Literacy

Literacy has been defined as the ability of a person to read write short and simple sentences about daily life in his/her mother tongue or national language as well as the ability to do simple calculations.

Nepal: Programmes and Strategies

Nepal is striving to reach the EFA goal of a 50 percent improvement in the level of adult literacy by 2015 (especially for women) through a number of strategies.

The following pledges have been made in the 10th plan to address the development needs in the field of literacy and non-formal education programmes:

- Formulate programmes on formal and non-formal technical and vocational education for producing human power as required by the country and implement those programmes; place emphasis on using technology
- Implement programmes on literacy, post-literacy, income generation and other non-formal education for assisting the disadvantaged and women in increasing their living standard
- Make 1,866,000 adults, particularly women, literate to achieve the target of the literacy rate set in the plan; provide 933,000 newly literate persons with post-literacy education and provide 93,300 with skill training. Provide 200,000 boys and girls of school age with basic primary education under the non-formal primary education and set up 205 Community Learning Centres (CLCs) for testing the on-going learning process. Entrust the running of these CLCs to local bodies
- Increase the literacy rate by expanding non-formal education programmes
- Implement effective adult literacy and child education programmes that the targeted community, particularly women, to education; run the programmes on literacy, post-literacy and continuous education in an integrated manner; and run these programmes in coordination with other development programmes with the involvement of the local bodies, governmental and non-governmental organizations for achieving the objective of increasing the literacy rate
- Develop the National Non-formal Education Centre as an institution for policymaking, providing technical services, and monitoring and evaluation; clarify the role of non-governmental organizations and local bodies in the implementation of illiteracy eradication programmes

The government has implemented women’s literacy programmes with the objectives of increasing literacy and quality of life in women specifically. Tailored readers, primers and continuing education materials have been developed and tested over the years. Recently, efforts have focused on connecting neo-literates to income generation activities. Illiteracy and poverty are inextricably linked, so the government given priority for literacy programmes to disadvantaged
social groups based on the following criteria:

- Remoteness: areas that are far from the road network or airport, and the far-western development region
- Dalit: disadvantaged groups who fall under the priority groups in the National Dalit Commission document, e.g., Musahar, Dushad, Badi
- Minority Ethnic Groups: Raute, Rajbansi, Dhimal, Chepang, or groups that are in the priority list of the National Ethnic Upliftment Academy
- Women: disadvantaged women who are prioritized by the National Women's Commission
- Age groups: adults, adolescents and children
- The economically disadvantaged: landless, jobless, Dalits, women, people from ethnic groups, groups involved in production promotion, farmers, labourers, housewives, etc.

Village Development Committees (VDCs) and District Development Committees (DDCs) identify top priority groups from among these categories. Public awareness and active participation of stakeholders including potential participants are considered crucial for the success of non-formal education programme. Media campaigns have been launched to bring about awareness and mobilise the public for this purpose.

### Nepal: Progress to Date

Annex Table 6: Comparison of Number of Illiterate People, progress of the EFA period and target for 2015 (only the age group of 15+)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of illiterates in 2001</td>
<td>New literates in EFA period</td>
<td>Number of illiterates in 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15+ age group</td>
<td>1575540</td>
<td>195489</td>
<td>4777267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people remaining illiterate by 2006</td>
<td>1380051</td>
<td>3972130</td>
<td>5352181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people to become literate by 2015 (75%)</td>
<td>1035038</td>
<td>2979097</td>
<td>4014135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A number of challenges remain to reaching literacy and education goals. These include:

- Inadequate and insufficient human and financial resources
- Lack of monitoring
- Insurgency
- Inadequate linkages with local development
- Lack of need identification
- Unsuitable time for class in some geographical regions
- Procedural shortcomings regarding NFE material development and distribution
Lack of responsibility in implementation at the district and grassroots level

New Zealand

New Zealand: Definition of Literacy

In New Zealand, literacy is defined as the reading, writing, speaking and listening skills adults need to function in everyday life, including work. Numeracy refers to the knowledge and skills that adults need to meet mathematical tasks at work, in family and community life, which includes the ability to use numbers, statistics, probability and measurement for everyday purposes.

There has been a change in emphasis since 1997, when the definition was broader and less specific: “Literacy is a complex web of reading, writing, speaking, listening, problem solving, creative thinking and numeracy skills.”

New Zealand: Programmes and Strategies

Literacy and numeracy education has been a particularly important area of development in New Zealand since 1997. New Zealand’s participation in the 1996 International Adult Literacy Survey highlighted the significant proportion of the population who had literacy skills at the level below the minimum needed to participate fully in a knowledge society. This saw the start of a comprehensive and planned approach to improving adult literacy and numeracy skills in New Zealand and the introduction of a New Zealand Adult Literacy Strategy in 2001, which was followed by a range of initiatives to improve the quality of literacy and numeracy learning and access to learning opportunities.

Another significant push in this area was launched through the Government’s 2008 Budget. Government funding for literacy and numeracy learning will more than double in the next four years. A five-year Literacy, Language and Numeracy Action Plan has been put in place (in conjunction with the New Zealand Skills Strategy). It has a particular emphasis on improving workforce literacy and numeracy and embedding literacy and numeracy learning in all low level tertiary education study.

New Zealand: Progress to Date

The literacy rate in New Zealand is high, and the 2006 Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL) shows that the literacy skills of adult New Zealanders have improved since 1996. There has been a gradual increase in the proportion of people with literacy skills at higher levels in the survey. Compared with 1996, New Zealand now has a lower proportion of adults aged 16-65 achieving levels 1 and 2 (a decrease from 51 percent to 43 percent) and the proportion of people at level 3 and above has increased to 57 percent. This means that almost one and a half million people have the literacy and numeracy skills needed to meet the demands of fully participating in a knowledge-based economy and society (level 3 and above). However, there are also an estimated 1.1 million people with literacy at levels 1 or 2 who do not have such skills.

Data collected in the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (2006) equates to that of IAL in 1996, enabling comparisons over time:
Annex Table 7: Comparison of ALL and IAL Results for Document Literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>477,000</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>378,000</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>670,000</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>762,000</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>737,000</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1,007,000</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>328,000</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>435,000</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>53,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>52,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,265,000</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2,634,000</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The key findings are:

- That the literacy skills of adult New Zealanders have improved since 1996.
- There has been a gradual increase in the proportion of people with literacy skills at higher levels in the survey.
- Compared with 1996, New Zealand now has a lower proportion of adults aged 16-65 achieving levels 1 and 2 – a decrease from 51 percent to 43 percent. In particular the proportion at level 1 has fallen from 21% to 14%.
- The numbers of people achieving document literacy levels 1 and 2 are stable at about 1.1 million people, in the context of a growing population of 16-65 year olds.
- New Zealand ranks in the middle of the countries participating in ALL, and is similar to Australia and Canada.
- Half of the 16-65 year old population has low numeracy. More women than men have low numeracy. (Numeracy was not measured in the 1996 survey).
- There has been some improvement in the low literacy figures of Māori, although a higher proportion of Māori than New Zealand European have low skills.
- A large proportion of Pacific peoples continue to have low skills - there has been no change in this since 1996.

