

Global LIFE Mid-term Evaluation Report 2006-2011

# Looking Forward with LIFE

Literacy Initiative for Empowerment



UNESCO Institute  
for Lifelong Learning



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United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Institute  
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# Acronyms

ADB	African Development Bank
AECID	Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development
APPEAL	Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All (UNESCO)
BFA	Belém Framework for Action
BREDA	Regional Bureau for Education in Africa (UNESCO)
CapEFA	Capacity Development for EFA Programme (UNESCO)
CAR	Central African Republic
CLC	Community Learning Centre
CONFINTEA	International Conference on Adult Education
CREAA	Regional Council for Education and Literacy in Africa
CSOs	Civil society organisations
DESD	United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EDI	EFA Development Index
EDUCAIDS	UNESCO Education Sector response to HIV and AIDS
EFA	Education for All
FTI	Fast Track Initiative (Global Partnership for Education since Sept. 2011)
GMR	EFA Global Monitoring Report
GPI	Gender Parity Index
ICAE	International Council for Adult Education
ICT	Information and communication technology
INGOs	International non-governmental organisations
LAMP	Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (UNESCO)
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LIFE	Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (UNESCO)
MDGs	UN Millennium Development Goals
NFE	Non-formal education
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
OEI	Organization of Iberoamerican States
PNG	Papua New Guinea
RAMAA	Action-research on the Measurement of Learning Achievements in Literacy Programmes
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SMS	Short Message Service
TTISSA	Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO)
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNLD	United Nations Literacy Decade
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

# Preface

by Irina Bokova

Director-General of UNESCO

Lasting peace can only be founded on respect for human rights and social justice. Literacy, the foundation of all education and lifelong learning, is one of these rights. It is also a development accelerator and a force for peace. In today's knowledge driven societies, lack of literacy is more than ever synonymous with exclusion and marginalization. According to the most recent figures from 2009, 793 million adults lack basic literacy skills – two-thirds of whom are women. This unacceptable situation is holding back all efforts to advance human development and reduce poverty. It is an infringement of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and an obstacle to lasting peace.

UNESCO launched the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (2006-2015) – LIFE – to tackle the literacy challenge. This is a collaborative effort to accelerate literacy efforts in thirty five of the world's most challenged countries and thereby to unlock progress to reach all of the Millennium Development Goals.

Now underway for five years, it is time to review the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment. We must assess LIFE's achievements, identify inspiring innovations as well as enduring challenges, highlight significant lessons and, on this basis, move forward. This is the goal of this global mid-term evaluation report, which draws on prior national and regional evaluation processes and the evidence of existing research, to provide strategic directions for the remaining implementation of the initiative.

This evaluation confirms the value of LIFE to literacy development. The majority of LIFE countries recorded an increase in adult literacy rates by an average of 3.1 percent, compared with 1.9 percent at global level over the same period, from 1995–2004 to 2005–2009.

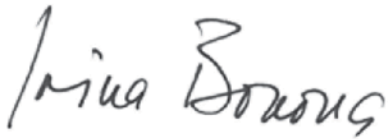
This progress occurred thanks to closer relationships between government and civil society, through alliances at the national and local level, and on the basis of partnerships with universities and institutions for teacher training. Most importantly, this progress drew on political will and high-profile advocacy, and also on the personal involvement of national leaders and mobilization of resources.

Much work remains ahead. The evaluation shows that twenty-four LIFE countries experienced an increase in numbers of adults without literacy skills due to population growth and to the number of those passing into adulthood who did not go to school (for long enough) to become literate.

One focus of LIFE is a concerted effort to empower women and girls. The evaluation reveals here a mixed picture that shows there is still much to do. Only six of the thirty-two LIFE countries with available data were able to record a net decrease in the number of illiterate women. In the future, LIFE will need to focus even more on women and girls. Indeed, this will be linked to the objectives guiding UNESCO's new Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education.

The evaluation confirms the need for an increased commitment to literacy that is backed by adequate resources to scale up and deliver programmes of high quality. This underlines the importance of policies of capacity development for improved literacy and non-formal education at national and sub-national levels. In the framework of its Capacity Development for Education for All programme, UNESCO is developing interventions with a long-term perspective in line with national human resource development strategies. We will continue to underpin these processes with research that is policy-driven and action-oriented and with platforms for policy exchange on innovative experiences.

LIFE's vision is to achieve literacy for all. For this, we must build on the experience, knowledge and resources that we generated in the first half of the initiative. On this basis, we will strengthen partnerships of collaborative action and sharpen our action to change the lives of millions of non-literate and semi-literate people. Literacy must be a priority for every Government, so that every individual can develop their potential and participate in shaping more sustainable, just and peaceful societies.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Irina Bokova". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Irina Bokova  
Director-General of UNESCO

# Foreword

## by Arne Carlsen

### Director

# UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

The Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) is one of UNESCO's landmark strategies for achieving the goals of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD – 2003–2012). The implementation of LIFE is also expected to contribute towards achieving the Dakar Goals (Education For All – EFA), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the *Belém Framework for Action* from UNESCO's Sixth International Conference on Adult Education, CONFINTEA VI.

Since its inception in 2006 as a strategic framework to meet a diversity of needs in different contexts, the initiative, which embraces a new vision for accelerating progress in literacy, has evolved into a genuine movement for literacy and empowerment. It has also started to expand its outreach beyond the participating 35 countries. Particularly the E-9 initiative has become a powerful mechanism to advance literacy in the spirit of South-South cooperation and in the framework of EFA, UNLD and LIFE.

The LIFE mid-term evaluation conducted in 2010/11 has provided an excellent opportunity for bringing together all relevant stakeholders to collectively reflect on progress made by LIFE countries, on challenges in achieving its strategic objectives, and on lessons learnt to be used in the remaining five years of the initiative. While building on these national and regional processes, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) has prepared this global mid-term evaluation report in order to contribute to an improved implementation of LIFE up to 2015.

The findings of the mid-term evaluation show that there is a huge diversity in starting points, in the ways countries address their literacy challenges, and in innovative potential to mobilise for and accelerate literacy efforts. The analysis of progress shows a mosaic of results including substantial achievements,

countless success stories and some encouraging evolutions such as an increasing acceptance of a concept that literacy involves a continuum of learning and that the literacy challenge has to be addressed in holistic ways. Sustainable levels of literacy require education beyond elementary literacy as a foundation of lifelong learning.

The analysis of findings also shows that most LIFE countries continue to face major literacy challenges and are at risk of falling short of EFA Goal 4 in 2015. Progress in increasing literacy rates is not fast enough to keep up with population growth and regrowing numbers of young people failing to become literate through formal school. Therefore the LIFE initiative continues to be relevant for boosting literacy efforts in LIFE countries.

LIFE, as a learning process in itself, has assisted many stakeholders and actors in accessing and generating new knowledge, experiences and ideas, and thereby has expanded horizons and visions. Therefore it is my genuine hope that the findings of the LIFE mid-term evaluation, as well as the strategies and action points, will continue to be broadly discussed to enrich and improve the implementation of the initiative in the coming years. I strongly believe that a more resolute use of the LIFE framework can contribute greatly to the achievement of the ambitious goal of empowering literacy for all.



# Acknowledgements

This publication was prepared by a UIL team coordinated by Ulrike Hanemann. The team included Madina Bolly, Christine Glanz, Angela Owusu-Boampong, Peter Roslander, Raúl Valdés Coterá and Rika Yorozu. It further benefited from the experience, perspectives and support of other UIL colleagues, in particular UIL's director Arne Carlsen, deputy director Carolyn Medel-Añonuevo and senior programme specialist Bettina Bochynek; Lisa Krolak, Imke Behr and Jan Kairies from the Library and Documentation Centre; and Virman Man, Cendrine Sebastiani and Maya Kiesselbach from the Publications Unit.

This global mid-term evaluation report draws on valuable contributions of many stakeholders in the 35 (now 36, including South Sudan) LIFE countries and builds on debates and collective reflection of participants in three regional mid-term evaluation meetings in 2010 and 2011. Further it benefits from the regional and national reports prepared by Roshan Bajracharya, Aliou Boly, Shiu Kee Chu, Jacques Reid, Eliane Ribeiro (with collaboration from Ana Karina Brenner and Miguel Farah Neto), and Ydo Yao.

We owe special thanks to our colleagues César Guadalupe, Friedrich Huebler, Weixin Lu and Albert Motivans from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), who provided us with the statistical information we requested for our purpose.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 LIFE: a framework of collaborative action for the achievement of EFA Goal 4

Literacy is a prerequisite for most forms of learning, for expanding opportunity and for personal and community empowerment. But the right to literacy has still to become a reality for about 793 million young people and adults around the world, two-thirds of them women. The true magnitude of the challenge is unclear since only a limited number of countries have measured the literacy skills of their adult population. Since its creation, UNESCO has prioritised the promotion of basic education and particularly of literacy. It has been responsible for coordinating and implementing such major initiatives as the **United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD, 2003-2012)**, which supports achievement of the literacy goal<sup>1</sup> of **Education for All (EFA, 2000-2015)**. The **Belém Framework for Action (BFA)**, adopted by the 144 UNESCO Member States represented at the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFITEA VI, December 2009), emphasised the urgency of redoubling efforts to halve the 2000 illiteracy rates by 2015 (EFA Goal 4), with the ultimate goal of creating a fully literate world.

When regular monitoring of Member States' progress towards the EFA Literacy Goal by 2015 showed that it would be missed by a wide margin – mainly due to long-standing neglect of literacy in education policy and a lack of political commitment – UNESCO decided to launch the **Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE, 2006-2015)**. LIFE was devised as a key operational mechanism for achieving the ambitious UNLD goals, concentrating on the constraints

identified by successive EFA Global Monitoring Reports,<sup>2</sup> that would provide a framework for action to accelerate efforts in countries where a lack of literacy and numeracy skills poses a critical challenge to achieving EFA (in particular Goals 3, 4 and 5), the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000-2015)** and the **United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014)**.

LIFE **targets** the 35 countries<sup>3</sup> with literacy rates below 50 per cent and/or a population of more than 10 million young people and adults reported to be illiterate. It is designed as a ten-year framework for national governments, NGOs, civil society, the private sector, UN agencies, and bi/multilateral development partners to collectively revitalise, enhance and advance national literacy efforts. Around 85 per cent of the world's reported non-literate adults – the majority of them women – live in these countries, 18 are in Africa, 9 in Asia and the Pacific, 6 in the Arab Region and 2 in Latin America and the Caribbean.

### 1.2 LIFE: objectives and areas for action

LIFE's overall **goal** is "to empower people, especially rural women and girls, who have inadequate literacy skills and competencies".<sup>4</sup>

1 EFA Goal 4 is about reducing adult illiteracy rates by 50 per cent by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults

2 For example, insufficient commitment and political will, low national capacities, insufficient funds, cooperation and support from donors and international partners, low involvement of civil society and the private sector (see UIL, 2007, p.19)

3 See Annex 2: Countries participating in LIFE

4 LIFE 2006-2015: *Vision and Strategy Paper*, 3rd edition, UIL, September 2007

The overall **objectives** of LIFE are:

- To reinforce national and international commitment to literacy through advocacy and communication.
- To support the articulation of policies for sustainable literacy within sector-wide and national development frameworks.
- To strengthen national capacities for programme design, management and implementation.
- To enhance countries' innovative initiatives and practices in providing literacy learning opportunities.<sup>5</sup>

Consequently, the **strategic areas for action** focus on advocacy, partnership-building, capacity-development for policy and empowering programmes, innovation and knowledge-sharing underpinned by accountability, transparency and cost-effectiveness. LIFE processes in support of literacy should aim to be country-led and country-specific, embedded in national policies and strategies, and address both policy and programme delivery. National ownership and the need to fit LIFE within a diversity of national specificities are perceived as crucial to the success of the initiative. LIFE also sets out to raise the profile of literacy by integrating literacy into national development frameworks and sector-wide education strategies and plans.

**Key actors** expected to implement the LIFE initiative are governments, civil society, the private sector and development partners in LIFE countries – including the United Nations organisations acting as “One UN”. UNESCO’s role is to facilitate collaborative action and to mobilise technical support services.

The ultimate **vision** guiding LIFE is to offer good quality, relevant learning opportunities to those denied the right to education - in particular girls and women in rural and marginalized communities - by building strong partnerships for collaborative action and implementing an effective strategy that will mobilise resources to make a real difference to the lives of millions of learners.

### 1.3 LIFE: mid-term evaluation

As a complement to continuous **monitoring and evaluation** in LIFE countries, the *Vision and Strategy Paper* planned a **mid-term evaluation in 2011**.<sup>6</sup> It was expected that “at the end of the ten-year period, significantly more people must have become and remain literate than would have been the case in the absence of LIFE”.<sup>7</sup> This implied that the mid-term evaluation would not only determine whether literacy rates in the 35 LIFE countries were significantly increased in the period from 2006 to 2010, but also to evaluate the extent to which these achievements were sustainable and could be attributed to the implementation of LIFE. These latter expectations do not fit well with an initiative that was devised as a strategic framework designed for flexible adaptation and interpretation at country level. LIFE was understood, adopted and used in a variety of ways in a range of contexts. In several cases, it was able to build on many years of experience in literacy work or coincided with on-going literacy campaigns and initiatives or even sector-wide reforms.

A pragmatic approach will be followed in this mid-term evaluation **focusing on progress made in LIFE countries with regard to the overall goal and four objectives promoted by LIFE** rather than trying to separate the specific contribution of LIFE from other interventions in the countries concerned. The overarching development goal of LIFE is seen as the **joint impact of efforts and results** in the four strategic areas for action. Activities within these areas are interdependent and are also subject to wider influences so impact cannot always be attributed to one area of action alone. However, even given this complexity it is appropriate to examine progress in each area of action and to include in this an assessment of the added value that LIFE has brought to accelerating literacy at country level and to advancing other frameworks such as the UNLD, EFA, DESD, BFA and the MDGs.

