UNESCO

Organisation des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation, la science et la culture

The United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012)

(UNLD)

2003-2004

The Literacy Decade:
Getting Started

The United Nations Literacy Decade
(2003-2012)
(UNLD)

UNESCO

The Literacy Decade:
Getting Started

2003-2004

June 2004

When the United Nations General Assembly launched the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) it asked UNESCO to be the international coordinator for the Decade. It also asked that a report on progress be presented to the General Assembly in September 2004. This document is a more detailed public version of the first UNLD progress report presented to the United Nations. It has been prepared for the Literacy and Non-Formal Education Section (ED/BAS/LIT) of the Basic Education Division of UNESCO by James E. Page.

Table of contents

Executive Summary

1. About the United Nations Literacy Decade and this Report

The United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) is an initiative adopted by the global community through a unanimous resolution of the United Nations General Assembly. The Decade was launched in New York at the U.N. in February 2003 to mobilize the resources and political will required to meet the learning needs of the hundreds of millions of illiterate people living around the world. Given the powerful impact of literacy on the full range of human endeavours, the UN has decided to identify certain themes for special attention during the Decade.

2003-04	Literacy and Gender
2005-06	Literacy and Sustainable Development
2007-08	Literacy and Health
2009-10	Literacy and Empowerment
2011-12	Literacy and Peace

This Report is the first to be published on the Literacy Decade. It presents an overview of the challenges the world must overcome to meet the literacy objectives established for the UNLD. The Report strongly argues that increased political and financial support to solve illiteracy is urgently required. Failure, the Report claims, is not an option given the plight of those who are negatively affected socially, economically, politically and culturally due to illiteracy or low literacy. But, the Report warns, all present indications are that we will fail. It appears that if present trends continue the global community will not even come close to reaching the literacy targets it has established for itself.

Nevertheless, the Literacy Decade probably represents our best chance to deal with this issue. Illiteracy is a human crisis that the world thus far seems either incapable or unwilling to solve. Now, the Report states, is the time for action.

The Report also provides commentary on key UNLD-related activities that have taken place during 2003 and early 2004. These include the launch of the Decade itself as well as actions undertaken by international organizations, by UN agencies, by bilateral and multi-lateral donor organizations, by member states, by non-governmental organizations, by literacy workers and practitioners, and, of course, by learners around the world. This first UNLD report concludes with recommendations for the future and a plea for the political will and increased resources required to solve the literacy crisis.

2. The UNLD's Objectives and Rationale

The rationale for the Decade is to increase national and international efforts to avoid this catastrophe. The objectives of the Literacy Decade are to ensure that the six Education For All goals agreed to at the World Education Forum held in Dakar Senegal in April 2000 are met. In particular the Decade gives special attention to achieving a 50% improvement in adult literacy by 2015 as well as equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults (EFA Goal 4). It also focuses on meeting the learning needs of those who are excluded from quality learning (EFA Goal 6).

As well the Literacy Decade is to be a vital part of realising the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in its Millennium Declaration of September 8th, 2000. The focus of the MDGs is the eradication of poverty around the world, a campaign that requires enhanced global literacy in order to succeed.

3. What is the State of Literacy in the World?

With these goals in mind the obvious question to ask is: What is the state of literacy in the world? Succinctly, it is as follows. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) estimates that close to 862 million adults, people over the age of 15 years, were illiterate in the year 2000.[1] Because of the poor quality of literacy statistical assessment and reporting worldwide, most experts think that this number is a gross underestimation of the situation suggesting that the truer figure may be closer to one billion people.

The UIS also estimates that 140 million of the 862 million were illiterate young people (aged 15 to 24). In 2000 over 104 million children did not have access to schooling.[2] As well there is a marked gender dimension to adult illiteracy and girls are less likely than boys to have schooling. Two thirds of illiterate adults were women. In 2000, there were 236 million more illiterate women than men.

The stark reality is that one in five adults on the planet and tens of millions of school aged children do not read and write. This is appalling and unacceptable. As Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has phrased it at the official launch of the UNLD:

The fact that 20 per cent of the world's adults are deprived of it (literacy) should fill us all with shame.[3]

4. What are the Implications of these Statistics?

At the present time, as the Decade unfolds, all evidence suggests that the Dakar Declaration goal of a 50% improvement in the levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, will not be met in over 70 countries. Current projections are that worldwide due to population growth there will be roughly 800 million illiterate adults in 2015, only slightly fewer than at present. Again the majority, 63 %, will be women. Estimates suggest that illiterate women will outnumber illiterate men by a projected 215 million. Even assuming growth in primary education over the next 10 years, a projected 112 million youth will be illiterate in 2015, 67 million of them female. If these forecasts are accurate the Decade's goals certainly will not be met.

The world cannot accept failure however. Tragically, scourges like poverty, exploitation, poor health and illiteracy go hand-in-hand. It is not a coincidence that where illiteracy is

---

1. The UIS figure reported is 861,966,000. Cited from UNESCO – 2003 EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4, *Gender and Education for All: The Leap to Equality,* UNESCO, Paris, see Table 2, page 319 and narrative text p. 87.

2. The figure reported is 104, *Ibid.* Table 5, page 335.

3. UN Press Release. *The Secretary General's Remarks to Mark the Launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade,* New York, February 13, 2003

high people face other, often dire, challenges. Sub-Saharan Africa is scarred by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In parts of North Africa, in the Arab States and in South and East Asia democracy is fragile and human rights, especially for women and girls, are often severely limited.

However, the challenges of the UNLD are not restricted to the costs and impediments imposed by illiteracy alone. Low literacy also robs people of opportunity, limits potential, and curtails political and economic participation. The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL), the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's (IEA) "Progress in International Reading Literacy Study" (PIRLS) highlighted the challenges occasioned by low literacy in the developed world.

IALS findings suggest that upwards of 20% of the adult populations of 20 countries, including the richest and most advanced, have only rudimentary literacy skills. Further, on average the literacy skills of a further 20% are below the level the OECD believes necessary for full participation in those societies and economies. IALS also reveals that there is a pattern of skill gain or loss associated with a country's prevailing socio-economic demand for literacy skills. So it is not simply a question of ensuring that there are literate people, but also it is an issue of ensuring demand in societies and economies for the use of these skills. The presence of significant levels of skills loss in OECD economies is sobering and suggests that both developed and developing countries need to pay attention to keeping the supply and demand of skills in rough balance.

5. What has been Happening Since the Decade was Launched?

The global launch of the Literacy Decade was held at the United Nations in New York in February 2003. At the launch ceremony, on 13 February 2003 at the New York Public Library, Ms Laura Bush was named Honorary Ambassador for the Decade. UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura presented Mrs. Bush with a UNESCO certificate commemorating her designation.

Additional launches have taken place in most regions of the world. Many countries have marked the event as well. Highlights of these activities are noted in the paper. In addition UNESCO and its partners have initiated many projects and activities to coordinate efforts and to strengthen the world's capacity to address literacy issues. These too are explained, as are some activities of other international organizations that are UNLD partners.

This report also presents an overview of current projects that "lead the way" in terms of how to address the UNLD's objectives. They illustrate what can be done with commitment and resources to address literacy challenges of whatever kind, wherever they surface, in both developing and developed countries.

Projects highlighted include work on the literacy needs of women and girls. As well there are illustrations of ways that excluded groups, such as aboriginal peoples, are addressing their literacy challenges. New programmes designed to create literate environments are highlighted. There are illustrations of new approaches, strategies, methods and models for literacy training. Examples are shown of what can be done through blended objectives that link literacy provision with, for example, the development of the skills required to earn a living. Finally the report notes examples of how the use of technologies and techniques can aid in understanding literacy needs and enhancing literacy skills.

Despite all of these efforts every nation still has literacy concerns, from the poorest of the poor to the most technologically advanced and economically powerful. The Literacy Decade must succeed in realizing its objectives because the personal, economic, social, cultural, health and political costs attributable to both illiteracy and low-literacy are staggering.

To succeed however, the Decade will have to have meaning at the grassroots, not only in the boardrooms of governments and international agencies.

6. Challenges and Conclusions

a. Aligning the Policy Agenda

The Report identifies several major challenges. The first issue, which should be addressed as the Decade begins to unfold, is the need for an effective and substantial integration of the UNLD movement into the EFA and MDG processes. For the UNLD to succeed there must be a clear recognition of the extent to which a lack of literacy skills limits the potential for societies to deal with issues such as poverty, discrimination, poor health, social exclusion, and powerlessness. Literacy is at the heart of the social, political, cultural, economic and political well-being of individuals, communities, societies and nations, indeed of the world.

b. Reporting on Results

The second challenge is how best to document and report on the progress that member states make towards the achievement of the goals established for the Decade to encourage continued commitment over the life of the initiative to 2012. Effective reporting will only be possible if clear goals are established for the short, medium and long term at the national level with respect to the strategies, expected outcomes and areas of activity of the UNLD Plan of Action. UNESCO is drafting a proposed approach to assist governments to meet this objective.

c. Securing the Political Will and Financial Resources Required

The third challenge is to secure the political will and the financial resources required to meet the literacy challenges countries face. The case must be made for the importance of investments in literacy and basic education for children but also for adults. The current situation, with over 860 million illiterate adults in the world, cannot continue. Research shows that literate parents raise literate children. Resources are not limitless, however. So it is urgently important that the arguments and the costing models required to justify increased investments in adult literacy be developed. Only then will it be possible to say quite clearly, "…this is what needs to be done to meet the goals the world has set for the literacy of adults by 2015, and this is how much it will cost to do it".

d. Generating Increased Momentum

The fourth challenge, related to the third, is based on evidence suggesting that while there is a growing basic awareness of the Decade around the world, the intentions that lay behind it, the plans that have been established for it, and the manner in which individuals and organizations can engage in achieving its objectives are less well known and understood. The challenge is to promote the UNLD objectives to ensure that their existence becomes common knowledge.

e. Strengthening the International Partnership

The achievement of the goals of the UNLD will only be possible through the collective efforts of the whole of the international community and every UN member state. The fifth challenge therefore is the need to expand and to enhance partnership arrangements to share information on practices, to leverage resources, to coordinate activities, to monitor progress and to report on the achievement of UNLD goals.

Efforts at the international, national and local levels need to be linked. Actions by governments and multi-lateral organizations as well as by the non-governmental sector and the private sector are crucial. The success of the UNLD will depend on the extent to which NGO's

and civil society organizations have the resources and the scope they require to be able to play a leading role in addressing the world's literacy challenges. Success will not come from the top but from the grass roots, in communities, through the efforts of practitioners and learners.

Conclusions

The UNLD presents those who are concerned about literacy with an unparalleled opportunity to encourage governments, agencies and civil society organizations to increase their efforts to meet the literacy and non-formal education targets set for the UNLD and for EFA. The initial effort has been to launch the UNLD internationally, regionally and nationally. This activity has involved sizeable human and financial investments throughout 2003 and in early 2004. There has neither been the time nor the resources required to document how various parties have responded to the UNLD call to action.

The information contained in this Report on many new approaches to the provision of literacy skills could inspire hope. They testify to the fact that we are on the right path. However real diligence, strength of commitment, relentless effort and appropriate resources are required if the United Nations is to meet its objectives for 2012 and if the EFA Goals are to be met by 2015.

However while the positive actions reported here could inspire hope, they are more than offset by a heavy dose of realism. The only conclusion to be drawn in mid-2004 is that the world is unlikely to meet the literacy challenges that lay before it by 2012, the end of the UNLD, or even by 2015, the end-date for the EFA goals. The costs of failure could be very high.

The United Nations Literacy Decade

The First Progress Report

Introduction

1. Preamble

Literacy today is a world preoccupation. The United Nations General Assembly has declared that the period from 2003 to 2012 will be known as the United Nations Literacy Decade. The UNLD as it has come to be called, was launched in February 2003 as a result of a decision of the United Nations General Assembly.[4] Since literacy is at the heart of UNESCO's mandate, the General Assembly gave to UNESCO a special role to play in the Literacy Decade. It was asked to *"take a coordinating role in stimulating and catalyzing the activities undertaken at the international level"*. This challenging task requires UNESCO to give primacy to its literacy work and to organize its resources accordingly.

The success or failure of the Decade will depend on the commitments made and actions taken by all stakeholders including governments, UN agencies, development agencies, donors, NGOs, civil society organizations, communities and individuals. Just as Education For All is everyone's responsibility, so too is the United Nations Literacy Decade. So even though UNESCO has been given this coordinating assignment, the UNLD is certainly not its responsibility alone.

2. This Report

When the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 57/166, it asked the Secretary-General of the United Nations, with the cooperation of the Director-General of UNESCO, to report on the implementation of the International Plan of Action at the General Assembly's fifty-ninth session in September 2004. Coming as it does in mid-2004, this is the first report on the worldwide impact of the Literacy Decade. As a first attempt it has some limitations. As explained in greater detail below, the lack of established reporting mechanisms limits the coverage of this document. However, work is underway to encourage the establishment of clear goals and objectives for the UNLD at the national level so that reporting on plans and activities will be possible as a complement to such efforts as the EFA Global Monitoring Reports.

---

4. United Nations General Assembly, A/Res/56/116 of January 2002, *United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for All.*

This report provides narrative descriptions of activities being undertaken around the world. The information gathered for the Report is based on information provided by UNESCO's regional and cluster offices, from UNESCO Institutes, from UNESCO National Commissions and from the various UN agencies and other governmental and non-governmental organizations that form the UNLD partnership. Sources are documented. The projects described in this document are not presented as "best practices" but rather as illustrations of activities indicative of the efforts currently underway. Of necessity information has been gathered from these sources in a relatively short time. The experience provides lessons as to how future UNLD reports might be made qualitatively stronger.

With these caveats in mind, the report has four main objectives:

1. To explain the rationale for and the context surrounding the proclamation of the United Nations Literacy Decade.
2. To report on the international, regional and national activities undertaken to launch the Decade. This includes not only celebrations to mark the opening of the UNLD but also other significant national or local literacy events held in 2003 as well as activities of UN agencies and other partners to advance literacy as the decade begins.
3. To present examples of current literacy projects from around the world to demonstrate what is being done to advance the objectives of the Literacy Decade internationally, nationally and locally.
4. To make some suggestions to strengthen the UNLD effort.

3. The Rationale for the United Nations Literacy Decade

With over 860 million illiterate adults in the world[5] and over 100 million children without access to schooling[6], the goal of universal literacy faces many challenges. "Learning and literacy for all" are not a reality for the hundreds of millions of people who are unable to read and to write, or who lack access to learning. The rationale for the Decade is to increase national and international efforts to meet the objectives set for literacy by the world community.

The UNLD International Plan of Action identifies the Decade's anticipated outcomes and details six strategies to be used in the implementing the Plan[7]. It describes six major "Areas for Action" including: policy changes, flexible literacy programmes, capacity building, research, community participation and monitoring and evaluation. The key elements of the Plan of Action are to be found in Annex 1 of this Report.

---

5. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4, *Gender and Education for All: The Leap to Equality,* UNESCO, Paris, 2003, p. 876

6. *Ibid.* Table 5, p. 335.

7. United Nations General Assembly, A/57/218, *United Nations Literacy Decade: Literacy for All: International Plan of Action.*

Where we stand at the beginning of the Decade

1. The Appalling State of Literacy in the World

Fifty-five years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights one in five adults in the world[8] cannot read or write. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the U.N. lead agency for education statistics has estimated that in 2000 close to 862 million adults were illiterate.[9] Because of the poor quality of literacy assessment and reporting worldwide most experts think that this number is a gross underestimation suggesting that the truer figure may be closer to one billion people.

As Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations phrased it at the official launch of the UNLD:

The fact that 20 per cent of the world's adults are deprived of it (literacy) should fill us all with shame.[10]

At the Launch the Director-General of UNESCO was also blunt when he said:

Efforts to promote literacy are not new, but the persistent scandal of around 860 million people without access to literacy in today's world is both a chilling indictment and an urgent call for increased commitment…. This situation is unacceptable.[11]

Their candor was certainly in order, not only because of the numerical magnitude of the problem but also because of some of the problem's other characteristics. For example, there is a marked gender dimension to adult illiteracy and girls are less likely than boys to have schooling. In 2000, two thirds of adults without literacy, or 63.7%, were women.[12] There were 236 million more non-literate women than men.

---

8. Adults are defined as those over the age of 15 years.

9. The UIS figure is 861,966,000 as reported in The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4, *Gender and Education for All: The Leap to Equality,* UNESCO, Paris, see Table 2, page 319 and narrative text p. 87.

10. UN Press Release. *The Secretary General's Remarks to Mark the Launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade,* New York, February 13, 2003

11. UNESCO, *Message by the Director-General of UNESCO to Mark the Launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade* (2003-2012) 13 February 2003. Paragraph 3.

12. *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4,* Table 5, p. 335.

Equally astonishing is the realization that in 2000 over 104 million children do not even have access to schooling.[13] It is also hard to believe that countless other children, young people and adults still in school or other educational settings have not yet developed the level of skill required to be considered literate in today's world. In over 100 countries fees for primary and secondary schooling are still being levied which effectively bars the poor from the world's classrooms.

2. What is the UNLD Designed to Accomplish?

In policy terms the Dakar Framework and the Millennium Development Goals are formative influences on the Decade. In launching the UNLD the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura made the key policy linkages:

> *Literacy is not only one of the six Education for All goals agreed to at the World Education Forum held in Dakar Senegal in April 2000, but it is central to the other five goals too. Moreover, evidence shows that increasing levels of literacy – particularly literacy among women – are a determining factor in reducing infant mortality rates and in improving child health. Thus the Literacy Decade will be a vital part of realising the Millennium Development Goals. Emphasis will be placed on literacy for all, with priority being given to the most disadvantaged groups, especially women and girls, ethnic and linguistic minorities, indigenous populations, migrants and refugees, out-of-school children and youth, and persons with disabilities. The Decade will be oriented to action, which promotes a voice for all, and learning for all.[14]*

The Decade is primarily focused on the realization of the six goals contained in the *Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments.*[15] The six Dakar Goals are:

1. expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
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;
3. ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;
4. achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
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;
6. improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Literacy is not limited to a few of these Education for All (EFA) Goals rather, as the UNLD International Action Plan states:

---

13. The figure reported is 104,189,000, *Ibid.* Table 5, page 335.

14. UNESCO, *Message by the Director-General of UNESCO to Mark the Launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade* (2003-2012) 13 February 2003. Paragraph 4.

15. *Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments,* Text Adopted by the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April, 2000, paragraph 7, p. 2.

Literacy is the common thread that runs through the six goals.[16]

Nonetheless, the Decade gives special attention to achieving a 50% improvement in adult literacy by 2015 as well as equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults (Goal 4) and to meeting the learning needs of those who are excluded from quality learning (Goal 6).

In addition to Dakar, another policy central to the Decade are the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in its Millennium Declaration[17] of September 8th, 2000. The primary focus of the MDGs is the eradication of poverty. There is no question that the achievement of literacy and the eradication of poverty are linked. As Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary-General said in his remarks at the Launch of the Literacy Decade:

> *Finally, the Decade is an affirmation of the inextricable link between literacy and our work to translate into reality the Millennium Declaration, adopted by all the world's governments as a blueprint for building a better world in the 21st century. Literacy is the prerequisite for a healthy, just and prosperous world.*[18]

One challenge for the international community is to ensure that there is, as the Decade begins to unfold, an effective and substantial integration of the UNLD movement into the EFA and MDG processes. The importance of this cannot be underestimated. For the UNLD to succeed there must be a clear recognition of the extent to which the presence or absence of literacy skills in a population is linked to the potential for societies to deal with poverty, discrimination, poor health, social exclusion, discrimination and powerlessness. Literacy is at the heart of social, political, cultural, economic and political well-being of individuals, communities, societies and nations.

While all agree that the education of children is critically important, the evidence, statistical and otherwise, makes clear that governments and agencies need to expand their attention to adult literacy and learning as well. Yet in most parts of the world adult education and literacy live in the shadows of primary and secondary schooling. For the Decade to succeed both children and adults merit equal attention. The reason is that parents influence their children, both in word and in deed. Literate parents raise literate children, to oversimplify. "Research findings consistently show that parents with higher levels of education and literacy are in a better position to build a strong foundation for literacy in their children".[19] There are hundreds of millions of adults on this planet who cannot read and write, and millions more whose literacy skills are marginal. Ensuring that the mothers and fathers of the world can read is an important affair.[20]

Clearly the U.N. policy suite should reflect the importance of literacy, especially the literacy of adults as part of an integrated approach to the realization of the EFA Goals and the MDGs as well as other policy priorities such as the World Bank's Fast Track Initiative (FTI). This alignment of policies will be extremely important as different priorities are given prominence on

---

16. A/57/150, United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for All; International Plan of Action: implementation of General Assembly resolution 56/116, p. 4.

17. United Nations, A56/2 of 8th September 2000, *United Nations Millennium Declaration.*

18. UN Press Release. The Secretary General Remarks to Mark the Launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade, New York, February 13, 2003 (http//www.escwa.org.1b/information/press/un/2003/feb/13-3.html)

19. Statistics Canada and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society,* Ottawa and Paris, 1997, p. 29.

20. For a general discussion of the relationship between parental skills and those of their children see R. Haveman and B. Wolfe, *Succeeding Generations and the Effects of Investment in Children,* Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1994.

the UNLD stage at various points over the ten-year life of the U.N.'s literacy initiative. The priorities and their scheduled timing are:

2003-04   Literacy and Gender
2005-06   Literacy and Sustainable Development
2007-08   Literacy and Health
2009-10   Literacy and Empowerment
2011-12   Literacy and Peace

An endeavor of the magnitude of the Literacy Decade can only succeed if the macro-policy instruments driving the effort are appropriately aligned.

3. Will the World Achieve its Goals?

As things stand at the moment the truthful answer is: "probably not".

One reason for this sober judgment is to be found in an assessment of how likely the world is to reach Dakar Goal five on eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005. The 2003/4 Global Monitoring Report states that "60% of the 128 countries for which data are available are likely to miss reaching gender parity at primary and secondary levels by 2005" and it concluded that *"forty percent of countries are at risk of not achieving gender parity either at primary (9) or secondary level (33) or at both (12), even by 2015".*[21]

Nonetheless, the Report concluded that there has been a strong global move towards greater gender parity, especially at the elementary level, where the enrolment ratio of girls to boys improved from 88% in 1990 to 94% in 2000. Girls' enrolments increased faster than boys in the three regions where gender inequalities are greatest – Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab States and South and West Africa.[22]

Despite some positive indicators of this kind another reason for thinking that the world will not reach its goals comes from the Global Monitoring Report 2003/4. All evidence suggests that Dakar Declaration Goal 4 calling for a 50% improvement in the levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, will not be met in over 70 countries. Current projections are that worldwide there will be roughly 800 million illiterate adults in 2015. Again the majority, 63 %, will be women.[23] Estimates suggest that illiterate women will outnumber illiterate men by a projected 215 million. If these projections are accurate then the UNLD will be an undeniable failure and the "scandal" described by the UNESCO Director-General will continue unabated.

The 2003/4 Global Monitoring Report cites UIS statistics that show that ninety-eight percent of the adults who lack literacy, or 857 million people, live in the developing world. The Report states: *"Almost half of the world's illiterates live in South and West Asia. Their numbers are still increasing and mainly reflect the situation in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. The East Asia and the Pacific region accounts for almost a further quarter."*[24] Sub-Saharan Africa has almost 136 million illiterates. These three regions account for 70 per cent of the world total.

Sixty-one percent of those who lack literacy live in the four most populous countries of the world: China, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. The most recent Global Monitoring Report notes, however, that the number of illiterates in China fell by 22% between 1990 and 2000. Due to an anticipated further decline of illiteracy in China of around 43% by 2015, it

---

21. *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2203/4.* p. 18.

22. *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4.* p. 17.

23.   *Ibid.* Table 2.21, p. 87.

24. *Ibid.* p. 86.

is expected that Sub-Saharan Africa will have more illiterates amongst its population than the East Asia and the Pacific Region by that date.[25]

Readers who are interested in a fuller statistical portrait can consult Annex 2 of this Report. It provides a series of seven tables generated by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) on the international literacy situation.

The Chinese case is an interesting one. A new policy framework was put in place in 2002 focused on promoting literacy campaigns and improving curriculum content and delivery systems in the economically disadvantaged rural areas in Western China. Driven by a commitment to sustain steady progress on human resources development through the effective diffusion of knowledge and the use of technologies, the objective is to achieve a 95% literacy rate among the 15 to 50 year age group by the year 2005. The new policy seeks to provide continuing learning programmes for neo-literates, youth and adults and to make the adult learning system more responsive to social and individual needs.[26]

In 2000 there were 140 million illiterate young people (aged 15 to 24) in the world of whom 86 million were female. Even assuming growth in primary education over the next decade, a projected 112 million youth will be illiterate in 2015, 67 million of them female.[27] If these forecasts are accurate the Dakar targets will not be met. A sceptic might say: "So much for the achievement of literacy for all".

The world simply cannot accept failure or that kind of cynicism. Tragically, scourges like poverty, exploitation, poor health and illiteracy go hand-in-hand. It is not a coincidence that where illiteracy is high people face other, often dire, challenges. Sub-Saharan Africa is scarred by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In parts of North Africa, in the Arab States and in South and East Asia democracy is fragile and human rights, especially for women and girls, are severely limited. Research shows that illiteracy compounds the conditions of deprivation and subordination to which women and girls in many parts of the world are being subjected.

However, the challenges of the UNLD are not restricted to the costs and impediments imposed by illiteracy alone. Low literacy robs people of opportunity, limits potential, and curtails political and economic participation. The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL), the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's (IEA) "Progress in International Reading Literacy Study" (PIRLS) have highlighted the challenges occasioned by low literacy in the developed world.

IALS findings suggest that upwards of 20% of the adult population of the 20 countries participating in the Survey, including the richest and most advanced, have only rudimentary literacy skills and that on average the literacy skills of a further 20% are below the level the OECD thinks necessary for full participation in those societies and economies. These finding also reveal that there is a pattern of skill gain or loss associated with a country's prevailing socio-economic demand for skills. So it is not simply a question of ensuring that there are literate people, but it is also an issue of ensuring that there is sufficient demand in societies and economies for the use of these skills. The IALS discovery of significant levels of skills loss in OECD economies is sobering and suggests that both developed and developing countries need to pay special attention to keeping the supply and demand of skills in rough balance.

The statistics cited here lead to the inevitable conclusion that national and international literacy efforts have been inadequate up to now. Every nation has literacy concerns, from

---

25. *Ibid.* p. 87.

26. Dr. I.V. Subba Rao, *Literacy and Adult Learning in Asia: A Brief Analysis of Past Progress, Current Situation and Future Direction,* An unpublished report presented at CONFINTA + 6, pp. 10-11.

27. *Ibid.* Table 2, p. 311.

the poorest of the poor to the most technologically advanced and economically powerful. The Literacy Decade must succeed in realizing its objectives because the personal, economic, social, cultural, health and political costs attributable to both illiteracy and low-literacy are staggering.

4. What does Literacy Mean in the Context of the Decade?

The answer to the question: *What does the word "Literacy" in the title: The United Nations Literacy Decade mean?* is more complex than people might first imagine. Modern research and thinking about literacy has expanded to include the ability to use varying levels of analysis, degrees of abstraction, more sophisticated symbol manipulation, the application of theoretical knowledge and other skills that go far beyond simply reading and writing.

We have long realised that literacy is not a simple dichotomy, something that you either possess or do not have. Consequently the questions being asked by policy makers and others go far beyond the simple interrogative: "Can you read and write?" Instead, answers to the following questions are deemed more relevant: "How well do people read and write?" "What are they challenged to do with these skills?" "How can these skills be maintained and enhanced?" "What are the related problem-solving and life skills required by society and the economy?" How can countries raise the literacy levels of their populations?

These kinds of questions suggest that the concept of literacy has become quite complex and they demonstrate how important literacy is to individual and national well-being. Literacy has become an essential part of the fabric of modern societies, a thread linking all aspects of life and living in the contemporary world.