The results from IAL and ALL show both the scale and nature of the literacy (and numeracy) challenge that New Zealand faces. Although, improvements have been made, there remains a strong imperative for on-going action in this area. This is recognized in the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) where increasing the literacy and numeracy of the workforce is a one of the priority outcomes for tertiary education.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Definition of Literacy

Persons 10 years and older who can read and write in any language (with understanding) are considered literate.

Pakistan: Literacy Programmes and Strategies


Toward securing these rights, the Government of Pakistan has undertaken important steps to promote adult literacy, including:

- The initiation of a Non-formal Basic Education (NFBE) Project aimed to open 82,000 schools
- Policy provision for literacy and NFBE in the current education policy
• International commitments to achieve literacy targets under EFA/UNLD and MDGs

• Development and launching of national, provincial, and district EFA plans, assigning second top priority to adult literacy

• Implementation of education sector reforms, with adult literacy as one of seven key areas

• Plan and execution of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme, in which literacy is a primary focus area

• Creation of separate departments for literacy and NFBE in the province of Punjab for the establishment of 10,000 literacy centres

• Establishment of the National Commission for Human Development as the lead agency for literacy programmes. Currently, the Commission operates 50,000 literacy centres in 122 districts with 1.25 million female learners annually. It aims to achieve 86 percent literacy by 2015

• Setting up the Elementary Education Foundation (EEF) in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) for the promotion of basic education and literacy

• UNLD/Literacy Initiative for Empowerment initiated in 2005

• The “Guidelines for the Strategic Frameworks of Action for UN Literacy Decade in Pakistan” were developed to effectively meet the literacy challenges in the country. The framework was discussed during the national policy seminar on literacy held on 4-5 September 2003 in Islamabad. The basic objectives of the strategic framework are to reinvigorate the effort for literacy in Pakistan in accordance with the vision of the UN Literacy Decade. It specifically tries to facilitate in creating awareness about the importance of literacy, strengthening and transforming literacy efforts in Pakistan according to the vision of the UNLD, achieving the literacy targets set by EFA-NPA, institutionalize the literacy effort, build the capacity of literacy and NFE personnel and institutes, create a mass mobilization, and promote post-literacy and continuing education.

LIFE Process in Pakistan

The Literacy Initiative for Empowerment started in Pakistan in 2006, when the country was selected for the first batch of interventions. The Ministry of Education formed a Core Group including representatives of both public and private organizations of all provinces and areas.

The objectives of the LIFE framework in Pakistan are to:

• Assess the literacy situation at national and provincial levels

• Identify present and future needs in literacy in all important areas: access, quality, management, resources, capacity-building, and monitoring and evaluation

• Reinforce national and international commitments to literacy through advocacy and communication

• Support the articulation of policies for sustainable literacy within sector-wide and national development frameworks

• Strengthen national capacities for programme design, management, and implementation

• Enhance countries’ innovative initiatives and practices in providing literacy opportunities
The following actions have been undertaken (2006 and 2007) in order to introduce and support the LIFE process in Pakistan:

- The Ministry of Education was designated as a focal point for LIFE.
- The Ministry of Education constituted a LIFE Core Group with representation from relevant public and private literacy organizations. The main objective of the Core Group is to facilitate, expedite and oversee the planning and implementation of LIFE activities, and also strengthen literacy capacity in the country. So far, three meetings have been held at the national level. In one LIFE Core Group meeting, project implementation strategies were discussed, as well as the plan for a needs assessment study. Participants were asked to review existing literacy programmes and make recommendations. The next meeting of the Core Group will be organized by the Ministry of Education with the support of UNESCO Islamabad. The Group will review the implementation of the LIFE process and progress on project activities, and evaluate the National Needs Assessment Report.
- The First Regional Planning Meeting on LIFE held in Islamabad in March 2006 was to develop the overall framework for conducting literacy needs assessments and prepare outlines of plans for LIFE implementation at the national level. It also fostered an effective support mechanism at national, regional and global levels for LIFE implementation.
- The two-year Literacy Capacity-building Project (2006-2008) with seven key components was launched under the LIFE framework in July 2006. The project activities are being planned and executed under the consultation of the LIFE Core Group.
- A “Non-Formal Education Library” was produced and disseminated by UNESCO Islamabad with the support of the Bunyad Foundation, The Pakistan Association for Continuing Adult Education (PACADE) and National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), with the following:
  - NFE/literacy primers (basic and post-literacy)
  - Various reading materials for self-learning and reference: health, education, income generating skills, life skills, culture, gender, etc.
  - Manuals and training guides for teaching and management
  - Studies, reports and other useful materials (best practice on other areas, statistical analysis, etc.)
- An easy to use ICT-based literacy kit was launched in December 2006 in Islamabad. This ICT literacy kit was developed under the supervision of representatives from NCHD, the Ministry of Education, National Institute of Science and Technical Education (NISTE), Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), and UNESCO Islamabad. The main objective of this kit is to facilitate learning and enhance basic literacy skills (reading, writing, speaking, and numeracy) for all in Pakistan and in other countries. The salient features of the kit are:
  - Most comprehensive Urdu learning software ever made in Pakistan
  - User-friendly and interactive sounds and visuals
  - Structure and contents based on NCHD curriculum
  - Examination at the end of each chapter/session
  - Auto play facility
  - Compatible with any operating system
• The Parliamentarian Caucus on Literacy in Pakistan (PCLP) was set up to achieve the following literacy-related objectives:
  - Create awareness among literacy stakeholders, especially in peer parliamentarians
  - Influence government to provide policy, institutional support, and provisions to sustainable literacy programmes
  - Motivate the public to actively participate in on-going literacy programmes
  - Develop effective monitoring and evaluation systems for literacy programmes
  - Ensure networking and sustainability of literacy programmes through public private partnership

Since its inception, four provincial meetings have been convened by the executive committee of the PCLP, with the active participation of parliamentarians, senators, national/provincial assembly members, educationists, and NGO representatives working in the field of literacy. PCLP produced publications, leaflets and reports that were shared widely in meetings, seminars and workshops. The PCLP executive committee made a proposal for literacy and NFE policy formulation, which emphasizes to the government the need to allocate structural and technical support and spend more of the development budget on literacy/NFE.

• A National Literacy Review Round Table meeting was organized by PACADE, aimed at reviewing the national level progress made by the government and NGOs to achieve the goals set in the National Plan of Action, which was formulated after the Dakar 2000 Declaration. The literacy roundtable meeting was the first of its kind to bring together provincial secretaries, senior officials of NCHD, the Equal Education Fund (EEF), UNESCO, UNICEF, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and local NGOs dealing with literacy/NFBE to review literacy programmes and identify gaps as well as measures to accelerate the implementation of policies and programmes.

• The Ministry of Education has drafted a National Needs Assessment Report on LIFE with the assistance of provincial contributions. The draft report provides situational analyses, lessons learned, recommendations and future directions. The Report will be finalized after incorporating inputs from LIFE Core Group members and UNESCO staff.

• In 2007, for the first time in the history of Pakistan, a national literacy curriculum was developed, approved, and printed by the Ministry of Education, with UNESCO and other partner support. Supplementary reading materials for functional literacy on life skills, women’s empowerment, and income generation were also developed.