The **evaluation process** has involved a multi-layered methodology characterised by an action-oriented and bottom-up approach. No independent or external evaluator was used to lead the process. It began at the end of 2009 in the Africa Region with the

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p.31 and 38

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p.38

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p.19

development of country evaluation reports based on a regional questionnaire.<sup>8</sup> The findings were discussed and recommendations formulated in a regional LIFE mid-term evaluation workshop in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in March 2010. Based on analysis of existing documents and information collected through a questionnaire, the first draft of a LIFE evaluation report was prepared for the Asia and Pacific Region and discussed in a regional meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, in December 2010. In the Arab region, regional-specific questionnaires were sent out to analyse progress and challenges in literacy. An Arab regional consultation meeting was convened in Sharjah, UAE, in July 2011 to discuss what recommendations might be made. These processes produced three regional LIFE mid-term evaluation synthesis reports.<sup>9</sup> Following the questionnaire responses of key stakeholders, national LIFE mid-term evaluation reports were also prepared for Brazil and Haiti in the Latin America and Caribbean Region during the second semester of 2011.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to the above a number of other important sources of information were used including:

- baseline data compiled in 2005 through the Country Profiles for each LIFE country
- LIFE progress reports from July 2007 (unpublished) and September 2009<sup>11</sup>
- reports from the three regional LIFE review and coordination meetings in December 2007 and January 2008<sup>12</sup>



*Regional LIFE mid-term evaluation meeting in Bangkok, December 2010*

- the UNLD<sup>13</sup> and EFA mid-term evaluation reports
- the CONFINTEA VI national reports<sup>14</sup>
- the country and synthesis reports from the E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting<sup>15</sup> on literacy in June 2009
- reports of the Capacity Development for EFA Programme on literacy and non-formal education projects.

Analysis of the available information was guided by the logical framework matrix<sup>16</sup> of the LIFE *Vision and Strategy Paper*. The first draft prepared by UIL was submitted for consultation with LIFE focal points in national ministries and at UNESCO's field offices, regional bureaux and related headquarters' divisions. External reviewers from the different regions were engaged to help focus on particular lessons to be drawn to support improved implementation in the remaining years of the Initiative.

Building on this collective reflection and national and regional mid-term evaluation processes, UIL has prepared this **global LIFE mid-term evaluation report**, which seeks to contribute to the effective implementation of the LIFE initiative through to 2015. It will also contribute to the achievement of a number of overall purposes<sup>17</sup> pursued by the LIFE mid-term evaluation process.

In terms of **content**, this report will analyse the overall progress achieved in the pursuit of the four objectives and expected results of LIFE; highlight inspiring innovations, success stories, challenges and lessons learned; and develop action points and strategies for the remaining period of the LIFE implementation (2012-2015).

<sup>8</sup> Each UNESCO Regional Bureau had developed its own questionnaire

<sup>9</sup> Boly, A. (2011) *UNESCO's Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE): Mid-term Evaluation for the Arab Region*. Hamburg, UIL (unpublished); BRENDA/UIL (2010) *Evaluation of the impact of LIFE in Africa. Workshop Report*, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, March 2010; Chu, S.K. and Bajracharya, R. (2011) *Regional Mid-term Evaluation of Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE)*. Bangkok, UNESCO Bangkok (unpublished)

<sup>10</sup> Ribeiro, E., Brenner, A.K. and Farah Neto, M. (2011) *Brazil's contribution to the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE)* (unpublished); Reid, J. (2011) *Evaluation du projet 514HAI1000-LIFE UNESCO/Espagne/SEA "Alphabétisation et formation de base des jeunes adultes des communes de Baint et Côtes de Fer", Rapport intermédiaire*, Port-au-Prince, décembre 2011 (unpublished)

<sup>11</sup> UIL (2009) *Advancing literacy: A review of LIFE 2006-2009*

<sup>12</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001777/177790e.pdf>  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001777/177782e.pdf>  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001777/177785e.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001631/163170e.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/en/confinteavi/national-reports/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001885/188530e.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> See Annex 3

<sup>17</sup> See Annex 1



# Chapter 2

## Implementation of LIFE 2006-2011: Process and landmarks

The *Vision and Strategy Paper*<sup>18</sup> which set out the LIFE strategy was based on a participatory process involving a number of international partners. Once officially adopted, LIFE was launched at UNESCO's 33<sup>rd</sup> General Conference in October 2005 as one of three EFA flagship initiatives<sup>19</sup> prioritised by the Education Sector. This chapter sets out a brief history of LIFE since its inception by building on the review undertaken in 2009,<sup>20</sup> highlights significant events and identifies some lessons learned from the history of the initiative about successful approaches during the first five years.

### 2.1 Launch and establishment of a UNESCO-wide LIFE coordination structure

LIFE was launched at regional level in March 2006 with three regional consultation, coordination and planning meetings.<sup>21</sup> These were attended by delegates from all LIFE countries from the Asia and Pacific and Arab Regions, and the four first-round countries<sup>22</sup> (initially the initiative envisaged a phased approach) in the case of the African Region. The meetings agreed Regional Follow-up Strategies and Support Mechanisms for implementing LIFE. UNESCO Field Offices were asked to submit LIFE country profiles for background and baseline information. LIFE countries were invited to conduct needs assessment

studies, with financial and technical support from UNESCO, and to prepare LIFE Country Action Plans based on the strategic gaps identified. However, it soon became clear that LIFE processes needed to be tailored to the specific contexts of participating countries and required flexible responses on the part of UNESCO.

The global coordination of LIFE was transferred from UNESCO Headquarters to the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) in mid-2006<sup>23</sup> and a two-pronged strategy was developed encompassing 1) macro-coordination (continuous consultation and negotiation with all stakeholders) and 2) technical assistance (responding to the specific requests of LIFE countries). This coordination and facilitation model was based on a network of UNESCO focal points (usually education officers) in field offices in (or responsible for) LIFE countries<sup>24</sup> working with a national LIFE focal point appointed by the Minister of Education. UIL staff provided back-up to the field system for each LIFE country. This support mechanism was complemented by regional LIFE focal points at each UNESCO Regional Bureau (in Bangkok, Beirut, Dakar and Santiago de Chile), by UNESCO's specialist institutes<sup>25</sup> and by the Unit responsible for coordinating the UNLD at UNESCO Headquarters.<sup>26</sup> In addition, UNESCO mobilised its literacy networks of international, regional and national agencies, governments, academic and research institutions and NGOs, particularly in LIFE and neighbouring countries.

18 In addition to English and French, this document was translated into Arabic, Bangla, Portuguese and Spanish.

19 The Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE), the Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA), and the Education Sector response to HIV and AIDS (EDUCAIDS)

20 UIL (2009) *Advancing literacy: A review of LIFE 2006-2009*, Hamburg, Germany

21 In Islamabad, Pakistan; Sana'a, Yemen; and Niamey, Niger. For the two LIFE countries in Latin America and the Caribbean – Brazil and Haiti – no regional launch meeting took place

22 Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal

23 This decision was taken as part of the UNESCO Education Sector Reform in 2006.

24 See Annex 4

25 In particular the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the International Bureau of Education (IBE), and the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)

26 Within the structural reform at the UNESCO Education Sector concluded at the end of 2010, this is now the Literacy & Non-Formal Education (LNF) Section under the Division for Basic to Higher Education and Learning (BHL)

## 2.2 Refining the strategy

Feedback provided by field offices at the end of 2006 on early experience of LIFE implementation indicated a clear need for adequate support from the specialised UNESCO entities, the necessity of generating accurate data on the real scale of national literacy challenges as well as a need to share information and define steps to be taken after the formulation of country action plans. Some of the lessons learned during the first year of LIFE were that:

- lack of technical support and misunderstanding of LIFE as merely a funding mechanism often presented challenges for the quality of the processes;
- approaches work best when they are flexible and feed into national agendas;
- strong ownership and partnerships early in LIFE processes help to lay solid foundations and are more likely to guarantee sustainability of such processes.

Because of the common misinterpretation of LIFE as a funded UNESCO project the *LIFE Vision and Strategy Paper* was revised in 2007 in order to affirm LIFE's nature as a strategic framework of collaborative action which is country-led and country-specific and embedded in national policies and processes. This implicitly recognised the fact that LIFE would take as many shapes as countries that participate.

In the course of implementing, monitoring and refining the LIFE strategy, it also became clear that the three stage process initially envisaged needed revision. There was no real reason to delay LIFE countries' efforts to advance literacy. In the context of the regional LIFE meetings at the end of 2007 and the beginning of 2008, all 35 LIFE countries were invited to "immediately set to work in order to extend, accelerate and improve their literacy strategies".<sup>27</sup> This key message helped to introduce a new dynamic to LIFE, but at the same time challenged all stakeholders involved to sustain the momentum for literacy.

## 2.3 A major challenge: creating a common platform of understanding and getting LIFE started at country level

As LIFE processes were intended to be country-led, national governments invited to participate in the initiative were expected to assume leadership in organising literacy actions. It has been a real challenge to create a common platform of understanding of what LIFE is and how it can be best used in different contexts as a support mechanism and framework of collaborative action. In a strict sense, a country cannot "implement LIFE". It can only implement its own literacy policies and plans, renewed and enhanced by support through LIFE. Many stakeholders and partners did not fully understand the orientation and *modus operandi* of LIFE. It was often interpreted too narrowly, as a project funded and implemented by UNESCO Field Offices in an isolated way. LIFE is intended to build on countries' existing experiences, increasing their scope, giving them urgency and preferably helping them frame activity within a sector-wide and multi-partnership approach.

However, the diversity of situations within countries has resulted in a range of different interpretations and uses of LIFE evolving in the reality of country processes. Poor countries with low levels of literacy and emerging from conflict (such as Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and South Sudan) are very different from high-population, (upper) middle-income countries such as Brazil and China. Differences have also been due to the fact that LIFE was proposed at exactly the right moment for some countries, while in others the situation on the ground was "indifferent" or not conducive to beginning LIFE-oriented processes. For some countries a strong driving force for interest was the possibility of obtaining financial support for major project activities (see 2.5).

Some LIFE countries have been motivated to use the initiative as an opportunity to share their experiences and to network for South-South cooperation.

### **Preparatory steps: needs assessment and designation of focal points**

Starting and developing LIFE processes at country level has been the centre of UNESCO's strategy and constitutes one of the greatest challenges. Preparatory work has included country profiles, needs assessment or situation analyses, launch and validation workshops with key stakeholders,

<sup>27</sup> UIL (2008) Maputo Strategic Platform for LIFE (leaflet) <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001777/177793e.pdf>



advocacy events, the formulation of action plans, and the establishment or reinforcement of (existing) coordination structures and partnership mechanisms.

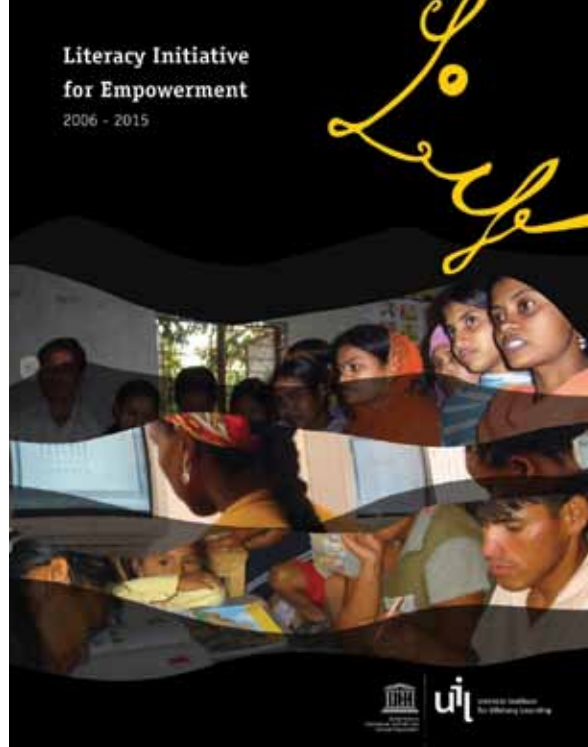
In 32 LIFE countries<sup>28</sup> needs assessments, situation analyses or in-depth studies were prepared, discussed and validated during national stakeholder events to produce recommendations for national action plans. These high-profile media events often provided a much-needed boost to kick-start new literacy activities, bringing partners together, mobilising and forging new alliances and creating a strong sense of shared commitment. In a few countries, such as Afghanistan, Benin, Egypt, Haiti, Mozambique and Pakistan, many stakeholders and partners were involved in consultations and debates to develop a national needs assessment document. In-depth studies on literacy in multilingual contexts served as a basis for LIFE launch workshops in Sudan (Khartoum) and South Sudan (Juba).

The LIFE focal points, who were officially designated by their Ministers at UNESCO's request, were given the important role of setting up LIFE coordination structures. Most often the head of the literacy or non-formal education department in the Ministry of Education or a similar body, they were supported by a UNESCO LIFE focal point – usually the education officer at the appropriate field office. The national LIFE focal points coordinated the activities of all relevant stakeholders, trying to generate synergy among partners, collecting and sharing relevant information, and representing their country at regional LIFE meetings. In a number of LIFE countries, the national LIFE focal points have provided continuity in the implementation of the initiative but in other countries, political change has led to discontinuity in this function and loss of institutional memory with regard to national LIFE processes.

### **Developing tools to support literacy in LIFE countries**

In support of advocacy, communication and capacity-development activities in LIFE countries, UIIL produced a *LIFE Resource Pack* which includes a number of research and meeting reports, flyers and publications on effective practice in print and electronic forms.

<sup>28</sup> See table in Annex 5. Most of these LIFE countries have received financial and technical support from UNESCO to carry out their studies.



*LIFE Resource Pack*

These materials have been distributed to key stakeholders, in particular to national and UNESCO LIFE focal points. They were also made accessible to the general public through UIIL's website.<sup>29</sup>

To facilitate direct communication, information and exchange among stakeholders in LIFE countries, LIFeline<sup>30</sup> was launched in 2008 as an interactive online platform. By means of an electronic mailing list, around 250 LIFE focal points and key stakeholders receive news and are able to communicate with each other. Alongside the UNESCO Literacy Portal and specially-designed country LIFE websites, LIFeline constitutes a key mechanism for reaching a broader audience to advocate for literacy.