To put it simply, literacy is about the power to communicate ideas and to influence people.[28] However its reach extends into many other areas of life. Literacy provides access to opportunities to learn, to find better employment[29] and to earn higher financial rewards.[30] Literacy also affects social status, political participation, cultural expression, linguistic survival, and access to health care, the effective delivery of social services, and more[31]. For individuals the presence or absence of literacy either expands or contracts life opportunities, and either limits or expand their ability to participate meaningfully in all aspects of life.

For all of these reasons the approach being taken to literacy during the UNLD needs to be a holistic one that relates literacy to the full human agenda. Literacy is an integral part of development and human rights issues. The acquisition of literacy lies at the heart of any successful poverty reduction strategy.

Achieving literacy implies more than the acquisition of basic literacy skills. Basic skills are the prerequisite for further development, the next challenge is to ensure that individuals can function as fully and effectively as possible in their various roles as citizens, parents, community members and workers. This is functional literacy, as opposed to basic literacy, the skills, including life skills, beyond the ability to read and to write that people need to meet the requirements of daily life.

28. For a discussion of this point see Colin Lankshear, "Introduction", *Literacy and the New Work Order,* National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, London, 1998, pp. 1-8.

29. Daniel Boothby, *Literacy Skills, Occupational Assignment and the Returns to Over- and Under-Education,* Statistics Canada and HRDC, January 2002.

30. *Lars Osberg, Schooling, Literacy and Individual Earnings,* Statistics Canada and HRDC, Ottawa, June 2000; and David A. Green and W. Craig Riddell, *Literacy, Numeracy and Labour Market Outcomes in Canada,* Statistics Canada and HRDC, Ottawa, January 2001.

31. OECD and Statistics Canada, *Literacy Skills For the Knowledge Society,* Paris and Ottawa, 1997, p. 107.

The Launch
of the Literacy Decade:
Highlights

1. The International Launch of the Decade

"Literacy as Freedom" was the motto adopted for the Official Launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade. The Inaugural Ceremonies were co-hosted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, and by the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura at a special ceremony held at United Nation's Headquarters in New York City on February 13, 2003. The Mongolian President, representing the nation that sponsored the resolution to establish the Decade, was present along with other notables including Mrs. Laura Bush, Mrs. Annan and the President of the United Nations Association of the United States (UNA). The Launch included a media event, the opening of a six-week long Inter-agency exhibition on literacy, and the distribution of UNLD information kits and publications.

In declaring the United Nations Literacy Decade to be open Mr. Annan said:

We are here because we know that the 21st century begins with one in five adults unable to read and write… We are here because we know that literacy is the key to unlocking the cage of human misery; the key to delivering the potential of every human being; the key to opening up a future of freedom and hope. We are here to open a Decade that must translate that hope into reality.

The United Nations Literacy Decade is a call to focus our collective will on the enormity of the task ahead. It is recognition that we must go beyond efforts of the past, and an opportunity to apply lessons learnt from past mistakes. It is a reminder that literacy is a human right. Fifty-five years ago, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights established that everyone has the right to education. The fact that 20 per cent of the world's adults are deprived of it should fill us all with shame.[32]

In his address the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, noted that the downtrodden could find their voice through literacy and that the poor could learn how to learn and the powerless how to empower themselves. He, too, said that literacy is integrally linked to human rights. While not a universal panacea for all development problems, he said that literacy is both a versatile and proven tool for development. He stressed that the special emphasis on "literacy as freedom" is designed to "free people from ignorance, incapacity

---

32. UN Press Release. *The Secretary General's Remarks to Mark the Launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade,* New York, February 13, 2003.

and exclusion" [33] and to empower them for action, choices and participation. Noting that the growth rate of world literacy had slowed in recent years, Mr. Matsuura highlighted the enormity of the challenge, remarking that the successful spread of literacy requires the stamina of all partners.

On January 31st, 2003 as a prelude to the Official Launch, a conference called "Literacy Now: Building an Educated World" was organized by the Committee on Teaching about the United Nations. An estimated 500 teachers and representatives from educational institutions gathered for the conference at UN Headquarters in New York. The conference provided a platform for literacy experts to discuss issues and trends such as the increasing use of information technologies as well as the impact of AIDS, gender discrimination and poverty on literacy rates. U.N. Delegates were able to learn about successful projects from both the educators and their students.

In her address to that conference, Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) said that the issue of literacy would be high on the global agenda in the coming years: *"It is absolutely essential that today's young people, who comprise half of the global population, be given the knowledge and tools they need to protect their lives and their futures."*[34]

2. The World's Regions Launch the Decade

In Africa

The Literacy Decade was launched in the African Region in conjunction with the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) biennium meeting at Grand Baie, Mauritius, from December 2nd to 4th, 2003. The event was organized by le Bureau regional de l' UNESCO pour l'éducation en Afrique (BREDA), by the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) and by UNESCO Headquarters. Prior to it a roundtable discussion was organized on the theme: From Gender Parity to Gender Equality: Challenges for the UN Literacy Decade".[35] The opening of an exhibition entitled "Literacy in Action around the World" which had been shown earlier in both New York and Bangkok followed the ceremony.

The Launch ceremony itself involved the President of Mauritius, the Education Ministers of Mauritius and Gabon, the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development of Uganda, the President of UNESCO's General Conference, and UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Education. Mauritius' President stressed the importance of linking literacy to gender. He also raised the issue of the promotion of literate environments, saying that UNLD should not be confined to seminar rooms and discussion groups but needed to reach the grassroots level, ensuring the participation of all.

A website for the Decade of Literacy was launched on December 1st to provide information on initiatives and best practices for "Literacy for All" in Sub-Saharan Africa. Its ultimate aim is to become an Interactive Observatory on Literacy in the Region, and a platform for a broad sharing of experiences, resources and research amongst partners involved in the implementation of the UNLD.

33. Horst Rutsch, *"Literacy as Freedom", United Nations Launches Literacy Decade* (2003-2012) U.N. Chronicle, Online Edition.

34. Liz Willmott, "Promoting Literacy for a Decade of Action", *U. N. Chronicle, Online Edition.*

35. The photographs and posters on display can be seen on the website: http://www.unesco.org/education/photo-bangkok/.

In the Arab Region

The Arab Region launched the Literacy Decade in Tunisia, during the Arab Regional CON-FINTEA Mid-Decade Review held in Hammamet in Tunis from July 15th to 18th. Seventeen Arab countries were present in addition to members of the Arab Network for Adult Education and Literacy, and other NGOs and civil society groups. The launch signaled the start of a newspaper and television media campaign organized by UNESCO Beirut.[36]

In the Asia-Pacific Region

The Asia Pacific Region of UNESCO launched the UNLD on International Literacy Day in Bangkok, Thailand with technical and financial support from the governments of Thailand and Japan. The launch occurred in conjunction with the Thai celebrations of Education Week and the opening of CONFINTAE+6. Featured events included the presentation of the UNESCO International Literacy Awards and a Roundtable discussion on *"Literacy and Gender in Asia – the Context of the Plural Notion of Literacy"*. A media campaign was part of the strategy designed to get the UNLD message out across the Region.

In the Latin American and the Caribbean Region

The Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Launch was held in Santiago, Chile at the Second Latin American Regional Meeting of EFA National Coordinators and Representatives of Civil Society Organizations held on September 24th, 2003.

3. The World's Nations Celebrate the UNLD Launch and Report on Related Literacy Developments

A. African Countries

A number of African nations held special events to launch the Decade. The President of Mozambique launched the UNLD in that country on April 30th 2003 at a ceremony in Maputo at the Noresta Basic General School. Senegal's launch took place on September 14th, 2003 at Mbour in a ceremony presided over by its President who reiterated the county's commitment to eradicate illiteracy. July 15th was the date chosen by the Government of Guinée to launch the Decade at an event in Kondeva and it used the occasion to draw attention to its literacy challenges. Mali chose mid-October as the time for its launch. A four-day workshop was held from the 13th to the 16th to review the state of non -formal learning in the country and to launch the UNLD.

There were other activities of note during the first year of UNLD in the African Region. For example, the 3rd Pan-African Reading For All Conference was held in Kampala, Uganda from August 18th to 22nd. Organized by the International Reading Association and the International Development in Africa Committee, delegates discussed how to achieve EFA goals in the region. In Lesotho a seminar was held on the theme "Building Momentum to Eliminate Gender Disparity by 2005" on September 4th and 5th, 2003. The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Education and Training took that opportunity to award certificates to Herdboys and other literacy graduates.

A number of African countries celebrated International Literacy Day (ILD) on September 8th. UNESCO Kgali held an event in Kageyo in Rwanda that involved cultural performances and the presentation of 3,000 certified new literates. Leading participants at the celebrations included the Minister for Youth, Sports and Culture, and the Minister of State

---

36. *United Nations Literacy Decade, UNESCO Website:*
   http://portal.unesco.org/education/ev.php?URL_ID=21381&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SEC-TION=201&reload=1073666761.

Responsible for Good Governance in the Ministry of Local Government. Cape Verde began its observance of the UNLD on International Literacy Day and announced a target of reducing its literacy rate for people 15 years and above to less than 10%. Sierra Leone also used September 8th as the occasion to launch the UNLD in that country.

In Abuja, Nigeria, the Commission for Youth, Sports, Culture and Development met with UNESCO Abuja to discuss a programme on juvenile delinquency to explore how programmes in literacy and education could be used as a means to reduce crime among youth. In Ngoksa in Cameroon there was a celebration of the 37th International Literacy Festival that ran from September 2nd to the 8th. Senegal had several events including not only a celebration of Literacy Day but also the launch of the 28th National Literacy Week (September 8th to 14th) that began with a seminar on the development of a national plan to eradicate illiteracy and promote the national languages.

A series of three training workshops for post-literacy material development focusing on the needs of three countries, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Zambia, were organized by various national agencies in partnership with UNESCO Harare and UNESCO Headquarters. The first two workshops identified HIV/AIDS as their focus. They trained stakeholders in literacy and HIV/AIDS in producing gender-sensitive post-literacy materials in Botswana (July 2003) and Zambia (March 2003). The training sensitized participants to gender concerns, exposed them to principles in material development, and allowed participants to prepare their own illustrated booklets. Altogether 40 booklets were prepared and tested. The materials are being finalized for distribution across southern Africa. The topics of the booklets include: the plight of AIDS orphans, superstitions and traditions which make women more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, ARV treatment and family life, knowing one's HIV/AIDS status, roles of traditional healers and religious leaders in HIV/AIDS prevention, inheritance rights of HIV/AIDS orphans and widows, polygamy, 'sugar daddies' phenomenon, living positively, and home-based care among others.

The third workshop of the series was organized within the framework of the cross cutting project called "Education for Empowering Women Farmers" and it took place in Harare, Zimbabwe in November 2003. The term "cross cutting" refers to projects that involve a number of the aspects of UNESCO's work on culture, science, communications, technology, social sciences and so on. The workshop trained women farmers who are also community leaders to prepare gender sensitive materials that respond to their needs. The participants were exposed to a range of topics including gender sensitization, appropriate technology for impoverished women farmers, women's rights to land and women's rights as human rights, a field visit to the experimental organic farm Fambidzanai and to Ecolab, and the principles of learning materials development. During the workshop fourteen booklets were produced in three languages, Shona, Ndbele and English. The FAO sub-regional office has adopted these materials for use in their farmers' field school in the sub-region and beyond. In addition, UNESCO has partnered with FAO to organize a workshop to train radio scriptwriters to prepare programmes for broadcast as part of the FAO farmers' field school programme.

B. The Arab States

There have been a number of International Literacy Day, or ILD, events held in the region during 2003. In Beirut, Lebanon there was a media campaign on the theme "Literacy as Freedom" in newspapers and on television in Arabic, English and French. A workshop on September 9th to 11th was organized on "Education and Poverty Eradication: Creating an Enabling Educational Environment for Poverty Eradication". There was also the launch of the new literacy "reading books" series by the Lebanese Department of Literacy in the Ministry of Social Affairs. This was done in co-operation with UNESCO Beirut.

In Rabat, Morocco, a two-pronged media campaign was launched on the promotion of literacy in the Maghreb states and on the issue of literacy and women's education. The

Moroccan Association, Ribat Al Fath, which won Honourable Mention for the 2003 NOMA Prize, launched an awareness campaign about illiteracy in the town of Rabat and in the surrounding area in cooperation with the State Secretary for Literacy and Education.

In Egypt International Literacy Day was marked by a seminar on "Eradicating the illiteracy of Egyptian Women and Girls". It involved the participation of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, the National Council of Women, the General Union of NGOs, the Working Culture Association and a number of organizations involved in the advancement of female literacy. A press conference on literacy rates in Egypt was organized involving the Minister of Education. A series of literacy festivals were held in Cairo and in the various governorates of the country. On Education and Literacy Day the government held a festival jointly with the Coptic Association for Social and Public Services.

There were a number of other literacy related activities in Egypt throughout the first year of the UNLD. These included a general conference on the literacy of women and girls in remote and slum areas; a workshop to determine the roles and responsibilities of NGOs in the fields of literacy and adult education; a conference of the General Union of Workers focused on the eradication of illiteracy amongst working women; and a seminar held by the Red Crescent Society on the role of the NGOs in dealing with the same topic.

C. Nations in Asia and the Pacific

Earlier in the year, on April 2nd, 2003 Thailand held its National Launch of the UNLD and kicked off a national literacy essay contest and drawing competition. The results of these competitions were on display in September at the Asia Pacific UNLD inauguration. During the Summer the Ministry of Education in Pakistan issued information kits entitled "Guidelines for the Strategic Framework of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade in Pakistan" explaining the country's policies in the field of literacy. In December, UNESCO Islamabad and the Pakistani Ministry of Primary and Mass Education held a sub-regional training workshop on literacy and non-formal education as a means of alleviating poverty.

Across the Asia Pacific Region there were a number of International Literacy Day (ILD) festivities including, of course, the events in Bangkok described above. In addition there were ILD celebrations in Dhaka, Bangladesh that included media events, the release of reports on Bangladeshi literacy rates and a cultural evening to celebrate both the ILD and the UNLD. Yangon in Myanmar was the site of that country's official ILD celebrations organized by the National Commission for UNESCO and involving a number of UN representatives. An information kit on the country's literacy policies was released, a 3-year programme was launched to increase the literacy rate from 92.2% to 95.5%, and a prize-giving ceremony was organized by students to reward excellence in essay and poetry writing, and in the creation of literacy posters. In Ulan Bator, Mongolia, there was an ILD ceremony and a media campaign involving the broadcast of the video "Literacy as Freedom".

An international seminar on the theme of "Capacity Building to Track Progress on Policy Commitments to Girls' and Women's Literacy and Education" was organized in New Delhi, India (17-21 December 2003). The Seminar brought together women and men from Asia, Latin America and Africa as well as international experts and representatives from UNESCO and the Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE).

Within the parameters of the "Education for Empowering Women Farmers" cross cutting project, two training workshops were organized in China drawing participants from the provinces of Gansu, Guangxi, Guizhou, Yunnan and Xinjiang. Prior to the workshops a series of 23 easy-to-read, locally relevant and gender sensitive learning materials, designed with the needs of women farmers in mind, had been printed and distributed in the provinces by farmers' evening schools, Community Learning Centres and local branches of the All China Women's Federation. Workshop participants were trained in methods to use the materials in educating women farmers. The provinces also have made plans for the further development of

local materials. In addition to printed materials, Yunnan Province is experimenting with establishing ICT centers in three townships. These centres will prepare teachers to train local farmers in the use of ICT and to help farmers to access information and to share their experiences beyond their own localities. This activity has the potential of introducing people living in very remote rural areas to a wider world perspective.

D. Latin America and the Caribbean Countries

In Brazil on May 20th 2003, UNESCO-Brazil, the Ministry of Education, the Senate and other parliamentarians launched the UN Literacy Decade. To mark the occasion, UNESCO-Brazil and the Ministry of Education signed an agreement for the training of literacy and adult educators and launched "Literacy as Freedom". Other UNLD related activities in Brazil included the creation of a Secretariat for the Eradication of Illiteracy (SEEA/MEC) by the Brazilian Ministry of Education. This body was given responsibility for the development and implementation of literacy policies to meet the goals of an initiative called "Brazil Literate". "Brazil Literate" is a collaboration of government and civil society to promote adult learning for those previously unable to access education. Long-term maintenance of these efforts will be the responsibility of the recipient organizations. On September 8th in Brazilia, the Ministry of Education launched the Brazilian Literacy Programme in the presence of the President of Brazil.

Peru has been equally engaged in celebrating the Decade. The Government[37] acknowledged the UNLD by establishing a target of a 50% reduction in illiteracy by 2012 as part of its National Literacy Programme. Between 2001 and 2003, 383,519 illiterate people from 19 regions of Peru received training and 128,572 were certified as literate. At the same time 600 District Committees for Literacy were created. Plans call for the training of 120,000 illiterates in 2004. From 2005 to 2012, an additional 250,000 persons will be trained annually.

The Peruvian National Literacy Programme promotes bilingual intercultural education with Spanish as a second language. Examples of projects developed across the country include: the Bi-Literacy Quechua-Spanish project with an emphasis on Environment, Gender and Reproductive Health; the Bi-Literacy for Life Project in the rural communities of Cusco financed by UNFPA; the Literacy and Citizenship project financially supported by WFP; and the Literacy and Basic Adult Education Project (PAEBA-Peru) supported by the Spanish Agency for International Co-operation.

In Saint Lucia the Official Launch of the UNLD took place on the 4th and 5th of February, 2003 as part of a Symposium on "Literacy and Gender: A National Concern". The Governor General of Saint Lucia declared the Decade open on the Island, and the Minister of Education and the Secretary-General of the Saint Lucia National Commission for UNESCO spoke as well. This two-day event featured presentations on the state of literacy in the Caribbean, literacy and the teacher, literacy and productivity, male underachievement in the schools system, gender participation in the National Enrichment and Learning Programme and presentations by regional participants from St. Vincent and Trinidad.

The Ministry of Education in El Salvador reports a broad range of accomplishments for the first year of the UNLD. Approval was given for an EFA Action Plan (2003-2015), 5000 literacy circles were organized, 100,000 people were beneficiaries of literacy programmes, and 200 teacher-training courses were established, amongst other things. Diverse activities were organized to celebrate ILD and the Ministry reports that illiteracy in the country has been reduced by a further 1% during the year.

---

37. Ministry Resolution Nº 271-2003-ED (February 20, 2003).

In Paraguay the Ministry of Education and Culture reports that it has created both formal and non-formal literacy programmes as part of its UNLD effort[38]. The formal Programme of Bilingual Education for Youth and Adults PRODEPA KO'E PYAHU offers literacy and basic education for persons who have not finished their basic education. In 2003, 24,000 persons were registered, with an anticipated target of 185,000 enrolments within four years. During 2003 curricula, educational kits, textbooks, manuals for evaluation and other materials were designed produced and distributed by the programme. New assignments were created for 624 teachers who were placed in charge of the same number of Learning Circles. A new building for the Dirección de Jóvenes y Adultos that includes a Training Centre opened in April 2004. The programme has also started a distance education component via Internet called "Aula Mentor". Special attention is paid to literacy and basic education in prisons, through Bilingual Basic Education and in-service training for teachers, experts and administrative staff.

In the non-formal realm the ministry has highlighted three programmes: (1) the bilingual programme Bi-Literacy Guaraní-Spanish that combines literacy with gender and community organization. About 3,000 persons have attended this programme in 150 learning centres in the Paraguayan Departments of San Pedro, Itapúa and Caaguazú. (2) The literacy programme "I definitely can" (Yo sí puedo) developed in Cuba is based on 65 video classes with additional tutorials. In 2003 about 7,000 people attended these programmes in 350 learning centres in the Departments of Concepción, Caazapá, Cordillera and Central. The programme expects the same level of attendance again in 2004. (3) Finally, modules for initial literacy and mathematics have been developed for inclusion in educational programmes to promote community culture, education and labour. This is being done as part of the Programme for Integrated Centres of Community Action in the departments of Cordillera, Paraguarí, Caaguazú, Concepción, Neembucú, Guairá y San Pedro.

The Centre of Regional Cooperation for Adult Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CREFAL)[39] started its work in 1951 and is a well-known institution specializing in adult literacy. On the occasion of its 52nd anniversary on May 9th, 2003, DREFAL declared its full commitment to the achievement of UNLD goals. It announced that in addition to its traditional literacy activities, CREFAL will enhance its cooperation with the National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions and will host a Latin American Meeting of Directors in Educational Planning, Adult Education and Education for Life in November 2004. The objective of this gathering will be to encourage participating countries top develop their own national literacy strategies and integrate literacy into the EFA National Plans.

In 2003 the CREFAL Directorate for Research and Investigation published eight articles and/or studies on adult education. The themes dealt with were: (1) teacher training in adult education – a review of the international debate 1979-2003; (2) andragogy – theoretical framework, principles and curricular models; (3) education for peace – a central component in adult education; (4) individual and collective self-development – case study of a successful experience in an indigenous community; (5) CONFINTEA V+6 and its implications for Latin America; (6) education and senior citizens; (7) youth and adult education, including literacy, for indigenous people; and (8) an overview on training for youth and adult educators in Latin America.

---

38. Information sent by the Ministry of Education (Dirección General de Educación Permanente); March 19th, 2004.

39. Information sent by the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) – Mexican Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO (CONALMEX); March 22, 2004.

As well in 2003 CREFAL's Directorate for Training and Education for Life offered two in-service diploma courses in literacy instruction through the Secretariat of Education of Michoacán for literacy teachers and other literacy workers. The first course, with four modules and a total of 160 contact hours, was called "Literacy – access to written culture, permanent education and information". The second course, with five modules and a total of 120 contact hours, was called "Literacy as the Development of Citizenship". In addition various expert lectures were given to the staff of CREFAL and to the interested public of Pátzcuaro. In 2004, CREFAL plans to offer a 15-day diploma course and a two-day seminar on "Literacy and Citizenship".

At the same time, CREFAL has been carrying out its current programmes of Education for Life and Work for youth and adults in Michoacán. Through this programme CREFAL provided literacy and basic education courses (on health, nutrition, hygiene, natural and social sciences, painting, household technologies, reading with the whole family, others); lectures and workshops on different pedagogical themes (like violence, drug addiction, stress management for children, and learning difficulties); and "productive workshops" for children, youth and adults (on arts and crafts, vegetable and fruit gardening, drawing and painting, professional skills training for women, gastronomy and nutrition, others). CREFAL is convinced that in order to promote literacy, social inclusion must be a first priority.

E. European and North American Activities

The United Nations Literacy Decade launch ceremony in Canada took place on September 4, 2003 at the country's National Library in Ottawa. Broadcast live in French and English, the Canadian launch programme featured Kim Phuc Phan Thi, the woman whose childhood image captured the world and defined the Vietnam War. Ms. Phuc, now a Canadian citizen and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Peace, chronicled her own learning journey and the many challenges she has faced along the way.

In Washington a special celebration to mark UNLD was held at the Embassy of Bangladesh featuring speeches by the President of the Reading Association and the Deputy-Assistant Secretary of Education. A Roundtable was held on Literacy and Gender and an exhibition on literacy was opened. A media campaign was begun involving the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) series "Children of the CODE" and interviews were broadcast featuring the Director of the New York Office of UNESCO, and the President and Executive Director of the Reading Association.

4. United Nations Agency and Other International Literacy Partner Activities

In addition to these launch ceremonies there have been a number of other activities and events that have helped to build momentum around the UNLD. Many of them feature partnerships involving United Nations Agencies and other international organizations. To encourage these kinds of partnerships UNESCO's Basic Education Division, as the Headquarters team coordinating the UNLD, organized an UN Inter-Agency Working Group to share information on Literacy Decade activities being undertaken by the Agencies. The first meeting was at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in November 2002 where agency representatives discussed how they could contribute to the launch of the Decade and to the implementation of its strategies.

One result of this initial collaboration was the creation of a special information kit called "Literacy As Freedom" explaining the various roles and interests of the UN Agencies in literacy with a special emphasis on their planned contributions to the Decade. The kit included information on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nation

Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), The World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Bank. As noted there was an Inter-Agency exhibition as part of the official launch in New York.

"Literacy As Freedom" was also the title of a special UNESCO publication to mark International Literacy Day in 2003. The volume is a collection of writings by academics, economists, practitioners, activists, as well as NGO and UN personnel who had been involved in a UNESCO Round-table on literacy. It includes pieces on the literacy of indigenous populations, literacy for women's empowerment and literacy for young girls, literacy in a least developed country and literacy as methodology for development. The Nobel Prize winner, Professor Amartya Sen, provided an opening chapter for the book entitled "Reflections on Literacy". His influential book "Development as Freedom" inspired the title "Literacy as Freedom". Since this volume is the result of a round-table discussion, it includes a final section of recommendations to UNESCO in its role as the international coordinating agency for the UNLD.

On April 6th to 7th, 2004 UNESCO hosted a second Inter-Agency Working Group session under the title "The UNLD Consultative Meeting" again at its headquarters in Paris. This second session presented an opportunity for a number of UN organizations and other interested partners to report on their activities since the launch of the initiative.

UNICEF, for example, explained that it has considerable interest in the goals of the UNLD and reported that its support for literacy is "global, broad-based and interrelated"[40]. This agency provides assistance for school-based programmes on mother-tongue literacy and life skills. It sustains non-formal education for young people usually focused on adolescent health issues and HIV/AIDS. Women's literacy is a priority for UNICEF and its programmes for them are linked to early childcare practices, micro-finance, agriculture and other income-generating activities. Capacity development for literacy trainers and strengthened literacy assessment are two other UNICEF priorities.

In all of its literacy programme work UNICEF reports adherence to certain principles of design and development. There is a focus on the professional development of literacy providers to ensure that what and how they teach addresses local problems and utilizes local solutions. Learner motivation is recognized as a key component in literacy provision especially "reaching the unreached" particularly out-of-school children and adolescents, girls and women, ethnic-linguistic minorities and rural girls. Knowledge-based programme design is another feature UNICEF encourages in a constant search for what works coupled with promoting results-based programming and outcomes-based learning. Finally, alternative approaches are valued by UNICEF and it pays attention to the diversity of learners and the contexts within which they live, searching for ways to engage technology in learning applications and solutions.

UNICEF provided a detailed rendering of roughly 50 projects demonstrating its support for literacy programmes and activities as the UNLD begins. The agency explained projects in Kazakhstan and Bolivia in which women's literacy and early childcare programmes are integrated. Support for basic literacy and numeracy was provided to Roma girls and women in Romania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In Kosovo UNICEF worked with Turkish, Bosniac and Ashalja minority groups with the result that 2300 women and girls became literate. Literacy and learning programmes for young children and adoles-

---

40. "Literacy and Development: A Focus on Gender in the Framework of UNLD", a presentation by Cooper Dawson, Senior Advisor, UINICEF/NY, UNLD Consultative Meeting, UNESCO, Paris, May 6th, 2004.

cents were supported in Uganda, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Somalia, Iran, Sudan, Cambodia and Lesotho. Literacy was linked to life skills and other programmes in Liberia, Guinea Bissau, Myanmar, Yemen, Swaziland and Malawi. Literacy for women linked to life skills, vocational and management training and income generating activities were features of programmes in Yemen, Uganda, Pakistan and Burkina Faso. Back to school campaigns have been supported in Afghanistan, Angola and Liberia, countries facing humanitarian cries or conflict situations. Capacity development projects aimed at literacy providers, NFE teachers and instructors have been supported in Bhutan, Laos, Lebanon, Kenya, Cambodia, Chad, Afghanistan, Papua New Guinea, Niger, Southern Sudan and Algeria.

A potential flagship programme for the UNLD is the Education for Rural People (ERP) initiative being led by FAO with the support of the International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP) and UNESCO headquarters. ERP has a gender dimension that fits the priority being given the literacy of women and girls in the first two years of the UNLD.

ERP has made strides during 2003 including a global study by FAO and IIEP on *"Education for rural development: towards new policy responses"*. The study's goal is to build awareness about the importance of education for rural people in achieving MDGs goals. The study found that this could be done best by increasing rural peoples' access to quality basic education and by increasing national capacity to implement basic education plans that address the learning needs of rural populations. The study is the first of a new series of books on Education for Rural People launched in collaboration by IIEP and FAO. A web page was produced for the ERP initiative and can be found at http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/.