• Twelve workshops organized for training 360 senior and middle-level literacy managers in planning, implementation, and monitoring of literacy programmes. Sixty workshops were organized to build the capacity of literacy facilitators in: teaching learning process, managing classes, assessment, etc. A total of 2,764 facilitators/literacy teachers received training.

• Desk study to review and analyze policy provisions for girls’ education and female literacy. A field study to identify factors affecting participation of females in adult literacy and NFBE programmes was also undertaken. An advocacy toolkit on gender in literacy was developed, produced, and disseminated. Various seminars were also organized to sensitize policy makers on female literacy and gender in education targets.
Overall Outcomes of LIFE Activities in Pakistan

- Project activities have provided literacy practitioners a forum to share their experiences and expertise on various issues and challenges. As a result, project activities have increased coordination among various partners. These projects have also raised awareness among literacy planners and managers about present gaps in literacy programmes and needs for future programmes.

- Project activities have offered literacy organizations and their personnel a unique opportunity to research and become updated on literacy and continuing education.

- A set of new materials on literacy is available with literacy organizations. Topics address management development, post-literacy, teacher training, CLC and gender empowerment.

- The institutional capacity of various public sector organizations and NGOs have been strengthened, and the capacity of managers, supervisors, and teachers have been enhanced with regard to various aspects of literacy.

Main Challenges

- Adult literacy has suffered due to lack of political will and consistent policy. Only a few projects for adult literacy could be launched during the post Dakar period, and they had limited coverage (reaching not more than 10 percent of the target group). Scarcity of resources (both human and financial) is also an issue.

- There is no separate budget allocation for adult literacy. Of the total expenditures on education, almost 43 percent is spent on primary education, 24 percent on secondary education, and 23 percent on higher education. The remaining 10 percent is spent on ‘Other,’ a category that includes adult literacy, NFBE, teachers training, madrassa reform, etc. The low level of utilization of available budget is an area of concern because non-availability of technical staff, delays in the release of funds, late submission of proposals/reports, and a lack of full-time project staff all diminish chances for success.

- The absence of a strong, coordinated organizational structure and an institutional mechanism for literacy/NFBE has resulted in weak interaction among the principal actors of the programmes.

- The professional base of adult literacy initiatives remains under-developed due to lack of training of teachers/facilitators, lack of formalized curriculum, and non-existence of effective research in the field of literacy and continuing education.

- The lack of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at various levels adversely affects the internal efficiency and quality of the literacy programmes and projects.

- There is a lack of community and civil society participation, as well as a shortage of donor support.

- Literacy programmes are challenged by the irrelevance and non-availability of teaching-learning material.

- Local language is being ignored in basic literacy and numeracy classrooms, which hinders participation of people in literacy programmes.

- The link between basic and post-literacy is missing in existing literacy programmes, resulting in an ad hoc situation on the part of learners and teachers. Post-literacy programmes that support learners/teachers to go beyond reading, writing and numeracy towards achieving income-generating skills and sustainable improvement in their lives.
are necessary if short-duration literacy programmes are to have a lasting impact on learners.

- Organizations working in the field of adult literacy focus mainly on quantitative objectives, paying less attention to the quality and sustainability of programmes.

- Public private partnership is also a missing link in literacy/NFBE programmes, and it needs to be streamlined through proper facilitation and coordination.

- There is an absence of equivalency and certification of literacy programmes, including synergies between formal and non-formal education systems.

- Political instability and insecurity in the country in past years curtail the timely completion of programmes.

- There is scarcity of educationists who possess adequate knowledge of adult literacy and NFBE. Hence, there is a limited choice of resource persons required for the development of literacy material, conducting training workshops, and for any field survey or research work.

**Papua New Guinea**

**Papua New Guinea: Definition of Literacy**

A literate person is someone with the ability to read and write a language with understanding.\(^{192}\)

**Papua New Guinea: Programmes and Strategies**

The National Education Reform process has been in place for a decade now and has been implemented through the 1995-2004 National Education Plan. It aims to increase accessibility and participation at all levels of education and support the EFA goal of universal primary education. The Plan includes revising the curriculum to make it more relevant to village life through the introduction of vernacular education (taught in local languages) and a focus on life skills.

Adult education through this Plan includes flexible, open, and distance education. It is currently offered primarily through the College of Distance Education to students who wish to complete grades 7 to 10. Skill-oriented vocational education is also available to students who have completed Grade 8. Technical education and training, which is available to students at the post-secondary level, like vocational training, is offered in part by private providers under the regulation of the National Training Council.

In addition, a significant amount of educational and life skills training is provided by NGOs, church groups, and international agencies.

The country faces significant educational challenges. Approximately half of the population of Papua New Guinea is illiterate and many lack basic life skills. Moreover, a large portion of adults lives in rural areas of the country. The population growth rate is 2.7 percent, while the literacy rate is growing at 1 percent per year.\(^{193}\) Much of this imbalance must be addressed through the non-formal educational sector.

The Department of Education is addressing illiteracy through the National Literacy and Awareness Secretariat (NLAS) and the implementation of the National Literacy Policy.

**Papua New Guinea: Progress to Date**

There is a large demand for literacy and community-based educational programmes in Papua New Guinea. Many such programmes are conducted on an ad hoc basis, and so the programmes are not monitored and data are not readily available.
Data are available, however, for literacy and community based education programmes run through the NLAS network and the Department of Education. According to the NLAS Situational Analysis (2008), there are 2,567,706 literates out of a population of 5,190,786 (56.0 percent literacy) for the country as a whole. Of this population, 54.9 percent of men were literate and 45.8 percent of women were literate in 2000. By 2010, the NLAS projects that these numbers will be 74.9 percent and 65.8 percent, respectively.

Female enrollment in vocational education has increased since 1995, and accounted for 26 percent of students in 2003.¹⁹⁴

The following table shows participation in adult literacy programmes in Papua New Guinea:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annex Table 8: Adult Literacy Programme Participation (2001-2005)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of registered learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of women in the programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of men in the programme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The following table gives government spending on literacy and awareness programmes from 2001 to 2005:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annex Table 9: Government Spending on Literacy and Awareness Programmes (US$1 – PGK 0.33)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual budget for non-formal education (NFE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K 193,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public expenditure on education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K 194,285,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of non-formal education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Philippines

Philippines: Definition of Literacy¹⁹⁵

The Philippines defines two levels of literacy:

- Basic literacy: Reading and writing with comprehension
- Functional literacy: Basic literacy plus numeracy skills

Literacy is measured in eight major languages: e.g., Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Ilocano, Waray and Bicolano, as well as in Filipino and English.

Philippines: Programmes and Strategies¹⁹⁶

The Philippines’ national goal in relation to EFA Goal 4 is outlined in the Philippine EFA National Action Plan. It aims to
achieve universal functional literacy for all Filipinos by 2015. At the start of UNLD in 2003, the Philippines had 3.8 million illiterates (UIS).

The Philippines’ primary strategy to increase literacy is the expansion of access to quality basic education. The Department of Education (DepEd) delivers literacy services through its Mobile Teacher programme and the Literacy Service Contracting Scheme.