In line with its mandate to provide up-to-date evidence and information to inspire and help to improve existing and future policies, strategies and practice, in 2009 UIIL started to develop an online Database on Effective Literacy Policies and Practices (<http://www.unesco.org/uiil/litbase/>). At regional level, UNESCO bureaux have launched similar online platforms in support of EFA, UNLD and LIFE. Good practice shared in the series of six Regional Conferences in Support of Global Literacy during 2007-2008 is accessible online in the form of short information sheets and serves to improve efforts everywhere.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> <http://uil.unesco.org/home/programme-areas/literacy/life-literacy-initiative-for-empowerment/life-resource-pack/>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/en/education/lifeline/>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/education-building-blocks/literacy/resources/databases/>

## 2.4 Creating and sustaining a momentum for literacy: some highlights

The literacy challenge requires political commitment at the highest level.<sup>32</sup> Such commitment needs to be reinforced continuously to make literacy a priority for different stakeholders. In order to achieve this, a series of global and regional activities were organised by or in cooperation with UNESCO, as leader and coordinator of the UNLD and the initiator of LIFE:

- A White House Conference on Global Literacy in New York in September 2006, hosted by the Honorary Ambassador for the UNLD, Ms. Laura Bush, raised international awareness and created a momentum.
- Six Regional Conferences in Support of Global Literacy during 2007 and 2008, organised by UNESCO in Qatar, China, Mali, India, Azerbaijan, and Mexico, resulting in new impetus for youth and adult literacy. The recommendations adopted at the African Regional Conference in Support of Global Literacy, attended by over 500 participants, were summarised in *The Bamako Call to Action*.<sup>33</sup> This Call was endorsed by a resolution at the 34<sup>th</sup> UNESCO General Conference in October 2007, at which Member States of the Africa region were encouraged to implement the recommendations and the UNESCO Director-General was invited to provide support and develop benchmarks to monitor progress.
- The White House Symposium for Advancing Global Literacy in September 2008, hosted again by Ms. Laura Bush and attended by a further 36 first ladies from around the world, provided a forum to discuss the outcomes of the six UNESCO Regional Literacy Conferences, and renewed international commitments to promoting and sustaining global literacy efforts.
- In December 2007 and January 2008, a series of three Regional Meetings of LIFE countries was organised by UNESCO with the participation of more than 125 national and UNESCO LIFE focal points and other key stakeholders.<sup>34</sup> A major outcome for Africa was the Maputo Strategic

Platform for LIFE,<sup>35</sup> a comprehensive and forward-looking document adopted by the participants of the Regional Meeting of African LIFE countries and used to mobilise all LIFE countries to take immediate action to address their literacy challenges.

- In October 2009: around 80 participants from E-9 countries<sup>36</sup> met at a seminar<sup>37</sup> on “Literacy and Adult Learning in Rural Areas” in Beijing, China, to strengthen further cooperative relationships among the LIFE and E-9 focal points, who were expected to take a leading role as the LIFE “locomotive” within the initiative.
- The regional conferences in preparation for CONFINTEA VI (2008 and 2009) and CONFINTEA VII, which took place in December 2009 in Belém do Pará, Brazil, constituted a framework for advancing the LIFE initiative and highlighted the urgency of breaking the cycle of low literacy in Article 11 of the *Belém Framework for Action*.<sup>38</sup>
- The three regional LIFE mid-term evaluation meetings for the African, Asia and Pacific and Arab regions in 2010 and 2011 provided platforms to strengthen commitment and re-energise the momentum for literacy.

## 2.5 Making visible impact through major extra-budgetary funded projects

In addition to the above major advocacy events, UNESCO’s LIFE initiative has received extra impetus through extra-budgetary funding.

The Capacity Development Programme for EFA,<sup>39</sup> developed by UNESCO since 2006 as an extra-budgetary funding mechanism and a programme with capacity development approach has been a vital aid to progress. The programme had three main areas of activity: technical assistance and institutional capacity-building in sector-wide educational planning,

32 EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006, p.17

33 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001777/177791m.pdf>

34 See UIL (2009), p.18-29; UIL (2008) *Regional Meeting of Arab LIFE Countries, 3-6 December 2007, Marrakech*; UIL (2008) *Regional Meeting of Asia and Pacific LIFE Countries, 21-24 January 2008, Dhaka, Bangladesh*; UIL (2008) *Regional Meeting of African LIFE Countries, 29 to 31 January 2008, Maputo*

35 UIL (2008) *Maputo Strategic Platform for LIFE*, leaflet <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001777/177793e.pdf>

36 Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan (all except Mexico are LIFE countries)

37 The seminar was jointly organised by UIL and the UNESCO Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (INRULED)

38 [http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/INSTITUTES/UIL/confintea/pdf/working\\_documents/Belém%20Framework\\_Final.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/INSTITUTES/UIL/confintea/pdf/working_documents/Belém%20Framework_Final.pdf)

39 CapEFA was launched by UNESCO in 2003 as a multi-donor programme for technical assistance to Member States. It has been mainly financed by Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland

capacity-building for teacher training (TTISSA) and capacity-building for policy formulation and programme delivery in literacy (LIFE).

- The LIFE countries benefitting from the first round of extra-budgetary funds<sup>40</sup> for literacy and non-formal education projects (2006-2007) – Bangladesh, Egypt, Morocco, Niger, Pakistan and Senegal – enhanced institutional and organisational capacities for developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating literacy policies, and for mobilising and coordinating partners to ensure plans are brought to scale.
- Projects earmarked by another two-year CapEFA cycle that was initiated in 2008 resulted in around half a million USD to benefit four LIFE countries – Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Senegal – and a further one million USD to support an additional three LIFE countries – Mauritania, Mozambique and Papua New Guinea. These special funds have enabled the initiative to achieve tangible impacts through major project interventions.
- A strategic shift in the use of specific criteria for selecting countries for participation in CapEFA programmes<sup>41</sup> led to the identification of 20 priority countries for the CapEFA 2010-2011 biennial programme, most of whom are located in the African Region. Out of these 20 priority countries, 11 are LIFE countries of which six have prioritised literacy as the main area of project activity: Bangladesh, Chad, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nepal and Yemen.<sup>42</sup>
- In addition to country projects, UNESCO Regional Bureaux in Bangkok, Dakar and Beirut received grants during the CapEFA cycle 2009-2010/11 to contribute to institutional and organisational capacity-development with cross-country and cross-regional support activities. These regional CapEFA initiatives, which are also firmly aligned with LIFE,<sup>43</sup> helped to consolidate, scale-up and share gains and knowledge generated in country programmes within and beyond LIFE countries.

The recent policy of concentrating CapEFA's actions more specifically on areas of extreme need is in line with UNESCO's policy of close harmonisation and

40 USD 880,000 for each country

41 These Member States were selected according to the criteria of LDC status, low EFA Development Index (EDI) and whether they were emerging from conflict (<http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrls/ldc/ldc%20criteria.htm>; UNESCO, 2011, p.45)

42 Other non-LIFE countries implementing CapEFA literacy projects are Rwanda, Timor-Leste and Togo

43 *Ibid.* P.49

synergy with the main ongoing education frameworks of UNESCO's Regular Programme, LIFE and TTISSA.<sup>44</sup>

The CapEFA programmes<sup>45</sup> have demonstrated that by bringing together human and financial resources and utilising them strategically, LIFE can generate and attract additional resources, one of the aims of reinforcing commitment to literacy.

Alongside the CapEFA funding, major literacy projects were implemented or are in the process of being implemented with special grants from bilateral donors, foundations or government funds-in-trust provided to UNESCO to facilitate technical assistance in LIFE countries. The following offer some prominent examples:

- From 2009 to 2011 a major literacy project was implemented by UNESCO in **South Sudan**, with financial support from the Italian Government<sup>46</sup> and technical support by the NGO BRAC South Sudan. The LIFE Project, which was developed within the framework of the United Nations and Partners 2007 Work Plan, focussed on expansion, quality and relevance of literacy programmes and support for the development of institutional capacities.
- A major programme, the "Enhancement of Literacy in Afghanistan" (ELA) is being implemented to reach 600,000 young people and adults in 18 provinces across **Afghanistan**. It is funded by the Government of Japan and implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. In June 2011 UNESCO and the Japanese Government agreed to commence the "Literacy for Empowering Afghan Police" (LEAP) programme, worth about 3 million USD. In the next 20 months, the programme will provide literacy training to 3,000 Afghan National Police officers in Kabul and seven provinces.
- The UNESCO Iraq Office launched a four-year LIFE Project in **Iraq** in 2010, which is funded by the Office of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, First Lady of Qatar and UNESCO Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education (USD 6.4 million). The main goal of this LIFE project is for Iraq to build

44 UNESCO, 2011, p.46

45 Since the 2010-2011 cycle, the target countries of the CapEFA Programme have been asked to present programme proposals with a longer term perspective, at least until 2015. Therefore, the previous literacy projects are now called literacy "programmes"

46 The Italian Government provided USD 681,200 for a Literacy and Flexible Alternative Learning and Training Programme



*Workshop to develop a literacy strategy in Iraq, March 2010*

the necessary institutional and human capacities, both at central and sub-national levels, to deliver sustainable and empowering literacy for all. Achievements so far include the development of a National Literacy Strategy; development of new literacy curricula, textbooks and teacher guides; establishment of a National Literacy Network for Iraq to coordinate the involvement of around 260 NGOs in partnership with the Iraqi Ministry of Education and international stakeholders; launching innovative literacy projects targeting vulnerable populations around the country; and conducting community-level advocacy campaigns to raise awareness on the importance of literacy.<sup>47</sup>

- In May 2011, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Government of **Nigeria** and UNESCO on the implementation of the project “Revitalizing Adult and Youth Literacy in Nigeria” for which the Government of Nigeria has established a self-benefitting Funds-in-Trust to the tune of USD 6.5 million.

## 2.6 Conclusions on achievements, challenges and some lessons learned

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The available documentation and mid-term evaluation processes reveal a **positive response** to the LIFE initiative. Even where LIFE has not been launched officially or is relatively unknown, stakeholders from the countries surveyed still consider that LIFE is an important framework with the potential to boost their literacy efforts. All participants of the regional LIFE mid-term evaluation meetings confirmed its relevance. There is general agreement on the need to find urgent solutions to address the major causes of the slow progress towards the EFA literacy goal.

Nonetheless, it has been **difficult to create, renew and maintain momentum** for literacy (and LIFE). A series of major regional and international advocacy events were organised by UNESCO to mobilise political will and resources for literacy. These activities have definitely provided a platform for policy dialogue, exchange of ideas, and sharing good practice and raised the profile of literacy in national and international agendas but it is extremely difficult to track concrete results and measure the impact of such activity. There have also been voices of scepticism, and even criticism reflecting “conference fatigue”

among some stakeholders concerned with generating concrete results. The 2011 GMR concludes that major international literacy conferences have not managed to establish credible platforms for action.<sup>48</sup> However, one outcome of the series of conferences has been the establishment of a UNLD Fund for Advancing Global Literacy<sup>49</sup>. Also the initiative of the E-9 countries has managed to galvanise collective commitment into a plan of action which has started to be implemented with promising results.

### From the outset, there has been a **challenge in creating a common understanding of the initiative.**

The diversity of contexts and baseline situations has required flexible approaches, and Member States were expected to take the lead in mobilising stakeholders for literacy. In some cases, the failure to obtain financial and technical support has dampened the enthusiasm that accompanied the launch of LIFE. Getting LIFE processes started at country level has been a major challenge. Experience has shown that LIFE is only successful if it meets a specific need, seems relevant within a given situation and is supported by many partners. It requires leadership and political will with the necessary perseverance to overcome hurdles and setbacks.

Most LIFE countries have conducted needs assessment or situation analysis studies as a preparatory step in setting-up LIFE processes. Many of these in-depth studies have been discussed and validated at national stakeholder events and produced recommendations for national action plans. However, it has not been possible to track the implementation of these plans apart from those leading to major projects for which UNESCO has mobilised extra-budgetary funds. The low-income countries with low literacy-rates and low levels of know-how and delivery capacity represent a major challenge for developing good-quality proposals and for convincing development partners to invest in literacy.

<sup>48</sup> GMR, 2011, p. 7

<sup>49</sup> Resulting from the second White House Symposium for Advancing Global Literacy (New York, September 2008)

<sup>47</sup> UNESCO Iraq Office, Newsletter, Issue 2, June-October 2011, p.4

The backbone of country-led LIFE processes was a coordination structure or mechanism, facilitated and supported by a network of LIFE focal points at national and UNESCO field levels. In some cases such coordination structures already existed, in other cases they had to be set up. **Well-organised and functioning coordination structures have demonstrated the benefits they bring** and are successful because there is a shared need felt for such coordination and because all partners perceive it as a win-win situation. The most advanced among LIFE countries have now started to build more decentralised and down-stream oriented coordination structures to energise literacy action at local level. However, even where new coordination mechanisms were set up, not all were able to function effectively or survive over the years because of political instability, crisis or change.

Key stakeholders in LIFE countries have expressed the **need for a platform for exchange of experience and knowledge**. The potential of LIFeline as an interactive online network and platform could be better utilised to improve communications and exchange among LIFE partners. Thus far, the majority of communications in LIFeline have been news items and documents collected and sent by UIL.

**Extra-budgetary funding has provided enhanced possibilities to generate visible impact in LIFE countries.** The initiation of literacy programmes with the support of the UNESCO Capacity Development for Education for All (CapEFA) Programme in 2008, has allowed for targeted interventions to develop capacities at institutional, organisational and individual levels. However, it also became clear that UNESCO would not be able to provide substantial funding through the CapEFA Programme to **all** the 35 LIFE countries.<sup>50</sup> Inclusion (or not) in the CapEFA Programme has proved a decisive factor in accounting for the uneven achievements generated by LIFE in different countries. Similar situations can be observed where UNESCO field offices were able to mobilise funds for major literacy projects.

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<sup>50</sup> It was decided to prioritize the least developed countries (LDC) and those emerging from conflict. It was also decided to focus also on TVET and sector-wide planning, in addition to literacy and teacher training

**The UNESCO CapEFA Programme has been successful when it has built on ongoing processes and achievements**, used a momentum for education reform and policy shifts, enhanced ownership, combined local, regional and international knowledge and experience, and managed to address strategic capacity development needs. One challenge for the CapEFA literacy programmes was to implement the planned activities using the UNESCO “family approach”<sup>51</sup> effectively and to reinforce UNESCO’s technical support to LIFE countries in a coordinated way. “Delivery on literacy as one UNESCO” requires clear determination of the roles and functions of each participating entity and on-going consultation and communication among all partners.

In several country reports and questionnaires **UNESCO Field and Cluster Offices have been praised as an important partner of national governments** (e.g. Brazil, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Morocco), mainly by sharing knowledge, supporting and disseminating research, facilitating South-South cooperation and opportunities for learning from other countries, and not least by providing and helping to mobilise technical and financial support.

### Some lessons learned

Experience has demonstrated that LIFE processes are most successful and potentially sustainable

- if the approach is flexible and streamlined into national agendas and structures;
- if strong ownership and partnerships are established during the first steps of the LIFE processes, enabling solid foundations to be laid;
- if technical support is available in response to demand;
- if there is a common understanding of LIFE as a framework of collaborative action, shared by many partners;
- if processes meet a specific need for better coordination or mobilisation of stronger commitment;
- if the initiative is able to mobilise additional resources and activate new partnerships;
- if activities are able to raise public awareness and obtain media attention.