A series of international seminars on ERP have been held. The first, on *"Education for Rural People in Asia:* experiences and policy lessons", brought together Ministries of Education and Agriculture from 10 Asian countries to discuss possible common actions to support education for rural people. The second was a workshop for aid agencies on *"Education for rural people: targeting the poor"* (Rome, Italy, December 2002), and the third was a Symposium on Rural Education (Baodin, China, 2003). Two regional Education for All coordinators' workshops where organized, one in Asia and the other in Latin America, both in September 2003 in collaboration with UNESCO Regional Offices and UNESCO IIEP. Case studies in Latin America involving Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Honduras, Mexico, and Peru were prepared and published by FAO in collaboration with UNESCO and the Latin America research NGO CIDE.

In addition to these activities, an ERP pilot project was started in Kosovo to develop a national strategy to address the learning needs of rural people there. Similar efforts have been undertaken in Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia and information will be published on two FAO websites. A preliminary project formulation mission has been undertaken in Mozambique. Two more Regional ERP workshops are being held in Latin America and in Asia in 2004. Since 2002 more than a hundred academic, public or civil society organizations have become ERP flagship members and are organizing national events under the "Education for Rural People" banner. A national event organized by ERP partners was planned to be held in Venezuela in May 2004.[41] In 2003 the European Commission approved a joint project presented by the Italian NGO ACRA in collaboration with FAO and UNESCO. The project is run in collaboration with 6 European NGOs to provide capacity building of civil society organizations and to increase public awareness of the importance of ERP in the United Kingdom, France and Italy as well as Senegal, Chad, Tanzania (Zanzibar), Chile and Bolivia.

41. This information was provided by the FAO in advance of the planned meeting.

UNFPA,[42] The United Nations Population Fund, has a mandate and programme priorities anchored created by the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994. ICPD devoted an entire chapter on Education and focuses on the following objectives each with a set of recommended actions: (a) to achieve universal access to quality education, in particular to primary and technical education and job training; (b) to combat illiteracy (the eradication of which is one of the prerequisites of human development) and to eliminate gender disparities in educational opportunities and support; (c) to promote non-formal education for young people; and (d) to introduce and improve the content of the curriculum so as to promote greater responsibility towards, and awareness of, the interrelationships between population and sustainable development; health issues, including reproductive health; and gender equity. ICPD also recognized that eradication of illiteracy is one of the prerequisites for human development (para 11.6).

Based on country needs, UNFPA supports groups both within the formal as well as the non-formal education sectors, mainly in secondary education, for those aged 10-24. Especially since ICPD+5, UNFPA's commitment to the needs of young people take center stage in many country and inter-country programmes, often including an education component (e.g. peer education and its links to health services). Complementary efforts to mobilize community groups (e.g. parents, teachers, local leaders) have been undertaken through advocacy campaigns and social mobilization initiatives. UNFPA's contribution to education goals have been in terms of advocacy for basic education, including girls' education; contributions to the improvement of the quality of education through curriculum revision/introduction of relevant content in the curriculum (i.e. RH, population/family life, sexual health, HIV/AIDS, life skills, gender, human rights, etc.), improved teacher training, development of relevant educational materials; and integration of education in all UNFPA programmes.

UNFPA's activities at the international level have included support to the Official launch of the Literacy Decade through participation in the event, and in the development of the inter-agency information kit (Literacy as Freedom) and exhibition. UNFPA has included literacy messages in all policy statements of UNFPA's highest leadership, and has integrated literacy concerns in inter-regional, regional and country programmes especially as they related to UNFPA's mandate on population, reproductive health, gender and HIV/AIDS. UNFPA continues to be involved in the UNICEF led UN Girls Education Initiative addressing literacy needs of women and girls. UNFPA has included literacy as one of the education concerns to be addressed in its programmes globally, in both policy and programme guidelines for UNFPA country offices.

Selected country level activities, as reported in the recently concluded field inquiry on follow up actions to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD+10) featured some of the following projects.

In Bolivia UNFPA's programme on bilingual literacy has served as a model to other countries on literacy programmes for women. The Bilingual Literacy Project in reproductive health, which is offered in Quechua and Spanish, focuses on gender and intercultural issues and aims to increase the level of participation of illiterates in society. The US$3-million project, funded by the United Nations Foundation, teaches basic reading and writing skills to beneficiaries and aims to improve participants' knowledge of reproductive health and basic health issues. In 2000, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) honoured the project with a literacy prize.

42. This information was provided by Delia Barcelona, Senior Technical Officer, Technical Support Division, UNFPA New York.

In several countries, health and life skills education is provided to out of school young people through specific programmes, including clubs, summer camps, workshops and seminars conducted by NGOs to address the needs of adolescents and youth especially in rural areas. Radio and peer education approaches are commonly used to support many of these programmes. "Comics" are also a very popular form of print material in these countries and have been used to send developmental messages across to a wide range of illiterate groups.

In some Asian countries (Malaysia, Philippines, Bangladesh, Indonesia, etc.) programmes targeted at women and youth workers in garment factories, as well as those who are out of school, disabled and unemployed, are making headway in terms of providing basic information on health and social services through literacy related initiatives.

In Latin American countries such as Honduras, El Salvador and Dominican Republic, programme for indigenous people have been set up with the help of international agencies like UNFPA and national NGOs to promote basic health and education services for these groups.

In several countries in Africa (Ethiopia, Tanzania, Chad, Nigeria) UNFPA is providing help to very young girls who have become victims of obstetric fistula by providing medical services to rehabilitate them and support their reinsertion into their communities. These programmes include basic literacy and life skills education for these young girls.

The World Food Programme (WFP) supports the UNLD[43] through programmes contributing to improving the literacy situation in many poor countries. Again, special attention is given to women and adolescent girls. The WFP is strongly committed to education and literacy and reports that it has supported education for more than 40 years. This commitment is reflected in its broad framework, strategy & policy priorities that include both Education for All and WFP Commitments to women.

The WFP programme goal for 2004–2007 is to contribute to meeting the Millennium Development Goals through food-assisted interventions targeted for poor and hungry people. WFP operations focus on five strategic priorities. One of them is directly addressing equitable access to education and continuing education for adults. In addition the School Feeding (SF) Programme supports Education for All. In 2000 SF fed 12.3 million children, in 2003 16 million and it expects to feed 32 million by 2005 and 50 million by 2007. WFP reports that SF is much more than food because it affects the quality of education and supports school infrastructure through sanitation and nutrition programmes. The impact of School Feeding on girls is clear, where SF exists there have been enrolment increases of up to 300% over one year.

WFP contributes to Adult Literacy through its Food for Training activities. However, literacy and numeracy training are considered as part of an overall package with life skills for practical and strategic needs of women and adolescent girls. Food for Training activities strive to build human assets, which makes it suitable for all type of situations: from development to humanitarian assistance, even displacement and migration situations.

Examples where food aid plays a role in supporting literacy can be found in many parts of the world. In Afghanistan after September 11, the school-feeding project expanded all over the country. Food for training programmes allowed adolescent girls who missed the chance to attend school to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills. But there was a need to address the post-conflict situation with ex soldiers who had never enrolled in school.

In Bangladesh WFP assists 700,000 poor rural women and adolescent girls every year. Food aid helps raising awareness about health, nutrition and legal rights as well as train-

---

43. This information is taken from a presentation made by the WFP at a Consultative meeting on the UNLD organized by UNESCO in Paris from April 6th to 7th, 2004.

ing in functional literacy, numeracy and income generation. In Burkina Faso the literacy rate is among the lowest in the world: 14.5% in 1985 and 26% in 1998, 13 years later, which represents one person out of four. Fifteen percent of women are literate as compared to 30% of the men. In the most food insecure areas with the lowest literacy rates, WFP is providing food aid to improve access to literacy courses, especially for women.

The ILO[44], the International Labour Organization has joined the international community promoting EFA. It does so within the context of the Decent Work Agenda. This concerns not only child labour but also ILO efforts on developing vocational and skills training, promoting the status of teachers, and upholding the rights of teachers' organizations. The ILO addresses literacy issues in several different ways. For example, the International Programme on the Elimination of Child labour (IPEC) has clearly demonstrated that the availability of free, quality education is one of the most important ways to keep children out of the workforce and to break the vicious cycle of poverty and child labour over the long run. For the ILO the progressive elimination of child labour and the international community's efforts to achieve "Education for All" (EFA) with universal primary education by 2015 are inextricably linked. The prevention and elimination of child labour should be an objective for education policy worldwide with free, compulsory education up to the minimum age for entering employment as defined by the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No.138).

The World Bank (WB) is another agency that has taken the UNLD message to heart. At the UNESCO Consultation the World Bank representative tabled a document "The World Bank and Adult Literacy and Education: Building Linkages"[45] which explained that the WB is an organization that spans many realms of development, from education to agriculture, from health to natural resources management, from business generation to improved governance, from human rights to infrastructure creation, from micro-credit to ecological presentation. The Bank is also an organization dedicated to the reduction of poverty and to the Millennium Development Goals articulated by the U.N.

In filling this broad mandate the Bank reports an active role in adult education in both literacy and non-formal learning. For the WB poverty reduction means more than raising incomes, it also means investing in improving health, building sustainable agriculture, forging gender equity, ensuring access to quality education, preserving natural resources and empowering local communities to play a larger role in social governance. The Bank states that for adult education to contribute to poverty reduction, it must be closely linked to these different fields where poverty is rooted. The WB reports that it has been trying to position itself at this intersection for several years in order to assist adult educators in making the new linkages and to persuade counterparts in other sectors of the critical importance of adult learning strategies within their own fields of operation.

The Belosiya Conference, supported by the Norwegian Education Trust Fund, placed a spotlight on the varied ways in which literacy and adult education are linked to new livelihoods across Africa. Studies conducted by John Oxenham and others have highlighted means of melding literacy with other development concerns in order to more effectively reach "the 900 million". The Africa region of the WB is planning a new action research study (in collaboration with UNESCO's Institute of Education in Hamburg) in four African countries to examine the interface between adult education and the growing needs for local capacity-building across sectors of development.

---

44. Facts on Education's role in combating child labour, ILO.

45. This paper was tabled by Maman Sidikou, Senior Education Specialist at the World Bank who also presented a brief paper on the activities of the bank related to Literacy and gender and to the WB activities in support of the UNLD.

With respect to the UNLD the WB reported that it has a focus on literacy and gender and has adopted a gender mainstreaming strategy to integrate gender concerns into both country and global programmes, especially MDG 3 to "promote gender equality and empower women". Knowledge creation and management in support of in-country operations is also a priority for the WB. It has supported 25 country gender assessments (including education issues) since the adoption of the strategy. It has been holding consultations to reassess the role of adult education in EFA and MDG's and has published draft papers on the cost and financing of adult education programmes, and public-private partnerships in the delivery of adult education. Several other works in progress were described.

Another partner agency, UNIFEM, reports that it has launched a publication called Progress of the World's Women, Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals, by Diane Elsen with Hande Keklik in May of 2003. The publication tracks, among others indicators, female youth literacy rates and secondary school enrolment ratios using figures from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics[46].

UNESCO itself, in cooperation with "Japan Funds in Trust" (JFIT) is working on a special project called Literacy and Non-Formal Education Development in Afghanistan, or LAND AFGHAN. Progress has been made on this project during 2003 despite security concerns, a lack of basic information on literacy in the country and a weakened Afghan infrastructure.

In January, as part of this effort, the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) organized a planning meeting on the promotion of literacy and NFE in Afghanistan. This led to the creation of a Steering Committee for the project. Subsequently, a national survey of learners' needs was carried out across 400 literacy centres in the country's 32 provinces. As well a study of textbooks and a curriculum review were undertaken to determine future needs. A number of UNESCO and ACCU handbooks and tools have been translated into two Afghani national languages. In September a LAND AFGHAN office was set up in the Ministry of Education. Since there is no organization in the country with the capacity to preserve literacy and NFE documentation, this Office has become a Literacy Documentation Centre. Discussions with ANCB (Afghan NGOs Coordination Bureau) are underway to mobilize local human and technical resources to enhance LAND.

A partnership has been established to promote an initiative to develop "Information Literate Societies". An initial meeting was held in Prague from September 20th to 23rd, 2003 organized jointly by the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) and the National Forum on Information Literacy (NIFL). UNESCO provided financial support from the special U.S. Contribution to UNESCO for 2003, and participated actively in the meeting. The objectives were to develop a clearer and more comprehensive vision of the role of Information Literacy (IL); to develop a working definition of the field; and to make preliminary recommendations for a Global Congress on IL. Forty experts from 23 countries attended the meeting.

They agreed that Information Literacy *"encompasses knowledge of one's information concerns and needs, and the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, organize, and effectively create, use and communicate information to address issues or problems at hand."* They saw it as a prerequisite for participating effectively in the Information Society, and as part of the basic human right of lifelong learning. Since this notion could be also applied to the post-literacy phase of learners' development in developing countries, participants proposed that some thought be given to integrating IL into the implementation of the UNLD in close collaboration with IC Sector.

---

46. Information provided by UNIFEM to UNESCO in March, 2004.

The Jury for the UNESCO International Literacy Awards met in Paris from May 19th to 23rd, 2003. Thirty projects from around the world were nominated for the four awards and the presentation of the prizes took place on International Literacy Day, September 8th, 2003 prior to the opening of CONFINTEA+6 in Bangkok, Thailand. The Jury had decided to adopt "Literacy and Gender" as the theme for the 2003 and 2004 prizes given that this is the theme for the UNLD during this biennium.

In 2003 the Jury selected the following projects for recognition. The International Reading Association Literacy Award was presented to the Dhaka Ahsania Mission, the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The Noma Literacy Prize went to the Panuka Trust in Zambia. The King Sejong Literacy Prizes were awarded to the Tembaletu Community Education Centre in the Republic of South Africa and to the International Reflect Circle (CIRAC). There were four Honourable mentions as well: the Fundación Alfabetizadora Laubach (Columbia) for the International Reading Association Award; the Rabat Al Fath Association for Sustainable Development (Morocco) for the Noma Prize; and for the King Sejong Literacy Prizes the two Honourable Mentions went to the Youth and Adult Literacy and Education Chair, Caribbean and Latin American Pedagogical Institute (Cuba) and to the National Guard, Directorate for Educational and Cultural Affairs (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia).

In 2004 the Jury met from May 10th to 14th at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris to award the International Reading Association Literacy Award and the King Sejong Literacy Prizes for this year. Again, literacy and gender was the theme selected. There were 28 candidates for the prizes nominated by governments. The Jury unanimously decided on the following awards. The International Reading Association Literacy Award will be presented to The Edikasyon pu travayer Organization nominated by the Government of the Republic of Mauritius. The two King Sejong Literacy Prizes are to be presented to AlfaSol (Alfabetização Solidária – Solidarity in Literacy) proposed by the Government of Brazil and to The Steering Group of Literacy Education in Qinghai Province, which had been submitted by the Government of the People's Republic of China.

The Jury unanimously agreed not to grant any Honourable Mentions or Recognitions in 2004 as a message to potential candidates for the International Literacy Prizes that projects need to give strong emphasis to: gender equality; the recognition of women's contribution to productive and community life; the promotion of positive and new role models for women and men; the illustration and justification of innovative, participatory and authentic contents and methods; and to monitoring, evaluation and both reliable quantitative and qualitative data including case studies of learners.

An Expert Meeting on Literacy held from June 10 to 12, 2003 was attended by professionals in the areas of literacy and assessment drawn from around the world. Sponsored by the UNESCO's Division of Basic Education, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the UNESCO Institute for Education, this meeting was composed of two sessions: the first on the "Renewed Vision for Literacy and Policy Implications" and the second "To Elaborate a conceptual framework for literacy assessment and an operational definition of literacy"[47]. The results of the meeting were an agreement on a definition of literacy for assessment purposes and a consensus on the need to advance the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP). LAMP, which is described in more detail later in this report, is designed to make the direct assessment of literacy skills available to developing nations of the world.

CONFINTEA+6 was a "mid-term review" of developments in the field of Adult Education since 1997 when the Fifth World Congress on Adult Education, CONFINTEA V,

---

47. Draft agenda, unpublished.

was held in Hamburg, Germany. The next World Congress will be held in 2009. The UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) organized this 90-nation conference in Bangkok, Thailand, from September 8th to 11th, 2003. The event was opened on International Literacy Day just after the launch of the Literacy Decade in the Asia-Pacific Region. Before the Conference the UIE organized two days of intensive workshops on a range of adult education subjects including adult literacy and basic education. UNESCO's International Literacy Awards were presented at the event in Bangkok.

Work in Progress: Current Projects Addressing UNLD Objectives

This chapter presents examples of projects currently underway that address objectives of the UNLD. Many of these projects feature partnerships involving national governments, donor and development agencies, educational institutions, churches, civil society organizations, as well as international and national NGOs. They are presented here as "examples of engagement" in literacy issues. No qualitative judgments have been made about these as "best practice" cases. Nor are they presented here as being more meritorious than projects not included in this résumé of activities. They are here because they are interesting for both their range and diversity, and for the various perspectives they provide to the task of enhancing of literacy skills in both developed and developing countries.

Projects are organized and reported upon in eight different topic or theme areas chosen for their timeliness and appropriateness. At the beginning of each there is a brief explanation of how they relate to the expected outcomes, strategies or areas of action of the UNLD Action Plan in annex one to this Report.

1. Enhancing the Literacy of Women and Girls

Significant progress to enhance the literacy levels of women and girls is the first of the U.N. General Assembly's "Expected Outcomes" from the Literacy Decade. What follows are several examples of projects that contribute to that goal and to other UNLD objectives like "improved quality of life", the fourth of the expected outcomes. Much more information on activities related to the education and literacy of women and girls can be found in the 2003/4 EFA Global Monitoring Report called Gender and Education for All: The Leap to Equality.

UNESCO's Institute for Education (UIE) examined a number of programmes in preparing the UIE's input for the 2003/4 EFA Global Monitoring Report[48]. While it identified some activities that address the distinct needs of both women and girls, and found projects explicitly focused on the barriers to participation faced by young women, the UIE also discovered that their educational and literacy needs are still not fully understood or appreciated in many parts of the world.[49]

---

48. Ulrike Hanemann, *Data cases Latin American and the Caribbean related to Dakar Goal 4,* Hamburg, UNESCO Institute for Education, Background paper for EFA Monitoring Report 2003/4.

49. Examples include projects in Kosovo and Afghanistan where the UIE is directly involved in providing technical advice.

In some cases, for example in the Islamic Republic of Iran, no specific gender perspective was mentioned in the programmes being offered even though 80% of the learners are women. Rather the focus was on the learning needs of rural families.[50] Similarly in countries like Sri Lanka the UIE found few specific programmes designed to change gender stereotypes or attitudes that foster illiteracy amongst women.[51] These are things that must change if the UNLD is to succeed.

An important question to ask is: what makes literacy programmes particularly important to and attractive for women? Research has identified the following five examples of successful approaches.

1. Programmes that link literacy classes to programmes designed to earn money have proven to encourage economic independence and increase woman's status in her family and community. The UIE speculates that programmes such as these may be crucial in cultures where husbands resist female participation in literacy training.[52]

2. Programmes providing women with opportunities to reflect on how their lives are organized and how they might be improved through greater contact with other women have proven to provide strong motivation for adult literacy and learning.

3. Programmes that strengthen self-esteem and the participation of women in public life are successful.

4. Literacy and basic education provision should be as close to a woman's home as possible. For example, in Islamic countries a woman's movements in public are restricted so female instructors often go to female students' homes to teach (e.g. the Bunyad Women's Literacy Programme in rural Punjab, Pakistan[53]).

5. Programmes that create networks to encourage discussion and the exchange of experiences among women also work well.[54]

An example of a project that implements some of these principles is the "Windows on Life" Literacy Programme in Kosovo. It reaches females of all ages through the use of locally developed learning materials tailored to their needs.[55] In 2001, UNICEF and the Kosovo Foundation for an Open Society (KFOS) began a literacy programme but discovered that locally available teaching materials were not suitable. One of their first steps was to create a new textbook through a participatory workshop process involving representatives from local women's organizations, a UIE consultant and a translator. The result was a book called

50. G.A. Afroz, "Literacy and Adult Education in the Islamic Republic of Iran," *Institutionalising Lifelong Learning: Creating Conducive Environments for Adult Learning in the Asian Context.* Ed. M. Singh (Hamburg, Germany: UNESCO Institute for Education: 2002) p. 221.

51. M. Kandsamy and P. Muthulingam, "Lifelong Learning for Gender Justice and Empowerment of Cultural Minorities in Sri Lanka," *Institutionalising Lifelong Learning: Creating Conducive Environments for Adult Learning in the Asian Context.* Ed. M. Singh (Hamburg, Germany: UNESCO Institute for Education: 2002) p. 252.

52. E.g. ADWAC programme for Ndrameh Jooka women in Ethiopia.

53. Farah, "Improvement in Quality of Life Indices: Role of Women's Literacy in Rural Punjab, Pakistan," *Institutionalising Lifelong Learning: Creating Conducive Environments for Adult Learning in the Asian Context,* Ed. M. Singh (Hamburg, Germany: UNESCO Institute for Education: 2002) pp. 326-334.

54. J. Jellemaand M. Mazon Hernandez, *"Mayor autonomia para las mujeres en Cuba: experiences del programa de asesoramiento SOFIA,"* IIZ/DVV, Adult Education and Development. No. 59 (2002) pp. 51-67.

55. Ulrike Hanemann and M. Elfert, "Windows on Life," *Education Today* (UNESCO: April-June 2002).

"Dritare Jete", which translated means "Windows on Life". It is being used in literacy programmes in 19 municipalities in all five regions of Kosovo. In 2002 there were 130 groups with approximately 2,250 participants meeting several times weekly in schools, houses and women's groups around Kosovo.

In July 2003 participants concluded the second level of the post-literacy programme and a textbook team is now writing level three. UIE technical support is being provided to the Ministry of Education for the development of an equivalency and accreditation system so that learners can acquire a Primary School certificate after finishing the third "Dritare Jete" course in mid 2004.

In its review for the EFA Monitoring Report 2003/4 the UIE observes that literacy is generally believed to have a positive impact on the development of women, their children and families. However, only a few assessments have been carried out to explore the impact of literacy programmes on individuals or on communities. Women who participated in the Bunyad Women's Literacy Programme in Pakistan[56], for example, were compared with women who did not participate to determine if there was an positive effect on personal development, social and family life, attitudes towards children's education, health knowledge, or the level of political participation of women enrolled in the literacy programme.

The results show that literacy seems to have a positive effect on some but not all aspects of a woman's life. It has a positive effect on personal development, self-image, confidence, personal appearance, home environment, and expectations for the education of children, especially daughters. However, literacy training alone does not significantly affect other indicators such as the health status of children, health knowledge, decision-making and political activity. Evidence suggests that "linked programmes" focusing on literacy and health, for example, are more effective. The Ugandan example described below is an illustration.

As well the UIE reports that some assessments[57] show that when literacy provision is supplemented by some kind of income generation activity, it does not necessarily result in a female student's economic independence. In some literacy programmes for women micro credit schemes have been introduced. Yet even in instances when credit was available only a few women started their own businesses. Women do not always make the link between income generation and literacy development and retention.

This relationship needs to be more explicit if literacy programmes are to be used to promote income generation. As noted earlier the UIE found that it might be more effective to offer literacy as part of an income generation programme, rather than income generation as part of a literacy programme (e.g. Las Golondrinas Programme in Nicaragua – small business and literacy for women peasants[58]).

An illustration of this approach is the Uganda government's Functional Adult Literacy Programme (FALP)[59] in Sub-Saharan Africa. Begun in 1992, FALP operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. It is the largest programme of its kind in the country. According to its year 2000 Annual Report, it is operating in 37 of 45 Ugandan districts reaching approximately 127,000 learners.

The Programme focuses on problem solving and draws on subject matter from a

---

56. Farah, pp. 326-334.

57. *Ibid*. pp. 326-334.

58. Anna Barkered, *Inputs for the 2003 Global Monitoring Report,* (Hamburg, Germany: UNESCO Institute for Education, 2003) pp. 15-16.

59. Oxenham, John, et al. "Skills and Literacy Training for Better Livelihoods – A Review of Approaches and Experiences." *Africa Region Human Development Working Paper Series.* (Africa Region: The World Bank, 2002) p. 104.

variety of areas. This is based on the common sense recognition that everyday challenges are often complex, and that people have learned to consider various factors in their environment when resolving such issues. Specialists assist literacy workers in dealing with problems related to agriculture, health or justice, for example. The project connects learning literacy to the activities the learner pursues in everyday life. This helps them to master a related skill set before turning to other challenges. This also involves follow up activities in learners' homes or in their workplaces where learning can be applied in real life situations.

In 1999 the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development with support from the World Bank commissioned an evaluation of this programme and found that:

> … *the literacy programmes had equipped the learners with practical knowledge, especially in the areas of agriculture, crop and animal husbandry and handicrafts. Other benefits… included, stronger participation in the governance of their communities in terms of frequency and in the significance of roles played, adoption of better health practices, especially through better personal and environmental sanitation and establishing successful income generating activities.*[60]

There have been some interesting developments in Asia. *"In many parts of India, Bangladesh and Pakistan there is a growing recognition that women's education, which has been neglected for so long, needs to be stepped up"*.[61] The research indicates that wherever collective women's groups have been established there has been a heightened motivation to increase the quality of life. In the "Akshara Sankranthi" programme in Andhra Pradesh, India, literacy acquisition has been quite rapid. A positive aspect of this approach is the impact it has had on the schooling of children. In villages where women have taken up literacy programmes most of the children are attending school.[62] Analyses of mother-child interactions have shown that a child's language development depends on the quantity and quality of language to which the child is exposed.[63]

Chapter four of the 2003/4 Global Monitoring Report provides a detailed analysis of practices that increase the participation of girls and women in learning and literacy. In the section "Making Public Policy Fit for Girls"[64] there are a number of practices highlighted that have had a beneficial effect. These include: creating enabling environments and mainstreaming gender into institutions (p.162-163) as well as investing in redistribution through: reducing the costs of girls' education (p. 164); measures to reduce child labour (p. 164-166); scholarships for girls (p. 166-168); income support schemes (p.168-169); and school feeding programmes (p. 169-171).

Matters of educational reform are raised including: addressing the needs of pregnant girls (p. 172); sexuality and reproductive health information for adolescents (p. 172-173); preventing HIV/AIDS (p.173-174); youth-based projects to combat gender violence (p 174-176); working with teachers (p.176-178); curriculum reform (p. 178); empowering women teachers (p.1778-179); innovative measures for out-of-school girls (p.180-181); expanding ECCE to enhance parity in primary education (p.181-183) and synergies between early edu-

60. Oxenham, John, et al. "Skills and Literacy Training for Better Livelihoods – A Review of Approaches and Experiences." *Africa Region Human Development Working Paper Series.* (Africa Region: The World Bank, 2002) p. 107.

61. Dr. I.V. Subba Rao, *Literacy and Adult Learning in Asia: A Brief Analysis of Past Progress, Current Situation and Future Direction,* An unpublished report presented at CONFINTEA + 6, p. 15.

62. *Ibid.* p. 15.

63. OECD and Statistics Canada, *Literacy Skills For the Knowledge Society,* Paris and Ottawa, 1997, p. 85

64. *EFA Global Monitoring Report,* 2003/4, pp. 161-84.

cation and women's empowerment (p.183-184).

The projects mentioned in this section and those highlighted in the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4 are examples of the kinds of projects required to achieve the EFA Goals related to women and girls.

2. Creating Literate Environments

The creation of literate environments is one of the targets of the United Nations Literacy Decade and is an aspect of the Dakar renewed vision of Literacy for All. It is also the third strategy embraced by the U.N. General Assembly in Article 10 of the Resolution on the UNLD.

Definitions of what constitutes a "literate environment" range from attempts to create infrastructures in societies or communities that encourage popular reading and writing, through to the creation of groups of volunteers who work together for the love of the printed word. The term also has been applied to union and management attempts to create environments that foster workplace literacy.

In Thailand, for example, public libraries, Village Reading Centres, mobile libraries, Community Learning Centres, National Science Centres for Education, and educational radio and television programmes are used in strategies for creating or for enhancing literate environments.