A complementary system of alternative learning is provided for those who cannot participate fully in formal schooling. Programmes to raise the level of functional literacy of the people, particularly disadvantaged groups, include: Each-One-Teach-One (or More) where a volunteer literate teaches reading, writing and simple numeracy skills to an illiterate or semi-literate family member; Family Literacy Drive, wherein a literate family member acts as a literacy facilitator to illiterate family members; and Learning "Barkada (Peer)," where a student or literate out-of-school youth (OSY) tutors a friend who has dropped out of school. The goal is to facilitate the friend’s return to the formal school system or passing of an accreditation test that would qualify him/her for employment.

Since the Philippines is a multi-ethno-linguistic nation, literacy learning modules, including instructional materials used in non-formal programmes are printed in seven regional languages (Ilocano, Hilgaynon, Cebuano, Bicolano, Waray, Maguindanao and Tausug) as well as the Tagalog-based national language Filipino. In addition, a non-formal education curriculum has been developed for indigenous peoples based on their native languages. This curriculum is implemented through culturally relevant educational approaches and supplemented by modules and other learning materials.

Philipppines: Progress to Date

The Philippine adult literacy rate declined slightly from 93.6 percent in 1990 to 92.6 percent in 2003. The 2003 literacy rate accounts for about 3.6 million illiterate Filipinos.

The functional literacy rate for Filipinos aged 10 to 64 was 84.1 percent, 0.11 percentage points short of the 2005 target of 84.21 percent. This accounts for 9.2 million Filipinos who are not functionally literate based on the old definition.

The Philippine EFA 2015 Plan aims to provide basic competencies to achieve functional literacy for all by 2015. The 2005 functional literacy targets of the country by age group are as follows:

**Annex Table 10: 2005 Functional Literacy Targets, by Age Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aged 10-64</td>
<td>86.30</td>
<td>86.41</td>
<td>84.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 15-29</td>
<td>No target set</td>
<td>No target set</td>
<td>90.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 15 and above</td>
<td>No target set</td>
<td>No target set</td>
<td>84.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


To measure the overall performance of the country in basic education, the Government through the National Statistics Office (NSO) administered the 2003 Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS). The FLEMMS is a national survey that gathers information on basic and functional literacy, the educational skills and qualifications and exposure of the population to mass media. The survey is conducted to complement existing school data of the Department of Education that will be used as the basis of education policies and programmes that will improve the coverage and quality of basic education in the country.
In this survey, "basic" or "simple" literacy is defined as the ability of the person to read and write with understanding a simple message in any language or dialect. “Functional” literacy is defined as a significantly higher level of literacy, which includes not only reading and writing skills, but also numerical skills. Thus, it should be noted that the result of 2003 FLEMMS, particularly the level of functional literacy, is not comparable with the 2005 target set in the Philippine EFA 2015 Plan.

Of the estimated 62 million Filipinos 10 years old and over, 93.4 percent, or about 58 million, have achieved basic literacy. The rate among females (94.3 percent) was higher than that of males (92.6 percent).

The basic literacy rate in 1994 and 2003 was over 90 percent, but the absolute number of illiterate Filipinos was still high (4 million in 2003). There were an estimated 0.8 million basically illiterate Filipinos the 10-19 age group and 3.2 million in the 20+ age group. The latter group (20 years old and over) was comprised of disadvantaged Filipino youth and adults who should have been covered by the basic literacy programmes of the alternative learning system.

The 2003 FLEMMS revealed a functional literacy rate of 84.10 percent, only 0.30 percentage points higher than the 1994 rate of 83.80 percent. Of the estimated 58 million Filipinos 10 to 64 years old, approximately 9 million were functionally illiterate. The functional literacy rate among females was higher than among males.

Republic of the Fiji Islands

Republic of the Fiji Islands: Definition of Literacy

The Republic of Fiji accepts the current UNESCO definition of literacy as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, communicate and compute using printed and written materials (UNESCO (2008). An adult literacy rate in Fiji (aged 15 and over) for 1990 was 91.6% for males and 85.5% for females. For the period 2000-2004 the figure is 94.5% for males and 91.4% for females. This represents an increase 2.9% and 5.9% respectively (UNESCAP 2008)

Republic of the Fiji Islands: Programmes and Strategies

Fiji has made significant progress towards providing access to basic education, including addressing the issues of gender parity and equality. However, Fiji’s Education for All (EFA) Mid-Decade Assessment Report highlights quality of education as a growing concern and an area that must be improved.

The report also examined the issues of student performance at the sub-national level, looking at EFA progress and gaps by district. Fiji is the second country in the Pacific, after Samoa, to publish their EFA MDA report. The report states that the country is on target with MDG 2 (Universal Primary Education), however hardships are faced in terms of daily transportation, to and from schools. The primary net enrolment rates increased from 95.98% in 2005 to 96.01% in 2006, yet, student retention and dropout remain challenges for the country. The growing number of drop-outs from primary school is attributed to educational costs, particularly for parents in rural areas.
Gender parity and equality are non-issues within the Fiji education system. The report states that girls and boys have equal opportunities to all levels of education and government scholarships are to be shared equally between boys and girls. Access to secondary education is increasing, with enrolments for girls being higher than boys. According to the 2002 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), 77.2 percent of the unemployed population had secondary education. However, there are concerns regarding the difficulty in finding employment.

The report states that ethnic differences remain a concern when it comes to examination performance. Indigenous Fijian students lag behind other ethnic groups in major external examination results such as Fiji Junior Certificate (FJC), Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) and Fiji Seventh Form Certificate (FSFE). Similar gaps are also evident between rural and urban schools. Mrs. Emi Rabukawaqa, Permanent Secretary for Education, National Heritage, Culture and Arts states, “There is a need to address many of these challenges, in terms of system capacity-building, effective targeting of under-performing districts and additional resource mobilization.” The Fijian government calls on stakeholders to play their part, if Fiji is to achieve the EFA goals by 2015.

### Republic of Korea

#### Republic of Korea: Definition of literacy

A literate person is someone with the ability to read and write a language with understanding.

#### Republic of Korea: Programmes and Strategies

Since the 1990s, literacy education has been growing rapidly in the Republic of Korea. Several factors have driven this literacy movement: academic studies of literacy; UNESCO’s designation of 1990 as International Literacy Year, which drew researchers’ attention to the field; and the emergence of civic and lifelong education organizations throughout the country during the 1990s.

Since CONFINTÉA V, a number of literacy education policies have been implemented. The Social Education Act has been replaced by the Lifelong Education Act, with the goal of constructing a lifelong learning society in which every person can access learning opportunities throughout the life cycle. The Ministry of Human Resources Development (MOEHRD) has been developing programmes targeting illiterate adults since 2001. The MOEHRD had also enacted a series of policies and projects to promote literacy education since 2006, including:

- Lifelong Education Programme Support Project for Underprivileged Groups (from 2001)

  This programme supports various programmes operated by lifelong education organizations for the elderly, those with low levels of educational attainment, and the handicapped. The project supports literacy in the groups served generally have low levels of literacy.
• Adult Literacy Education Support Project (from 2006)
  This project supports the programme budget of literacy education organizations that serve those who have low educational attainment as a result of poverty. The budget is used for programme operating expenses, textbooks, development costs, and instructor training and education.

  The Plan contains two critical tasks related to literacy education: to systemize adult education and make it more substantive; and to establish a lifelong learning safety net for underprivileged groups, including married immigrant women, migrant workers, and North Korean defectors.