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<sup>51</sup> In order to ensure quality delivery of technical assistance for expected results, field offices, regional bureaux, Headquarters and UIL were encouraged to work together through joint and well-coordinated actions



# Chapter 3

## Progress, achievements and lessons learned – the overall Development Objective of LIFE

### **LIFE Development Objective (Goal): To empower people, especially rural women and girls, who have inadequate literacy skills and competencies**

Literacy policies, strategies and programmes supported through LIFE are expected to contribute to the empowerment of learners, which should be the ultimate result of all educational activities. The assessment of progress with regard to the overall development objective of LIFE is a complex undertaking. Impact has to be evaluated within specific contexts and usually represents the cumulative effects of a myriad of influencing factors. As information on the impact and sustainability of achievements will only be available in the long term, this mid-term evaluation of LIFE prioritises the analysis of promising and successful developments and the challenges presented in relation to the objectives promoted by LIFE. It sets out to identify lessons learned that can inform and improve performance in the period leading up to the target year of 2015.

In order to allow for a more in-depth analysis of the progress made, a limited number of key indicators, established in the logical framework of the LIFE *Vision and Strategy Paper*,<sup>52</sup> have been addressed for each of the four LIFE Strategic Objectives. In each case, on the basis of available reports and information, efforts are made to provide both an overview of overall developments and achievements as well as concrete examples that illustrate how LIFE countries in specific cases have been successful or innovative in addressing their literacy challenge and in generating progress in strategic areas of action promoted through

the LIFE framework. Progress, challenges and lessons with regard to these strategic objectives are dealt with in the four chapters following this overview.

### **3.1 Monitoring progress with regard to the overall development objective of LIFE**

Assessing progress in relation to the overall development objective of LIFE has involved the analysis of progress in relation to two indicators established in the logical framework matrix of the LIFE *Vision and Strategy Paper*:<sup>53</sup> adult literacy rates and gender disparities. Literacy-related activities supported by UNESCO in LIFE countries aim to empower vulnerable groups of people with low literacy skills. However, the task of evaluating impact on empowerment requires more specific research and is beyond the scope of this mid-term evaluation.

### **3.2 Progress in terms of literacy rates**

**Adult literacy rates** (persons aged 15 and over) in the 32 LIFE countries with data have increased by on average **3.1** percentage points compared to the global average of **1.9** percentage points over the same period (from 1995-2004 to 2005-2009). This marks a significant improvement in adult literacy rates in LIFE countries compared to others. As observed in Table 1, 29 LIFE countries recorded an increase while three countries (Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Madagascar) recorded a decrease in adult literacy rates.

52 UIL 2007, p. 41-44 and Annex 3 in this document

53 *ibid.*

However, increases in literacy rates have not been fast enough and remain modest in relation to the magnitude of the literacy challenge and population growth. The number of adults reported illiterate in LIFE countries with data for both periods increased by around 1.4 million. While China reported the highest decrease in illiterate population, over 20 million

between 2000 and 2009, **24 other LIFE countries showed an increase in numbers of adults without literacy skills due to population growth and to the number of those passing into adulthood without having gone to school (long enough) to become literate.**

**TABLE 1 Progress in adult literacy in LIFE countries since EFA Dakar Forum 2000**

Country	Literacy rate (%)			Reported illiterate population (in 1,000)		
	1994-2004 [A]	2005-2009 [B]	Progress [B-A]	1994-2004 [C]	2005-2009 [D]	Changes [C-D]
Afghanistan	...	...	n/a	...	...	n/a
Bangladesh	47.5	55.9	8.4	48,059	49,036	increased
Benin	34.7	41.7	7.0	2,555	2,969	increased
Brazil	88.6	90.0	1.4	15,089	14,089	decreased
Burkina Faso	21.8	28.7	6.9	5,401	5,646	increased
Central African Republic	50.6	55.2	4.6	1,075	1,175	increased
Chad	28.4	33.6	5.2	3,743	4,039	increased
China	90.9	94.0	3.1	85,307	64,604	decreased
Democratic Republic of the Congo	67.2	66.8	-0.4	8,916	11,685	increased
Djibouti	...	...	n/a	...	...	n/a
Egypt	55.6	66.4	10.8	17,620	17,816	increased
Eritrea	52.5	66.6	14.1	1,070	992	decreased
Ethiopia	35.9	29.8	-6.1	25,485	28,929	increased
Gambia	36.8	46.5	9.7	469	526	increased
Guinea	29.7	39.5	9.8	3,466	3,487	increased
Guinea-Bissau	41.4	52.2	10.8	438	442	increased
Haiti	...	48.7	n/a	...	3,054	n/a
India	61.0	62.8	1.7	269,823	283,105	increased
Indonesia	90.4	92.2	1.8	14,824	12,858	decreased
Iran, Islamic Republic of	77.0	85.0	8.0	11,099	8,292	decreased
Iraq	74.1	78.1	4.0	3,649	3,975	increased
Madagascar	70.7	64.5	-6.2	2,440	3,978	increased
Mali	24.0	26.2	2.2	4,719	4,966	increased
Mauritania	51.2	57.5	6.2	731	847	increased
Morocco	52.3	56.1	3.8	9,945	10,075	increased
Mozambique	48.2	55.1	6.9	5,732	5,763	increased
Nepal	48.6	59.1	10.5	7,646	7,604	decreased
Niger	9.4	28.7	19.3	5,315	4,767	decreased
Nigeria	54.8	60.8	6.0	34,272	34,842	increased
Pakistan	42.7	55.5	12.8	46,625	50,020	increased
Papua New Guinea	57.3	60.1	2.8	1,351	1,618	increased
Senegal	39.3	49.7	10.4	3,440	3,538	increased
Sierra Leone	34.8	40.9	6.1	1,842	1,905	increased
South Sudan	...	...	n/a	...	...	n/a
Sudan	61.3	70.2	8.9	7,701	7,667	decreased
Yemen	54.8	62.4	7.6	4,964	4,988	increased

Source: UIS April 2011 Data Release



The UIS data on out-of-school children in twenty-four LIFE countries indicate that there are close to 10 million out-of-school children at primary school age. Needless to say, unless they enter formal schooling in the future or master literacy skills through non-formal or informal learning, they will add to the literacy challenge. This emphasises the need to address this challenge in holistic and integrated ways.

As shown above and further illustrated by Table 2, progress in LIFE countries has been mixed. Although there have been improvements in adult literacy rates (3.1% in average), the number of non-literate population aged 15 and above has still shown an overall increase.

Diagram 1 (page 30) on progress towards the EFA literacy goal in LIFE countries shows that LIFE countries which had higher literacy rates in the base year, around 2000, are very near to achieving the target by 2015 (Brazil, China, Indonesia and the Islamic Republic of Iran). Worrying is the fact that six countries are at serious risk of not achieving the 2015 target by more than 20 percentage points (Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, Madagascar and Mali).

**TABLE 2 Latest adult literacy rate (2005-2009)\***

<b>Literacy rates in 2005-2009</b>	(80% and above)	<b>Islamic Republic of Iran</b>		<b>Brazil China Indonesia</b>
	(between 50% and 80%)	<b>Eritrea Nepal Sudan</b>	Central African Republic Guinea-Bissau Iraq Madagascar Mauritania Mozambique Papua New Guinea Yemen	Bangladesh Dem. Rep. of Congo Egypt India Pakistan Morocco Nigeria
	(50% and below)	<b>Niger</b>	Benin Burkina Faso Chad Haiti Gambia Guinea Mali Senegal Sierra Leone	Ethiopia
		Less than 10 million with decreasing trend	Less than 10 million with increasing trend	10 million or more
Number of reported illiterate adults in 2005-2009				

\*Countries in bold have a decrease in the number of reported illiterates since 1995-2004.

Source: UIS April 2011 release (no data available on Afghanistan, Djibouti, Haiti and South Sudan)

### 3.3 Progress in terms of reducing gender disparities

About two thirds of the non-literate adults in LIFE countries are women (64%), which is also the case globally. Brazil is the only LIFE country where gender equity in adult literacy has been achieved.

In terms of progress (see Table 3), in ten LIFE countries the share of reported non-literate women decreased, while 21 LIFE countries faced increases in the share of non-literate women. Significant decrease in gender parity is seen in Niger where literacy rates among men increased faster than literacy rates among women. Overall there is not much

**TABLE 3 Progress in terms of gender equity in adult literacy**

Country	Literacy rate / GPI			% of females in illiterate population		
	1994-2004 [A]	2005-2009 [B]	Progress [B-A]	1994-2004 [C]	2005-2009 [D]	Changes [C-D]
Afghanistan	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bangladesh	0.76	0.84	0.08	55.7	55.1	0.6
Benin	0.49	0.54	0.05	60.1	60.6	-0.5
Brazil	1.00	1.00	0.00	50.4	50.4	0.0
Burkina Faso	0.52	0.59	0.07	55.8	56.2	-0.4
Central African Republic	0.53	0.61	0.08	67.4	66.4	1.0
Chad	0.46	0.52	0.06	58.3	58.8	-0.4
China	0.91	0.94	0.03	72.5	73.5	-1.0
Democratic Republic of the Congo	0.67	0.73	0.06	71.6	66.6	5.0
Djibouti	...	...	...	...	...	...
Egypt	0.65	0.77	0.13	63.3	62.5	0.8
Eritrea	0.62	0.72	0.10	65.2	68.0	-2.9
Ethiopia	0.46	0.43	-0.03	61.4	59.2	2.1
Gambia	0.51	0.62	0.11	60.4	61.1	-0.7
Guinea	0.43	0.55	0.13	58.8	59.2	-0.4
Guinea-Bissau	0.48	0.57	0.09	64.0	66.0	-2.0
Haiti	...	0.84	...	...	55.8	...
India	0.65	0.68	0.02	64.7	65.1	-0.4
Indonesia	0.92	0.93	0.01	69.2	70.6	-1.4
Iran, Islamic Republic of	0.84	0.90	0.06	63.4	63.6	-0.2
Iraq	0.76	0.81	0.05	69.5	68.7	0.8
Madagascar	0.85	0.91	0.06	60.0	54.6	5.4
Mali	0.49	0.52	0.04	57.1	57.2	-0.1
Mauritania	0.73	0.78	0.05	58.6	58.1	0.5
Morocco	0.60	0.64	0.04	65.1	65.8	-0.7
Mozambique	0.51	0.59	0.09	68.8	68.5	0.4
Nepal	0.56	0.65	0.09	64.7	66.7	-2.0
Niger	1.00	0.35	-0.65	51.1	60.8	-9.7
Nigeria	0.65	0.69	0.04	63.5	64.4	-0.9
Pakistan	0.53	0.58	0.06	59.5	64.4	-4.9
Papua New Guinea	0.80	0.89	0.09	56.6	54.2	2.4
Senegal	0.57	0.63	0.05	60.0	62.7	-2.7
Sierra Leone	0.52	0.57	0.05	60.8	61.7	-0.9
South Sudan	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sudan	0.73	0.76	0.04	62.8	65.8	-2.9
Yemen	0.48	0.56	0.08	71.2	73.1	-1.9

Source: UIS April 2011 Data Release



*Computer training for girls and women in India*

reason to celebrate progress with regard to reducing gender disparities in adult literacy in the majority of LIFE countries.

When looking at gender equity in children and in youth literacy (age 15-24), the picture becomes more encouraging. Twenty LIFE countries have achieved gender parity or a parity index in favour of girls (over 0.98) for a survival rate up to grade four which could have positive impact on youth literacy in the coming years. In youth literacy, the gender parity index ranges from 0.86 (Iraq) to 1.11 (Brazil).<sup>54</sup> Fourteen LIFE countries achieved a 0.10 or higher improvement in the gender parity index for the youth literacy rate, with an increasing number of countries achieving gender parity in youth literacy. The gender balance in Bangladesh and Papua New Guinea has changed from the position at the start of the last decade with higher numbers of reported non-literate young men than young women.

In general, literacy rates are higher for urban than for rural populations. Rural women are more disadvantaged in terms of literacy rates with only 6 per cent and 9 per cent of women reported as literate in Chad and Niger respectively, compared to 32 per cent and 41 per cent respectively of urban women in these countries. Multiple factors increase the probability of being reported as illiterate. In Yemen, for example, women living in urban areas are almost three times more likely to be reported as literate than women living in rural areas, and women from the poorest 20 per cent of households are ten times less likely to be reported as literate than women from the richest households.<sup>55</sup> The rural/urban divide also affects younger women, as the example of Iraq shows: close to 50 per cent of women aged between 15 and 24 living in rural areas are reported as non-literate,

compared to 28-30 per cent of their fellow women living in urban areas.<sup>56</sup> The empowerment of girls, women and families living below the poverty line, particularly in rural areas needs to be continued as the key focus of LIFE in future.

Countries emerging from conflict – or still affected by ongoing conflict – or natural disaster such as Afghanistan, Haiti, Iraq, and South Sudan are particularly challenged with the need to rebuild their systems and to create appropriate entry points for promoting literacy in rural areas and making it accessible for women.

While the empowering role of literacy is uncontested, and LIFE is making a concerted effort to empower (rural) women and girls, there is still much left to do. Only six out of the 32 LIFE countries with available data were able to record a net decrease in the number of illiterate women (Brazil, China, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, and Iran).

### 3.4 Challenges and lessons

Although it is impossible to link LIFE processes and inputs directly to progress in literacy rates, it is encouraging that the LIFE countries with the highest increase of literacy rates in the period evaluated are all low income countries starting with low literacy rates in the “base year” (Niger, Pakistan and Morocco).

However, even if countries are able to report progress in terms of literacy rates, the size of the challenge is often underestimated and is not seen in a holistic way. There is an increasing acceptance of a concept that literacy involves a continuum of learning (see BFA) and that the achievement of sustainable reading, writing and numeracy skills require levels of basic education beyond elementary literacy. During the initiative it has become apparent that addressing the literacy challenge in holistic ways involves working simultaneously on at least four complementary fronts:

- Laying strong foundations for later learning and addressing disadvantage through good-quality early childhood care and education programmes;
- Universal good-quality basic education for all children (in formal or non-formal settings);

<sup>54</sup> These data relate to a period ranging from 2000 to 2010.