The Associates for Research and Education for Development (ARED) Programme in Senegal is continuously developing books and a non-formal education curriculum in African languages. At the same time local adults are encouraged to become writers as well as readers.

The Bi-Literacy programmes in Mexico, Guatemala, Bolivia, Peru and Paraguay are designed so that indigenous adults are able to learn to read and write in two languages simultaneously. This bilingual method is purposefully crafted to enhance the value accorded to indigenous languages and culture. At the same time the project contributes to the preservation of cultural identities within a pluralistic literacy environment.

Reflect describes itself as an approach to learning and social change predicted on creating a space where people feel comfortable to meet and discuss issues relevant to them and their lives. Reflect aims to improve the meaningful participation of people in decisions that affect their lives through strengthening their ability to communicate.[65]

In 2003 UNESCO awarded the King Sejong Literacy Prize to CIRAC: the International Reflect Circle for having developed the Reflect method for revolutionizing literacy training focusing on a "bottom up" approach combining the philosophy of Paulo Freire and the principles of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) which encompasses broader social development. This was unusual as CIRAC is not an institution or an individual literacy programme but rather a global network of practitioners. There are over 350 organizations from 60 countries involved in CIRAC, all united in having innovated with and creatively adapted the Reflect approach to adult literacy. CIRAC helps to break down institutional barriers so that people in different contexts, countries, organizations and institutional environments can share experiences, learn together, generate energy and find practical solutions to old problems.

The Reflect approach was developed in response to the excessive standardisation of many traditional literacy programmes that were based around the use of a literacy primer. The approach evolved through 3 pilot projects coordinated by Action Aid in Uganda, El Salvador and Bangladesh, with the first of these, in Uganda, starting in September 1993. The initial idea was a simple one: to fuse the theoretical thinking of Paulo Freire with the practical visualisation methodologies developed within Participatory Rural Appraisal. Each literacy circle devel-

---

65. Education Action, Volume 18, January 2004, p. 2.

ops its own learning materials through constructing different types of maps, calendars, matrices and diagrams to systematise the existing knowledge of participants and analyse local issues. At the same time as learning to read and write people compile their own detailed survey of their local environment and develop practical local development plans.

Ten years on, Reflect has evolved in response to the huge diversity of countries and contexts where it has been adapted.

Over 2 million adult learners have participated in a Reflect process and the approach is continuing to spread rapidly. The costs of course vary from place to place, ranging from $18 per capita in Bangladesh to $55 per capita in El Salvador. In the rigorously evaluated pilot projects, of those adults who initially enrolled in Reflect circles, 65% in El Salvador, 60% in Bangladesh and 68% in Uganda, achieved basic literacy over a one-year period. Other significant outcomes included: challenging and changing gender roles; improving health and hygiene; increasing school enrolment (especially of girls); strengthening productivity (for example, diversifying crops, increasing cooperative practices); and increasing peoples involvement in and control over community development programmes.[66]

The effort to create "literate environments" is not limited to the developing world. For example, in Canada and the United States there is the "Certified Literate Community Program" (CLCP), which began in 1990 in the American State of Georgia as a pilot programme to involve the whole community in the promotion of literacy. Since then the idea has gained popularity and the Georgia model has been successfully adapted in the Canadian Provinces of Ontario and Manitoba.

An example of a different approach to creating literate environments is to be found in Germany where the programme "Learning Regions – Providing Support for Networks" (Lernende Regionen – Förderung von Netzwerken) was launched in late 2000 to support the establishment and further development of regional networks. It brings together partners from education institutions (course participants, participants in self-directed learning), companies, the social partners, Agenda 21-projects, youth offices, employment offices, and socio-cultural institutions to cooperate in the design, testing and long-term implementation of innovative lifelong learning projects for disadvantaged groups.

The aim of the programme is to modernise the local basis and structures of both in-school education and continuing education in order to enable participation by the greatest possible number of people. It is a large-scale implementation of the concept of the learning society. An estimated 118 million Euro will be spent by 2006 in support of such activities. As of April 1st 2003 the "learning regions" programme consists of 75 regional networks in all 16 Laender. The German Institute monitors the programme for Adult Education and other educational research institutes. (See http://www.lernende-regionen.info).

3. Expanding Indigenous Language Literacy

One of the UNLD "Expected Outcomes" is an increase in the literacy levels of communities or groups that are excluded from the mainstream. This objective gives recognition to the fact that just as the physical environment contains threats to various endangered species, the cultural environment is replete with threats to small linguistic societies, especially to the languages of indigenous peoples. Literacy and oracy are inextricably linked to cultural survival.

---

66. Based on information contained in a forthcoming article on ActionAid to be published by UNESCO.

The issues of cultural preservation are not limited to the developing world. In many developed nations native languages are under threat. In Canada, for example, where indigenous people's communities are referred to as "First Nations", there are 641 First Nations communities consisting of 52 indigenous cultural groups. They speak roughly 50 languages, many of them under pressure or threatened with extinction.[67]

Almost everywhere in the world literacy is a complex issue that intersects with cultural, social and historical concerns. For many aboriginal peoples literacy is viewed as much more than reading and writing and the cultural stakes are very high. Given the complexity of issues related to the languages of preference and of approaches to what constitutes aboriginal literacy, the challenge has been for governments, aboriginal leaders and other interested parties to provide meaningful and sustainable options that will increase literacy levels while respecting and protecting languages and cultures that are oft times under threat.

Language forms the context for learning. In many communities the local language is different from the dominant one. This is the case not only for aboriginal peoples but also for immigrant communities in industrialized countries. This complicates learning for everyone concerned but especially for youth and adults because learning materials, textbooks and even texts written in their local language may be scarce or even non-existent. In these cases learner-generated materials become important.[68]

There are many examples of successful practice. The bi-literacy programmes in Peru, Bolivia, Guatemala, Paraguay and Mexico combine the objectives of literacy provision in two languages, an indigenous language and the national language, with community participation, the strengthening of indigenous identity and rights, the democratisation of intercultural relationships, environmental protection, and community health with a particular emphasis on reproductive health.[69]

In Australia The Koorie Educational Kit (Heritage Trust and Cultural Centre)[70] is an educational resource for educators. A Cultural centre on the Koorie People has also been opened to promote Koorie culture and an understanding of its people. It is the result of aboriginal demands for measures to combat past and present stereotypical attitudes of mainstream society that have adversely affected Koorie children's opportunities to learn.

4. Creating Inter-sectoral Partnerships to meet UNLD Goals

The building of partnerships at all levels, particularly at the national level, is one of the six strategies in the plan for the UNLD. This is so important that the Director-General of UNESCO said at the official launch of the UNLD in New York that:

> … *the success of the Literacy Decade will depend on strong partnerships and the mobilizing of governments, UN agencies, civil society and NGOs, local communities, the private sector and individuals.*[71]

---

67. "Raising Adult Literacy Skills: The Need for A Pan-Canadian Response," Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (Ottawa: Communication Canada Publishing, 2003) p. 28.

68 *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4,* p. 95.

69 Ulrike Hanemann, *Data cases Latin American and the Caribbean related to Dakar Goal 4,* Hamburg, UNESCO Institute for Education, Background paper for EFA Monitoring Report 2003/4.

70 Priscilla George, "Research on Aboriginal Literacy in Australia," (2001) p. 35.
http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/abo-aus/cover.html

71 UNESCO, *Message by the Director-General of UNESCO to Mark the Launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade* (2003-2012) 13 February 2003. Paragraph 4.

In virtually every corner of the globe government efforts to enhance literacy are assisted by, even dependent on, the work of non-governmental organizations. In Africa[72] and Latin America[73] Christian churches and religious orders still play important roles as providers of adult learning. Unions also provide adult education and training[74]. Partnerships with universities and civil society organizations are common.

Many governments strive for increased stakeholder participation to improve and expand literacy and adult basic education provision at all levels[75]. The creation of sustained partnerships and networks is seen as an appropriate strategy to secure the human and financial resources as well as the knowledge and expertise necessary for success. These governments recognize that the problems and challenges are sometimes too large for any one agency to address alone. The wide variety of target populations, socio-cultural and geographic factors, as well as the diversity of required tasks, demand equally varied perspectives, skill sets and knowledge bases.

An illustration of what this means can be found in Somalia where literacy students receive instruction through radio broadcasts. The Somali Distance Education for Literacy (SOMDEL) project, a partnership between the BBC World Service and the African Educational Trust, has taught an estimated 10,000 Somalis basic literacy, numeracy and life skills.[76] In addition to radio broadcasts, the distance-learning programme uses study packages and tutorials to reach learners, many of whom live in areas of the country plagued by conflict and a lack of resources. Teachers chosen from the community receive training and printed resource materials. Radios are also provided to communities when they are needed. This project was the first attempt at providing teaching by radio and it was deemed so successful the BBC World Service and the African Educational Trust are working on the second phase of the project.

The building of institutional networks is increasingly a part of literacy and adult basic education programmes[77]. Some organizations are even specializing in activities to promote and facilitate partnerships[78]. In what are called the transition societies in Eastern and South-eastern Europe, partnerships and networks at the national level, as well as communication with and participation in regional and sub-regional networks, are seen as crucial to overcome geographic isolation, the lack of information on external practices and policies, and weak links between social and educational policy[79].

---

72. For example, the Ngbaka project in Congo, adult literacy campaign for women in Tanzania; Christian Aid's programmes in Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

73. Examples include the Alternative education programme for young and adult persons organized by CETHA Emborozú in Bolivia, and the Education programme "Talita Kumi" organized by the Salesian Association Don Bosco and by PRODESSA in Guatemala.

74. For example in Brazil and Mexico.

75. W.P. Napitupulu, "Creative Change Agents for Lifelong Learning Communities," *Institutionalising Lifelong Learning: Creating Conducive Environments for Adult Learning in the Asian Context*, Ed. M. Singh (Hamburg, Germany: UNESCO Institute for Education: 2002) p. 155.

76. "Radio Education Helps Somalis," BBC News, UK Edition (June, 2003) http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3003676.stm

77. E.g. ECAZOP Programme in Ecuador (Administration@unesco.org.ec); Programa Integrar Brazil, Alfabetização Solidária Brazil, Bi-Literacy Programme in Mexico, Guatemala, Bolivia, Peru and Paraguay.

78. E.g. Rede Mulher de Educacã in Brazil, ALFORJA at Central American level, CEAAL for the Latin American Region; ICAE at international level.

79. D. Neiburga, "Towards EFA Goals: Situation in Latvia and Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region," Lifelong Learning Discourses in Europe. Ed. Carolyn Medel-Anonuevo (Hamburg, Germany: UNESCO Institute for Education, 2003) pp. 61-72.

An interesting example of a successful "engineering of alliances" is the Brazilian Literacy Programme "Alfabetização Solidária"[80]. This government-initiated programme has created a partnership involving universities, the private sector, and other civil society organizations. The Association for the Support of Solidarity in Literacy, an NGO, manages the project. Universities are responsible for literacy research and for the teaching programme including the training of teachers and coordinators. Governments and civil administrations work with volunteer groups to provide facilities, transportation and other support to learners. The Ministry of Education provides 50% of the monthly student cost as well as financial support for libraries and scholarships. Support is also sought from private businesses and organizations.

Begun in 1997, by 2001 the programme was running in 1,578 municipalities in over 20 Brazilian states, with a total of 120,000 teachers serving 2,410,000 students. The programme focuses on developing reading and writing skills using everyday situations and encouraging lifelong learning. Other activities include health promotion, setting up reading rooms, developing radio programmes for teacher training and a digital literacy project. The programme has been adapted to other countries including Timor, Mozambique, São Tomé and Principe.

5. Using New Technologies to Reach UNLD Goals

There are other examples of partnerships that transcend national boundaries and include an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) dimension. One European illustration is The Parent Empowerment for Family Literacy project (PEFal) involving partners from England, Belgium, Lithuania, Spain, Romania, Italy and Malta [81]. The goal of the project is to provide an opportunity for marginalized families to participate in learning activities together as a family unit. The objectives are to develop parents' literacy, numeracy and social skills while helping their children achieve these same skills. Parents' ICT skills are established as they communicate with other parents in other European countries about the project. A wonderful part of the project is that as children's literacy, numeracy and social skills increase, their parents' sense of achievement and willingness to persevere grows.

Another technology-based European example is the Alpha-Portal Literacy Learning or APOLL project.[82] This joint effort of Germany's Literacy Association and the German Adult Education Association is funded by the German federal Ministry of Education and Research. APOLL's objective is to improve basic education through the use of new media. It also aims at awareness raising on the issue of illiteracy in Germany. The project team is developing a learning platform that offers additional learning opportunities for functionally illiterate people attending literacy courses. It also addresses the needs of those lacking literacy who want to develop their reading and writing skills through private study.

One of the more interesting features of this approach is the anonymity provided to learners. Because learners are not identifiable on the web it is easier for those who lack literacy to access learning opportunities on-line rather than by "outing themselves" through atten-

80. Solimon, M. Programa Alfabetización Solidaria – una estrategia de éxito para la educación de jóvenes adultos en Brazil. Sept. 2002.

81. European Commission, Socrates Compendium 2001 – Grundtvig – European Cooperation Projects in Adult Education. (European Commission: Education and Culture, 2001) p. 65.

82. See.www.apoll-online.de.

dance at a traditional classroom course. Since the launch of the UN Literacy Decade, www.apoll-online.de has been reporting on illiteracy and e-learning.

The use of technology is not limited to the West. To provide nationwide literacy information over the Internet, the Research and Training Centre for Literacy Education at Southwest China Normal University has developed "China Literacy Online" (http://www.chinaliteracy.org).[83]

The Asia Pacific Literacy Database is a collaboration of the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) and UNESCO with the assistance of literacy, non-formal education and statistics experts from international organizations, governments and NGOs of the member states in the region. The database website was started in 1997 and has become a valuable resource for up-to-date information about adult literacy in Asia.

A particularly interesting element of the website is the Literacy Breakthrough section containing an inventory of reports and studies on innovative literacy programmes in the region. It includes initiatives to enhance community/NGO involvement, to develop learner-based learning material and curricula, to formulate policy for advocacy and awareness, and to increase the use of media and technology for literacy purposes.

The website also contains resources and updates on the MANGO project – Map-based Analysis for Non-formal Education Goals and Outcomes.[84] This is a three-year regional project that has been undertaken by the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) and by The Asia Pacific Programme of Education for All (UNESCO APPEAL) to develop computer software and handbooks for the analysis of progress in achieving the Non-Formal Education goals at the project and community levels. There are four pilot projects in Indonesia, India, Bangladesh and Philippines.

6. Using National Policy Instruments

"Policy Change" is the first of the six UNLD "Areas of Action" contained in the U.N. General Assembly Resolution establishing the Decade. Governments can enact major policy shifts to increase the literacy capacity of nations. The United Kingdom and Ireland provide two current examples.

The performance of the United Kingdom in the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) prompted the U.K. Government to establish The Working Group on Post-school Basic Skills chaired by Sir Claus, now Lord Moser. Its report: A Fresh Start: *Improving literacy and numeracy,* recommended that the Government launch a National Strategy for Adult Basic Skills. It began:

> *Something like one adult in five in this country is not functionally literate and far more people have problems with numeracy. This is a shocking situation and a sad reflection on past decades of schooling.*[85]

Based on the Moser findings, the Government of England launched *"Skills for Life: The national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills"* in March 2001 with a 3-year budget of £1.5 billion. The goal was to have 750,000 adults improve their literacy and

---

83. Research and Training Centre for Literacy Education. China Literacy Online. 2001. http://www.chinaliteracy.org/.

84. Asia Pacific Literacy Database, http://www.accu.or.jp/litdbase/. See also: *A MANGO Grows in India: Strengthening the Monitoring of NFE Activities at the Grassroots Level,* APPEAL Bulletin, UNESCO, Bangkok, Vol. 10, No. 2, September, 2003, p. 9.

85. Department for Education and Employment, *The Moser Report: A Fresh Start – Improving Literacy and Numeracy* (England: Government of England, 1999) p. 1.

numeracy skills by 2004. A revised strategy designed to reach 1.5 million adults by 2007 with an additional £1.6 billion of funding was announced in 2002.

Armed with a total commitment of over 3.0 billion, *Skills for Life* addresses priority groups which reflect major UNLD targets: the approximately 1.5 million low-skilled employees with lower than adequate literacy and numeracy skills, including young people and those employed in occupations and sectors with traditionally low literacy and numeracy rates. The strategy also targets groups at risk of exclusion as a result of low literacy and numeracy skills such as the homeless, refugees, asylum seekers, speakers of English as a second language and those in disadvantaged communities.[86]

The Government of Ireland was faced with a similar dilemma. The findings of the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), conducted in Ireland in 1995 and published in 1997, turned adult literacy into an issue of high political concern. Partly in response to IALS, in July 2000 the Irish Government published its White Paper on Adult Education, *Learning for Life* that proposed a national adult literacy strategy as a top priority.[87]

On November 15th, 2000, details were announced of an IR£5.35 billion National Development Plan (2000 – 2006), which implemented key aspects of the White Paper. Spending was concentrated on promoting social inclusion, greatly expanding second-chance and life-long learning opportunities, and on modernizing education facilities at all levels.

Part of the National Plan included the implementation of the proposed National Adult Literacy Strategy (NALS) with funding of IR£73.8m from 2000 to 2006. In announcing the strategy the Government noted that high levels of literacy and numeracy are a prerequisite for participation in a modern knowledge based economy.

The National Adult Literacy Strategy envisages a rapid increase in participation, rising to 18,000 annually by the end of the Plan. By then it anticipates that approximately 110,000 people will have participated in the programme. Between 1997-2002 the number involved increased from 5,000 to 28,000, surpassing published targets.

7. New Approaches, Strategies, Methodologies and Models

A number of innovative approaches, strategies, methodologies and models are being used around the globe to provide basic literacy, to enhance literacy skills or to create conditions favourable to learners and learning. A sampling of them is described in this section of this report. They exemplify many of the strategies and actions outlined in the UNLD plan of action.

A number of other examples are reported in the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4. It provides a full chapter on "Lessons from Good Practice" related to closing the gender gap and promoting equality in education.[88] Some of them touch on literacy. Overall, the EFA Global Monitoring Report's focus is on issues such as making public policy that is appropriate for the needs of girls and for their learning objectives: creating an enabling environment; investing in redistribution by targeting resources to needed areas and the introduction of education reforms. While these measures are centred on the issues of the parity and equality of women and girls, they also apply to other people who are "literacy disadvantaged".

---

86. Department for Education and Skills, Skills for Life – The National Strategy for Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills – Focus on Delivery to 2007 (Nottingham, England: Government of England, 2003).

87. Department of Education and Science, *Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education* (Dublin, Ireland: Government Publications, July, 2000) p. 22.

88. *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4*, Chapter 4, pp. 155-189.

The EFA Report also explains how historical circumstances can provide lessons for the future. One such example it cites is the "Kerala Model" drawn from the Indian State of the same name. The impact of a matrilineal culture and the efforts of an early modernizing state complemented one another in the creation of unprecedented social and educational developments for women during the early 20th Century.[89]

The report then turns to examples of practices that reduce the costs of girl's education and reduce child labour. These measures include: scholarships for girls, income support schemes, school feeding programmes, addressing the needs of pregnant girls, preventing HIV/AIDS, combating gender-based violence, working with teachers, curriculum reforms, empowering women teachers, measures for out-of-school-girls, and expanding early childhood care.

There are many other examples drawn from a variety of other sources that also illustrate what can be done to meet the objectives of the UNLD. The following are worth noting:

1. Projects, like the Programa Integrar of the Brazilian Metalworkers' Union that integrate training for work with general education.[90]
2. Programmes that link adult basic education with lifelong learning[91].
3. Action-oriented programmes where adult educators work under the same conditions as farmers. Two examples are the Adult Education for Alternative Farming Methods and Healthcare Programme in Argentina[92] and Frontier College in Canada that works with inner city youth, prisoners, and migrant farm workers. In both cases the objective is to build mutual trust and respect between educators and learners to facilitate learning.
4. Peer education programmes such as the "My Future is My Choice" Life Skill Programme in Namibia, where young people teach their peers sex health information, or the Adolescent Peer Education Programme in Belize which is about healthy lifestyles with a focus on combating HIV/AIDS.
5. Teacher training projects like one found in Albania that use an Individual Learning Strategy (ILS) approach that is fully adapted to any learner's learning style. Care is given to where the learning takes place and to other environment factors that affect learning[93]. Another example is the Individual Interest Promotion Programmes at Continuing Education Centres in Kerala, India[94].
6. A combination of learning and interactive networking involving female participants and mentors called "net-learning" encourages experimental learning methods and approaches[95].

89. Ibid., p. 156.

90. Bueno Fischer, C.M./ Hannah, J.: (Re)constructing Citizenship, 2002; www.integrarmetalrs.org.br.

91. Singh, M. (ed.): *Institutionalising lifelong learning. Creating conducive environments for adult learning in the Asian context.* UIE, 2002: Medel-Añonuevo, C. (ed.): *Integrating lifelong learning perspectives.* UIE, 2002; Medel-Añonuevo, C. (ed.): *Lifelong learning discourses in Europe.* UIE, 2002; Medel-Añonuevo, C. / Mitchell, G. (eds.): *Citizenship, democracy, and lifelong learning.* UIE, 2003.

92. R. Aramendy, "Learning to Fly," IIZ/DVV, *Adult Education and Development* No. 53, pp. 265-285.

93. V. Ristani, "The Challenges of Teacher Training in Albania," *Lifelong Learning Discourses in Europe.* Ed. Carolyn Medel-Anonuevo (Hamburg, Germany: UNESCO Institute for Education, 2003) pp. 159-160.

94. Kerala State Literacy Mission, Beyond Letters.

95. Jellema, pp. 51-67.

List of UNLD photographs

Africa

Mali	Parents and teachers come together at a rural primary school in northern Mali	© Teresa Murtagh/UNESCO
Senegal	Tostan Literacy Project, Non-formal education, woman at blackboard	© Inez Forbes/UNESCO
Sierra Leone	Pupils of Bombali school	© Jane Caro-Gardiner/UNESCO
Tanzania	Children of Mazimbu school	© A. Camacho-Utriaga/UNESCO

Arab States

Algeria	Education, literacy	© Bernard Nantet
Lebanon	Zehrie Lycée :Teaching on dialogue, tolerance and peace	© Bassam Jamalelddine
Sudan	Literacy class for adults	© Dominique Roger/UNESCO
Tunisia	Reading class for adults	© Dominique Roger/UNESCO

Asia and the Pacific

Afghanistan	Ferdeusi Lycée :students in the classroom	© Manoocher/UNESCO/Webistan
China	Teachers with their pupils	© Ariane Bailey/UNESCO
India	Pupils at a Bengali occidental school created by MASS Education	© J. Cassagne/UNESCO
Iran *(Islamic republic of)*	Young girl reading in a copy book	© Dominique Roger/UNESCO

Europe and North America

Armenia	Russian Kindergarten class in Gumri	© K. Hibbs/UNESCO
France	Reading class in a primary school using electronic equipment	© O. Pasquiers/UNESCO
Hungary	Pupils in a maths class in an ASP school	© Dominique Roger/UNESCO
Spain	Gipsy woman in reading class	© A.Jonquieres/UNESCO

Latin America and the Caribbean

Brazil	Literacy class for adults	© M. Soler-Roca/UNESCO
Cuba	Teacher preparing teaching materials	© A. Lopez/UNESCO
Nicaragua	Literacy awareness information board	© M. Soler-Roca/UNESCO
Paraguay	Publications for the literacy campaign	© M. Soler-Roca/UNESCO
UNLD	UNLD Launch	© UNA
UNLD	UNLD Launch, evening ceremony	© UNA