• Literacy education related provisions included for the first time in the 2007 Lifelong Education Act
  The revision of the Lifelong Education Act represents the first official recognition of the importance of literacy education in Korea; previously, literacy education had always been situated outside formal schooling. The Act will play a critical role in developing Korean literacy education for the following reasons: literacy education is now officially recognized as a key area of lifelong learning; the literacy education provisions define responsibilities and financial support on the part of the government and local autonomous organizations; and Article 39 of the Act enables illiterates who complete literacy education programmes to gain an equivalent academic diploma.

Republic of Korea: Progress to Date
  Over the past few years, there has been an increasing focus on socially disadvantaged groups in Korea. In an effort to serve these groups, the Korean literacy education system has become more systematized, and partnerships between private organizations and central and local governments have been increased. Such efforts have also gained policy support, through the Lifelong Education Act, which codifies many of the principles of lifelong learning in support of Korea’s literacy education goals.
  The role of local governments has been strengthened in the provision of literacy education through the Lifelong Learning City Project. This has had a pronounced effect in rural areas, where there are fewer civil society literacy education programmes and weaker educational infrastructures. Projects have focused on curricula relevant to learners’ lives; enhancing instructors’ competencies and increasing the number of instructors; and developing autonomous management systems for residents. One such programme, the Korean Composition Class project has reinforced the network for literacy education support in the region. In 2006, 1,420 local residents participated (in 107 organizations nationwide) and in 2007, 1,946 residents participated (in 143 organizations nationwide). In addition, 110 residents participated in the Korean Language Class for Foreigners, which covers basic Korean language, cultural manners, and job skill development education.

The majority of beneficiaries of literacy education programmes in Korea are women. Key literacy education programmes targeting female beneficiaries are: the Information Education Project for the Illiterate; Literacy Education for Married Immigrant Women; and the Korean Language Education through Social Integration Credit System.
Annex Table 11: Number of Formation Literacy Education Institutes and Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Literacy Education Institutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the illiterate</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For married women immigrants</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>5,527</td>
<td>11,366</td>
<td>13,787</td>
<td>30,885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married women immigrants</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>913</td>
<td>913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>5,527</td>
<td>11,366</td>
<td>14,700</td>
<td>31,798</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In recent years, the contents and objectives of literacy education in Korea have expanded. As a result, literacy education programmes are broadening into adult education programmes aimed at developing the abilities needed for living as a citizen. This includes civic education and cultural adaptation education. This is particularly the case for incoming immigrant groups, including North Korean defectors and foreign women marrying Korean men. These groups require not just reading and writing skills, but cultural literacy in order to successfully adjust to Korean society.

Efforts are also being made to make literacy and adult education programmes available to adults, as creating learning family environments leads to greater opportunities for children in these families.

Republic of Palau

Republic of Palau: Programmes and Strategies

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) enables out of school youth and educationally disadvantaged adults to achieve a high school equivalency diploma and pursue post-secondary education or skills training.

According to the Republic of Palau 2005 census statistical report, 33.4 percent of the 1,773 individuals surveyed between the ages of 18 to 24 do not have a high school diploma. Moreover, 23.8 percent of 11,125 individuals surveyed between the ages of 24 to 60 had no high school diploma.

Republic of Palau: Progress to Date

The adult education programme under the AEFLA grant accomplished the following in the 1994 to 2007 period: 741 youth and adults were tested under the GED and ABE programmes, and 313 candidates passed and achieved a high school equivalency diploma.

The Palau adult education programme has retained all records and information regarding the above through a contract with the Oklahoma Scoring International Database (IDB). This will enable records to be retrieved for future use.

Under the AEFLA grant, computer literacy training was implemented in ABE and GED courses. Out of 236 trainees in the programme, 182 received certificates for basic and advanced beginner computer operation.
Republic of Uzbekistan

Republic of Uzbekistan: Programmes and Strategies

Uzbekistan’s transition to a market economy has driven ALE by creating a strong demand for new curricula that provides practical knowledge, professional qualifications and employable skills. A new educational model that encompasses a broader understanding of “literacy” has been implemented to address these changing market conditions. This model uses an integrated approach that simultaneously addresses the development of learners through lifelong education and the development of state, community, science, and production. Structural reforms include modifications in the continuing education sector and the development of learning standards. In a broader sense, the education system is being reformed through new approaches to learning, including multilingual and multicultural education.

As Uzbekistan has reached almost universal literacy, adult learning programmes are primarily oriented toward personal development and empowerment. The goal of adult education in Uzbekistan is to engender a lifelong learning process and to promote a culture of learning in society. In particular, programmes seek to nurture plural citizenship, awareness of diversity, and multiculturalism.

Uzbekistan is a multi-ethnic society, with more than 130 ethnic groups. Uzbeks comprise 80 percent of the population, and the official language is Uzbek. At the same time, Russian, Karakalpak, Kazakh, Tajik, Kyrgyz, and Turkmen are also used as teaching languages in secondary schools; the government provides textbooks in these languages within the formal education system.

To deepen Uzbekistan’s integration into the international community, a change from Cyrillic to Latin script has been underway since 1996. To educate adults in Latin script literacy, short-term training courses have been organized in a number of educational institutions.

Republic of Uzbekistan: Progress to Date

ALE programmes are stimulating the establishment of professional associations and the development of civil society and promoting the concept and practice of human development.

Adult education in Uzbekistan has also fostered a transformation of mentality from public to private ownership, and a switch from highly centralized decision-making processes to a largely decentralized one.

New educational standards were adopted by the Government of Uzbekistan in 2001. On the basis of these standards, educational institutes have developed their own curricula and introduced new training facilities. New standards focus on:

- Expanding the labour market in the service sector (which is still small) to offset redundancies in manufacturing and farming
- Developing small-scale enterprises, which will provide most of the jobs in the economy
- Encouraging the emergence of a new productive class, which will strengthen the social pluralism that is the essence of democracies
- Restoring the values of merit, risk-taking, innovation, and hard work which are driving forces of a market economy
The higher education system is playing an important role in supporting ALE through innovative delivery methods, including: e-learning; franchise operations; satellite or branch campuses; and joint degree programmes. Taking into the account the demands of the knowledge economy, higher education institutions of Uzbekistan are following the recommendations of the Bologna Process and Lisbon Strategy.

As a follow up to CONFINTEA V, the First Regional Conference on “Education for All – Lifelong Learning in Central Asia” was organized in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on 4 June 2003. Over 150 delegates from Central Asia, Europe, and Asia participated in the conference, which supported the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All (EFA), the Hamburg Declaration and the Agenda for the Future of CONFINTEA V (1997), recommendations of the World Conference on Higher Education (1998) and the Central Asian countries actions to implement these recommendations.

The “Tashkent Call to Action,” adopted at the conference, expresses support for work done to date on EFA in developing strategies for lifelong learning policies in Central Asia. Participants in the conference underscored that learning is a fundamental human right that must be extended to all, regardless of age or social status, and that adults in particular must not be forgotten – particularly during this time of socio-economic transition in Central Asia, where all groups of the population must continue to develop their skills and knowledge.

Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands: Definition of Literacy

In the Solomon Islands, literacy is defined as an essential life skill that enables a person to face challenges in life and participate effectively in the economic development of society and the country. Literate adults have acquired basic education and are able to read, write, and perform simple mathematical calculations.