<sup>55</sup> GMR 2011, p. 67

<sup>56</sup> UNESCO Iraq Office, Newsletter June-October 2011, p. 4

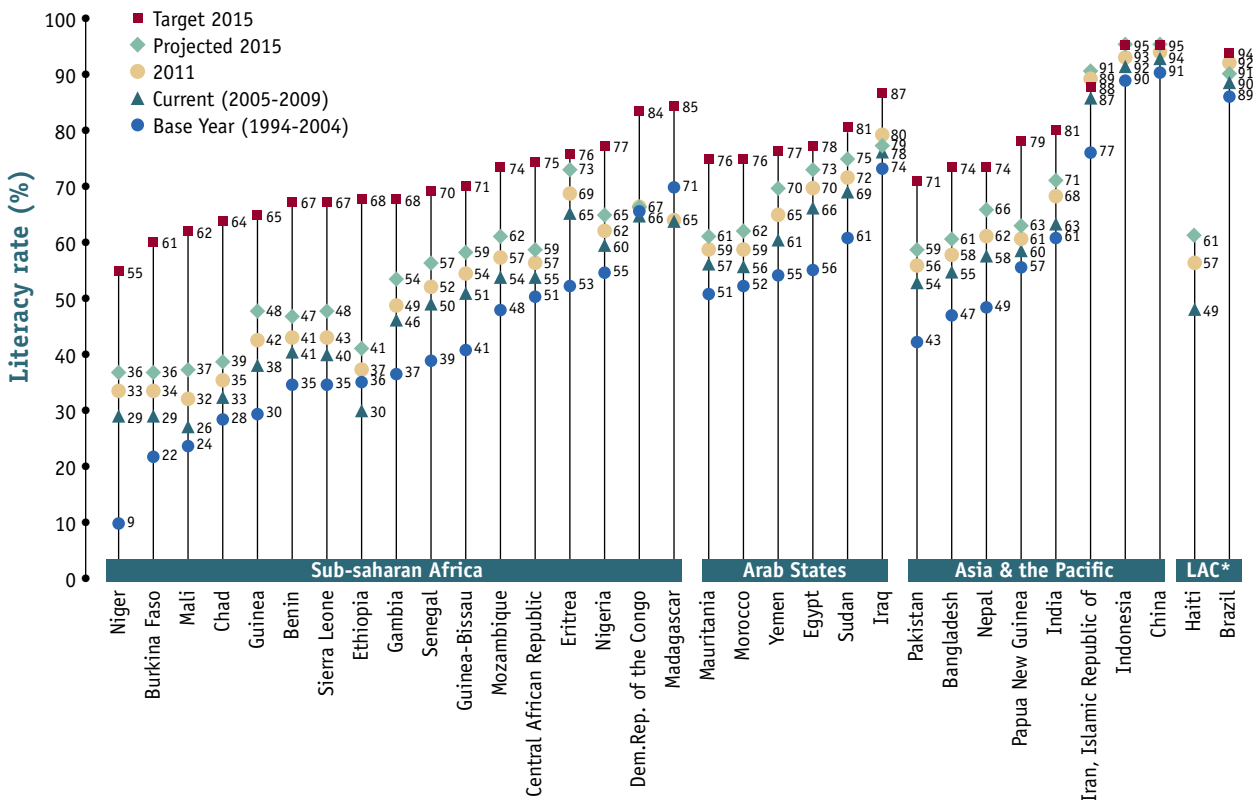
- Scaling up and reaching out with relevant literacy provision to all young people and adults;
- Developing literacy-rich environments and a literate culture at local and national level.

Whatever the delivery mechanism everybody should have opportunity to acquire basic skills and qualifications. Integrating literacy and non-formal education opportunities into the broader EFA agenda involves the creation of alternative, complementary and comparable pathways of learning to foster and sustain literacy among children, adolescents, young people, adults and elderly alike.

Although a transversal issue, the focus on gender does not seem to have been strong enough in LIFE. A number of LIFE countries will not achieve the target of reducing gender disparities in adult literacy without radical shifts of policy and priorities in education planning; without systemic improvements to reduce inequalities; and without removing barriers to enable women to access and complete successfully their basic education and continue with other relevant learning opportunities. This applies also to other marginalised groups.

Concerted efforts are required to boost the empowering role of literacy, the principle of which need to be unpacked at national and local levels and to permeate systematically the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of learning programmes. This also requires working harder to achieve a gender balance at the level of decision-making. The monitoring and evaluation of LIFE and national literacy activities needs to integrate a “gender lens” into indicators and measurement instruments and to complement this with related impact research on gender and empowerment.

**DIAGRAMM 1 Progress towards EFA literacy goal in LIFE countries**



Source: UIS April 2011 Data Release

\*Latin America & the Caribbean



## Chapter 4

### LIFE Strategic Objective 1:

# To reinforce the national and international commitment to literacy through advocacy and communication

Making literacy a priority on the agenda of different stakeholders and creating a momentum for jointly accelerating literacy efforts is the core of this objective. The expected results under this strategic area for action are:

- strong new partnerships
- effective coordination structures
- comprehensive advocacy and communication strategies and campaigns
- mobilisation of adequate and additional resources for literacy

#### 4.1 Building strong new partnerships

##### Progress

Information from LIFE countries provides many examples of successful – and in some cases innovative – partnership approaches that recognise that the literacy challenge is too big and complex to be shouldered by one or a few stakeholders.

**Multi-stakeholder partnerships** have resulted from the implementation of LIFE in countries such as Chad and Haiti and in some countries such as Mali, **sub-national** multi-stakeholder partnership frameworks allow for participatory and bottom-up planning approaches. The development of **partnerships between federal governments and sub-national or local authorities** has been a visible feature within government approaches to decentralisation. The Saakshar Bharat Programme of India, for example, puts a strong emphasis on partnership building through alliances at national and sub-national levels. The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding or the establishment of a “Pact” between national and state/provincial/municipal level is considered in Brazil, India, Indonesia and the Islamic Republic of

Iran as an effective strategy for building partnerships. Some countries, such as Brazil, are reconsidering the governmental delegation of the implementation of literacy programmes through an **outsourcing strategy**, which in a number of West-African LIFE countries (e.g. Burkina Faso, Chad, Central African Republic, Gambia, Mali, Niger and Senegal) has become known as the *faire-faire* strategy.<sup>57</sup>

The LIFE framework has helped to develop **closer relationships between government and civil society organisations** in the field of literacy in countries such as Burkina Faso, Egypt, Guinea-Bissau, Morocco, and Sudan. Where this relationship was characterised by mutual distrust, a forum for dialogue and cooperation between government officials and civil society personnel working on literacy has emerged. In many cases the CapEFA LIFE programmes have managed to create, reactivate or enhance strong partnership schemes between government and civil society as well as with international partners. This was the case in Bangladesh, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Senegal and Yemen. The Adult Education Department in Mozambique, for example, now has 18 partnerships including some with the private sector. In the framework of the CapEFA LIFE programme, a manual of procedures was developed to provide regulating tools (e.g. for the management of funds) to increase the effectiveness and transparency of such partnerships.

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<sup>57</sup> “The ‘faire-faire’ (outsourcing) strategy’ is one of decentralization, namely a deliberate and organized delegation of the conception and implementation of programmes; the latter address grassroots educational needs, expressed by known stakeholders who are recognized as able to implement the programs within the framework set by the State” (Wade Diagne, A. and Rassouloula Aw Sall, B., 2006, p. 8)

Signs of intensified **inter-sectoral cooperation** for literacy have been seen in several LIFE countries. In Ethiopia, for example, six line ministries signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the coordinated effort of implementing the national Integrated Functional Adult Literacy strategy. The General Directorate of Literacy and the Promotion of National Languages within the National Ministry of Education in Chad works in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Finance, as well as the Chad Cotton Company and religious organisations. Partnership has been strengthened in Indonesia between the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry for People's Welfare, the Ministry of Trade and the State Ministry for the Empowerment of Women and Child Protection. An inter-sectoral committee was established in Burkina Faso to pursue the objectives of LIFE. In Brazil, partnerships have been established between the Ministries of Education and Health within the *Olhar Brasil* project (which caters for ophthalmological examination and glasses for participants of the Literate Brazil Programme<sup>58</sup>). A further partnership is in place with the Ministry of Culture and civil society networks to promote reading and literature appropriate for the newly literate.

Other encouraging developments include increased **intra-ministerial collaborations** allowing for greater synergy between the formal and non-formal pathways of education and paving the way for establishing equivalency systems, mechanisms for recognition, validation and accreditation of prior and non-formal learning; and comprehensive national qualification frameworks. This has been the case, for example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where LIFE has facilitated a closer collaboration within the Ministry of Education to allow for alternative pathways for out-of-school children and recognition of learning achievements acquired through non-formal education.

New partnerships were developed **with universities, research institutes and institutions for teacher training** in a number of LIFE countries (e.g. Brazil, Egypt) but there are no reported partnerships with unions, teachers or learner organisations. In some cases, partnerships indicate that literacy programmes are mainly targeting women, or that cooperation with women-oriented partners has helped to attract

women to engage in literacy learning. While examples illustrate the development of successful partnership approaches between governments, ministries, NGOs and civil society organisations to advance literacy, very little has been reported on (new) partnerships with the **private sector**.<sup>59</sup>

### **BOX 1 Inter-ministerial cooperation for literacy in China**

After the launch of LIFE, the Chinese Ministry of Education and 11 other national partners (2007) issued the Guidance Opinion on Further Enhancing Literacy with measures to achieve their literacy targets for 2010 and 2015. The multi-sector coordination and implementation mechanism is created at national, provincial and lower levels involving the Publicity Department of CPC Central Committee, the National Development and Reform Commission, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Culture, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, the State Statistics Bureau, the All-China Women's Federation and Youth League of China. An intra-Ministerial network for literacy was also set up including: Departments of Basic Education, Vocational and Adult Education, Finance and Development and Planning, Chinese National Commission for UNESCO and Office of National Education Inspectorate. With the involvement of more ministries in literacy and a more than six-fold increase in government funding for literacy, target-specific programmes are provided for marginalised members of the population – women, ethnic minorities, migrants, handicapped people. Through effective communication and cooperation among the partners involved in literacy, the main objectives and priorities for adult literacy have been clearly included in China's National Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010–2020).

*Sources: National Center for Education Development Research, Progress in China's Literacy: Challenges and changes. 2010 Mid-term evaluation questionnaire completed by China, August 2010*

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/uil/litbase/?menu=16&programme=50&language=en>

<sup>59</sup> See some successful examples of private partnerships in chapter 7 (Objective 4), Section 7.4

## Challenges

One of LIFE's main accomplishments has been to bring different actors to work together. Achievements include closer relationships between government and civil society organisations, multi-stakeholder mechanisms to coordinate major literacy projects, the development of stronger partnerships for decentralised schemes at sub-national and local levels as well as outsourcing strategies, intensified inter-sectoral cooperation for literacy and NFE, and in a few LIFE countries the establishment of new partnerships with the private sector. The challenge has been to nurture these partnerships continuously and to attain a higher degree of cooperation by developing more formalised and institutionalised approaches, including budgetary commitments.

## Initial lessons

**Leadership has been critical to mobilising partnership for LIFE. The involvement of Prime Ministers or Ministers of Education in launching LIFE has produced significant impact in building public awareness and rallying partners. Experience in the Asia and Pacific Region demonstrated that a high-profile launch of LIFE can attract the participation of high-level representatives from key stakeholders and decision-makers who commit to supporting LIFE implementation. In the Africa Region the direct involvement of First Ladies has raised the profile of literacy at national and sub-national levels.**

## 4.2 Effective coordination structures

### Progress

The mobilisation of many stakeholders and the building of strong teams and partnerships demands coordinated approaches to the literacy challenges in LIFE countries or effective responses may be hampered by isolated interventions, duplication and piecemeal solutions. In most LIFE countries, the initiative has inspired the setting up of coordination structures for literacy, NFE and adult education or the reinforcement of existing coordination mechanisms. In some cases, coordination mechanisms promoted by the UN system (within the "Delivery as One UN" scheme), among the bilateral and multilateral donor community active in literacy and NFE, have made a specific LIFE coordination framework unnecessary.

The impetus for more harmonised approaches often results from the preparation and implementation of major strategies, projects or programmes, particularly where there is technical and financial support from international partners, such as the LIFE projects within the CapEFA Programme, for example in Iraq, Mauritania, Papua New Guinea and Senegal. In large LIFE countries with diverse contexts, and within decentralised government schemes, coordination structures have been set up or are proposed at three different levels: national, sub-national and local levels. This is the case in Afghanistan, China, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Madagascar, among others. In Brazil, the National Commission for Youth and Adult Literacy and Education (CNAEJA), composed of representatives from government (federal, state and municipal) and social movements, training and research institutions and NGOs, has evolved into a democratic platform for policy dialogue between government and civil society.

The greatest degree of success has been in coordination structures set up in response to a felt need and which managed to define their terms of reference and institutionalise their operation. An example of this is the LIFE Coordination Working Group in Afghanistan (see Box 2), which was initiated in 2007 in response to the lack of coordination of literacy efforts in post-conflict Afghanistan, and to the need for collaboration among key international players to achieve national coverage with their fragmented activities.

### **BOX 2 LIFE Coordination Working Group in Afghanistan**

In 2007, the Afghan Ministry of Education decided to adopt LIFE as the national literacy framework to achieve the goals of the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP, 2006-2010) – within the wider Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) – and to facilitate better coordination between the Afghan Government and its development partners. Since then, one of LIFE's major achievements has been to establish a coordination mechanism which brings together key national and international partners who previously worked independently. A longer process of consultation preceded the establishment of the LIFE Coordination Working Group in October 2007, which is co-chaired by



the Deputy Minister in charge of the Education Ministry's Literacy Department and by UNESCO Kabul. One of the first tasks accomplished by the representatives of over 30 organisations registered as partners of the working group was agreement upon the terms of reference, including definition of the objectives of LIFE in Afghanistan. A LIFE steering committee functions as a secretariat for the initiative. The setting up of LIFE coordination working groups at province and district levels is currently under preparation.

To date, monthly meetings have taken place to plan, coordinate and evaluate the national literacy work including the provision of guidance to the LIFE Needs Assessment and the formulation of the National Literacy Action Plan (NLAP, 2010-2014). Under the umbrella of the LIFE framework, the LIFE Coordination Working Group has developed into the steering force for national literacy policies and has also helped to anchor literacy as one of the priority areas within the National Education Strategic Plans (NESP I 2006–2010 and NESP II 2010–2014) within a sector-wide approach. With its designation as a sub-group of the Education Development Board, new avenues for mainstreaming literacy into the wider national education and development agendas have been opened for the LIFE Coordination Working Group. This enables literacy stakeholders to be heard by higher level political decision-makers, in particular in the context of the ongoing development of an Afghan National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

*Sources: Afghanistan Literacy Initiative for Empowerment Newsletter, UNESCO Kabul, September 2011 and Chu, S.K. and Bajracharya, R. (2011) Regional Mid-term Evaluation of Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE). Bangkok, UNESCO Bangkok*

## Challenges

In most LIFE countries coordination structures were strengthened or created through (new) partnerships and collaboration mechanisms although sustainability remains an issue. Experience has demonstrated that coordinating bodies are difficult to sustain, particularly if there is no concrete common goal for such coordination and if there are no funds involved. The continuity of a strong national and institutional coordination structure has sometimes been

undermined by political instability, rapid changes in the ranks of public sector senior management, and the dissolution of federal level institutions.