Cover:	*Ethiopia*	Literacy class, young girl writing	© Dominique Roger/UNESCO

1. Africa
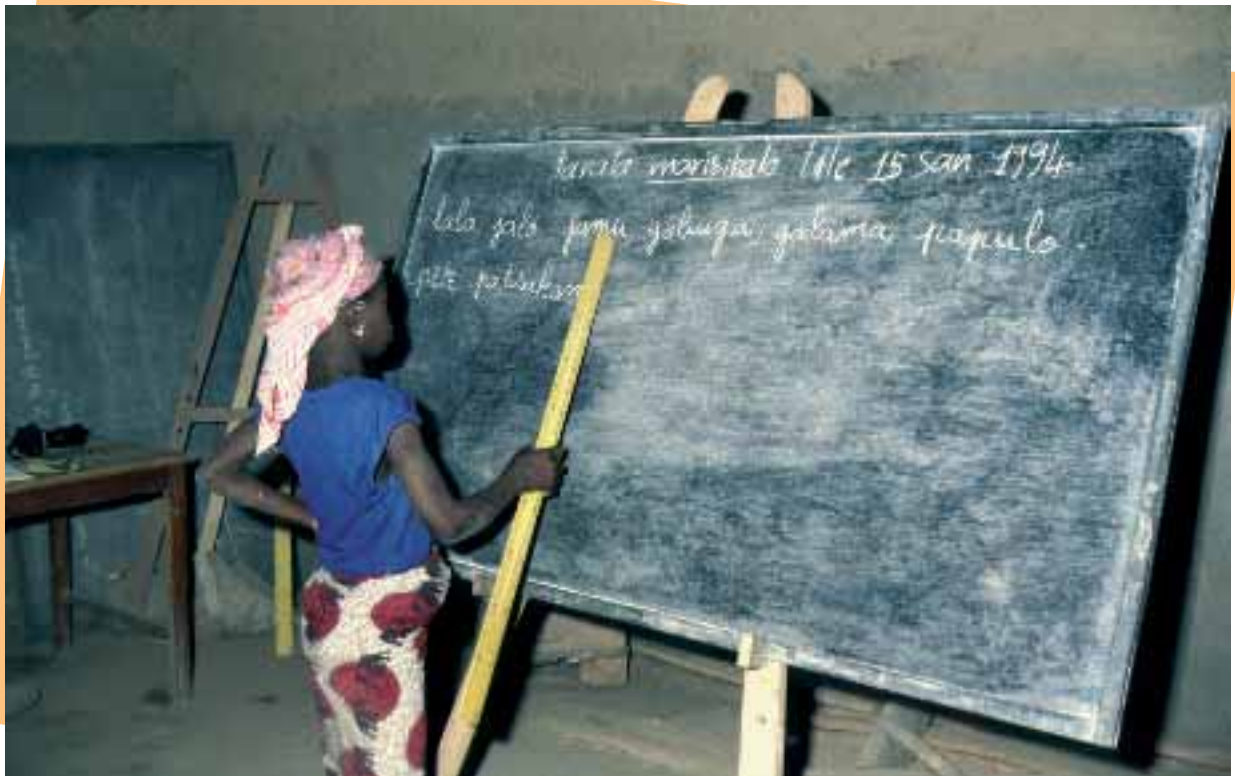
2. Arab States
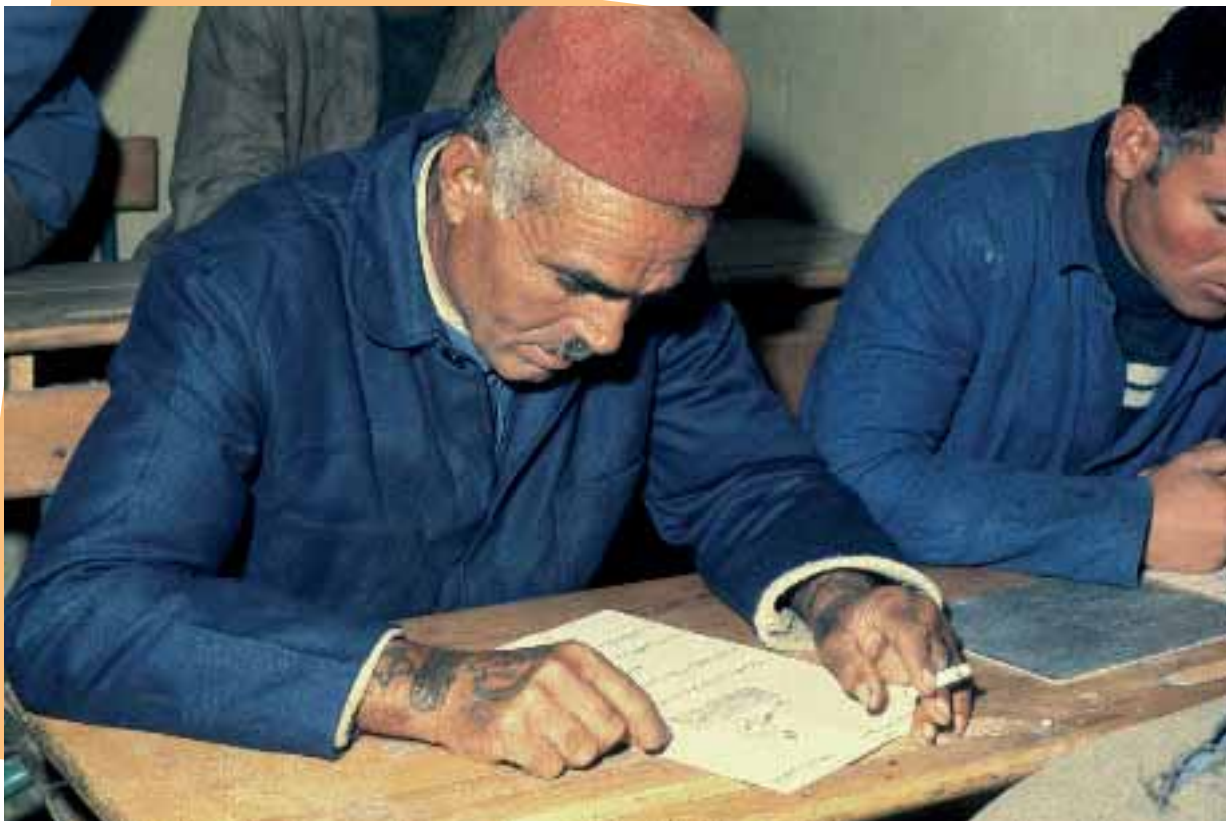
3. Asia and the Pacific
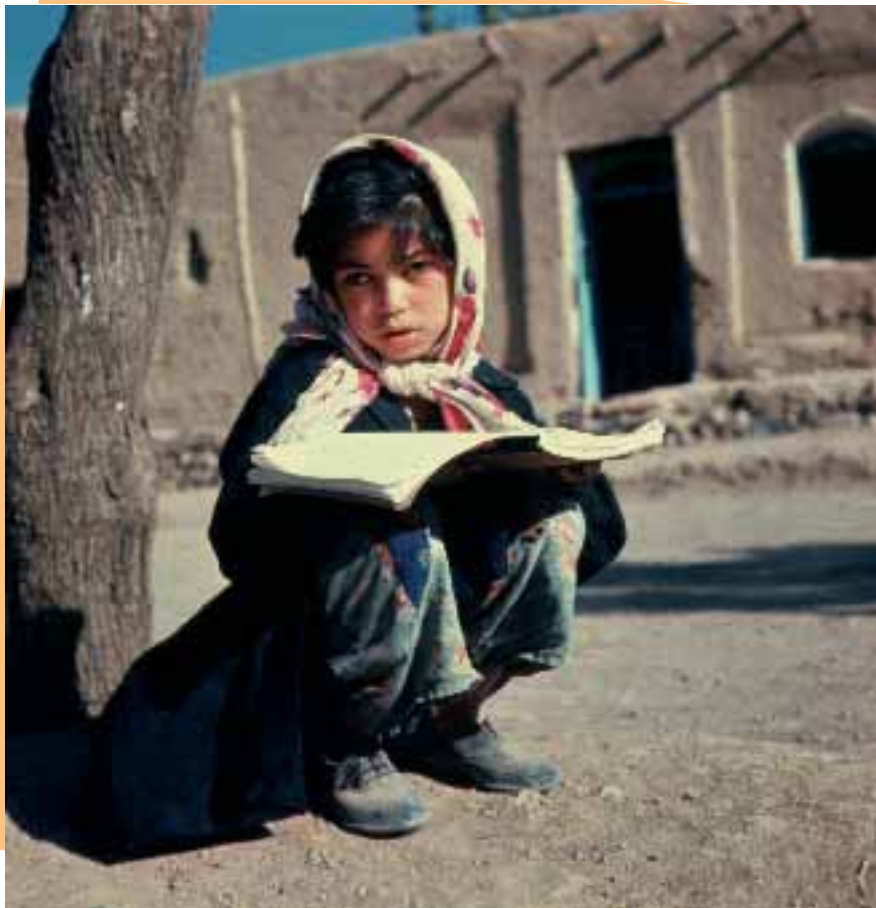
4. Europe and North America
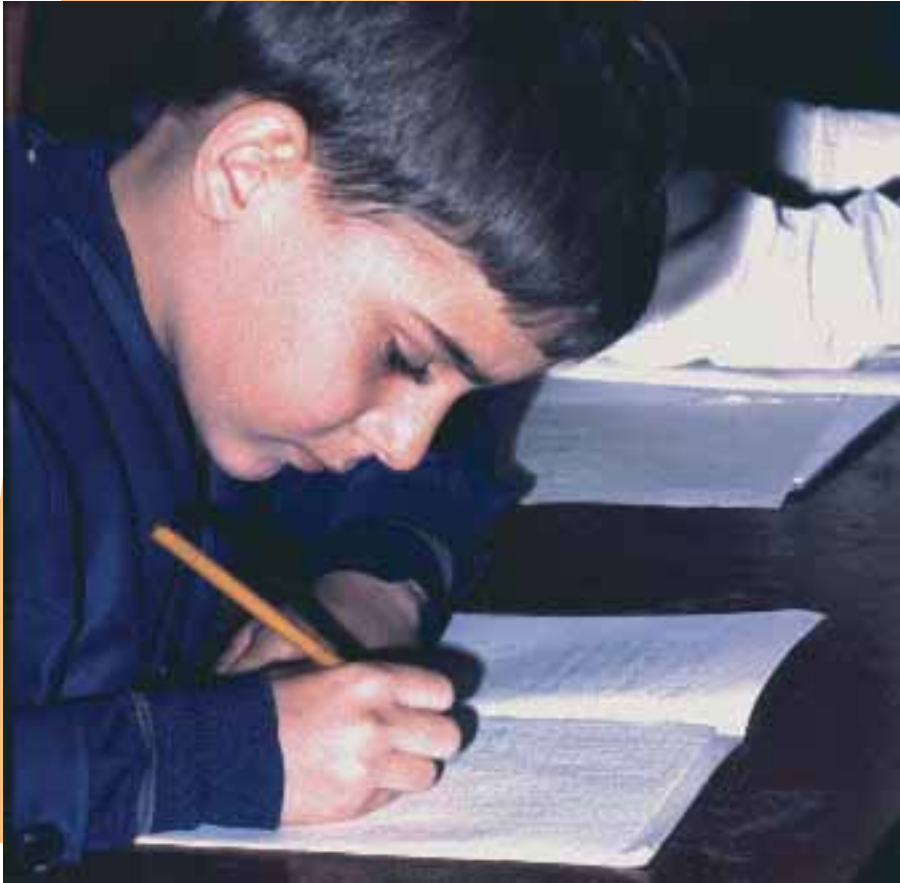
5. Latin America and the Caribbean
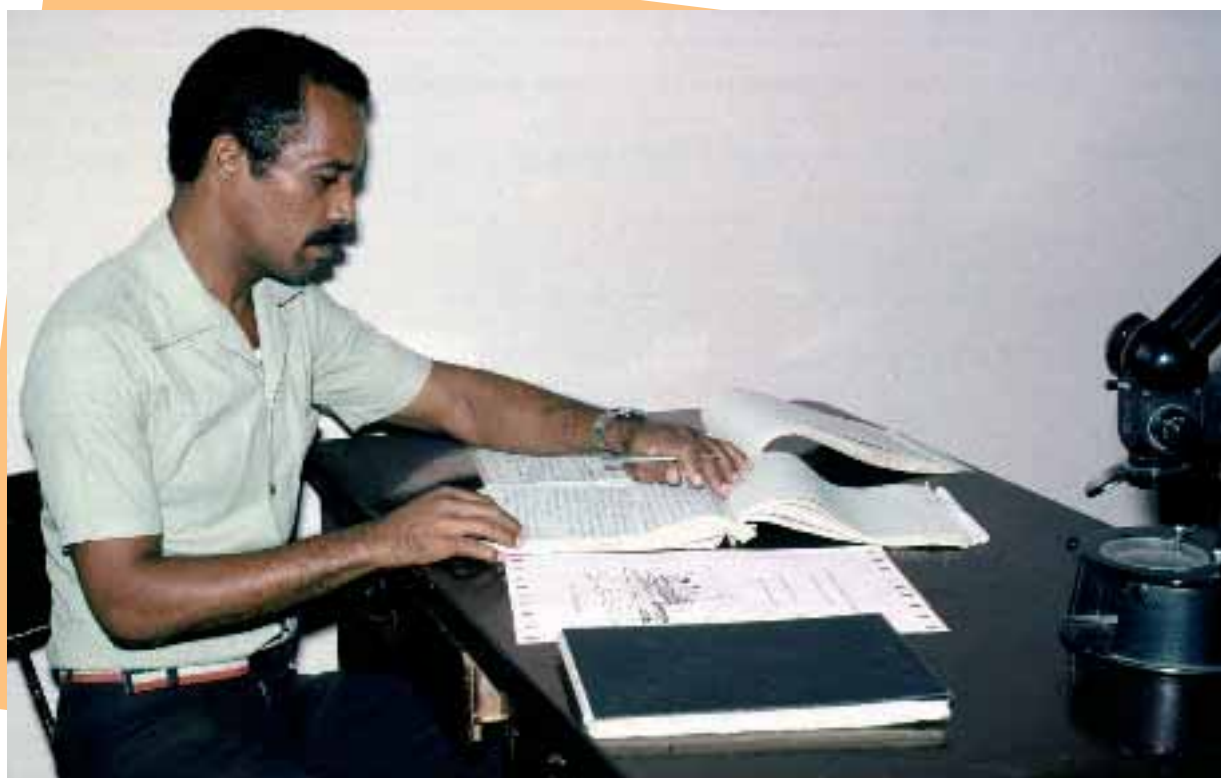
6. UNLD Launch

7. A productive community-based model in Bolivia called the Alternative Education Programme for Young and Adult Persons of CETHA-Emborozú that uses an integrative curriculum[96].

8. A strategy of reorienting rural schools as community learning centres is used, for example, in China where the role of rural schools is expanded to serve as Community Learning Centres [97].

9. Adult Learners' Weeks or Learning Festivals[98] are used as an awareness strategy to reach many in a short period of time.

8. New Initiatives in Measurement, Monitoring and Reporting

Both the sixth UNLD strategy and the sixth UNLD Area of Action stress monitoring and evaluation. Some countries have begun to invest heavily in various literacy and life skills assessments. Efforts such as the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL), the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's (IEA) "Progress in International Reading Literacy Study" (PIRLS) are examples. These direct literacy assessment initiatives support the concept that the measurement of literacy should go beyond the traditional dichotomy of illiterate/literate to take into account various functional uses of literacy in social, cultural, economic and citizenship terms. They also suggest, given the distribution of literacy in the world, that there is a need to develop survey tools and analytical instruments that will permit the implementation of data collection in developing countries. This leads to the requirement that the approaches developed be both affordable and transferable.

One of the major issues facing the global community is the lack of reliable and dependable data on the state of literacy in the developing world.[99] There is no question that good data are needed in order to understand the current literacy situation and to design appropriate interventions in literacy training and policy-making nationally and internationally. There is also a need to develop methods for assessing individual's literacy and numeracy skills, and to measure participation in formal and informal adult education and training.

To that end, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) is taking a number of steps to strengthen the quality of the data used to track literacy developments. For example as part of its new strategy the UIS is working to obtain better information from countries on their

96. Alternative Education Programme for Young and Adult Persons of CETHA-Emborozú in Bolivia. CETHA Emborozú, Centro Experimental y Generador: Educación y Vida. De la Práctica a la Teoría. Sistematización de la experiencia educativa de 1993 a 1999. la Paz, 1999.

97. Zh Tiedao, "Increasing Learning Opportunities in Rural China: School Community Linkages and Farmer's Access to Further Learning," *Institutionalising Lifelong Learning: Creating Conducive Environments for Adult Learning in the Asian Context.* Ed. M. Singh (Hamburg, Germany: UNESCO Institute for Education: 2002) pp. 179-181.

98. B. Bochynek, "Mobilising for Learning at the Crossroads of International Education Policy Frameworks: The Role of Adult Learners Weeks and Lifelong Learning Festivals," *Lifelong Learning Discourses in Europe.* Ed. Carolyn Medel-Anonuevo. (Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education, 2003) pp. 169-177.

99. *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4,* p. 85.

methods of collecting literacy data. It is reviewing estimation processes and working with United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) on recommendations to improve census taking relative to literacy assessment. UIS is also planning a review of the methodology used for producing literacy estimates for years when no survey is conducted in a given country.

The UIS is the lead UN agency on education statistics. As part of this responsibility it has launched the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP) in cooperation with a number of stakeholders. They include the UNESCO Institute for Education, UNESCO's Literacy and Non-formal Education Section (ED/BAS/LIT), various agencies such as the U.K.'s Department for International Development (DFID), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the World Bank, along with technical experts in literacy assessment. Collaboration with local and regional organisations is also expected.

LAMP is developing and testing a methodology to measure skills directly through literacy assessments to provide participating countries with data of high quality. UIS is working with The Education Testing Services (ETS) at Princeton and with Statistics Canada on the science underpinning the project. It will use several levels of literacy proficiency and be compatible with the pioneering work done through IALS on the direct assessment of literacy skills in industrialized countries. However, it will incorporate more assessment time on the component skills thought to underlie fluent reading. It will differ from IALS/ALL in that it will provide greater discrimination of literacy competence in the lower ranges of the scales to be employed. It is hoped that the IALS/ALL/LAMP common measure will become the world standard. LAMP's long-range potential in the developing world is considerable.

Currently the UIS is working with partner countries on the first phase of LAMP's implementation. Kenya, Mongolia, Morocco, Niger and El Salvador have all put in place LAMP national project teams and it is hoped that India will also become involved. UIS with the aid of international experts in literacy assessment are drafting the survey instruments. Participating countries are adapting them to their local circumstances (languages and cultures) in implementing the survey. One of the benefits of LAMP is that it is providing training to local authorities and institutions throughout the programme that will result in strengthened local capacity to do direct literacy assessment.

An additional feature of this initiative is that it will be possible to create a package of survey questions that will be available for use in other types of survey activity like household surveys or censuses. Surveys like LAMP and IALS are time consuming and relatively expensive. A package of this kind could improve the gathering of literacy statistics in countries unable to undertake a full literacy assessment. This strategy should speed up the improvement of literacy statistics and lead to more evidence-based national literacy policies.

LAMP's development is to be warmly applauded. However, it alone will not solve the data problems we currently face, at least not for the short or even the medium term. Current ambiguous measures, based on the flawed data presently available, will not permit comparisons between LAMP results and recent statistics. Retroactive estimates will have to be used to assess the progress of participating countries. Comparisons with countries not using LAMP will have to be cautiously done.[100]

The monitoring, evaluation and measurement issues faced by the world of adult literacy are replicated in the situation faced by Non-Formal Education (NFE) generally. In order to systematically measure progress towards EFA targets we need a comprehensive picture of efforts undertaken, what their quality of performance has been, and what actions are required to advance the field towards the realization of EFA goals.

100. *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4,* p. 87 and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (www.uis.unesco.org).

The main difficulties identified in the area of NFE are the following factors:

1. The absence of a clear conceptual framework of NFE.
2. A lack of data on NFE: providers, programmes, learners, teachers, input, output, effectiveness and impact.
3. A lack of methodologies to collect such data.
4. The lack of a sound information base.
5. Duplication of activities between government and NGOs and between NGOs.
6. Parallel reporting structures.
7. Different information needs at community, district and national levels.

In response to these challenges and as a follow-up to Dakar, UNESCO's Literacy and Non-Formal Education Section of the Basic Education Division (ED/BAS/LIT), initiated the "Monitoring and Evaluation of Non-Formal Education Programme" in 2000.

The Programme responds to the demand for a practical and internationally applicable approach to NFE monitoring and evaluation which is adaptable to local contexts and information needs. Meaningful reliable information, as well as indicators for use by policy-makers and planners at both the international and national levels, is required. An enhanced capacity to provide information to potential learners is also necessary.

The objective is to promote widespread monitoring and evaluation of NFE to guide the development of sound policies and planning, and to improve the management, coordination and delivery of NFE at the national and sub-national levels. Plans also call for the creation of an international methodology for monitoring NFE, including a conceptual framework, indicators, practical tools and guidelines, the development of appropriate software and capacity building efforts for use at the national level.

As a first step towards an NFE monitoring system, the UNESCO programme team has designed a prototype for a Non-Formal Education Management Information System (NFE-MIS). Non-formal educational programmes are highly diversified and dispersed; the NFE-MIS has adopted an innovative incremental approach to building integrated databases on NFE agencies, programmes, educators and learners.

Presently, this prototype is being field-tested in Tanzania, Cambodia and India. In those countries operational Non-Formal Education Management Information Systems (NFE-MIS) are being set-up. This work is in line with EFA goals and the MDG poverty-reduction strategies.

There are other monitoring activities going on in the world as well. In Bangladesh, the Directorate of Non-Formal Education, Primary and Mass Education is now preparing a computerized system to monitor ongoing education projects. Other NGOs active in non-formal education (NFE) have developed monitoring systems for their activities.[101] The Bureau of Nonformal Education in the Philippines developed a computerized monitoring system in 2000. The Northern Regional NFE Centre in Thailand is setting up a web-based monitoring system to shorten the time lag between reporting and feedback and to give NFE instructors more information.

101. Bangladesh paper submitted in the NFE-MIS software orientation workshop (March 2003, Mumbai).

The Challenges Ahead

This is the first Report to be issued on the United Nations Literacy Decade. It covers what can only be described as "the early days" of the UNLD appearing as it does about 18 months into the life of this initiative. What conclusions can we draw so early on?

Certainly the UNLD has been successfully launched and many countries are taking the literacy challenge seriously both in policy and in programme terms. There are considerable efforts being expended on projects to enhance and promote literacy around the world. While positive strides are being made are they sufficient?

The inescapable conclusion is that in too many instances the hopes and aspirations of those facing literacy challenges are not being met. Unfortunately it also appears they may not be met during the Literacy Decade. The sober forecasts of the *2003/4 EFA Global Monitoring Report* (GMR) provide little solace.

To repeat the GMR's findings, all evidence suggests that the Dakar Declaration goal of a 50% improvement in the levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, will not be met in over 70 countries. Current projections are that worldwide there will be roughly 800 million illiterate adults in 2015. Again the majority, 63 %, will be women. Estimates suggest that illiterate women will outnumber illiterate men by a projected 215 million. Even assuming growth in primary education over the next 10 years, a projected 112 million youth will be illiterate in 2015, 67 million of them female. If these forecasts are accurate the Decade's goals cannot possibly be met.

This Report describes the situation as "The Appalling State of Literacy in the World". This may seem a harsh judgment, delivered in alarmist terms. But it is not. At the UNLD Consultation held in Paris in April 2004, representatives from UN, multilateral, national and non-governmental organizations drawn from every quarter of the globe were unanimous in their view that the world still does not "get it". Participants were of one voice regarding the importance of ensuring that the literacy needs of the "862 million-plus" be met and that the case for support for the importance of this goal needs to be made more convincingly.

They concluded that the world still appears not to accept as fully as it ought the importance of literacy to development, to human rights, to economic well-being, to effective democracy, to justice and tolerance. If the world did "get it", this realization would turn literacy into the absolute first priority for governments, development banks, donors, politicians and commentators. But it has not.

Even with eight and one-half years to go before the Decade ends, time is running out on this issue. Dealing with the illiteracy of upwards of one billion people is complex, dif-

ficult and urgent. If left unresolved the illiteracy of these millions will ensure the conditions of the poor will be unchanged despite the Millennium Declaration and its Goals. After the Literacy Decade is over the continuing illiteracy of hundreds of millions of people will make hollow the world's bold commitment to Education for All and to Literacy for All.

Consequently, the messages about the literacy challenges of millions of children and adults, especially of women and girls, must be made stronger and more compelling. While Declarations and plans have been made, they are not enough. Commitment is required and to that end the following issues merit urgent attention.

1. Integrating the Policy Agenda

The first issue is the need for an effective and substantial integration of the UNLD movement into the Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) processes. The importance of clearly and demonstrably linking literacy to the achievement of these objectives cannot be underestimated. There must be a clear recognition of the extent to which the presence or absence of literacy skills affects a society's ability to deal with poverty, discrimination, poor health, social exclusion, and powerlessness. Literacy is at the heart of the social, political, cultural, economic and political well-being of individuals, communities, societies and nations.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)[102] have as their principal focus the eradication of poverty. The achievement of literacy and the eradication of poverty are linked. Since the MDG's are a critical part of the UN policy framework within which the United Nations Literacy Decade will be played out, literacy's role in poverty reduction should be stressed more vigorously, especially in support of adult literacy and formal and non-formal learning.

The same might be said of the World Bank's Fast Track Initiative designed to meet the Millennium Development Goal of the achievement of universal completion of primary education by 2015. Appropriately for this objective, the focus is on the education of children and youth. There is no doubt the education of children is of crucial importance. However, a very strong argument can be made that the UNLD will succeed only if governments and aid agencies expand their attention to adult literacy and learning as well. Research findings consistently show that parents with higher levels of education and literacy are in a better position to build a strong foundation for literacy in their children.[103] So ensuring that the mothers and fathers of the world can read should be a much higher priority than it is at present.[104]

For this reason the first challenge that must be addressed at the beginning of the UNLD is for the United Nations and its Agencies to clearly and specifically make the policy and programming linkages required to give adult and child literacy the attention they deserve both in the context of Education for All and poverty reduction.

2. Strengthening the International Partnership

The UNLD poses a challenge to the whole of the international community and every UN member state. To meet this challenge effectively will require that efforts at the international,

---

102. United Nations, A56/2 of 8th September 2000, *United Nations Millennium Declaration.*

103. Statistics Canada and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society,* Ottawa and Paris, 1997, p. 29.

104. For a general discussion of the relationship between parental skills and those of their children see R. Haveman and B. Wolfe, *Succeeding Generations and the Effects of Investment in Children,* Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1994.

national and local levels be linked. Concerted actions involving governments and multi-lateral organizations as well as by the non-governmental sector and the private sector are crucial. For the UNLD to succeed partnership arrangements need to be expanded and enhanced in order to share information on practices, to co-ordinate activities and to leverage resources.

The recent UNLD Consultation provided those present with information about what is being done to promote and support the UNLD. It also highlighted the fact that not all organizations present, even some those within the UN family, are aware of the priority that the United Nations General Assembly has given to literacy. Literacy connects, in policy and programme terms, to just about everything that the United Nations does in the fields of human rights, health, security, economic development, cultural promotion, heritage preservation, education, science and the promotion of democracy and the rule of law.

Consequently, just as the UN must act to ensure that literacy is integrated into the policy agenda of the EFA and MDG's, direction is required to assure that all UN agencies connect literacy to their strategies and missions. In addition, and to support these UN directions, UNESCO's capacity to coordinate the UNLD needs to be strengthened both in financial and human resource terms.

Key to the success of a UNLD partnership approach will be the extent to which NGO's and civil society organizations have the resources and the scope for action they require to be able to play a leading role in addressing the world's literacy challenges. Literacy's ultimate success will come not from the top but from the grass roots, in communities at the local level. Multilateral and bilateral donor programmes and policies should be encouraged to support NGO and community partnerships during the UNLD, especially in the field of adult literacy.

3. Reporting on Results

The United Nations must be able to document and report on the progress that member states make towards the achievement of the goals it has established for the Decade over the life of the initiative to 2012. So a third challenge is the need to measure the impact of the UNLD on the global literacy situation.

The EFA Global Monitoring Report, through its inclusion of literacy as a principal theme and by the special Literacy Report scheduled for release in late 2005, provides an important instrument to review what is taking place in a macro sense. However, actions to advance literacy depend on national and sub-national interest, activity, resources and policies. Member states need further encouragement to set clear UNLD goals as part of their EFA National Plans of Action as stipulated in the UNLD Action Plan. A preliminary analysis of some of these EFA plans suggests that this is not be done as fully as intended.[105]

The UN has approved the UNLD International Plan of Action that calls for the planning, coordinating, implementing and financing of programmes for Literacy for All to take place at the national level. It also calls on member states to give priority to literacy in the development and implementation of their Education for All national plans.

The successful implementation of the Literacy Decade requires that Literacy for All be the central focus of all Education for All plans and programmes. Thus, it is necessary to remember that a plan for the Literacy Decade and its implementation at the national level must be incorporated in the national Education for All plan and its implementa-

---

105. A Draft Discussion Paper to propose: "A Guide to Benchmark, Monitor Progress and Report on the Results of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD)", April 6th, 2004, UNESCO, unpublished.

tion. Where the national Education for All plan has been formulated, the Literacy for All component can be added as a supplement. Where the national Education for All plan is being finalized, it would be appropriate to incorporate the Literacy for All component within it.[106]

Consequently member states need to set for themselves short, medium and long term UNLD objectives so that they can assess, as the Decade progresses, where they are with respect to the expected outcomes and areas of activity of the UNLD Plan of Action and provide information through UNESCO, the international coordinator, to the UN General Assembly through biennial reporting.

4. Securing the Political Will and Financial Resources Required

The fourth challenge is to secure the political will and the financial resources required to meet the literacy challenges countries face. The case must be made for the importance of investments in literacy and basic education both for children but also for adults. While there is a broad recognition of the importance of investing in the future through the education of children, the current situation in the world, with well over 860 million illiterate adults in the world, cannot continue.

Resources are not limitless, however. So it is important that the literacy community develops the arguments and the costing models required to make the business case for investments in adult literacy. The research and analysis required needs to be done on a priority basis. Only then will it be possible to say "… this is what needs to be done to meet the goals the world has set for the literacy of adults by 2015, and this is how much it will cost to do it".

5. Generating Increased Momentum

The fifth challenge, related to the fourth, is based on evidence suggesting that while there is a growing basic awareness of the Decade around the world, the intentions that lay behind it, the plans that have been established for it, and the manner in which individuals and organizations can engage in achieving its objectives are less well known and understood. The challenge is to promote the UNLD's objectives to ensure that their existence becomes common knowledge for policy makers, publics and practitioners everywhere. That is not the case at present. A sustained communications effort is required. As part of such an approach, the international community might consider the creation of a "branding strategy" to encourage individuals and organizations to identify their efforts with the UNLD.

6. Conclusions

The UNLD presents those who are concerned about literacy with an unparalleled opportunity to encourage governments, agencies and civil society organizations to increase their efforts to meet the literacy and non-formal education targets set for the UNLD and for EFA.

The initial effort has been to launch the UNLD internationally, regionally and nationally. This activity has involved sizeable human and financial investments throughout 2003 and in early 2004. There has neither been the time nor the resources required to document how various parties have responded to the UNLD call to action.

---

106. United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for All; International Plan of Action: implementation of General Assembly Resolution 56/116, A/57/218, p. 8.

The information contained in this Report on many new approaches to the provision of literacy skills could inspire hope. They testify to the fact that we are on the right path. However real diligence, strength of commitment, relentless effort and appropriate resources are required if the United Nations is to meet its objectives for 2012 and if the EFA Goals are to be met by 2015.

While there may be room for hope, a heavy dose of realism is in order. The only conclusion to be drawn in mid-2004, roughly 18 months after the launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade, is that the world is unlikely to meet the literacy challenges that lie before it if current policies and practices remain unchanged. However, there can be no doubt that the costs of such a failure will be very high.

T H E   U N L D   I N T E R N A T I O N A L   P L A N   O F   A C T I O N

When it passed Resolution 56/116 entitled: *The United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for All,* the United Nations General Assembly specified the outcomes it expects to occur, the strategies it wishes to be used and the actions it wants to be taken to advance the UNLD agenda during its ten year span. The following three Articles are drawn from the Resolution.