Solomon Islands: Programmes and Strategies

The Adult Literacy unit is currently implementing the Education Strategic Framework (2007-2015), which states that all children, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, location and disability should receive basic education by 2015.

The adult literacy division is formulating an adult literacy policy that will act as a platform for the formulation of an adult literacy common curriculum. The policy is now in its initial stage.

Most adult literacy programmes are currently implemented by NGOs such as the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), World Vision, APHEDA, and other religious organizations.

The Literacy for Livelihood project offers literacy programmes for adults and trainings for literacy instructors with the aim of enhancing the education system. Training workshops are offered for tutors, instructors, and literacy and livelihood trainers who work in CLCs in the Solomon Islands in an effort to improve the quality of educational delivery and to increase the number of teachers available for literacy and life skills courses. The project also facilitates professional exchange at
the national and CLC level to increase the capacity of literacy and livelihood NGOs.

**Solomon Islands: Progress to Date**

In 2002, girls made up only 43 percent of the secondary school population. The proportion of girls steadily decreases between form 1 and form 7, as well. In skills training centres, only 30 percent of students are female, and in some mixed gender centres, the proportion of females is as low as 10 percent. The low proportion of females in school reflects wider gender biases in society, where girls and women are expected to look after the home and children.

In 2008, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) created an adult literacy division within TVET/NFE that employs two officers: an Adult Literacy Officer and a Principal Curriculum Officer.

MEHRD current has in place the Education for Living TVET Policy, which was approved in 2005. This comprehensive document details 22 policy areas that integrate TVET into the formal education system. The policy represents the Government’s vision and direction for TVET, and is the basis for TVET delivery.

The Literacy for Livelihood project has improved the quality of training for literacy and livelihood educators through the use of context-specific, practice-oriented teaching materials. It has also conducted research and evaluated existing literacy programmes to make them more effective.

However, trainers who have been trained in such programmes face significant challenges in implementing literacy education when they return to their communities. They generally work as volunteers and have only minimal paper and supplies with which to teach. In many cases, they receive little support from local communities.

**Sri Lanka**

**Sri Lanka: Definition of Literacy**

Literacy in Sri Lanka is defined as the ability to read and write in one’s first language. The procedure used to assess literacy is asking respondents whether they can read and write.

The language policy adopted by Sri Lanka accepts English as the Second Language and teaches a Third Language (Sinhala for Tamil students and Tamil for Sinhala students). There is no accurate estimate of the percentage of persons who are literate in more than one language.

**Sri Lanka: Programmes and Strategies**

The EFA Assessment Country Report for 2000 identifies “providing functional literacy programmes to meet the needs of all males and females who failed to receive a basic education” as one of the goals to be achieved under non-formal education. The goal does not specify a clear target nor take into account the fact that even after going through a period of basic education, some children may not acquire literacy.

The EFA Assessment Country Report for 2000 states the actions to be taken with regard to adult literacy from 1999-2003:

- Establishment of 1,000 reading centres for adults
- Establishment of 1,500 non-formal technical units in 1AB schools
- Provision of equipment to 1,500 non-formal education units located in 1AB schools
- Provision of perishables for 1,500 non-formal training units in 1AB schools
• Establishment of 2,500 training centres for non-school going children and adults

This goal of improving the adult literacy programmes identified under the Three Year Action Plan for Education for All (2002-2004) was to be achieved through the establishment of 300 community learning centres for adults and by establishing 90 activity schools for children.

The Action Plan for 2004-2008 keeps Goal 4 of the Dakar Form in focus. The objective for this period is to ensure that out of school youth in the compulsory education age group receive functional literacy.

The actions to achieve this objective are:
• Reorganize literacy centres as functional literacy centres in appropriate locations
• Develop special centres for street children
• Improve the quality of the functional literacy programmes.

The Non-formal Education Branch of the Ministry of Education (2005) had identified five activities for implementation related to improvement in literacy. These were initiating literacy classes, initiation of functional activity learning centres, initiating community learning centres for street children, strengthening of community learning centres and providing literacy skills for women who are going abroad for jobs. Strictly speaking, the community learning centres do not impart literacy, but would have some impact on functional literacy due to the engagement of participants in these activities.

A draft action plan has also been developed for the period from 2007-2010. It has identified four objectives related to literacy:
1. Increase of basic literacy among youth and adults from 91 percent to 100 percent in 2010
2. Development of functional literacy among youth and adults
3. Development of life skills/practical skills
4. Development through the school system of both practical and technical skills required to succeed in life

Sri Lanka: Progress to Date

The non-identification of specific targets or performance indicators to be achieved in relation to literacy at the overall national level, regionally or gender-wise, prevents an accurate assessment of progress achieved being made. Therefore what can be reported is progress achieved without attempting to link it with the action plans. The fact that no attempt has been made to assess literacy using reliable assessment instruments and non-specification of levels of attainment creates problems in assessing progress.

The EFA Assessment Country Report for 2000 points out that the literacy rate of 15-24 year olds has changed little in the past two decades (1980s and 1990s) and that it is not possible to determine whether this is due to a measurement error. It states that main issue is that at the end of the 1990s is that the 20-24 year population would remain illiterate. Here the age range is given as 20-24 and not 15-24. Of the 15-24 year olds, Sabaragamuwa and Central provinces had higher rates of illiteracy than the other provinces.

The Report showed the literacy gender parity index to be 0.95 in 1999. In districts where overall literacy was low, such as Nuwara Eliya and Moneragala districts, gender disparity also was shown as high. Micro-level studies of literacy indicated that gender parity was low in disadvantaged communities.
The lowest was in urban slums (0.2) and the highest was in fishing and rural working class communities (0.9).

An examination of these action plans from 2000 to 2004-2008 indicate that the importance of ensuring universal or near universal literacy (which is a realistic goal in view of the achievements made so far by the country) has not been adequately recognized. First, a specific target percentage of literacy has not been identified as expected from the Dakar Framework. Second, the findings from research\(^{219}\) which question the validity of official statistics on literacy, indicating a clear difference between claimed and actual literacy, have not been considered. Third, the implicit assumption in planning to improve literacy of out-of-schoolchildren, appears that participation in basic education enables students to become literate which has been refuted by recent studies on learning achievement.\(^{220}\) Fourth, literacy needs to be a goal for development of not only children and youth, but even for adults in the context of interest in lifelong education.

**Thailand**

**Thailand: Definition of Literacy\(^{221}\)**

There are different definitions of literacy in Thailand.

National Statistic Office definition of literacy:

- The national census defines literacy as the ability to read and write in any language (for individuals aged 5 years and above). A person who can read, but not write, is defined as literate, but with a low level of literacy. (National Statistics Office, 2543, 2545)

Committees under the Department of Community Development, Ministry of Interior, working on policy related to Thai quality of life define a literate person as:

- Anyone between the ages of 15 and 60 years old who is able to read and write in Thai and is also able to perform simple calculations and solve basic mathematical problems

**Thailand: Programmes and Strategies\(^{222}\)**

National literacy levels were at 93 percent with only small disparities in gender in 2003 as a result of over two decades of primary enrolment expansion. However, data on disadvantaged groups and specific groups remains unavailable.