## Initial lessons

**The most successful coordination mechanisms have been self-organised, guided by clear terms of reference (roles and responsibilities), chaired by high-level decision-makers, and demonstrating the will to expand their outreach both upstream by influencing national education policies and downstream by setting up coordination structures at provincial and district level.**

## 4.3 Comprehensive advocacy and communication strategies and campaigns

### Progress

Strengthening political will to invest in literacy is just one dimension of advocacy. Another is the creation of an effective demand for literacy through awareness-raising campaigns, a system of incentives, the development of literate environments and the provision of learning opportunities that extend beyond basic literacy. Different approaches have been used to reach out to a broad range of target audiences ranging from high-level policy-makers to local communities and potential learners. LIFE has provided a framework for a wide range of advocacy and communication activities to raise the profile of literacy at the international, regional and national levels. The development of a multi-stakeholder network and effective partnerships willing and able to make a case for literacy are essential to success.

At country level, the importance of literacy has been emphasised by **highly visible LIFE launch events**, often combined with a discussion of the results of a country needs assessment or situation analysis (e.g. in DRC, Haiti, Morocco, Nigeria, Sudan, South Sudan and Yemen). In Nepal, political parties are currently engaged in campaigning for literacy. In Africa, effective advocacy and communication strategies have developed, including initiatives spearheaded by **First Ladies** who mobilise political and financial support for literacy. As a consequence, in some cases new ministries for literacy and non-formal education have been established increasing the visibility of literacy as a national development priority. In Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Niger



*First Ladies mobilise for literacy in Bamako, Mali, September 2007*

and Nigeria, the First Ladies have been personally involved as strong advocates for literacy. In Mozambique, UNESCO facilitated the launch of a **Literacy Movement** (*Movimento Alfa – MASMA*) in September 2006, headed by the country's First Lady and the Ministry of Education and Culture. The MASMA Movement,<sup>60</sup> closely aligned with LIFE, has been particularly successful in strengthening commitment and capacities through decentralised structures by working with governors' wives and local governments. Parliamentarians have established specialised commissions to coordinate their efforts to lobby for and sensitise stakeholders for literacy and education (e.g. Burkina Faso and Pakistan).

**Advocacy campaigns** to develop partnerships have been conducted in many LIFE countries. International Literacy Day (8 September) and EFA Global Action Weeks are used every year to publicise the importance of literacy. In a few LIFE countries, such as Brazil,

the preparatory process for CONFITEA VI prompted stakeholders to mobilise for literacy and adult education. A number of LIFE countries have designed **national advocacy, awareness or mobilisation strategies**. In Burkina Faso, a national strategy for mobilising society for (formal and non-formal) basic education was designed in 2009. It includes an agreement to hold a national literacy forum every three years. In Indonesia a literacy advocacy and communication strategy included the Minister of Education taking part in a road show in the provinces and districts, as well as socialisation meetings and the use of print and mass media. In the case of the Iraqi LIFE Project launched in 2010, an advocacy strategy is being prepared which will include awareness campaigns at community level. In some cases, such as in Senegal, communication plans are developed, but not validated and implemented. In Papua New Guinea, the absence of an advocacy and communication strategy is seen as one of the main causes of literacy not being given the special attention it deserves.

<sup>60</sup> Movement for Advocacy, Sensitisation and Resource Mobilisation for Literacy



*Celebration of International Literacy Day in Kabul, Afghanistan*

and adolescent girls. In national and sub-national workshops, around 250 policy-makers and key stakeholders built up their expertise in advocacy and became “champions for literacy”. Media persons were sensitised about EFA and literacy-related challenges in Pakistan and their capacity was developed to report effectively on educational issues which resulted in better coverage of literacy and EFA-related matters in the press (see Box 3). In addition, a Parliamentarian’s Caucus for literacy has been formed to mobilize political support for literacy.

Numerous **tools and resources** have been developed in support of advocacy and communication within the framework of LIFE which include websites (e.g. Afghanistan, Pakistan, PNG, Senegal); LIFE Newsletters (e.g. Afghanistan); advocacy kits, brochures and leaflets (e.g. Indonesia, Iraq, Pakistan); advocacy documentaries (e.g. UNESCO-BREDA, Brazil); LIFE Resource Packs (UIL) and printed material containing personal stories from literacy learners (e.g. *The Power of Literacy*, Afghanistan).

### **BOX 3 Mobilising parliamentarians and journalists for literacy in Pakistan**

Through a series of advocacy, policy dialogue and consultation meetings of Parliamentary Forums on Literacy and EFA, organised at national and provincial levels, parliamentarians are now more aware of the literacy situation in the country, of implications of illiteracy for socio-economic development, and are supportive of increasing budgets for adult literacy and NFE programmes. In addition, Media Forums on EFA were organised in collaboration with the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), sensitising over 150 journalists, TV producers and reporters for EFA. This effort was supported by the production and dissemination of a booklet on “Media and EFA” in collaboration with the Department of Mass Communication of the Allama Iqbal Open University. The Ministry of Education, where the LIFE Unit was based, provided support for the development of advocacy and post-literacy material, and for the organisation of a National Literacy Forum.

*Source: The CapEFA Programme 2009-2010/11, Country Report Pakistan “Capacity Development for Adult Literacy and NFE in Pakistan”, October 2011*

Many LIFE countries have also reported the **use of media** to run advocacy campaigns (some in local languages) using videos, DVDs and public TV and radio networks (e.g. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Brazil, CAR, Chad, DRC, Ethiopia, Eritrea, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone and Sudan). The Brazilian Ministry of Education has developed a sophisticated communication strategy with radio and television campaigns to raise public awareness and to encourage enrolment in the Literate Brazil Programme. A series of documentary films about persons who initiated their literacy learning process and how this has impacted their lives have been produced. Madagascar is another country where documentaries with success stories were broadcast in large-scale programmes. However, very little evidence is available on the impact of such outreach campaigns. The National Literacy Survey (2009) in Nigeria revealed, for example, that only 33 per cent of adults are aware of a literacy programme or centre.

In the framework of the CapEFA literacy programmes, some LIFE countries have also successfully addressed the need to **strengthen the capacity** of different stakeholders **in advocacy**. In Bangladesh, NGO managers were trained in the planning and implementation of advocacy campaigns and 600 volunteers were trained to organise advocacy campaigns for around 6,000 illiterate rural women

## Challenges

One of the major achievements of LIFE is the mobilisation of many people for literacy through successful advocacy events, campaigns and materials and well-designed communication strategies. However, often it is difficult to assess the direct impact of these activities. The key challenge remains the low priority that is given to literacy in many countries by governments and donors alike in spite of all the LIFE supported advocacy activities. Many LIFE countries suffer from political instability and frequent changes affecting the continuity of movements and campaigns. In some cases a political crisis has disrupted the dynamics around literacy and reduced its profile.

## Initial lessons

**This objective has been best delivered by anchoring related advocacy activities at different levels rather than relying on a limited number of stakeholders. A broad range of partner institutions and organisations have helped to build a critical mass of actors and therefore more continuity and effectiveness.**

## 4.4 Mobilisation of adequate and additional resources for literacy

### Progress

Motivating political will to invest adequately in literacy is one important aim of advocacy. The following outcomes can be attributed directly to advocacy carried out within the LIFE framework:

- Following the recommendations of the Bamako Literacy Conference for the Africa region, the Governments of Benin and Mali<sup>61</sup> decided to create special literacy ministries with increased budgets.
- In Burkina Faso, the budget increase is attributed to the advocacy and information campaign. Some communities are now including funds for literacy centres in their development budget. Also in Nepal, Village Development Committees and municipalities expanded their budget for literacy.

<sup>61</sup> Ministry of Basic Education, Literacy and National Languages, 2007

- In Mauritania, LIFE has not only contributed to fostering governmental political support and funding, but also the gaining of funds from international partners for literacy projects. The CapEFA LIFE Programme in Morocco has helped attract new donors<sup>62</sup> to fund programmes.
- In Egypt, LIFE enjoyed political support from the highest level decision-makers responsible for literacy and adult education programmes, which led to an increase of financial resources for such programmes.
- In Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania<sup>63</sup> and Mozambique,<sup>64</sup> governments have argued strongly for and secured some literacy funding from the EFA Fast Track Initiative.

Information on budgets, though mainly positive, has to be treated with caution as available information is sketchy, vague<sup>65</sup> and full of gaps. Five countries provided no information at all on the financing of literacy. Twenty-seven of the 36<sup>66</sup> LIFE countries reported increases in funding for literacy (see Table 4). Only three countries reported no increase (Iraq, Niger and South Sudan) and 1 country, Papua New Guinea, has suffered a decline over the years.



*Woodwork training for women in Oromia, Ethiopia*

<sup>62</sup> For example, the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID), the Canadian Development Agency (CIDA), dvv international and the European Union

<sup>63</sup> FTI-EFA in Mauritania involved the World Bank, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the French Development Agency (AFD), the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID) and UNICEF

<sup>64</sup> The proposal for FTI includes a component "Subsidies for literacy workers" (3.7 million USD)

<sup>65</sup> In most cases, representatives from LIFE countries just indicated "increased" in the questionnaires, without providing exact figures to back up their statement

<sup>66</sup> Including South Sudan

**TABLE 4 Budget increases for literacy and NFE (in USD) between 2005 and 2011**

REGION / Country	
<b>AFRICA</b>	
Benin	Increased
Burkina Faso	Increased. The national literacy strategy received less than 1% of the ministry's budget. At the time of reporting it was 10%.
Central African Republic	Increased by 16% between 2005 and 2009 This represents less than 0.01% of the national budget
Chad	Increased from 0.88% to 0.96% from the budget of the Ministry between 2006 and 2007
Democratic Republic of Congo	Increased from 1.7% in 2006 to 8.2% in 2011
Djibouti	...
Eritrea	Increased from 30,230 in 2002 to 227,268 in 2008
Ethiopia	Increased
Gambia	...
Guinea	...
Guinea-Bissau	Increased
Madagascar	...
Mali	Increased
Mozambique	Increased
Niger	No increase, unstable funding 2006 - 4,968,000; 2007 - 5,955,390; 2008 - 5,065,290
Nigeria	Increased 2007 - 346,820; 2009 - 430,313; 2010 - 10,789,949
Senegal	Increased (from 0.1 in 2005 to 1.9 % in 2007 in the budget for education)
Sierra Leone	Increased (0.1% of the ministry's budget in 2010/11)
<b>ARAB REGION</b>	
Egypt	Increased
Iraq	No increase
Mauritania	Increased (0.6% of overall public expenditure)
Morocco	Increased
Sudan	Increased since 2005
South Sudan	No increase
Yemen	Increased since 2005
<b>ASIA &amp; the PACIFIC</b>	
Afghanistan	Increased
Bangladesh	Increased
China	Increased from 1,258,000 in 2007 to 7,862,000 in 2010
India	Increased
Indonesia	Increased by 77% 2006-2009 from 49,827 to 88,576
Iran, Islamic Republic of	Increased
Nepal	Increased
Pakistan	A small increase in some provinces
Papua New Guinea	Decreased over the years by 3 to 4% annually
<b>LATIN AMERICA &amp; the CARIBBEAN</b>	
Brazil	Increased from 71,449,000 in 2005 to 281,826,000 in 2009
Haiti	Increased by 32% 2006-2010 from 1,415,272 to 1,869,215

From the available information it can be deduced that interpretations of the term “increase” vary from quite modest levels (Chad: 0.88 per cent to 0.96 per cent of the education budget) to very significant levels (Burkina Faso: from 1 per cent to 10 per cent of the education budget). Pakistan<sup>67</sup> has experienced only a small increase in some provinces. What cannot be inferred from available information in most cases is the actual amount of financial resources. And there is no indication whether government funding is adequate for the scale of the task of reaching EFA Goal 4 in the country. There are some signs of hope – for example, in the case of Senegal, the budgetary allocation for literacy was expected to rise from 1.9 per cent of the national education budget in 2007 to 3 per cent in 2009-10,<sup>68</sup> but the current global financial crisis brings a risk that funding for literacy and NFE may stagnate or even decrease rather than increase to the required levels.

Several LIFE countries indicated that effective advocacy has resulted in an increase of financial support from development partners. In addition, special funds for literacy were created and additional financial resources mobilised, through partnerships, funds-in-trust, Global Partnership for Education (previously FTI) or donor initiatives. Most countries reported increased national budgets for literacy and NFE. However, this positive trend must be treated with caution given the vagueness of the information provided and the size of the literacy challenge. The majority of the LIFE countries are still far from the benchmark of allocating a minimum of three per cent of the national education budget to literacy and NFE. It is not clear whether the budgetary allocations are gender-responsive and aim to redress existing disparities.

## Challenges

One of the major challenges faced by LIFE continues to be the mobilisation of sufficient resources to accelerate the increase of literacy rates. Weak mobilisation of resources from the private sector in most of the countries was attributed to a lack of an effective strategy. The numbers to be reached

<sup>67</sup> Some Provincial Governments have slightly increased their allocations for literacy, although these allocations are still insufficient to meet the huge needs. For example, the Government of Punjab raised the development budget for its Literacy and NFE Department from Rs. 675 million, allocated for 2010-2011, to Rs. 800 million for 2011-12

<sup>68</sup> UNESCO, 2011, p. 69



*Literacy course for construction workers in the Zé Peão School Project in Brazil*

by literacy provision before 2015 in order to reduce illiteracy to 50% need to be estimated for each LIFE country in order to determine the adequacy of funding levels for literacy. Additionally the unit cost of ensuring that everyone acquires at least a minimum level of literacy needs to be calculated taking into account the diversity of situations in each country if adequate funding levels are to be determined.

With regard to major funding gaps, relevant strategies need to be developed in order to mobilise additional funding for literacy at national and international levels. However, the fact that literacy was not included into the MDG agenda has not helped in raising awareness (governments) and resources (donors) on the international stage.