Article 9: Expected Outcomes

With respect to what is to be achieved by the Decade the Assembly continued:

"National governments, local authorities, international agencies and all stakeholders are to ensure that by the end of the Literacy Decade, the Literacy for All thrust of Education for All will yield the expected outcomes. Those outcomes are:

a) Significant progress toward the 2015 Dakar goals (iii), (iv) and (v), in particular, a recognizable increase in the absolute numbers of those who are literate among:

1. Women – accompanied by reduction in gender disparities;

2. Excluded pockets of population in countries that are otherwise considered to have high literacy rates;

3. Regions of greatest needs, namely, Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and E-9 countries;

b) Attainment by all learners, including children in school, of a mastery level of learning in reading, writing, numeracy, critical thinking, positive citizenship values and other life skills;

c) Dynamic literate environments, especially in schools and communities of the priority groups, so that literacy will be sustained and expanded beyond the Literacy Decade,

d) Improved quality of life (poverty reduction, increased income, improved health, greater participation, citizenship awareness and gender sensitivity) among those who have participated in the various educational programmes under EFA."

Article 10: Strategies

Expectations were not established in a vacuum, there were specific plans suggested to achieve the outcomes desired:

In order to attain the above-mentioned outcomes, the implementation process of the Literacy Decade needs to place a focus on the following as principal strategies. They are essential in attaining and maintaining the above outcomes but are largely overlooked currently. Those principal strategies are:

a) Placing literacy at the centre of all levels of national education systems and developmental efforts;

b) Adopting a two-pronged approach giving equal importance to both formal and non-formal education modalities with synergy between the two;

c) Promoting an environment supportive of uses of literacy and a culture of reading in schools and communities;

    d) Ensuring community involvement in literacy programmes and their ownership by communities;

    e) Building partnerships at all levels, particularly at the national level, between the government, civil society, the private sector and local communities, as well as at the sub-regional, regional and international levels;

    f) Developing systematic monitoring and evaluation processes at all levels, supported by research findings and databases.[107]

Article 11: Six Areas for Action to Implement Literacy for All

These were the areas for action outlined in the initial U.N. Resolution. Since they are quite lengthy and detailed, a summary rather than a verbatim rendering is provided here.[108]

4.3.1 Policy change

Policies must provide a framework for local participation in literacy, including multilingual approaches and freedom of expression. National policy environments must link literacy promotion with strategies of poverty reduction and with programmes in agriculture, health, HIV/AIDS prevention, conflict resolution and other social concerns.

4.3.2 Development of flexible programmes to suit different needs

Diverse and meaningful literacies require flexible modes of acquisition and delivery, using appropriate materials and languages, focusing on relevant purposes, and generating interesting, culturally relevant and gender-sensitive materials at the local level. Well-trained non-formal facilitators will respect learners' needs. Programmes should enable learners to move on to more formal learning opportunities.

4.3.3 Capacity-building for literacy workers

As well as increasing and improving the training of literacy facilitators, capacity building will focus on areas that need strengthening in particular countries. These may include the planning and management of programmes, research and documentation, material production and curriculum design.

4.3.4 Research to understand problems and their solution

New policies for literacy will be most effective when they are based on the results of empirical research. This will answer questions such as: what is the long-term impact of literacy? How can local communities better participate? What is the extent of civil society engagement in literacy? Studies, databases and papers will make the outcomes of this research widely available.

4.3.5 Community participation

Community participation: strong community ownership of the purposes and processes of literacy will result in its effective use. This requires good communication between government and communities, inter-community networks, community learning centres and other ways of ensuring that literacies are relevant and useful to people in their daily lives and serve their aspirations.

4.3.6 Monitoring and evaluation to measure progress

Better literacy indicators are necessary to show what progress is made during the Decade, both in terms of literacy rates and numbers, and in terms of the impact of literacy. UNESCO will work with its institutes and its partners to find improved ways to measure literacy.

---

107. United Nations General Assembly, United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all; International Plan of Action; implementation of General Assembly resolution 56/116, A/57/218, pp.4-5.

108. This abbreviated description of the Key Areas for Action are taken from the UNESCO Website (http://portal.unesco.org/education), *"What is the United Nations Literacy Decade?"*.

S TATISTICAL T ABLES
ON L ITERACY

Table 1 — Estimated number of adult illiterates - population aged 15 and over, 1990, 2000 and 2015

| | Adult illiterates (15+) | | | | | | Percentage change | |
| | 1990 | | 2000 | | 2015 | | | |
	Total (000 000)	F %	Total (000 000)	F %	Total (000 000)	F %	1990 to 2000	2000 to 2015
World	879	63	862	64	799	63	–2,0	–7,3
Developed and transition countries	22	70	15	67	8	61	–32,2	–49,5
Developing countries of which	857	63	847	64	792	64	–1,2	–6,5
Sub-Saharan Africa	131	61	136	61	133	61	3,5	–2,3
Arab States	62	63	67	64	71	64	8,1	4,9
East Asia and the Pacific	233	69	186	71	114	73	–20,0	–38,8
South and West Asia	382	60	412	61	437	62	7,9	5,9
Latin America and the Caribbean	42	56	39	56	33	54	–6,4	–15,8

Table 2 — Estimated adult literacy rate (population aged 15 and over) by gender, 1990, 2000 and 2015

| | Adult Literacy rates (%) | | | | | | | | |
| | 1990 | | | 2000 | | | 2015 | | |
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
World	75,3	81,7	68,9	79,7	85,2	74,2	85,0	89,0	81,0
Developed and transition countries	97,7	98,5	96,9	98,6	99,0	98,1	99,3	99,4	99,2
Developing countries of which	67,0	75,9	57,9	73,6	81,0	66,1	81,3	86,5	76,1
Sub-Saharan Africa	49,2	59,3	39,5	60,3	68,9	52,0	73,9	79,7	68,2
Arab States	50,2	63,8	35,8	60,1	71,7	47,8	71,7	80,1	62,9
East Asia and the Pacific	80,3	88,1	72,2	86,6	92,5	80,6	93,3	96,5	90,1
South and West Asia	47,5	59,7	34,5	55,3	66,4	43,6	65,6	74,5	56,3
Latin America and the Caribbean	85,1	86,8	83,4	88,9	89,9	87,9	92,9	93,2	92,5

Table 3 — Nine countries with high illiteracy: trends and projections to 2015

| | Adult literacy rates | | | | | Adult illiterates | | | | |
| | % | | | % changes | | (000 000) | | | % changes | |
	1990	2000	2015	1990 to 2000	2000 to 2015	1990	2000	2015	1990 to 2000	2000 to 2015
Bangladesh	34,2	40,0	47,2	16,9	17,9	41,9	50,6	64,9	20,6	28,4
Brazil	82,0	86,9	91,8	5,9	5,6	17,4	15,9	12,5	–8,5	–21,4
China	78,3	85,2	92,9	8,8	9,1	181,3	141,9	80,5	–21,7	–43,3
Egypt	47,1	55,3	65,9	17,4	19,2	17,9	19,6	21,0	9,8	7,3
Ethiopia	28,6	39,1	56,4	36,7	44,2	18,8	21,0	21,8	11,6	3,7
India	49,3	57,2	67,9	16,0	18,7	272,4	287,0	288,4	5,3	0,5
Indonesia	79,5	86,8	93,6	9,2	7,8	23,9	19,4	12,1	–19,0	–37,5
Nigeria	48,7	64,0	81,4	31,6	27,2	23,7	22,5	18,0	–5,1	–20,0
Pakistan	35,4	43,2	55,3	22,1	28,1	41,2	46,7	56,2	13,4	20,3

Table 4   Regional adult illiteracy rate and population by gender

Continents, major areas and groups of countries	Year	Population aged 15 years and over					
		Illiteracy rate (%)			Illiterate population (000 000)		
		MF	M	F	MF	M	F
World	1990	24,7	18,3	31,1	879	325	554
	2000	20,3	14,8	25,8	862	313	549
	2015	15,0	11,0	19,0	799	292	507
Africa	1990	51,2	40,2	61,8	176	68	108
	2000	40,2	30,9	49,2	183	70	113
	2015	26,8	20,5	33,1	179	68	111
America	1990	9,0	8,0	10,0	45	20	26
	2000	6,9	6,3	7,5	42	18	23
	2015	4,6	4,3	4,8	35	16	19
Asia	1990	30,2	21,5	39,4	640	232	408
	2000	24,4	17,0	32,1	625	221	404
	2015	17,7	12,4	23,1	579	205	374
Europe	1990	2,8	1,6	3,9	16	4	12
	2000	1,8	1,1	2,4	11	3	8
	2015	0,8	0,6	1,0	5	2	3
Oceania	1990	7,1	6,0	8,3	1,36	0,57	0,79
	2000	6,1	5,2	7,0	1,37	0,58	0,79
	2015	5,0	4,3	5,6	1,36	0,58	0,78
Less Developed Regions	1990	33,0	24,1	42,1	857	318	539
	2000	26,4	19,0	33,9	847	308	539
	2015	18,7	13,5	23,9	792	289	503
Sub-Saharan Africa	1990	50,8	40,7	60,5	131	52	80
	2000	39,7	31,1	48,0	136	53	83
	2015	26,1	20,3	31,8	133	52	81
Latin America and the Caribbean	1990	14,9	13,2	16,6	42	18	24
	2000	11,1	10,1	12,1	39	17	22
	2015	7,1	6,8	7,5	33	15	18
East Asia and the Pacific	1990	19,8	12,0	27,9	231	71	160
	2000	13,5	7,6	19,5	185	53	132
	2015	6,8	3,6	10,0	113	30	83
South and West Asia	1990	52,5	40,3	65,5	382	152	230
	2000	44,7	33,6	56,4	412	160	253
	2015	34,4	25,5	43,7	437	166	271
Arab States and North Africa	1990	49,8	36,2	64,2	62	23	39
	2000	39,9	28,3	52,2	67	24	43
	2015	28,3	19,9	37,1	71	25	46
Least Developed Countries (LDC)	1990	57,3	46,1	68,2	165	66	99
	2000	48,4	38,3	58,4	185	73	112
	2015	36,1	28,5	43,7	207	82	125
More Developed Regions and Countries in Transition	1990	2,3	1,5	3,1	22	7	15
	2000	1,4	1,0	1,9	15	5	10
	2015	0,7	0,6	0,8	8	3	5
E-9 Countries	1990	33,9	24,4	43,9	626	231	395
	2000	27,2	19,3	35,5	609	220	390
	2015	19,4	13,9	25,2	558	202	357

Note: **More developed regions** include: North America and Western Europe (minus Cyprus and Malta) and Australia, Japan, New Zealand.
Countries in transition include: Central Asia (minus Mongolia), Central and Eastern (minus Turkey)
Less developed regions include: Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Caribbean, Eastern Asia and the Pacific (minus Australia, Japan and New Zealand), South and Western Asia, Arab States and North Africa, Cyprus, Malta, Mongolia, Turkey.
Population data are based on UN population estimates, 2000.

Table 5　Regional youth illiteracy rate and population by gender

Continents, major areas and groups of countries	Year	Population aged 15 years and over					
		Illiteracy rate (%)			Illiterate population (000 000)		
		MF	M	F	MF	M	F
World	1990	15,8	11,8	20,0	157	60	97
	2000	13,2	10,1	16,6	141	55	86
	2015	9,5	7,5	11,7	113	46	67
Africa	1990	33,6	25,4	41,8	40	15	25
	2000	23,7	18,4	29,0	38	15	23
	2015	14,1	11,8	16,4	32	13	18
America	1990	5,1	5,1	5,1	7	3	3
	2000	3,6	3,7	3,4	5	3	2
	2015	2,1	2,3	1,9	3	2	1
Asia	1990	17,2	12,6	22,1	110	41	69
	2000	14,8	10,9	19,0	97	37	60
	2015	10,8	8,1	13,6	78	30	47
Europe	1990	0,5	0,4	0,6	0,53	0,22	0,31
	2000	0,3	0,3	0,4	0,32	0,14	0,18
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,3	0,19	0,09	0,10
Oceania	1990	6,0	5,1	7,0	0,26	0,11	0,15
	2000	5,7	4,9	6,4	0,26	0,12	0,14
	2015	4,4	3,8	5,0	0,24	0,11	0,13
Less Developed Regions	1990	19,2	14,3	24,3	157	60	97
	2000	15,8	12,0	19,9	140	54	86
	2015	11,0	8,6	13,4	113	45	67
Sub-Saharan Africa	1990	33,5	25,9	41,0	31	12	19
	2000	23,7	18,7	28,7	30	12	18
	2015	14,2	11,9	16,6	26	11	15
Latin America and the Caribbean	1990	7,3	7,3	7,2	6	3	3
	2000	5,0	5,2	4,7	5	3	2
	2015	2,9	3,3	2,6	3	2	1
East Asia and the Pacific	1990	4,9	3,1	6,9	18	6	12
	2000	2,8	2,0	3,6	9	3	6
	2015	1,2	1,0	1,5	4	2	2
South and West Asia	1990	38,4	28,9	48,8	87	34	53
	2000	30,3	22,5	38,8	83	32	51
	2015	20,8	15,7	26,1	69	27	42
Arab States	1990	33,5	22,8	44,9	14	5	9
	2000	24,0	16,9	31,5	13	5	8
	2015	14,9	11,4	18,6	10	4	6
Least Developed Countries (LDC) and North Africa	1990	43,9	34,6	53,3	44	18	27
	2000	34,7	27,4	42,2	46	18	28
	2015	22,8	18,7	26,9	44	18	26
More Developed Regions and Countries in Transition	1990	0,4	0,4	0,5	0,77	0,34	0,43
	2000	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,50	0,23	0,27
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,36	0,18	0,18
E-9 Countries	1990	18,9	14,1	23,9	107	41	66
	2000	16,1	12,2	20,3	93	36	57
	2015	11,3	8,7	14,1	73	29	44

Note:　**More developed regions** include: North America and Western Europe (minus Cyprus and Malta) and Australia, Japan, New Zealand.
Countries in transition include: Central Asia (minus Mongolia), Central and Eastern Europe (minus Turkey)
Less developed regions include: Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Caribbean, Eastern Asia and the Pacific (minus Australia, Japan and New Zealand), South and Western Asia, Arab States and North Africa, Cyprus, Malta, Mongolia, Turkey.
Population data are based on UN population estimates, 2000.

Table 6
Estimates and projections of youth illiteracy for population aged between 15 and 24 years old, by country and by gender 1990, 2000, 2015

Country	Year	Illiteracy rate (%) Total	Male	Female	Illiterate population (000) Total	Male	Female	Total population (000) Total	Male	Female
Albania	1990	5,2	2,6	8,1	34	9	25	641	330	311
	2000	2,2	0,9	3,6	12	3	9	550	285	265
	2015	0,7	0,2	1,2	4	1	3	578	297	281
Algeria	1990	22,7	13,9	31,9	1 161	363	797	5 108	2 609	2 498
	2000	11,5	6,8	16,4	758	227	530	6 585	3 360	3 226
	2015	3,7	2,1	5,3	251	74	177	6 867	3 505	3 361
Argentina	1990	1,8	2,0	1,6	97	54	43	5 271	2 659	2 612
	2000	1,4	1,7	1,2	96	56	39	6 658	3 367	3 291
	2015	1,0	1,2	0,7	67	42	25	6 933	3 516	3 417
Armenia	1990	0,5	0,3	0,6	3	1	2	561	285	277
	2000	0,3	0,2	0,3	2	1	1	689	351	338
	2015	0,1	0,1	0,1	1	0	0	506	260	246
Bahamas	1990	3,5	4,6	2,5	2	1	1	54	27	27
	2000	2,8	3,8	1,7	2	1	0	56	28	27
	2015	1,9	2,8	1,0	1	1	0	61	31	30
Bahrain	1990	4,4	3,8	5,0	3	2	2	79	42	37
	2000	1,6	1,8	1,4	2	1	1	100	51	48
	2015	0,5	0,8	0,2	1	1	0	124	63	61
Bangladesh	1990	58,0	49,3	66,8	13 098	5 791	7 250	22 598	11 746	10 852
	2000	51,6	43,3	60,3	14 441	6 267	8 168	28 000	14 457	13 542
	2015	41,9	34,9	49,2	14 781	6 338	8 451	35 300	18 138	17 162
Barbados	1990	0,2	0,2	0,2	0	0	0	49	25	24
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	0	0	0	42	21	21
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	0	0	0	34	17	17
Belarus	1990	0,2	0,2	0,2	3	1	1	1 416	706	710
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	3	2	2	1 582	796	786
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	2	1	1	1 090	558	533
Belize	1990	4,0	4,6	3,3	1	1	1	37	19	19
	2000	2,0	2,7	1,3	1	1	0	49	25	24
	2015	0,7	1,2	0,2	0	0	0	57	29	28
Benin	1990	59,6	43,4	75,3	497	179	318	834	412	422
	2000	46,9	29,5	64,0	596	187	409	1 272	633	639
	2015	29,9	14,9	44,9	576	143	433	1 928	964	964
Bolivia	1990	7,4	3,8	11,0	97	25	72	1 303	648	654
	2000	4,2	2,0	6,4	68	16	51	1 625	818	807
	2015	1,3	0,6	2,1	29	7	23	2 236	1 138	1 098
Botswana	1990	16,7	20,7	12,8	43	26	16	255	127	128
	2000	11,7	15,5	7,9	40	27	14	346	174	173
	2015	6,2	9,0	3,4	26	19	7	416	209	207
Brazil	1990	8,2	9,5	6,9	2 367	1 373	994	28 955	14 479	14 477
	2000	4,7	6,0	3,3	1 585	1 034	551	33 930	17 096	16 834
	2015	2,5	3,8	1,1	786	614	173	31 786	16 109	15 677
Brunei Darussalam	1990	2,1	2,4	1,9	1	1	0	48	25	23
	2000	0,6	1,0	0,2	0	0	0	56	29	27
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	0	0	0	72	37	35
Bulgaria	1990	0,6	0,5	0,7	7	3	4	1 226	626	600
	2000	0,3	0,2	0,5	4	1	3	1 161	595	566
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,3	2	1	1	704	360	344
Burkina Faso	1990	75,1	64,3	86,0	1 355	573	786	1 804	891	914
	2000	65,4	54,2	76,7	1 568	639	935	2 399	1 179	1 219
	2015	47,5	38,8	56,4	1 780	729	1 051	3 743	1 879	1 864
Burundi	1990	48,4	41,6	55,2	517	221	296	1 068	532	536
	2000	36,1	34,1	37,9	469	220	249	1 300	645	655
	2015	21,4	24,8	18,1	417	241	176	1 947	972	975
Cambodia	1990	26,5	18,5	34,4	477	165	312	1 801	893	908
	2000	20,9	16,1	25,7	510	198	311	2 445	1 231	1 214
	2015	13,6	11,9	15,3	524	232	292	3 865	1 957	1 907
Cameroon	1990	18,9	13,6	24,1	412	149	263	2 184	1 091	1 093
	2000	10,0	8,0	12,0	308	124	184	3 071	1 540	1 531
	2015	3,8	3,6	3,9	160	77	83	4 215	2 119	2 096

Table 6 (continued)   **Estimates and projections of youth illiteracy for population aged between 15 and 24 years old, by country and by gender 1990, 2000, 2015**

Country	Year	Illiteracy rate (%)			Illiterate population (000)			Total population (000)		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Cape Verde	**1990**	18,5	12,9	23,8	14	5	9	77	38	40
	2000	12,0	8,7	15,2	11	4	7	92	46	47
	2015	5,3	4,5	6,3	6	3	4	113	57	56
Central African Republic	**1990**	47,9	34,4	60,6	249	86	163	520	251	268
	2000	32,7	24,0	41,0	241	87	154	737	362	375
	2015	15,7	13,4	17,9	163	69	94	1 039	513	525
Chad	**1990**	52,0	41,6	62,3	568	226	343	1 093	543	550
	2000	33,4	26,6	40,1	503	200	303	1 507	750	757
	2015	13,5	11,9	15,2	331	146	185	2 444	1 223	1 221
Chile	**1990**	1,9	2,1	1,7	48	27	21	2 470	1 248	1 222
	2000	1,1	1,3	1,0	28	16	12	2 476	1 256	1 220
	2015	0,3	0,4	0,3	10	5	5	2 872	1 460	1 413
China, Hong Kong Sar	**1990**	1,8	1,5	2,1	16	7	9	896	461	435
	2000	0,6	1,0	0,2	6	5	1	986	507	479
	2015	0,4	0,5	0,2	3	2	1	819	418	400
China	**1990**	4,7	2,5	6,9	11 709	3 239	8 470	251 310	128 937	122 373
	2000	2,3	1,3	3,3	4 486	1 314	3 172	198 945	103 090	95 856
	2015	0,6	0,2	1,1	1 251	213	1 038	197 021	103 660	93 362
Colombia	**1990**	5,1	5,7	4,5	369	208	161	7 280	3 660	3 620
	2000	3,1	3,8	2,5	250	153	97	8 009	4 043	3 966
	2015	1,1	1,8	0,4	104	84	21	9 343	4 752	4 592
Comoros	**1990**	43,3	36,2	50,4	46	19	27	106	53	53
	2000	41,4	34,7	48,2	63	26	36	151	76	75
	2015	38,6	32,3	45,0	80	34	46	209	106	103
Congo	**1990**	7,5	5,1	9,7	32	11	21	424	208	216
	2000	2,6	1,9	3,2	15	5	10	578	284	294
	2015	0,6	0,2	1,0	6	1	5	957	473	483
Costa Rica	**1990**	2,6	2,9	2,3	15	9	7	582	297	285
	2000	1,7	2,0	1,4	13	8	5	771	396	375
	2015	0,7	1,0	0,5	7	5	2	882	451	431
Cote d'Ivoire	**1990**	47,4	35,1	59,7	1 059	397	659	2 234	1 131	1 103
	2000	38,5	29,4	47,7	1 325	508	817	3 437	1 725	1 713
	2015	24,4	19,6	29,3	1 057	425	632	4 329	2 171	2 158
Croatia	**1990**	0,4	0,3	0,4	2	1	1	609	310	299
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	1	1	1	641	327	314
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	1	1	1	536	274	262
Cuba	**1990**	0,7	0,7	0,8	17	8	9	2 265	1 156	1 109
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	3	2	1	1 505	770	736
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	3	1	1	1 463	749	714
Cyprus	**1990**	0,3	0,5	0,2	0	0	0	102	52	50
	2000	0,2	0,3	0,2	0	0	0	121	62	59
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	0	0	0	117	60	57
Democratic Rep. of the Congo	**1990**	31,1	19,7	42,4	2 162	683	1 478	6 960	3 471	3 489
	2000	18,3	11,6	25,1	1 769	558	1 209	9 642	4 821	4 821
	2015	7,2	4,9	9,4	1 231	421	810	17 172	8 596	8 576
Djibouti	**1990**	26,8	17,8	35,8	23	7	16	85	40	44
	2000	16,0	11,3	20,6	20	7	13	123	61	62
	2015	6,6	5,6	7,7	11	5	6	169	85	84
Dominican Republic	**1990**	12,5	13,2	11,8	184	100	84	1 469	755	713
	2000	8,9	9,6	8,1	148	82	66	1 664	853	811
	2015	5,3	6,0	4,5	93	54	39	1 773	907	866
Ecuador	**1990**	4,5	4,0	5,1	95	42	53	2 096	1 061	1 036
	2000	2,8	2,5	3,1	72	33	39	2 571	1 302	1 268
	2015	1,1	0,9	1,2	30	13	18	2 856	1 450	1 405
Egypt	**1990**	38,7	29,1	49,0	3 996	1 559	2 437	10 331	5 354	4 977
	2000	30,3	23,6	37,4	4 178	1 678	2 500	13 799	7 107	6 692
	2015	19,7	16,8	22,7	3 072	1 340	1 732	15 593	7 964	7 629
El Salvador	**1990**	16,2	14,9	17,4	172	77	95	1 064	521	544
	2000	11,8	11,0	12,7	158	74	84	1 334	674	661
	2015	7,1	6,8	7,4	105	51	54	1 494	758	736

Table 6 (continued)   **Estimates and projections of youth illiteracy for population aged between 15 and 24 years old, by country and by gender 1990, 2000, 2015**

Country	Year	Illiteracy rate (%)			Illiterate population (000)			Total population (000)		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Equatorial Guinea	1990	7,3	3,4	11,2	5	1	4	64	32	32
	2000	3,1	1,5	4,6	3	1	2	84	42	42
	2015	0,7	0,3	1,1	1	0	1	134	67	67
Eritrea	1990	39,1	27,5	50,7	236	83	153	604	302	302
	2000	29,8	19,9	39,6	209	70	139	703	351	352
	2015	18,4	11,7	25,1	216	69	148	1 179	591	588
Estonia	1990	0,2	0,3	0,2	0	0	0	214	112	102
	2000	0,3	0,3	0,2	1	0	0	206	105	102
	2015	0,3	0,3	0,3	0	0	0	125	64	61
Ethiopia	1990	57,0	48,5	65,9	5 185	2 195	3 010	9 095	4 531	4 564
	2000	45,0	38,8	51,3	5 408	2 333	3 081	12 016	6 006	6 010
	2015	28,1	26,2	30,1	5 266	2 454	2 811	18 713	9 381	9 331
Fiji	1990	2,2	1,9	2,4	3	1	2	137	69	67
	2000	0,9	0,9	0,9	2	1	1	166	85	81
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	0	0	0	164	84	79
Gambia	1990	57,8	49,5	65,9	95	40	55	164	81	83
	2000	42,8	34,8	50,7	100	40	60	233	116	117
	2015	23,1	17,6	28,6	81	31	50	349	174	175
Ghana	1990	18,2	11,8	24,6	533	173	360	2 926	1 463	1 463
	2000	8,9	6,4	11,4	368	134	235	4 132	2 071	2 061
	2015	2,9	2,7	3,2	153	70	83	5 213	2 617	2 596
Greece	1990	0,5	0,6	0,3	7	5	3	1 543	787	756
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	3	2	1	1 466	753	713
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	2	1	1	1 051	542	509
Guatemala	1990	26,6	19,5	33,8	457	170	287	1 717	867	849
	2000	20,9	14,6	27,3	494	176	318	2 369	1 205	1 164
	2015	14,0	9,1	19,1	474	157	317	3 392	1 728	1 664
Guinea-Bissau	1990	55,9	37,8	73,5	97	33	64	174	86	88
	2000	41,9	27,2	56,3	94	30	63	224	111	113
	2015	22,7	15,9	29,5	77	27	50	337	168	169
Guyana	1990	0,2	0,2	0,2	0	0	0	161	79	82
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	0	0	0	162	81	81
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	0	0	0	129	65	64
Haiti	1990	45,2	44,2	46,2	580	283	297	1 283	641	642
	2000	35,6	35,7	35,5	628	316	311	1 763	885	878
	2015	23,5	24,8	22,0	477	255	222	2 031	1 026	1 005
Honduras	1990	20,3	21,5	19,2	201	107	93	987	499	488
	2000	14,9	16,5	13,4	200	112	88	1 336	678	658
	2015	9,1	10,8	7,4	166	100	66	1 821	927	894
Hungary	1990	0,3	0,2	0,3	4	2	2	1 478	757	721
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	3	2	1	1 468	750	718
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	2	1	1	1 072	548	524
India	1990	35,7	26,6	45,8	58 575	22 819	35 760	163 865	85 758	78 107
	2000	27,4	20,3	35,2	52 125	20 050	32 090	190 107	98 886	91 221
	2015	17,3	13,3	21,6	38 771	15 449	23 323	223 578	115 783	107 795
Indonesia	1990	5,0	3,4	6,6	1 879	651	1 225	37 627	19 098	18 529
	2000	2,3	1,7	2,9	963	365	597	42 268	21 415	20 853
	2015	0,5	0,4	0,6	219	93	127	42 342	21 486	20 855
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	1990	13,7	8,3	19,2	1 485	466	1 003	10 862	5 632	5 230
	2000	6,2	3,8	8,7	950	296	655	15 380	7 835	7 545
	2015	1,7	1,0	2,4	276	84	192	16 248	8 345	7 903
Iraq	1990	59,0	43,6	75,1	2 059	776	1 283	3 488	1 779	1 709
	2000	55,4	40,7	70,9	2 554	962	1 593	4 610	2 364	2 246
	2015	49,6	35,8	63,9	3 221	1 188	2 034	6 497	3 313	3 184
Israel	1990	1,3	1,0	1,6	10	4	6	792	405	387
	2000	0,6	0,5	0,7	6	2	4	1 035	532	503
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	2	1	1	1 227	630	597
Italy	1990	0,2	0,2	0,2	18	9	9	8 824	4 489	4 335
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	13	7	7	6 687	3 411	3 276
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	11	6	5	5 468	2 809	2 659