Key initiatives in non-formal literacy education in local languages are as follows:

- Bilingual Curriculum (P’wo Karen) is a pilot project that first teaches the native language (P’wo Karen), then links this to teaching Thai by surveying the community’s demands and readiness and by tracking and assessing development.

- A target curriculum is aimed at illiterate children and adults of the Thai-Maugan ethnicity who live in the Surin Islands, Umphur Sraburi, and Pang-nga province. This project aims to provide students with adequate Thai and mathematical knowledge to further their education. The students’ native language (Maugan) is used initially to build confidence before Thai language skills aimed at improving students’ quality of life are introduced.

- A Malay language course encourages government officials and others working in the five Southern border provinces to communicate in Malay with Thais who use Malay in their daily life. The course focuses on listening and speaking skills and requires 20 hours of study, with 2 hours of instruction for 10 days.
Section 43 in the Constitution of The Kingdom of Thailand ensures the right to twelve years of fundamental education provided by the state without charge. In addition, section 10 of the 1999 National Education Act and Amendments (Second National Education, 2002) states that persons with physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, social, communication, and learning deficiencies as well as the destitute or disadvantaged shall have the right to special educational opportunities. Such persons shall have access to facilities, media, services, and other forms of educational aid.

**Thailand: Progress to Date**

Between 2000 and 2005, the literacy rate increased for all regions of the country. The overall rate of literacy (15 years and over) increased from 92.6 percent in 2000 to 93.5 percent in 2005. However, males remain slightly more literate than females. In 2000, the male literacy rate was 95.2 percent, compared with 91.4 percent for females; in 2005, these rates increase to 96.1 percent and 92.3 percent, respectively.

Bangkok and the Northeast have the highest literacy rates, followed by the Central, Southern, and Northern regions. Moreover, literacy is higher in urban and municipal areas.

### Annex Table 12: Summary of Indicators for Goal 4, Thailand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core EFA MDA Indicators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Literacy Rate (15 years and above)</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Male</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Female</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Literacy Rate (age 15-24 year olds)</td>
<td>98.0</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>98.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Male</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Female</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Additional EFA MDA Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Parity Index for Adult Literacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Expenditure on Literacy and Non-formal Education as a Percentage of Total Public Expenditure on Education (million baht)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Percentage of Literacy Budget to MOE Budget</td>
<td>0.0050</td>
<td>0.0050</td>
<td>0.0049</td>
<td>0.0043</td>
<td>0.0042</td>
<td>0.0133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Percentage of Literacy Budget to NFE</td>
<td>0.2625</td>
<td>0.2306</td>
<td>0.2243</td>
<td>0.2209</td>
<td>0.2108</td>
<td>0.7682</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Viet Nam

Viet Nam: Definition of Literacy

A literate person is defined as someone who knows how to read and write (with understanding) simple sentences in his national or ethnic language or a foreign language.

Viet Nam: Programmes and Strategies

The Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (1992) confirms that “Learning is the right and obligation of every citizen, regardless of ethnicity, religion, sex, rich/poor, etc.”

The Government’s Education National Targeted Programme (NTP) for 2001-2005 provided support to the activities that helped strengthen and consolidate the literacy and post-literacy achievement.

Viet Nam’s National EFA Action Plan aims:

- To ensure that all adults, especially women and disadvantaged groups, have access to quality literacy and post-literacy programmes
- To improve quality, relevance and results of all literacy and post-literacy programmes for youth and adults up to age 40
- To strengthen the management capacity of literacy and post-literacy programmes at the local level

Viet Nam: Progress to Date

The adult literacy rate (15 years and above) increased from 89.88 percent in the year 2000 to 92.13 percent in 2004 as a result of the efforts made by the Government and localities. At this rate, Viet Nam will achieve the EFA goals of reducing the number of illiterates by 50 percent by 2015.

Literacy rates have increased in all geographical regions of Viet Nam, but rates of illiteracy vary across regions. The figure is highest in Red River Delta region (95.15 percent). Regions with low adult literacy rates (15 years or above) are North West, Central Highlands and Mekong River Delta with difficult geographical conditions.

These regions face various obstacles in the effort to eradicate illiteracy, including transportation difficulties, socio-economic conditions, and low perceptions of learning in the community.

In addition to those who live in remote areas, including ethnic minorities, women and girls make up the largest groups of illiterates in Viet Nam.

Annex Table 13: Adult Literacy Rate (15 years and above) by Sex, Ethnicity, Rural/Urban (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Ethnic Minority</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>GPI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>89.88</td>
<td>75.33</td>
<td>90.76</td>
<td>94.29</td>
<td>93.61</td>
<td>86.46</td>
<td>92.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>91.71</td>
<td>77.13</td>
<td>91.79</td>
<td>94.82</td>
<td>93.65</td>
<td>88.80</td>
<td>93.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>92.13</td>
<td>77.13</td>
<td>90.76</td>
<td>96.06</td>
<td>92.69</td>
<td>90.22</td>
<td>97.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The female literacy rate (15 years and above) increased from 86.46 percent to 90.22 percent during this period. The gender disparity was reduced from 7.15 percent in 2000 to 6.02 percent in 2002 to 2.47 percent in 2004. Despite this, males still predominate (92.69 percent male versus 90.22 percent female in 2004).

During 2000-2004, the adult literacy rate (15 years and above) for ethnic minorities increased from 75.33 percent to 77.13 percent. However, this figure for males is always lower than the national average.
The adult literacy rate (15 years and above) in both rural and urban areas has been increasing since 2000-2004. The urban-rural disparity has been reduced from 5.80 percent in 2000 to 5.42 in 2004). However, the figure for those in rural areas remains lower than those in urban areas.

Since 2000, the Government has also enacted strategies to reduce the youth illiteracy rate (aged 15-35 years). As a result, the youth illiteracy rate decreased from 6.24 percent to 4.46 percent between 2000 and 2004.

Annex Table 14: Youth Illiteracy Rate (15-35 years) by Sex, Ethnicity, and Urban/Rural (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Ethnic minority</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>GPI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>6.24</td>
<td>7.20</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>6.66</td>
<td>114.62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>17.19</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>113.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>16.59</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>85.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The illiteracy rate of ethnic minority youth aged 15 to 35 decreased from 17.19 percent to 16.59 percent, but remains much higher than the national average.

The illiteracy rate of females in this age group decreased from 6.66 percent in 2000 to 3.95 percent in 2004, but still remains higher than the rate for males.

Urban/rural ratios for youth illiteracy (aged 15 to 35) worsened over the 2000-2004 period, however, with the gap between urban and rural areas increasing twofold.

During 2000-2004, the youth illiteracy rate (aged 15 to 35) in various regions decreased. However, the rate remained relatively high in North West (where there is high concentration of Hmong people) and Central Highlands (where there is high concentration of Bahnar and J’rai people) (19.66 percent and 10.09 percent respectively). Access by ethnic minorities, especially groups of Hmong, Bahnar, J’rai and those in Mekong River Delta, North West and Central Highlands was limited. In ethnic minority areas, the literacy rate for those aged 15-35 was lower than the national average (Dak Nong 12.18 percent; Lao Cai 11.94 percent; Son La 10 percent; Lai Chau 9.30 percent; Dien Bien 8.77 percent; Kon Tum 8.23 percent; Dak Lak 7.40 percent). By August 2004, Son La province had 10 communes at risks of not maintaining their target.