## Initial lessons

**In order to redress poor commitment at the highest political levels, it is important to make the gains and benefits of literacy and NFE, especially their impact on social and economic development, more visible and to strengthen advocacy by creating an effective social demand for literacy among those with no – or very limited literacy skills. The voice of social actors has to be transformed into tangible public policy actions. Many years of social mobilisation for adult literacy and education, as well as participatory processes involving learners, have been shown to be effective.**



## Chapter 5

### LIFE Strategic Objective 2:

# To support the articulation of policies for sustainable literacy within sector-wide and national development frameworks

Capacity building to develop policies for sustainable and empowering literacy has been identified in the LIFE framework as a strategic area for action. The results expected according to the LIFE logical framework include:

- the integration of literacy and NFE into national development strategies, policies and programmes
- the review or development of national literacy and NFE policies, strategies and action plans
- the implementation of major literacy programmes<sup>69</sup>
- the improvement of literacy statistics

#### 5.1 Integration of literacy and NFE into national development strategies, policies and programmes

##### Progress

In most countries the right to education is written into the constitution and in some cases there is direct reference to literacy (e.g. China, Bangladesh and Brazil). In a few LIFE countries **new laws, acts or decrees** have been adopted, focusing on literacy or adult education. This is the case in Brazil,<sup>70</sup> Egypt<sup>71</sup> and Iraq.<sup>72</sup> A number of LIFE countries have aligned or integrated their literacy policies, strategies and programmes with or into **wider national**

##### **development strategies and education plans.**

For example, in Afghanistan, literacy is one of the National Education Strategic Plan's (NESP II) five programme areas, while human capacity is a cross-cutting issue in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). The Literacy and Advancement of National Languages Programme in Mali, which was developed in 2008, is aligned with the National Programme of Economic and Social Development (PDES) and part of the national non-formal education policy. In Mozambique, the Strategic Plan for Education and Culture (PEEC, 2006-2010/11) included adult literacy and education, and this is also the case for the Draft Strategic Plan for the Education Sector (2012-2016) presented in March 2011. Both the Yemen Vision 2025 development framework and the PNG Vision 2050 Plan underscore literacy as a priority for development. In Morocco, an integrated vision of literacy, poverty reduction and development was strengthened by the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH). LIFE is mentioned as a reason for the inclusion of literacy programmes as part of the national development priority agenda in Indonesia.

Some LIFE countries have included literacy in their **Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans**, such as Guinea, Chad (*Programme d'actions prioritaires* – PAP, 2008-2011), and the Gambia, with a focus on women's empowerment (PRSP II 2007-2011). Through the LIFE framework, literacy programmes were introduced into the Pakistani Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP II). In Nigeria, the National Poverty Eradication Programme advocates that every state government should commit at least 5 per cent of its annual budget to economic empowerment and participation, including adult literacy. An achievement of the CapEFA LIFE programme in Egypt was to develop modalities to reach rural communities and link literacy programmes with the national poverty reduction strategy.

69 The latter two bullets have been analysed as additional indicators of progress

70 Decree no. 6093 (2007) on the reorganisation of the national Literate Brazil Programme

71 Enactment of the new Adult Education Law No. 131 in 2009 (it requires an annual national report on the status of literacy)

72 With technical assistance from UNESCO, a new literacy law was passed by the Iraqi parliament on the occasion of International Literacy Day 2011, replacing the 1978 law. It abolishes the age limit (15-45 years) of those eligible to benefit from literacy programmes, and includes life skills and the empowerment of learners as important components



## Challenges

A number of LIFE countries have aligned or integrated their literacy policies, strategies and programmes with or into wider national development strategies and education sector plans. A few countries have included literacy in their Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans. Most of the LIFE countries have renewed, improved or developed their national literacy policies, strategies or action plans. However, government bureaucracy, political instability and crisis, natural disaster and frequent changes of government officials have slowed down such development processes and often challenged the implementation, continuity and ownership of these activities. Even where government commitment to promote literacy is reflected in policy documents and literacy is declared a national priority, this does not automatically lead to strong leadership at the highest level, to the allocation of adequate resources, nor to concrete actions on the ground. Policy-makers are not easily convinced of the benefit of literacy as a means for social change.

## Initial lessons

**Political stability and democracy are prerequisites for continuity in policy and effective action. Successful approaches have managed to identify new actors, above all at local level, who can contribute effectively to providing literacy programmes, financial stability and continuity.**

**The LIFE framework has the potential to contribute to the strengthening of decision-makers' conviction that literacy is an integral part of development and national ownership. The establishment of priorities has made it easier and has encouraged the translation of policies into feasible and well-phased plans.**

## 5.2 Review or development of national literacy and NFE policies, strategies and action plans

Most LIFE countries have **reviewed their national literacy and NFE policies or developed new policies, strategies and action plans** (see Table 5). In a number of countries, LIFE has influenced national authorities in integrating literacy into new education policies and plans (e.g. Guinea-Bissau, Haiti). While many LIFE countries address literacy through a national education plan, other countries have special literacy and adult education plans or policies (e.g. Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea, Mozambique, Nepal and Niger), a national non-formal education policy framework (e.g. Bangladesh), or a national action plan for literacy especially for girls and women (e.g. Burkina Faso). In most countries, LIFE has inspired the development of such policy frameworks or action plans for partnership-building and the strengthening of ownership by involving many stakeholders in the process.

**TABLE 5 National literacy and NFE policies, strategies or plans reviewed or developed**

REGION / Country	
<b>AFRICA</b>	
Benin	Plan Décennal de Développement du Système Educatif au Bénin 2006-2015 (2006) National Literacy and Adult Education Policy/Politique nationale d'alphabétisation et d'éducation des adultes (DEPOLINA) Policy on the promotion of women's literacy (2008)
Burkina Faso	10 Year Plan for Basic Education/Plan décennal de développement de l'éducation de base (PDDEB) (2007) National plan for bilingual education (FE, NFE) in 2007 Improvement of the normative framework for non-formal education (2008)
Central African Republic	Plan Sectoriel de l'Éducation National Literacy Strategy drafted (2010)
Chad	Action Plan for the Development of Literacy and Non-Formal Education (2007) National Plan for Literacy and NFE (2010)
Democratic Republic of Congo	National Strategy for the Development of Literacy and Non-Formal Education 2012-2020 (2011)
Djibouti	National Strategy for Literacy and NFE 2011-2015 (2009)
Eritrea	National Policy on Adult Education, including literacy (NPAE, 2005)

Ethiopia	Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP VI) 2010-2015 (2010)
Gambia	Master Plan for Adult Education 2010-2020 (2010) National policy on non-formal education 2010-2015 (2009)
Guinea	Draft national policy for literacy and non-formal education (2007)
Guinea-Bissau	National Action Plan for EFA includes new strategies aimed at the reduction of illiteracy, especially for women (2008-2013) Education Policy (2010) includes literacy
Madagascar	National Literacy and Adult Education Policy (2003) Integration of literacy into Madagascar Action Plan 2008-2012 (2008)
Mali	National NFE Policy (2007)
Mozambique	Draft Strategic Plan for the Education Sector 2012-2016 (March 2011) Strategy for Adult Literacy and Education (2010-2015) approved by Council of Ministers (2011)
Niger	National Non-formal Education Policy formulated and validated (2010) and related action plan
Nigeria	National Blueprint for Adult and Non-Formal Education
Senegal	n/d
Sierra Leone	Integration of NFE into National Education Policy (2010)
<b>ARAB Region</b>	
Egypt	National Strategic Plan for Education Reform (2007) National Plan for Literacy and Adult Education
Iraq	New literacy law (2011) that replaces the 1978 law National Literacy Strategy (2011-2015)
Mauritania	National Strategy on Adult Education (SNEA) (2006) Literacy and NFE sub-components of Education Reform Framework PNDSE II 2011-2020 (2011)
Morocco	National Strategy for Literacy and Non-Formal Education (2008)
Sudan	Review of national literacy and NFE policy and strategy
South Sudan	n/d
Yemen	National Literacy Plan (2008)
<b>ASIA &amp; the PACIFIC</b>	
Afghanistan	National Literacy Action Plan (NLAP) 2010-2014 (2009)
Bangladesh	National Policy on NFE (2006) Strategic Actions 2010-2014 (2010) National Education Policy (2010)
China	Guidance Opinion on Further Strengthening Literacy Implementation (2007) National Plan Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development 2010-2020 (2010)
India	National Strategy Framework for Adult Education (2009) and Five Year Plans Saakshar Bharat Scheme – Mission 2012
Indonesia	National Movement to Hasten Compulsory Nine-Year Basic Education Accomplishment and the Fight against Illiteracy (2006) National Strategic Plan 2010-2014
Iran, Islamic Republic of	n/d
Nepal	Non-formal Education Policy and Programme Framework (2006)
Pakistan	National Education Policy (2009) National and Provincial 5-year Literacy and NFE Plans 2010-15 (2010)
Papua New Guinea	Review of literacy and NFE policy framework (2011)
<b>LATIN AMERICA &amp; the CARIBBEAN</b>	
Brazil	National Education Development Plan (2007) Decree on reorganization of Literate Brazil Programme (2007) State Commission “Agenda Territorial” for municipalities to develop their own literacy plans and adult education systems (2008)
Haiti	The National Strategy for EFA in 2007 The National Plan for Reconstruction in 2010

Twelve LIFE countries<sup>73</sup> have been or are in the process of implementing major (CapEFA) activities to **enhance national capacity to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate literacy policies**, and to mobilise and coordinate key stakeholders and partners to ensure that related policies and strategies are implemented as well-targeted and budgeted plans. In addition, two LIFE countries (DRC and Ethiopia) have benefitted from CapEFA programme grants that focus on sector-wide planning. UNESCO has helped to mobilise funds for another three LIFE countries to implement major literacy projects with similar goals. And one LIFE country has made available funds-in-trust to upgrade its capacities in developing literacy policies and programmes (see Chapter 2.6). All these projects are working to integrate literacy and NFE into sector-wide frameworks and to link these policies to broader development strategies. As a result of this sector-wide approach, international partners operating in LIFE countries are now showing more willingness to intervene financially and technically in literacy and NFE under UNESCO's technical lead.

The importance of developing **specific plans for literacy and NFE at sub-national level** is increasingly reflected in countries which have major non-literate populations and/or are geographically large, such as Brazil, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Pakistan. The UNESCO Brasilia Office, in partnership with the Ministry of Education (MEC), has annually contracted 50 consultants to assist prioritised municipalities (with more than 25% illiteracy) to develop their own literacy plans and adult education systems.

Positioning literacy policy within the broader framework of **lifelong learning** has been an important focus of UNESCO's support within the LIFE framework. For example, decision-makers from West-African LIFE countries (Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Senegal) held a Lifelong Learning Policy Dialogue (February 2008) to discuss strategies to integrate the principle of lifelong learning into LIFE and develop related strategies. In China, the Government has planned to build a learning society alongside a system of lifelong learning for all, as proposed in the National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020). In recent Brazilian public policies there has been a move away from a campaigning vision to a more systemic way of

understanding the literacy work as "the entry door to youth and adult education".<sup>74</sup> In a number of LIFE countries, processes have been started to discuss and set up **equivalency systems** to ensure flexible and horizontal pathways and allow for **synergies between the formal and non-formal education systems**, to develop **recognition, validation and accreditation mechanisms for non-formal learning**, or even to develop more comprehensive and complex national qualifications frameworks.<sup>75</sup>

## Challenges

To varying degrees, LIFE has managed to sensitise policy-makers and key stakeholders to the need to link literacy with adult basic education, and within a broader context to link it with NFE and lifelong learning. Despite promising signs in a few LIFE countries of sector-wide approaches to literacy and linkages between literacy and national development strategies, the need to address the national literacy challenge in holistic ways remains a major challenge. The creation of comprehensive education systems that allow for alternative learning pathways and equivalencies between formal and non-formal education is a task that still needs to be taken up by most of the LIFE countries. However, among policy-makers in some countries a reduced understanding of literacy is still a factor which may hamper the development of systematic and longer-term approaches to literacy as the point of entry to youth and adult basic and continuous education.

Governments in a number of LIFE countries have decentralised or are in the process of decentralising their literacy and NFE efforts. This is reflected in the development of specific plans for literacy and NFE at sub-national level and in the attempt to build on local approaches to a diversity of situations and needs. The challenge has been to strengthen the coordinating, articulating and monitoring role of the national authorities and the capacity of local providers to offer good quality literacy programmes.

73 Teles, J. (2011), p.1 (country questionnaire Brazil)

75 Discussion on National Qualifications Frameworks have begun, for example, in Afghanistan and Papua New Guinea

## Initial lessons

**An enlarged vision of national literacy policy which links literacy action with wider education and human development and poverty reduction strategies has translated into more coherent interventions. The development of recognition, validation and accreditation mechanisms for non-formal learning and the current trend in many countries of discussing more comprehensive national qualifications frameworks have opened up new opportunities for integrated and collaborative approaches to literacy.**

**Decentralised arrangements need to establish clear roles and responsibilities and build capacities at provincial and even district levels with concrete allocation of funds from both national and sub-national education budgets. Well-designed provincial literacy plans can serve as important instruments to mobilise political and financial support for the promotion of literacy in the country. Participatory processes to prepare regional and provincial plans have been key to these efforts. Successful decentralisation processes have extended professional support for community-led activities and NGOs through Resource and Community Learning Centres.**

### 5.3 Implementation of major literacy programmes

#### Progress

Several LIFE countries have recently **launched major literacy programmes and set ambitious goals and timelines** in their policies, strategies and action plans. In Afghanistan, the National Literacy Action Plan (NLAP, 2010-2014) aims to enable at least 3.6 million adults to attain basic literacy and vocational skills by 2014. In Bangladesh, an operational plan approved in April 2010 by the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPNE) strives to cover 37 million illiterates in the 11-45 age group, in the hope of achieving EFA Goals 3 and 4 by 2015 with basic literacy and continuing education programmes. In Pakistan, the Province of Punjab has developed and approved a 10 Year Strategic Plan for Literacy, which aims to achieve a 100% literacy rate by 2019. Brazil sets a benchmark in its National Education Plan to achieve literacy for 10 million young people

and adults in five years.<sup>76</sup> In Ethiopia, it is intended to reach 36 million adults between 2011 and 2015 through the Functional Adult Literacy Programme, a key strategy within the recently-developed Master Plan (2010). The Iraqi Government launched a national literacy campaign in 2010 with the overarching goal of reducing the illiteracy rate by 50% by 2015. As recently as September 2011 a literacy campaign announced by the new Egyptian authorities to reduce the national illiteracy rate to 10% within four years.