Country	Year	Illiteracy rate (%)			Illiterate population (000)			Total population (000)		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Jamaica	1990	8,8	12,9	4,8	42	31	12	483	238	245
	2000	6,0	9,3	2,5	31	24	7	519	261	258
	2015	3,2	5,6	0,6	16	15	2	517	264	253
Jordan	1990	3,3	2,1	4,7	23	8	15	709	385	325
	2000	0,8	0,9	0,7	8	5	3	1 032	532	500
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	3	1	1	1 367	700	668
Kazakhstan	1990	0,2	0,2	0,2	6	3	3	2 776	1 431	1 345
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	6	3	3	2 956	1 487	1 469
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	5	2	2	2 364	1 198	1 166
Kenya	1990	10,2	7,1	13,3	471	164	308	4 623	2 301	2 322
	2000	4,9	4,0	5,8	338	138	201	6 966	3 481	3 485
	2015	1,5	1,7	1,2	126	75	51	8 589	4 310	4 279
Korea, Republic of	1990	0,2	0,2	0,2	18	9	9	8 753	4 502	4 251
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	15	8	7	7 718	3 980	3 738
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	13	7	6	6 441	3 403	3 038
Kuwait	1990	12,5	12,1	12,8	46	23	23	370	188	182
	2000	7,6	8,3	6,8	34	19	15	445	230	215
	2015	3,7	4,8	2,6	13	9	4	349	180	169
Lao People's Dem. Republic	1990	29,9	20,5	39,4	234	80	155	781	389	393
	2000	22,1	15,1	29,2	226	78	148	1 024	518	506
	2015	13,3	9,4	17,3	196	70	126	1 477	751	727
Latvia	1990	0,2	0,2	0,2	1	0	0	366	189	178
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	1	0	0	346	175	170
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	0	0	0	231	118	113
Lebanon	1990	7,9	4,5	11,4	48	14	34	609	308	301
	2000	4,8	2,8	7,0	32	9	23	654	330	324
	2015	2,1	1,1	3,2	15	4	11	717	366	352
Lesotho	1990	12,8	22,8	2,9	41	36	5	318	159	160
	2000	9,5	17,3	1,5	38	35	3	402	203	200
	2015	5,8	11,0	0,4	29	28	1	502	255	247
Liberia	1990	42,8	24,6	61,4	171	50	120	400	205	195
	2000	31,2	15,1	47,4	228	55	172	728	366	363
	2015	16,7	6,6	26,8	144	29	116	863	432	431
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	1990	9,0	1,1	17,3	78	5	73	862	439	423
	2000	3,5	0,2	7,0	44	1	43	1 252	637	615
	2015	1,1	0,2	2,0	13	1	11	1 175	601	574
Lithuania	1990	0,2	0,2	0,2	1	1	1	548	281	267
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	1	1	1	533	270	263
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	1	0	0	427	218	208
Macau	1990	2,8	0,8	4,2	2	0	1	58	24	33
	2000	1,1	0,2	2,1	1	0	1	61	31	30
	2015	0,3	0,2	0,3	0	0	0	61	31	30
Madagascar	1990	27,8	22,2	33,4	635	254	381	2 287	1 146	1 141
	2000	19,9	16,4	23,4	610	252	359	3 070	1 538	1 533
	2015	11,4	10,1	12,8	552	244	308	4 827	2 413	2 414
Malawi	1990	36,8	24,3	48,8	650	211	439	1 767	867	900
	2000	28,9	19,0	39,0	653	216	437	2 259	1 141	1 118
	2015	19,4	13,1	25,8	652	224	428	3 368	1 707	1 661
Malaysia	1990	5,2	4,7	5,8	179	81	98	3 413	1 721	1 692
	2000	2,4	2,5	2,3	102	54	48	4 199	2 147	2 052
	2015	0,8	1,1	0,5	42	29	14	5 274	2 701	2 572
Maldives	1990	1,9	1,9	1,9	1	0	0	39	20	19
	2000	0,9	1,0	0,9	1	0	0	59	30	29
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	0	0	0	87	45	42
Mali	1990	72,4	61,7	82,9	1 266	538	728	1 750	871	879
	2000	63,9	52,7	74,9	1 425	589	835	2 231	1 117	1 114
	2015	49,2	39,2	59,3	1 691	678	1 012	3 435	1 729	1 706
Malta	1990	2,5	4,0	0,9	1	1	0	51	26	25
	2000	1,4	2,6	0,2	1	1	0	59	30	28
	2015	0,7	1,1	0,2	0	0	0	50	26	24

Table 6 (continued)

Estimates and projections of youth illiteracy for population aged between 15 and 24 years old, by country and by gender 1990, 2000, 2015

Country	Year	Illiteracy rate (%)			Illiterate population (000)			Total population (000)		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Martinique	1990	0,4	0,5	0,3	0	0	0	70	35	35
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	0	0	0	56	29	28
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	0	0	0	55	28	27
Mauritania	1990	54,2	44,5	63,9	205	84	121	378	190	189
	2000	51,1	42,9	59,4	268	113	155	524	263	261
	2015	45,1	40,3	49,9	355	159	197	789	395	394
Mauritius	1990	8,9	8,8	8,9	18	9	9	200	102	98
	2000	6,2	6,7	5,7	13	7	6	212	107	104
	2015	3,2	4,2	2,1	6	4	2	200	102	99
Mexico	1990	4,8	4,1	5,6	888	371	517	18 329	9 138	9 192
	2000	3,0	2,6	3,4	594	260	334	19 955	10 006	9 949
	2015	1,3	1,1	1,5	272	117	155	20 776	10 487	10 289
Moldova	1990	0,2	0,2	0,2	1	1	1	633	318	315
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	2	1	1	761	385	376
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	1	1	1	559	286	274
Mongolia	1990	1,1	1,3	0,9	5	3	2	459	231	228
	2000	1,0	1,3	0,7	5	4	2	537	271	266
	2015	0,5	0,8	0,2	3	2	1	546	279	268
Morocco	1990	44,7	32,0	58,0	2 254	821	1 433	5 039	2 567	2 472
	2000	32,7	24,0	41,8	2 015	750	1 265	6 158	3 132	3 026
	2015	17,7	14,6	20,9	1 209	506	703	6 832	3 472	3 361
Mozambique	1990	51,2	33,9	68,3	1 340	442	898	2 617	1 303	1 314
	2000	39,4	24,9	53,8	1 422	448	971	3 605	1 799	1 806
	2015	23,6	15,2	32,0	1 221	392	831	5 172	2 576	2 596
Myanmar	1990	11,8	9,9	13,8	969	407	563	8 206	4 113	4 093
	2000	9,1	8,6	9,5	863	413	451	9 530	4 780	4 751
	2015	6,1	7,0	5,2	633	365	269	10 358	5 224	5 134
Namibia	1990	12,6	14,1	11,0	35	20	15	279	139	140
	2000	8,4	10,1	6,7	29	17	11	345	173	172
	2015	4,4	6,0	2,8	23	16	7	517	260	257
Nepal	1990	53,4	33,0	72,7	1 853	593	1 215	3 472	1 801	1 671
	2000	39,6	23,3	57,2	1 744	532	1 214	4 409	2 288	2 121
	2015	23,4	14,0	33,6	1 514	466	1 050	6 461	3 333	3 128
Netherlands Antilles	1990	2,5	2,7	2,3	1	0	0	30	15	15
	2000	1,8	2,0	1,6	1	0	0	33	17	17
	2015	1,1	1,2	0,9	0	0	0	35	18	17
Nicaragua	1990	31,8	32,3	31,3	246	124	122	773	384	389
	2000	28,4	29,0	27,7	308	158	150	1 085	545	540
	2015	23,7	24,5	22,8	355	187	168	1 500	761	738
Niger	1990	83,0	75,1	90,7	1 223	562	658	1 473	748	726
	2000	77,0	67,7	86,2	1 623	726	892	2 108	1 073	1 036
	2015	64,9	54,7	75,1	2 326	998	1 321	3 583	1 824	1 759
Nigeria	1990	26,4	19,2	33,5	4 257	1 568	2 672	16 115	8 147	7 968
	2000	13,1	10,4	15,7	3 001	1 214	1 776	22 953	11 653	11 299
	2015	4,0	3,9	4,1	1 375	684	691	34 519	17 547	16 972
Oman	1990	14,4	4,6	24,6	44	7	37	307	156	151
	2000	2,1	0,5	3,8	10	1	9	491	248	243
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	2	1	1	773	393	379
Pakistan	1990	52,6	37,5	69,4	10 581	3 921	6 698	20 126	10 469	9 657
	2000	43,0	28,9	58,1	11 685	4 034	7 677	27 156	13 940	13 216
	2015	30,0	19,5	40,9	12 063	4 037	7 993	40 251	20 708	19 543
Panama	1990	4,7	4,3	5,2	23	11	13	496	251	246
	2000	3,3	2,9	3,7	17	8	10	526	267	259
	2015	1,6	1,3	2,0	9	4	6	576	292	283
Papua new Guinea	1990	31,4	25,6	37,6	238	102	135	757	398	360
	2000	24,3	20,2	28,7	240	107	130	986	532	454
	2015	15,8	13,7	18,1	213	95	118	1 346	694	652
Paraguay	1990	4,4	4,1	4,8	36	17	19	816	415	401
	2000	2,9	2,9	3,0	32	16	16	1 081	549	533
	2015	1,5	1,7	1,4	23	13	10	1 486	755	731
Peru	1990	5,5	3,1	7,9	243	69	173	4 410	2 220	2 190
	2000	3,3	1,8	4,8	171	47	124	5 240	2 640	2 600
	2015	1,1	0,7	1,6	65	19	45	5 641	2 858	2 783

Country	Year	Illiteracy rate (%)			Illiterate population (000)			Total population (000)		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Philippines	1990	2,7	2,9	2,6	342	185	157	12 472	6 338	6 133
	2000	1,3	1,5	1,1	196	116	80	15 377	7 817	7 559
	2015	0,2	0,3	0,2	45	27	19	18 934	9 652	9 282
Poland	1990	0,2	0,2	0,2	11	5	5	5 316	2 720	2 596
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	13	7	6	6 559	3 345	3 214
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	9	5	4	4 416	2 262	2 153
Portugal	1990	0,5	0,5	0,4	8	4	3	1 616	818	798
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	3	1	1	1 456	740	716
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	2	1	1	1 131	580	551
Puerto Rico	1990	3,9	4,7	3,0	24	14	9	615	307	308
	2000	2,5	3,1	1,8	16	10	6	661	336	326
	2015	1,3	1,7	0,8	8	6	3	636	325	311
Qatar	1990	9,7	11,7	7,0	5	3	2	51	28	22
	2000	5,2	7,4	2,9	4	3	1	71	37	34
	2015	2,3	3,9	0,7	2	2	0	104	53	51
Reunion	1990	4,9	7,6	2,2	6	5	1	121	60	61
	2000	2,5	4,7	0,3	3	3	0	126	64	62
	2015	0,8	1,3	0,2	1	1	0	138	69	68
Romania	1990	0,7	0,7	0,8	28	13	15	3 853	1 966	1 887
	2000	0,4	0,5	0,3	14	8	5	3 612	1 842	1 769
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	5	3	2	2 331	1 193	1 137
Russian Federation	1990	0,2	0,2	0,2	42	22	19	19 760	10 085	9 674
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	46	23	22	22 753	11 511	11 242
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	29	15	14	14 307	7 297	7 010
Rwanda	1990	27,3	22,0	32,6	369	147	222	1 351	671	680
	2000	16,6	14,8	18,4	280	124	157	1 691	839	852
	2015	7,5	8,1	6,9	159	86	74	2 121	1 056	1 066
Samoa	1990	1,0	0,9	1,1	0	0	0	36	20	16
	2000	0,6	0,6	0,6	0	0	0	36	19	17
	2015	0,3	0,4	0,2	0	0	0	39	20	19
Saudi Arabia	1990	14,6	8,8	21,4	368	115	261	2 524	1 304	1 220
	2000	7,3	5,1	9,7	287	101	187	3 925	1 997	1 928
	2015	2,8	2,7	2,9	170	83	88	6 106	3 117	2 989
Senegal	1990	59,9	50,0	69,8	832	349	483	1 390	698	692
	2000	49,3	40,5	58,1	926	382	545	1 881	943	938
	2015	33,4	27,8	39,2	917	383	534	2 744	1 382	1 362
Singapore	1990	1,0	1,2	0,8	6	3	2	563	282	281
	2000	0,3	0,3	0,2	1	1	0	501	259	241
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	1	1	1	673	348	325
Slovenia	1990	0,2	0,3	0,2	1	0	0	281	143	138
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	1	0	0	291	149	142
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	0	0	0	193	99	94
South Africa	1990	11,5	11,4	11,6	877	433	445	7 615	3 795	3 820
	2000	8,7	8,7	8,7	777	386	392	8 924	4 447	4 477
	2015	5,6	5,7	5,5	535	273	263	9 558	4 809	4 749
Spain	1990	0,4	0,4	0,4	27	15	12	6 650	3 397	3 253
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	12	7	6	5 758	2 945	2 813
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	8	4	4	3 814	1 968	1 846
Sri Lanka	1990	4,9	4,1	5,8	159	68	91	3 214	1 639	1 575
	2000	3,2	3,0	3,4	116	55	61	3 632	1 844	1 788
	2015	1,6	1,9	1,3	50	30	20	3 151	1 598	1 553
Sudan	1990	35,0	24,4	46,0	1 742	614	1 131	4 975	2 516	2 460
	2000	22,8	17,2	28,5	1 400	535	861	6 138	3 113	3 025
	2015	10,7	9,8	11,6	894	418	476	8 368	4 255	4 114
Swaziland	1990	14,9	15,3	14,5	23	12	11	153	75	77
	2000	9,6	10,4	8,8	18	10	8	189	94	95
	2015	4,7	5,5	3,9	11	7	5	245	122	122
Syrian Arab Republic	1990	20,1	7,8	33,1	500	99	401	2 481	1 270	1 211
	2000	12,8	4,6	21,2	461	85	376	3 591	1 821	1 770
	2015	5,9	2,1	9,8	254	46	207	4 308	2 199	2 109

Country	Year	Illiteracy rate (%)			Illiterate population (000)			Total population (000)		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Tajikistan	**1990**	0,2	0,2	0,2	2	1	1	1 015	506	509
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	2	1	1	1 205	609	597
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	3	1	1	1 424	721	703
Thailand	**1990**	1,9	1,4	2,4	220	82	139	11 770	5 862	5 908
	2000	1,1	0,6	1,6	129	35	95	11 755	5 885	5 870
	2015	0,6	0,2	1,0	69	11	58	11 114	5 612	5 502
Togo	**1990**	36,5	20,6	52,3	242	68	174	662	330	332
	2000	24,5	12,8	36,2	226	59	167	919	460	460
	2015	12,0	6,1	17,9	162	41	121	1 351	677	675
Trinidad and Tobago	**1990**	0,4	0,3	0,4	1	0	0	219	111	108
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	1	0	0	267	135	132
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	0	0	0	186	94	92
Tunisia	**1990**	15,9	7,2	24,8	262	60	203	1 646	831	816
	2000	6,7	2,6	10,9	133	27	106	1 994	1 019	975
	2015	1,7	0,2	3,4	30	2	28	1 743	897	846
Turkey	**1990**	7,3	2,9	11,7	816	167	649	11 246	5 713	5 532
	2000	3,5	1,2	6,0	473	81	392	13 506	6 942	6 564
	2015	0,9	0,2	1,5	120	14	106	13 973	7 083	6 890
Uganda	**1990**	29,9	20,2	39,5	1 002	338	663	3 354	1 676	1 678
	2000	21,3	14,6	27,9	998	342	655	4 690	2 345	2 345
	2015	11,9	8,7	15,1	920	336	584	7 725	3 866	3 859
Ukraine	**1990**	0,2	0,2	0,1	11	6	5	7 034	3 562	3 472
	2000	0,1	0,1	0,1	9	5	3	7 363	3 726	3 636
	2015	0,1	0,1	0,0	4	3	1	4 899	2 504	2 395
United Arab Emirates	**1990**	15,3	18,3	11,4	40	30	12	264	163	101
	2000	9,4	12,6	5,6	37	29	10	400	226	173
	2015	4,8	7,4	2,0	21	17	4	439	232	207
United Republic of Tanzania	**1990**	16,9	10,8	22,8	883	276	607	5 236	2 572	2 664
	2000	9,5	6,8	12,1	684	245	439	7 237	3 614	3 623
	2015	3,6	3,5	3,8	382	185	197	10 505	5 271	5 234
Uruguay	**1990**	1,3	1,7	0,9	6	4	2	489	247	242
	2000	0,9	1,2	0,6	5	3	2	527	268	259
	2015	0,5	0,7	0,3	3	2	1	551	281	270
Uzbekistan	**1990**	0,4	0,3	0,4	14	6	8	3 930	1 965	1 965
	2000	0,3	0,3	0,4	17	7	10	4 988	2 515	2 473
	2015	0,3	0,3	0,4	19	8	11	5 733	2 915	2 818
Venezuela	**1990**	4,0	4,6	3,4	153	89	64	3 814	1 937	1 876
	2000	2,0	2,7	1,4	95	64	31	4 710	2 394	2 316
	2015	0,7	1,1	0,2	37	32	5	5 502	2 803	2 699
Viet Nam	**1990**	5,9	5,5	6,4	800	372	430	13 479	6 729	6 750
	2000	4,8	5,0	4,6	759	400	359	15 843	7 983	7 860
	2015	3,0	3,7	2,3	493	307	184	16 515	8 347	8 168
Yemen	**1990**	50,0	26,5	75,0	1 193	324	869	2 385	1 226	1 159
	2000	35,0	17,1	53,8	1 165	324	874	3 332	1 709	1 623
	2015	14,9	8,0	22,2	1 009	276	734	6 771	3 458	3 313
Zambia	**1990**	18,8	13,6	23,8	305	110	193	1 622	811	811
	2000	11,8	9,2	14,5	254	100	155	2 161	1 090	1 071
	2015	5,8	5,1	6,5	187	83	103	3 217	1 626	1 591
Zimbabwe	**1990**	6,1	3,4	8,7	125	35	90	2 072	1 034	1 038
	2000	2,8	1,3	4,3	78	18	59	2 753	1 378	1 374
	2015	0,6	0,2	1,0	24	4	20	3 798	1 902	1 896

Table 7   **Estimates and projections of adult illiteracy for population aged 15 years and above, by country and by gender 1990, 2000, 2015**

Country	Year	Illiteracy rate (%)			Illiterate population (000)			Total population (000)		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Albania	1990	23,0	13,2	33,3	509	149	361	2 211	1 127	1 084
	2000	15,3	7,9	23,0	336	88	248	2 195	1 118	1 077
	2015	7,3	3,1	11,5	194	42	151	2 659	1 347	1 312
Algeria	1990	47,1	35,7	58,7	6 804	2 588	4 218	14 436	7 252	7 184
	2000	33,3	23,7	43,0	6 571	2 360	4 211	19 737	9 947	9 790
	2015	19,3	12,7	26,0	5 378	1 789	3 585	27 844	14 074	13 771
Argentina	1990	4,3	4,1	4,4	964	448	517	22 566	10 915	11 651
	2000	3,2	3,2	3,2	849	409	440	26 767	12 949	13 818
	2015	2,1	2,3	2,0	704	360	345	32 822	15 929	16 894
Armenia	1990	2,5	1,1	3,9	63	13	50	2 468	1 173	1 295
	2000	1,6	0,7	2,4	46	10	36	2 889	1 372	1 517
	2015	0,7	0,4	1,0	23	6	17	3 274	1 570	1 704
Bahamas	1990	5,6	6,4	4,8	10	5	4	172	84	88
	2000	4,6	5,5	3,7	10	6	4	214	104	110
	2015	3,4	4,3	2,6	9	6	4	271	131	140
Bahrain	1990	17,9	13,2	25,4	60	27	33	335	205	130
	2000	12,5	9,1	17,4	57	25	32	459	275	184
	2015	6,5	5,0	8,4	41	18	22	633	366	267
Bangladesh	1990	65,8	55,7	76,3	41 908	18 480	23 309	63 712	33 178	30 534
	2000	60,0	50,6	69,8	50 558	22 035	28 445	84 249	43 522	40 727
	2015	52,8	44,3	61,7	64 941	27 941	36 953	122 897	63 031	59 867
Barbados	1990	0,6	0,6	0,7	1	1	1	194	91	103
	2000	0,3	0,3	0,3	1	0	0	212	102	111
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	0	0	0	234	114	120
Belarus	1990	0,5	0,3	0,7	42	10	32	7 893	3 602	4 291
	2000	0,3	0,2	0,4	29	9	20	8 283	3 773	4 510
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	17	8	10	8 282	3 782	4 500
Belize	1990	10,9	10,0	11,8	11	5	6	104	53	51
	2000	6,8	6,7	6,8	9	5	5	140	71	69
	2015	3,2	3,6	2,9	7	4	3	207	104	103
Benin	1990	73,6	61,9	84,5	1 773	724	1 049	2 411	1 170	1 241
	2000	62,6	47,9	76,4	2 106	782	1 322	3 365	1 634	1 730
	2015	46,2	30,1	61,7	2 499	798	1 700	5 405	2 648	2 757
Bolivia	1990	21,9	13,2	30,2	846	249	598	3 864	1 882	1 981
	2000	14,6	8,1	20,8	733	199	535	5 029	2 463	2 565
	2015	7,3	3,6	10,9	543	132	411	7 442	3 683	3 759
Botswana	1990	31,9	34,3	29,7	212	106	106	665	311	355
	2000	22,8	25,5	20,2	203	109	94	892	428	464
	2015	12,7	15,5	10,0	136	83	53	1 070	534	536
Brazil	1990	18,0	17,1	18,8	17 358	8 127	9 232	96 604	47 473	49 130
	2000	13,1	13,0	13,2	15 885	7 690	8 195	121 329	59 220	62 110
	2015	8,2	8,8	7,6	12 488	6 478	6 009	152 552	73 905	78 647
Brunei Darussalam	1990	14,5	9,0	20,6	24	8	16	168	90	78
	2000	8,5	5,4	11,9	19	6	12	224	119	105
	2015	4,2	2,8	5,8	14	5	9	321	169	152
Bulgaria	1990	2,8	1,7	3,8	195	59	136	6 937	3 384	3 553
	2000	1,6	1,0	2,1	106	33	73	6 697	3 223	3 474
	2015	0,7	0,5	0,9	43	15	29	5 986	2 843	3 143
Burkina Faso	1990	83,7	75,0	92,0	3 876	1 626	2 268	4 633	2 169	2 465
	2000	76,1	66,1	85,9	4 504	1 817	2 723	5 918	2 749	3 169
	2015	61,7	51,7	71,7	5 977	2 417	3 590	9 684	4 676	5 008
Burundi	1990	63,0	51,6	73,4	1 949	761	1 187	3 093	1 475	1 617
	2000	52,0	43,9	59,6	1 734	691	1 047	3 333	1 575	1 758
	2015	36,0	33,6	38,2	1 945	890	1 055	5 409	2 649	2 761
Cambodia	1990	38,0	22,3	51,2	2 025	543	1 482	5 333	2 439	2 894
	2000	32,0	19,8	42,8	2 352	689	1 660	7 355	3 474	3 881
	2015	22,8	15,8	29,3	2 602	874	1 729	11 420	5 522	5 897
Cameroon	1990	42,1	31,3	52,5	2 683	979	1 704	6 371	3 123	3 248
	2000	28,7	20,9	36,3	2 432	875	1 555	8 465	4 178	4 287
	2015	14,2	10,5	18,0	1 743	639	1 101	12 244	6 111	6 133

Table 7 (continued)

Estimates and projections of adult illiteracy for population aged 15 years and above, by country and by gender 1990, 2000, 2015

Country	Year	Illiteracy rate (%) Total	Male	Female	Illiterate population (000) Total	Male	Female	Total population (000) Total	Male	Female
Cape Verde	1990	36,2	23,8	45,7	70	20	51	193	82	111
	2000	26,2	15,5	34,3	68	18	50	259	114	145
	2015	15,6	9,7	20,8	60	17	43	386	179	207
Central African Republic	1990	66,8	52,9	79,3	1 112	417	695	1 665	789	876
	2000	53,3	40,3	65,1	1 129	408	719	2 119	1 013	1 106
	2015	33,7	25,0	41,7	977	351	624	2 902	1 403	1 499
Chad	1990	72,3	63,0	81,2	2 297	974	1 323	3 176	1 546	1 631
	2000	57,4	48,4	66,0	2 423	1 000	1 423	4 222	2 065	2 157
	2015	34,8	28,8	40,6	2 308	942	1 366	6 634	3 271	3 363
Chile	1990	6,0	5,6	6,4	550	248	302	9 161	4 470	4 691
	2000	4,2	4,1	4,4	461	216	245	10 883	5 329	5 555
	2015	2,3	2,3	2,4	321	156	165	13 675	6 715	6 960
China, Hong Kong Sar	1990	10,3	4,4	16,6	463	100	363	4 478	2 285	2 193
	2000	6,7	3,1	10,8	387	91	306	5 739	2 912	2 827
	2015	3,4	2,0	5,1	237	69	175	6 911	3 469	3 442
China	1990	21,7	12,8	31,1	181 331	54 922	126 409	835 430	429 120	406 310
	2000	14,8	7,9	22,1	141 903	38 424	103 499	958 295	488 974	469 321
	2015	7,1	3,2	11,1	80 460	18 449	62 030	1 136 057	576 954	559 103
Colombia	1990	11,6	11,2	11,9	2 584	1 226	1 359	22 368	10 928	11 439
	2000	8,4	8,4	8,4	2 368	1 152	1 216	28 299	13 749	14 550
	2015	4,9	5,2	4,6	1 890	977	913	38 412	18 735	19 677
Comoros	1990	46,2	38,6	53,6	129	53	76	279	138	142
	2000	44,1	36,8	51,3	177	73	104	402	199	203
	2015	41,5	34,7	48,4	267	111	155	642	321	321
Congo	1990	32,9	22,9	42,1	401	134	266	1 220	587	633
	2000	19,3	12,5	25,6	313	98	215	1 622	783	839
	2015	7,1	4,1	10,0	181	51	131	2 555	1 244	1 311
Costa Rica	1990	6,1	6,1	6,2	119	59	59	1 937	973	963
	2000	4,4	4,5	4,4	121	62	59	2 721	1 374	1 347
	2015	2,6	2,8	2,5	101	54	47	3 813	1 922	1 891
Cote d'Ivoire	1990	61,5	49,5	74,3	4 141	1 756	2 365	6 734	3 550	3 184
	2000	51,4	40,5	62,8	4 761	1 953	2 795	9 268	4 820	4 448
	2015	37,6	29,4	46,0	4 983	1 996	2 971	13 252	6 794	6 458
Croatia	1990	3,1	1,0	5,1	113	17	95	3 591	1 711	1 880
	2000	1,7	0,7	2,7	66	12	54	3 814	1 823	1 991
	2015	0,6	0,4	0,8	22	7	15	3 843	1 839	2 004
Cuba	1990	4,9	4,8	4,9	398	196	202	8 179	4 088	4 091
	2000	3,3	3,2	3,4	294	141	153	8 822	4 392	4 430
	2015	1,6	1,5	1,7	156	73	83	9 731	4 830	4 901
Cyprus	1990	5,7	2,3	9,0	29	6	23	505	249	256
	2000	2,9	1,3	4,6	18	4	14	603	298	305
	2015	0,9	0,6	1,3	7	2	4	698	347	352
Democratic Rep. of the Congo	1990	52,5	38,6	65,6	10 256	3 653	6 602	19 534	9 476	10 059
	2000	38,6	26,9	49,8	10 078	3 437	6 636	26 102	12 775	13 327
	2015	20,8	13,8	27,7	9 093	2 985	6 096	43 671	21 627	22 044
Djibouti	1990	47,0	33,2	60,3	136	42	98	289	126	162
	2000	35,4	24,4	45,6	127	39	91	359	160	199
	2015	20,8	14,0	27,2	85	26	60	411	189	222
Dominican Republic	1990	20,6	20,2	21,0	895	445	450	4 349	2 207	2 143
	2000	16,3	16,3	16,3	910	462	448	5 567	2 825	2 742
	2015	11,6	12,0	11,2	839	435	404	7 258	3 634	3 624
Ecuador	1990	12,4	9,8	14,9	775	307	468	6 267	3 130	3 137
	2000	8,4	6,8	10,1	706	283	423	8 368	4 174	4 193
	2015	4,8	3,8	5,7	553	223	331	11 621	5 785	5 836
Egypt	1990	52,9	39,6	66,4	17 866	6 752	11 116	33 774	17 033	16 742
	2000	44,7	33,4	56,2	19 613	7 374	12 253	43 880	22 085	21 795
	2015	34,1	26,0	42,3	21 041	8 064	12 986	61 729	31 065	30 664
El Salvador	1990	27,6	23,9	30,9	835	346	489	3 026	1 443	1 583
	2000	21,3	18,5	23,9	862	359	503	4 043	1 944	2 099
	2015	14,6	12,8	16,3	822	348	473	5 624	2 728	2 896