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- --Bhutan
- --Cambodia
- --Yunnan, China
- --Henan, China
- --Jiangsu, China
- --India
- --Indonesia
- --Iran
- --Lao PDR
- --Malaysia
- --Maldives
- --Myanmar
- --Mongolia
- --Nepal
- --Pakistan
- --Sri Lanka
- --Thailand
- --Turkmenistan
- --Viet Nam
1. For more information on the UNLD, please see http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-ID=53811&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

2. The Asia Pacific regional launch of UNLD took place on September 8, 2003, International Literacy Day, and coincided with the CONFINTEA V Review meeting.

3. Resolution 56/116 on United Nations Literacy Decade

4. The United Nations Literacy Decade in Asia and the Pacific: Progress to Date, p. 1

5. The United Nations Literacy Decade in Asia and the Pacific: Progress to Date, p. 1


7. Using ICT to Develop Literacy, p. 4.

8. Reformulating Education for All (EFA) Policy in a Framework of Lifelong Learning. Policy Note with Recommendations for Decision-Makers from the “International Expert Meeting on Educational Policies from a Lifelong Learning Perspective in Promoting EFA” (Tokyo, Japan, 9-12 October 2007) organized by the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), the National Institute for Educational Policy Research of Japan (NIER) and UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education.


10. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006, p. 34


13. Details on these partners and their activities can be found in Annex I.

14. See the bibliography for a comprehensive list of UNESCO publications during the first half of UNLD.


19. EFA GMR 2008. 64.


21. South-East Asian countries are included in “East Asia” by the EFA GMR.

22. EFA GMR Regional Overview: East Asia. p. 4.

23. EFA GMR Regional Overview: East Asia. p. 4.


29. EFA GMR 2008.
30. EFA GMR 2008.
31. A country-by-country review of literacy activities and progress-to-date can be found in Annex II.
32. Other CLC support is as follows: BAFIS 2; CWS 1; COM 4; EDI 12; ESCAP 4; EU 19; EU+US 19; GAPE 12; GTZ 27; ICS-ASIA 1; IDRC 2; IVJ 3; JP ROTARY 1; LAUBACH 18; NCA 4; RAS 3; SCN 33; UNDP 15; UNICEF 38; WEI 13; WV 16; QSL 1; ZOA 1.
33. MoE data, April 2008, from the Pakistan Questionnaire on CLC completed by Prof. Hashmi.
35. Mother Tongue-based Literacy Programmes: Case Studies of Good Practice in Asia.
43. Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Mongolia
46. Indonesia Equivalency Report (contained on CD), p. 4. CD is included in the following publication: Equivalency Programmes (EPs) for Promoting Lifelong Learning. UNESCO Bangkok Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All. 2006.
47. Indonesia Equivalency Report (contained on CD), p. 4. CD is included in the following publication: Equivalency Programmes (EPs) for Promoting Lifelong Learning. UNESCO Bangkok Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All. 2006.
49. community learning centres: Country Reports from Asia, p. 8.
50. community learning centres: Country Reports from Asia, pp. 87-88.
51. community learning centres: Country Reports from Asia, p. 84.
52. community learning centres: Country Reports from Asia, p. 84


54. Thai Binh, Phu Tho, Ninh Binh, Vinh Phuc, Da Nang, Bac Kan, Nam Dinh, Vinh Long, Dong Nai, Dong Thap, Bac Ninh


58. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam

59. Promoting Literacy in Multilingual Settings, p. 20

60. Promoting Literacy in Multilingual Settings, p. 20

61. Promoting Literacy in Multilingual Settings, p. 32

62. These include not just computers and the Internet, but also radio and television, the telephone and fax machine, and disc media.


64. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for Community Empowerment through Non-Formal Education: Experiences from Lao PDR, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Uzbekistan. p. 15


66. Using ICT to Develop Literacy, p. 36.

67. Action research on effective implementation of life skills to strengthen NFE programmes in Kazakhstan. p. 6.

68. Graduate employment rates ranged from 30% to 80% depending on the Centre. Action research on effective implementation of life skills to strengthen NFE programmes in Kazakhstan. pp. 20-21.

69. Graduate employment rates ranged from 30% to 80% depending on the Centre. Action research on effective implementation of life skills to strengthen NFE programmes in Kazakhstan. pp. 22-23.


77. This pilot project was initiated by the Asian Development Bank.

78. Pakistan CONFINTÉA report, p. 60


80. LLP Pilot Project: Thailand (Draft)


85. The female net enrolment ratio (NER) was 54.6% and the male NER was 71.6% for 2004-05. MOEYS cited in Education for All (EFA) Mid-Decade Assessment, Mekong Sub-region Synthesis Report, February 18, 2008.


88. According to UNICEF (2005) approximately 50% of hill tribes are currently stateless.


90. Asia and the Pacific Education for All (EFA) Mid-Decade Assessment, Insular South-East Asia Synthesis Report, February 2008.


93. UNESCO APPEAL, *Promoting Literacy in Multilingual Settings*.


95. Education for All (EFA) Mid-Decade Assessment, Mekong Sub-region Synthesis Report, February 18, 2008.


106. The Research and Training Centre for Literacy Education is the ACCU’s Literacy Resource Centre in China.

107. In discussing the attainment of literacy goals, it is important to note that each country measures and defines literacy differently.


133. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006


137. Literacy and ALE information is available for selected provinces in China.


140. Monitoring and Evaluation Report on Education for All in Yunnan, Yunnan Institute of Educational Science.


143. Monitoring and Evaluation Report on Education for All in Yunnan, Yunnan Institute of Educational Science.


146. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006
147. India Draft EFA Mid-Decade Assessment Report as of March 19, 2008.
149. Asia and the Pacific Education for All (EFA) Mid-Decade Assessment, Insular South-East Asia Synthesis Report, February 2008.
150. Indonesia EFA Mid-Decade Assessment, 2007.

166. Education for All (EFA) Mid-Decade Assessment, Mekong Sub-region Synthesis Report, February 18, 2008.


169. For all three datasets, the literacy was self-reported. In the 1995 and the 2005 census instruments, the question asked was “Can (name) read and write Lao?” The response alternatives were Yes/No/Under age 6.

170. National Assessment of Student Learning Outcome Primary Grade 5 (August 2007) which was prepared by the Evaluation Team in the Research Institute for Education Sciences (RIES) and a consultant (Neville Postlethwaite) in the framework of the World Bank-funded Second Education Development Project.


172. Malaysia Draft EFA Mid-Decade Assessment MSIA 2 as of February 18, 2008.

173. Malaysia Draft EFA Mid-Decade Assessment MSIA 2 as of February 18, 2008.


189. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006


200. Recomputed from the 1990 Census and 2003 FLEMMS based on UNESCO age range for adult literacy which is 15 years old and above.

201. It should be noted that the 2003 FLEMMS still used the old definition of functional literacy. The new definition will be used in the next FLEMMS to be administered in 2008. Results of the 2008 FLEMMS are expected to reveal a lower functional literacy rate because the new definition of FL is much broader.


218. 1AB schools are those with the A/L Science stream.


220. (Gunawardena et al, 1995)

221. (Gunawardena et al, 1997)

222. (NEREC, 2003).