Country	Year	Illiteracy rate (%)			Illiterate population (000)			Total population (000)		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Equatorial Guinea	1990	26,7	14,2	38,9	54	14	41	203	98	104
	2000	16,8	7,5	25,6	43	9	34	257	125	132
	2015	6,8	2,8	10,6	26	5	21	392	192	200
Eritrea	1990	53,6	41,5	65,2	930	355	575	1 736	854	882
	2000	44,3	32,7	55,5	908	330	578	2 051	1 010	1 041
	2015	31,0	21,4	40,5	1 058	361	696	3 408	1 688	1 720
Estonia	1990	0,2	0,2	0,2	3	1	1	1 223	560	663
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	2	1	1	1 147	523	624
	2015	0,2	0,3	0,2	2	1	1	1 027	471	556
Ethiopia	1990	71,4	62,7	80,2	18 822	8 117	10 752	26 362	12 953	13 408
	2000	60,9	52,9	69,0	21 005	8 996	12 062	34 494	17 002	17 492
	2015	43,6	38,4	48,8	21 773	9 550	12 234	49 925	24 874	25 051
Fiji	1990	11,4	8,4	14,5	51	19	32	450	227	223
	2000	7,1	5,1	9,2	39	14	25	542	274	268
	2015	3,3	2,4	4,3	22	8	14	665	337	327
Gambia	1990	74,4	68,3	80,3	401	181	221	539	264	275
	2000	63,4	56,3	70,3	494	215	279	778	382	396
	2015	45,3	38,2	52,2	511	211	300	1 127	553	574
Ghana	1990	41,5	29,9	52,8	3 438	1 219	2 218	8 275	4 075	4 200
	2000	28,4	19,7	36,8	3 239	1 112	2 125	11 405	5 637	5 768
	2015	14,7	9,9	19,3	2 474	830	1 641	16 869	8 375	8 494
Greece	1990	5,1	2,4	7,7	419	94	324	8 205	4 001	4 203
	2000	2,8	1,5	4,1	256	67	189	9 012	4 406	4 606
	2015	1,1	0,7	1,4	96	33	63	9 137	4 453	4 684
Guatemala	1990	39,0	31,2	46,8	1 843	740	1 104	4 729	2 372	2 357
	2000	31,5	24,0	38,9	2 020	768	1 251	6 420	3 206	3 214
	2015	22,5	15,9	29,1	2 307	811	1 496	10 231	5 093	5 138
Guinea-Bissau	1990	72,8	57,7	87,1	397	153	244	545	266	280
	2000	61,6	45,9	76,5	417	152	266	678	331	347
	2015	41,9	29,2	54,2	409	139	269	974	478	496
Guyana	1990	2,8	2,0	3,6	13	4	9	463	221	242
	2000	1,5	1,1	1,9	8	3	5	528	251	277
	2015	0,6	0,5	0,6	3	1	2	556	259	297
Haiti	1990	60,3	57,4	63,1	2 323	1 061	1 263	3 851	1 849	2 001
	2000	50,2	48,0	52,2	2 428	1 111	1 318	4 837	2 312	2 525
	2015	37,2	36,3	38,1	2 468	1 148	1 320	6 626	3 161	3 465
Honduras	1990	31,9	31,1	32,7	851	414	436	2 667	1 332	1 335
	2000	25,0	25,1	25,0	934	467	467	3 734	1 864	1 871
	2015	17,1	17,9	16,2	985	515	470	5 772	2 872	2 899
Hungary	1990	0,9	0,7	1,1	78	29	49	8 268	3 905	4 362
	2000	0,7	0,5	0,8	56	21	36	8 279	3 891	4 388
	2015	0,4	0,3	0,5	34	13	22	8 027	3 768	4 259
India	1990	50,7	38,1	64,1	272 388	105 800	166 639	537 491	277 439	260 052
	2000	42,8	31,6	54,6	286 951	109 367	177 689	671 017	345 629	325 388
	2015	32,1	23,5	41,1	288 372	108 267	180 120	899 300	461 238	438 062
Indonesia	1990	20,5	13,3	27,5	23 927	7 734	16 124	116 794	58 147	58 647
	2000	13,2	8,2	18,1	19 377	6 018	13 306	146 860	73 203	73 658
	2015	6,4	3,9	8,9	12 101	3 656	8 418	188 286	93 827	94 460
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	1990	36,8	27,8	46,0	12 059	4 706	7 272	32 735	16 939	15 796
	2000	24,0	17,0	31,1	10 552	3 819	6 696	44 028	22 476	21 552
	2015	12,7	8,1	17,4	8 053	2 599	5 445	63 445	32 151	31 294
Iraq	1990	64,3	48,7	80,3	6 198	2 377	3 821	9 636	4 878	4 758
	2000	60,7	45,1	76,7	8 125	3 057	5 070	13 392	6 786	6 606
	2015	55,4	40,3	70,9	11 779	4 336	7 445	21 250	10 749	10 501
Israel	1990	8,6	5,1	12,0	267	78	190	3 101	1 523	1 578
	2000	5,2	3,0	7,3	225	64	162	4 334	2 105	2 229
	2015	2,1	1,3	2,9	124	38	86	5 839	2 868	2 971
Italy	1990	2,3	1,7	2,9	1 103	386	717	47 720	22 911	24 809
	2000	1,6	1,1	2,0	778	271	507	49 314	23 683	25 631
	2015	0,6	0,5	0,8	309	117	192	48 585	23 331	25 254

Table 7 (continued)   **Estimates and projections of adult illiteracy for population aged 15 years and above, by country and by gender 1990, 2000, 2015**

Country	Year	Illiteracy rate (%)			Illiterate population (000)			Total population (000)		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Jamaica	1990	17,8	22,0	13,9	274	163	110	1 536	742	794
	2000	13,1	17,1	9,3	231	146	84	1 766	858	908
	2015	8,4	11,8	5,1	185	127	57	2 206	1 082	1 124
Jordan	1990	18,5	10,0	27,9	320	91	229	1 730	909	821
	2000	10,2	5,1	15,7	300	78	220	2 946	1 546	1 399
	2015	4,0	1,8	6,2	182	43	138	4 574	2 366	2 209
Kazakhstan	1990	1,2	0,5	1,8	136	29	107	11 464	5 448	6 016
	2000	0,6	0,3	0,9	72	20	53	11 809	5 625	6 184
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,3	29	13	17	12 416	5 900	6 516
Kenya	1990	29,2	19,1	39,2	3 479	1 119	2 367	11 896	5 861	6 034
	2000	17,6	11,1	24,0	3 049	954	2 102	17 338	8 573	8 765
	2015	7,5	5,0	10,1	1 862	617	1 249	24 691	12 337	12 354
Korea, Republic of	1990	4,1	1,6	6,6	1 307	255	1 052	31 792	15 807	15 985
	2000	2,2	0,9	3,6	831	159	673	37 000	18 374	18 626
	2015	0,7	0,4	1,1	312	74	239	41 944	20 833	21 111
Kuwait	1990	23,3	20,7	27,4	317	169	148	1 358	819	539
	2000	18,1	16,1	20,4	238	130	103	1 315	810	505
	2015	12,2	11,6	12,8	250	139	109	2 049	1 197	853
Lao People's Dem. Republic	1990	43,5	29,7	57,2	1 010	338	680	2 323	1 135	1 188
	2000	35,2	23,8	46,6	1 064	354	716	3 022	1 488	1 534
	2015	23,9	16,1	31,8	1 099	368	734	4 600	2 288	2 313
Latvia	1990	0,2	0,2	0,2	4	2	2	2 097	951	1 146
	2000	0,2	0,2	0,2	4	2	2	2 000	901	1 099
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	4	2	2	1 946	887	1 059
Lebanon	1990	19,7	11,7	26,9	347	98	250	1 766	837	929
	2000	14,0	7,9	19,7	337	91	246	2 408	1 156	1 252
	2015	7,9	4,1	11,5	253	64	189	3 215	1 567	1 647
Lesotho	1990	22,0	34,6	10,5	219	166	54	994	481	514
	2000	16,6	27,4	6,4	205	166	41	1 236	605	631
	2015	10,6	18,6	2,7	143	128	18	1 357	688	670
Liberia	1990	60,8	44,6	77,2	640	237	403	1 054	532	522
	2000	46,5	29,8	63,3	776	251	524	1 669	841	828
	2015	32,0	17,5	46,5	880	242	637	2 751	1 381	1 370
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	1990	31,9	17,2	48,9	775	223	553	2 427	1 296	1 131
	2000	20,1	9,2	31,9	701	168	533	3 495	1 823	1 673
	2015	10,1	3,2	17,4	498	80	418	4 914	2 513	2 401
Lithuania	1990	0,7	0,5	0,9	20	6	13	2 881	1 334	1 546
	2000	0,4	0,3	0,5	13	5	8	2 977	1 375	1 602
	2015	0,3	0,2	0,3	8	4	4	3 078	1 429	1 649
Macau	1990	9,5	5,4	13,2	26	7	19	277	131	145
	2000	6,2	3,2	9,0	21	5	16	346	167	179
	2015	3,4	1,5	5,2	15	3	12	437	212	224
Madagascar	1990	42,0	33,6	50,2	2 773	1 094	1 674	6 596	3 260	3 336
	2000	33,5	26,4	40,3	2 957	1 155	1 799	8 827	4 367	4 461
	2015	22,0	17,6	26,2	3 072	1 221	1 850	13 983	6 924	7 059
Malawi	1990	48,2	31,2	63,8	2 406	746	1 660	4 995	2 392	2 603
	2000	39,9	25,5	53,5	2 419	758	1 659	6 070	2 969	3 101
	2015	28,4	18,4	38,4	2 482	809	1 666	8 730	4 393	4 336
Malaysia	1990	19,3	13,1	25,6	2 190	750	1 440	11 332	5 713	5 619
	2000	12,6	8,6	16,6	1 846	636	1 211	14 643	7 364	7 279
	2015	6,2	4,5	7,9	1 266	461	806	20 445	10 244	10 201
Maldives	1990	5,2	5,0	5,4	6	3	3	115	60	56
	2000	3,1	3,0	3,2	5	3	3	164	84	80
	2015	1,4	1,4	1,4	4	2	2	269	138	131
Mali	1990	81,2	72,1	89,6	3 849	1 655	2 193	4 743	2 296	2 447
	2000	74,4	64,2	84,0	4 548	1 918	2 627	6 116	2 990	3 126
	2015	62,2	51,6	72,6	5 905	2 429	3 470	9 486	4 704	4 781
Malta	1990	11,6	12,1	11,1	32	16	16	276	134	141
	2000	8,0	8,7	7,3	25	13	12	311	153	159
	2015	4,3	5,4	3,2	15	9	6	342	169	173

Country	Year	Illiteracy rate (%)			Illiterate population (000)			Total population (000)		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Martinique	**1990**	4,5	5,1	3,9	12	7	6	271	129	142
	2000	2,6	3,0	2,2	8	4	3	297	142	155
	2015	1,1	1,3	0,9	4	2	2	335	161	174
Mauritania	**1990**	65,2	53,7	76,1	715	287	428	1 097	535	562
	2000	59,8	49,3	69,9	890	360	530	1 488	731	758
	2015	52,7	44,4	60,8	1 222	508	714	2 318	1 143	1 175
Mauritius	**1990**	20,2	15,2	25,0	150	56	94	743	369	374
	2000	15,5	12,2	18,8	134	52	82	864	428	436
	2015	10,2	8,7	11,7	105	44	61	1 026	504	522
Mexico	**1990**	12,7	9,4	15,7	6 469	2 357	4 112	51 122	25 004	26 118
	2000	8,8	6,7	10,9	5 845	2 161	3 684	66 102	32 209	33 893
	2015	5,2	4,0	6,3	4 580	1 718	2 862	87 805	42 647	45 158
Moldova	**1990**	2,5	0,9	3,9	80	14	66	3 146	1 460	1 685
	2000	1,1	0,5	1,7	38	7	31	3 302	1 546	1 756
	2015	0,3	0,2	0,3	10	4	6	3 460	1 640	1 820
Mongolia	**1990**	2,2	1,5	2,9	29	10	19	1 293	639	653
	2000	1,6	1,4	1,7	26	11	14	1 641	814	827
	2015	1,0	1,2	0,9	23	13	10	2 286	1 138	1 148
Morocco	**1990**	61,3	47,3	75,1	9 090	3 465	5 624	14 825	7 332	7 494
	2000	51,2	38,2	63,9	9 988	3 702	6 286	19 523	9 691	9 832
	2015	38,1	28,1	48,1	10 324	3 796	6 527	27 087	13 510	13 577
Mozambique	**1990**	66,5	50,7	81,6	5 081	1 889	3 191	7 638	3 725	3 913
	2000	56,0	40,0	71,3	5 741	2 008	3 728	10 255	5 027	5 228
	2015	37,1	24,4	49,5	5 082	1 660	3 419	13 693	6 793	6 900
Myanmar	**1990**	19,3	12,6	25,8	4 913	1 589	3 319	25 474	12 587	12 887
	2000	15,3	11,1	19,5	4 897	1 740	3 161	31 943	15 743	16 200
	2015	11,4	9,4	13,4	4 715	1 900	2 823	41 288	20 226	21 062
Namibia	**1990**	25,1	22,6	27,6	196	84	112	779	373	406
	2000	18,0	17,2	18,8	178	83	96	988	481	507
	2015	9,3	10,1	8,5	132	71	60	1 412	704	708
Nepal	**1990**	69,6	52,6	86,0	7 439	2 885	4 481	10 696	5 484	5 212
	2000	58,3	40,6	76,0	7 922	2 808	5 065	13 588	6 925	6 663
	2015	42,1	26,8	57,9	8 497	2 746	5 747	20 174	10 241	9 934
Netherlands Antilles	**1990**	4,4	4,4	4,3	6	3	3	138	65	73
	2000	3,5	3,5	3,4	6	3	3	162	77	85
	2015	2,5	2,6	2,4	5	2	2	192	92	100
Nicaragua	**1990**	37,3	37,3	37,2	764	373	391	2 051	1 000	1 051
	2000	33,5	33,8	33,3	975	481	494	2 910	1 424	1 486
	2015	28,8	29,2	28,3	1 345	675	670	4 676	2 307	2 368
Niger	**1990**	88,6	82,0	94,9	3 420	1 568	1 847	3 860	1 913	1 947
	2000	84,0	76,2	91,5	4 564	2 072	2 483	5 430	2 717	2 713
	2015	74,7	65,4	83,8	6 948	3 067	3 859	9 296	4 690	4 606
Nigeria	**1990**	51,3	40,6	61,6	23 709	9 324	14 313	46 185	22 956	23 229
	2000	36,0	27,8	43,9	22 510	8 698	13 715	62 562	31 319	31 243
	2015	18,6	14,1	22,9	18 003	6 922	10 982	96 934	48 995	47 939
Oman	**1990**	45,3	32,7	61,7	433	177	257	956	540	416
	2000	28,3	19,9	38,4	402	155	246	1 419	778	642
	2015	12,9	8,4	17,9	310	107	203	2 403	1 268	1 134
Pakistan	**1990**	64,6	50,7	79,9	41 169	17 082	23 993	63 705	33 659	30 046
	2000	56,8	42,6	72,1	46 702	17 980	28 871	82 235	42 210	40 025
	2015	44,7	31,6	58,4	56 195	20 143	36 265	125 845	63 762	62 083
Panama	**1990**	11,0	10,3	11,6	170	81	89	1 552	783	769
	2000	8,1	7,5	8,8	159	74	86	1 962	984	978
	2015	5,1	4,5	5,7	132	58	74	2 593	1 292	1 300
Papua New Guinea	**1990**	43,4	35,6	51,8	949	406	543	2 188	1 141	1 047
	2000	36,1	29,4	43,2	1 040	443	594	2 880	1 505	1 375
	2015	26,4	21,7	31,4	1 125	479	644	4 252	2 204	2 049
Paraguay	**1990**	9,7	7,6	11,7	237	94	143	2 447	1 224	1 223
	2000	6,7	5,6	7,8	224	94	130	3 324	1 666	1 658
	2015	4,0	3,6	4,3	203	92	111	5 126	2 574	2 552

Table 7 (continued)   **Estimates and projections of adult illiteracy for population aged 15 years and above, by country and by gender 1990, 2000, 2015**

Country	Year	Illiteracy rate (%)			Illiterate population (000)			Total population (000)		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Peru	1990	14,5	8,0	20,9	1 935	525	1 409	13 313	6 585	6 728
	2000	10,1	5,3	14,8	1 735	448	1 287	17 094	8 375	8 720
	2015	5,7	2,9	8,4	1 332	327	1 005	23 367	11 460	11 907
Philippines	1990	8,3	7,8	8,8	2 986	1 397	1 590	36 101	18 019	18 083
	2000	5,1	4,9	5,2	2 395	1 161	1 235	47 258	23 587	23 672
	2015	2,5	2,5	2,5	1 671	842	828	67 513	33 718	33 795
Poland	1990	0,4	0,4	0,5	119	48	71	28 537	13 678	14 859
	2000	0,3	0,3	0,3	84	38	46	31 210	14 970	16 240
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	65	31	34	32 493	15 564	16 930
Portugal	1990	12,8	9,1	16,2	1 013	341	672	7 920	3 760	4 160
	2000	7,8	5,3	10,1	654	210	444	8 344	3 962	4 382
	2015	2,8	1,9	3,7	242	76	165	8 497	4 032	4 465
Puerto Rico	1990	8,5	8,4	8,5	217	102	115	2 568	1 220	1 348
	2000	6,2	6,4	6,0	185	90	95	2 981	1 408	1 574
	2015	4,0	4,4	3,6	138	73	65	3 488	1 645	1 842
Qatar	1990	23,0	22,6	24,0	74	53	21	324	236	88
	2000	18,8	19,6	16,9	78	57	21	414	289	125
	2015	12,7	14,7	9,0	68	50	17	536	343	192
Reunion	1990	17,8	20,1	15,5	74	41	33	417	202	216
	2000	12,4	14,4	10,5	64	36	28	519	250	268
	2015	6,3	8,0	4,7	42	25	16	657	316	341
Romania	1990	2,9	1,4	4,4	519	121	398	17 738	8 655	9 083
	2000	1,9	1,0	2,7	342	86	257	18 343	8 882	9 460
	2015	0,8	0,6	1,0	146	52	94	18 176	8 773	9 403
Russian Federation	1990	0,8	0,4	1,1	857	202	655	114 243	52 126	62 118
	2000	0,4	0,3	0,6	535	159	376	119 368	54 773	64 595
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,3	277	115	162	115 166	52 602	62 564
Rwanda	1990	46,7	37,1	56,0	1 671	650	1 021	3 577	1 753	1 823
	2000	33,2	26,4	39,6	1 405	550	854	4 239	2 083	2 155
	2015	18,4	15,6	21,1	1 105	465	639	6 009	2 978	3 031
Samoa	1990	2,0	1,5	2,6	2	1	1	95	50	45
	2000	1,4	1,1	1,7	1	1	1	93	50	43
	2015	0,8	0,7	0,9	1	0	0	113	61	53
Saudi Arabia	1990	33,8	23,8	49,8	2 968	1 210	1 840	8 782	5 090	3 691
	2000	23,8	17,0	33,1	2 760	1 092	1 723	11 611	6 407	5 205
	2015	12,9	9,5	17,0	2 510	979	1 560	19 487	10 323	9 164
Senegal	1990	71,6	61,8	81,4	2 863	1 227	1 636	3 996	1 987	2 010
	2000	62,6	52,7	72,3	3 285	1 365	1 920	5 245	2 589	2 656
	2015	48,5	40,0	56,7	3 925	1 599	2 326	8 101	3 998	4 103
Singapore	1990	11,2	5,6	16,8	265	66	199	2 369	1 182	1 187
	2000	7,7	3,8	11,7	243	59	184	3 140	1 569	1 571
	2015	3,5	1,9	5,1	142	38	104	4 092	2 043	2 048
Slovenia	1990	0,4	0,4	0,5	7	3	4	1 552	742	810
	2000	0,4	0,3	0,4	6	3	3	1 672	804	868
	2015	0,3	0,3	0,3	5	2	3	1 695	816	879
South Africa	1990	18,8	17,8	19,8	4 215	1 953	2 262	22 437	10 984	11 453
	2000	14,8	14,0	15,4	4 217	1 956	2 260	28 575	13 931	14 645
	2015	9,8	9,3	10,2	3 026	1 435	1 590	31 005	15 344	15 661
Spain	1990	3,7	2,2	5,2	1 186	339	847	31 687	15 343	16 344
	2000	2,4	1,5	3,2	807	240	568	34 036	16 483	17 553
	2015	1,1	0,8	1,4	379	124	255	34 134	16 508	17 627
Sri Lanka	1990	11,3	7,1	15,3	1 302	434	839	11 547	6 071	5 477
	2000	8,4	5,6	11,0	1 167	401	745	13 947	7 190	6 758
	2015	5,4	4,0	6,7	893	334	551	16 623	8 380	8 242
Sudan	1990	54,2	40,0	68,5	7 792	2 859	4 948	14 369	7 142	7 227
	2000	42,3	30,8	53,8	7 881	2 857	5 019	18 621	9 283	9 337
	2015	27,6	20,4	34,8	7 563	2 796	4 757	27 394	13 707	13 687
Swaziland	1990	28,4	26,3	30,1	122	55	67	430	209	221
	2000	20,4	19,2	21,4	110	51	59	540	264	277
	2015	12,0	11,7	12,2	75	37	38	627	314	313

Country	Year	Illiteracy rate (%)			Illiterate population (000)			Total population (000)		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Syrian	1990	35,2	18,2	52,5	2 273	592	1 680	6 463	3 263	3 201
Arab Republic	2000	25,6	11,7	39,6	2 449	566	1 879	9 577	4 826	4 751
	2015	15,9	6,3	25,5	2 422	485	1 927	15 236	7 692	7 544
Tajikistan	1990	1,8	0,8	2,8	55	12	43	3 014	1 475	1 539
	2000	0,8	0,4	1,2	30	8	22	3 690	1 817	1 873
	2015	0,3	0,2	0,4	15	6	9	5 171	2 562	2 609
Thailand	1990	7,6	4,7	10,5	2 842	855	1 996	37 299	18 378	18 921
	2000	4,5	2,9	6,1	2 081	647	1 440	46 063	22 613	23 450
	2015	2,4	1,5	3,3	1 382	418	968	56 563	27 608	28 955
Togo	1990	55,8	39,5	71,3	1 047	363	684	1 877	919	958
	2000	42,9	27,7	57,5	1 082	343	737	2 523	1 242	1 282
	2015	25,9	14,8	36,7	1 001	284	715	3 869	1 918	1 951
Trinidad	1990	3,2	1,9	4,4	26	8	18	809	402	406
and Tobago	2000	1,7	1,1	2,3	17	5	12	971	480	491
	2015	0,7	0,5	0,9	8	3	5	1 122	549	572
Tunisia	1990	40,9	28,4	53,5	2 081	726	1 355	5 088	2 554	2 534
	2000	29,0	18,6	39,4	1 928	621	1 307	6 650	3 334	3 316
	2015	16,1	8,4	23,9	1 363	357	1 007	8 467	4 247	4 220
Turkey	1990	22,1	10,8	33,6	8 077	1 981	6 097	36 468	18 321	18 148
	2000	15,0	6,6	23,5	6 993	1 539	5 453	46 647	23 481	23 166
	2015	8,1	2,9	13,4	4 883	869	4 011	59 926	30 019	29 907
Uganda	1990	43,9	30,7	56,5	3 924	1 358	2 561	8 948	4 416	4 532
	2000	33,0	22,5	43,2	3 902	1 324	2 572	11 834	5 874	5 960
	2015	20,8	14,2	27,2	4 076	1 393	2 678	19 641	9 784	9 857
Ukraine	1990	0,6	0,3	0,8	237	55	182	40 770	18 338	22 432
	2000	0,4	0,3	0,5	160	46	113	40 728	18 500	22 227
	2015	0,2	0,2	0,2	84	33	51	37 781	17 300	20 481
United	1990	29,0	28,8	29,4	410	297	113	1 416	1 033	383
Arab Emirates	2000	23,8	25,2	20,9	459	345	117	1 928	1 370	558
	2015	17,0	19,9	12,1	432	335	104	2 547	1 687	860
United Republic	1990	37,1	24,5	49,0	5 142	1 653	3 490	13 879	6 758	7 121
of Tanzania	2000	25,0	16,1	33,5	4 827	1 528	3 299	19 319	9 471	9 849
	2015	12,3	8,2	16,3	3 616	1 197	2 418	29 431	14 582	14 849
Uruguay	1990	3,5	4,0	3,0	80	44	37	2 297	1 095	1 202
	2000	2,4	2,9	2,0	61	35	26	2 510	1 196	1 313
	2015	1,4	1,8	1,1	41	24	16	2 841	1 366	1 475
Uzbekistan	1990	1,3	0,5	2,1	164	32	132	12 123	5 891	6 232
	2000	0,8	0,4	1,2	126	31	94	15 859	7 768	8 091
	2015	0,4	0,3	0,5	94	34	59	22 631	11 177	11 454
Venezuela	1990	11,1	9,9	12,3	1 340	599	741	12 060	6 039	6 022
	2000	7,5	7,0	8,0	1 189	554	635	15 943	7 961	7 982
	2015	3,9	4,0	3,8	875	447	428	22 353	11 129	11 223
Viet Nam	1990	9,6	6,0	12,9	3 897	1 200	2 651	40 384	19 890	20 494
	2000	7,5	5,5	9,3	3 901	1 419	2 463	52 067	25 706	26 361
	2015	5,3	4,7	5,8	3 722	1 660	2 061	70 743	34 987	35 756
Yemen	1990	67,3	44,8	87,1	3 994	1 243	2 750	5 932	2 773	3 159
	2000	53,6	32,5	74,7	4 914	1 444	3 525	9 161	4 444	4 718
	2015	33,7	18,8	48,9	5 703	1 592	4 149	16 931	8 446	8 485
Zambia	1990	31,8	21,4	41,3	1 384	459	909	4 346	2 143	2 202
	2000	21,8	14,8	28,5	1 215	411	793	5 572	2 785	2 787
	2015	12,1	8,8	15,4	999	368	626	8 252	4 183	4 068
Zimbabwe	1990	19,3	13,4	25,0	1 071	368	701	5 550	2 747	2 802
	2000	11,3	7,2	15,4	784	249	532	6 918	3 453	3 465
	2015	4,4	2,4	6,4	432	118	311	9 845	4 976	4 869