#### BOX 4 National Programme to Accelerate Literacy by 2015 in Burkina Faso

The national programme to accelerate literacy (*Programme national d'accélération de l'alphabétisation – PRONAA 2011-2015*) was launched by the government in 2010 and constitutes two main parts: (1) a broad analytical diagnosis for the period 2006 to 2010 and (2) a strategic plan for the period 2011 to 2015. The main objective of the strategic plan is to increase the literacy rate from 28.3 per cent in 2007 to 60 per cent in 2015. Achieving these objectives will require more synergy and partnership between the state, civil society and development partners. The programme builds on existing achievements (including the *faire-faire* approach) and will be implemented gradually with a strong sector-wide profile. A national committee for monitoring and evaluation has been put in place as a mechanism to ensure that all implementation of the programme is documented.

Source: Ouedraogo, F., Ki, J.-B., Barry, B., Sie Tiaye, A.-M. and Dalbera, C. 2011. *Programme National d'Accélération de l'Alphabétisation (PRONAA) d'ici à 2015. Version provisoire (à présenter en Conseil des Ministres)*. Ouagadougou: Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de l'Alphabétisation

## Challenges

Several LIFE countries have launched major literacy programmes or campaigns and set ambitious targets in their policies, strategies and action plans. However, in most cases no specific information, data, or detailed and costed plans are available in order to assess how realistic such targets are.

## Initial lessons

**Participation in adult literacy programmes is increasingly perceived as one step on a longer road to developing sustainable skills levels in reading and writing, which needs to be supported by literate environments as well as by opportunities for further learning and to obtain recognised qualifications. This is the case in countries that have abandoned the short-duration campaign approach.**

### 5.4 Improvement of literacy statistics

#### Progress

Most countries of the world have been producing statistics on literacy that provide modest background information on the way people describe themselves as being able to read and write or not. Unfortunately, this approach cannot be expected to generate information on what people actually know and are able to do when facing written material in their lives or about the most complex set of practices that constitute the world of literacy.

Policy-makers and literacy managers in a number of LIFE countries have taken an interest in improving their monitoring and information systems and producing better data on literacy in their countries, particularly in post-conflict countries with lack of population data. This is accompanied by an understanding of literacy as a continuum of skills or as a foundation of lifelong learning. LIFE has provided an effective framework to share experience on literacy surveys, assessing literacy skills, monitoring and evaluating literacy programmes, and improving literacy statistics. Enhancing national capacities for literacy assessment and monitoring has been a crucial task and has been successful in mobilising additional funds.



*Women credit group initiated by the Nepalese NGO READ*

In Mauritania, for example, a country-wide literacy survey was carried out in 2008 – *The Referential Literacy Questionnaire in Mauritania/Rapport sur l'Enquête de référence sur l'analphabétisme en Maurétanie* (ERAM) – and generated valuable information to national education policy. It was conducted in the context of the support programme from UNESCO (*Programme d'Appui de l'UNESCO au Développement de l'Éducation en Mauritanie – PADEM*).<sup>77</sup>

The survey provided a comprehensive overview of the literacy situation in the country in terms of quantitative information (statistics on illiteracy rates among different age cohorts in the country as well as numbers of out-of-school children) and qualitative information (socio-demographic profile of illiterates and out-of-school children; characteristics of illiterates and their interests, aspirations and concerns; needs and demands of illiterates; reasons for illiteracy; and an evaluation of the impact of illiteracy on the life situation of illiterates).

With the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme – LAMP (see Box 5) – and similar initiatives, UNESCO has created practical tools and approaches that are being piloted in a number of LIFE countries.<sup>78</sup> It is hoped that these initiatives will continue and motivate other LIFE countries to introduce such approaches to better inform their policies and plans. It is also hoped that sound data will help to present a better case for political commitment and help to mobilise additional funds for literacy at national and international levels.

<sup>77</sup> Ministère des affaires économiques et du développement et le Bureau multi-pays de l'UNESCO à Rabat. 2009. Rapport sur l'Enquête de référence sur l'analphabétisme en Maurétanie – ERAM 2008. Rabat: UNESCO

<sup>78</sup> See: Guadalupe, C. and Cardoso, M. (2011)

### **BOX 5 Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP)**

In 2003, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) launched its Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP) as an attempt to: (i) develop and validate a methodology to test reading and numeracy skills; (ii) work with country teams to foster the development of capacities to conduct this sort of assessment, and (iii) produce evidence of actual reading and numeracy skills that can inform policy and programme interventions.

While LAMP was initiated relying on previous experiences<sup>79</sup> an extensive validation process was required since LAMP introduced some new elements in the field that required a significant developmental effort: (i) a change in the overall orientation of the study paying more attention to equity-related issues from a broad understanding of educational affairs; (ii) measuring pre-reading skills; and (iii) working in non-European languages.

So far, LAMP has been validated in ten languages from six different linguistic families, using three different scripts and two numeral systems. In 2012 the first results produced by conducting the actual assessments will be available for Jordan, Mongolia, Palestine and Paraguay. LAMP field trials have also been completed in El Salvador, **Morocco, Niger**, and Viet Nam. LAMP is currently being implemented also in **Afghanistan** (as a part of the ELA programme); **India**; Jamaica; Laos PDR; Namibia; and **Nigeria** (as a part of the Revitalizing Adult and Youth Literacy project). LAMP is also being trialled in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) among refugee populations in **Chad**.

Source: UIS

### **Challenges**

In a few LIFE countries, there are indications of a broadened understanding of literacy as a continuum that, however, still needs to be translated into the measurement area. Policy-makers and literacy managers in a number of LIFE countries have taken an interest in improving literacy statistics. Related pilot experiences with skills measurement (e.g. LAMP) have shown that the challenges include the need to find valid cost-effective approaches, to ensure their relevance in different contexts, as well as to deal with issues of ownership and sustainability.

### **Initial lessons**

**UNESCO's experience with LAMP shows how important it is to address issues such as relevance, ownership and sustainability in order to enable countries to develop an approach that is fit for purpose.**

79 In particular the US experiences: from the Young Adult Literacy Survey (1985) to the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (see <http://nces.ed.gov/naal/naalhistory.asp>); the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS 1994-1998; see <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/dli-ild/data-donnees/ftp/ials-eiaa-eng.htm>) and the Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey (ALL 2003; see <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/all/>)



## Chapter 6

### LIFE Strategic Objective 3:

# To strengthen national capacities for programme design, management and implementation

Capacity-building with countries to translate policies into reality – the delivery of good-quality empowering literacy programmes has been a continuous process within LIFE. The LIFE logical framework indicates that this would include

- the carrying out of country needs assessments
- adequate human resource development
- design of new curriculum frameworks
- the creation of rich and dynamic literate environments
- assessment of literacy skills<sup>80</sup>

#### 6.1 Country needs assessments or situation analysis

##### Progress

The importance of starting LIFE or literacy capacity development processes with a situation analysis or needs assessment was discussed in Chapter 2.3.<sup>81</sup> Most of the LIFE countries started their capacity development activities with situation analysis or needs assessment studies. Within the LIFE framework, manager, trainer and literacy personnel capacities for such activity were developed at all levels. In the regional mid-term evaluation meetings participants from LIFE countries addressed issues such as how up-to-date and comprehensive these literacy situation analyses are; how far they include disaggregated data to identify and locate non-literate populations; and the extent to which their findings and recommendations have been used for policy-making and planning. The assessment of capacity development needs was part of most CapEFA

LIFE programmes and has been made mandatory for the new project cycle (2011-2012) using a refined capacity-development approach.<sup>82</sup> It is expected that this will lead to relevant and realistic capacity-development plans for literacy personnel in CapEFA literacy programmes.

However, in the initiative so far, particularly in Asia and the Pacific, LIFE countries reported a lack of capacity constantly to review, plan and implement youth and adult education programmes offering progress in learning beyond basic literacy. In the Africa Region, where technical support through the CapEFA programmes has played a pivotal role, the lack of skilled human resources was suggested as a major impediment to effective planning, management and monitoring of literacy and NFE programmes.

##### Challenges

In a number of LIFE countries, low capacity levels in assessing need, planning and implementing programmes still pose major challenges. Although major change was initiated through the CapEFA LIFE programmes and some key results were attained, there is a need to ensure continuity and to establish more solid bases to help countries to become more self-reliant and efficient in their literacy and NFE work. The rather short-term focus and sustainability of the CapEFA interventions has presented a challenge.

<sup>80</sup> The last two bullets have been added as additional indicators

<sup>81</sup> For country overview see table in Annex 5

<sup>82</sup> UNESCO, 2011, p.20/21



## Initial lessons

**The acceleration of literacy efforts involves an increased demand for trained and qualified literacy personnel able to assess needs effectively and translate policy into targeted and appropriate action. Developing such a “critical mass” of literacy professionals requires a long-term vision and human resource development planning.**

### 6.2 Developing human resources – increasing the capacity of managers, trainers and literacy personnel at all levels

#### Progress

Developing a professional workforce in literacy, NFE and adult education is a prerequisite for the delivery of good-quality provision. Very few LIFE countries report having a human resource development plan (e.g. Eritrea, Ethiopia, Morocco, Sudan and Yemen, although several countries (Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Mali and Nigeria) have developed frameworks for NFE teachers/facilitators, including recommendations for their proposed status, career development and capacity development. Some countries have indicated increases in staff numbers for literacy and NFE since 2005 (e.g. Burkina Faso, Iraq). In other countries new training centres have been established (e.g. Mali) or institutional capacities strengthened (e.g. Mozambique and Niger). The LIFE framework has promoted training, capacity-building and the professionalisation of literacy managers and adult educators continuously at institutional, organisational and individual levels.

In Mozambique, staff were trained at national, provincial and district levels in both managing and teaching adult literacy and education programmes. As a result, all districts now have a minimum of two trainers of trainers in literacy and the capacity of provincial adult education centres was further developed. In Pakistan, a programme for capacity development of Non-Formal Basic Education (NFBE) teachers and managers has been prepared and implemented with UNESCO support. This included the development of training modules for NFBE Managers and Trainers, and organising Training the Trainers workshops. At institutional level, the establishment of four Literacy Resource Centres in three provinces and one at national level has been supported. As a result of the CapEFA LIFE programme in Egypt, a

core group of 100 people from all 27 branches at the Egyptian Adult Education Authority were trained in data collection, basic research, reporting mechanisms and new methods for testing and training literacy facilitators. A new database at the Training Unit in the Adult Education Authority captures information on both newly qualified and previously trained teachers including type of training and past performance allowing better targeting of training. In Afghanistan efforts have been made to establish national qualifications standards for teachers, in collaboration with the Literacy Teachers Training Institute. The Indian Government has put strong emphasis on the professional development of literacy stakeholders through the Saakshar Bharat scheme, which was launched as one of 18 flagship programmes by the Prime Minister in September 2009. The Programme has a clear human resource plan and implementation structures were strengthened from national level down to sub-district levels. At each level technical support groups were established with the function of quality control management (see Box 6).

At regional level, the UNESCO Regional Bureau in Beirut has developed a “Facilitator’s Guide for Adult and Non-Formal Education”, based on a participatory process involving NFE experts and practitioners from the Arab Region. The Regional Bureau in Bangkok has developed a generic regional guide on decentralised planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of literacy and NFE programmes, as well as a resource pack on creating literate environments. It has also trained participants from ten countries in the region (September 2010) to understand the system, issues and challenges of equivalency programmes and their effective implementation. UNESCO BREDA has strengthened the capacity of 40 participants from the Africa region (November 2010) in integrating literacy and NFE in sector-wide educational planning and budgeting exercises.

*Training within the LIFE project in South Sudan*



### **BOX 6 Saakshar Bharat in India puts emphasis on professional development of literacy stakeholders**

The human resource development plan of the Saakshar Bharat Programme in India includes the following:

- Training of trainers, literacy facilitators and supervisors using learner-centred, learning-by-doing, participatory techniques;
- Total Quality Management (TQM) emphasises the quality of literacy workers and literacy educators;
- Volunteer teachers are given intensive pre- and in-service training in andragogy in local languages;
- A cascade approach is adopted in training literacy personnel;
- Model manuals and resource books with participatory training techniques have been distributed for adaptation at State Resource Centres and State Literacy Mission Authorities;
- On-going training of key resource persons at district level;
- Orientation and managerial training for literacy managers;
- Various kinds of training workshop have been organised by different bodies for different target literacy personnel.

*Source: Chu, S.K. and Bajracharya, R. (2011) Regional Mid-term Evaluation of Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE). Bangkok, UNESCO Bangkok*

### **Challenges**

A general trend of professionalisation in literacy and NFE can be observed in most LIFE countries and it is very encouraging to see that several LIFE countries have started to establish qualification standards for literacy teachers and to emphasise the positioning of literacy stakeholders within more comprehensive human resource development strategies. However, most of the recently-launched major literacy programmes still rely on volunteers to teach literacy classes and long-term arrangements to increase individual and institutional capacity in literacy and adult education are still lacking. Participants in the African LIFE mid-term evaluation meeting were in agreement that there is a need to improve the

socio-professional status of literacy personnel, by ensuring that they are included in the overall national policies and strategies on the teaching profession.

### **Initial lessons**

**Although the capacity of literacy personnel at all levels remains a huge challenge there are some visible signs of movement towards improved quality for programme delivery in LIFE countries. The planning, delivery and monitoring of training is undergoing a paradigm shift in countries which have introduced quality standards and accreditation mechanisms for literacy and NFE personnel. Efforts have been made to strengthen training units and institutes and to expand training facilities to local levels. Universities have been involved offering specialised support and allowing civil servants to obtain additional qualifications.**

**It is important to introduce such new approaches in dialogue with teachers' unions and accompanied with new and adequately paid job opportunities. The development of specialised national, sub-national or regional training institutes and use of open and distance education will hopefully allow the pooling of expertise and provision of training services leading to higher quality standards.**

### **6.3 Developing capacities for curricula and learning materials: another prerequisite for improved quality**

#### **Progress**

In a number of LIFE countries efforts were undertaken to review existing curricula and materials in order to provide for improved relevance, equity and quality in learning. In some cases national curriculum frameworks have been developed which will allow for equivalencies between formal and non-formal education in the future, for example in India, Pakistan and Senegal. In a peer learning and review workshop with literacy specialists from the sub-region, the new Senegalese curriculum was critically analysed, improved and validated.

In some places, curricular reform became necessary because bilingual approaches to both formal and non-formal education were adopted. In Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau and Benin, for example, action has

been taken to incorporate national languages into the curriculum and to support literate environments in local languages. In other LIFE countries, existing literacy and NFE curricula have been updated to take account of relevant issues and themes. In Bangladesh, the curriculum was enriched by including HIV and AIDS content which was complemented by providing related training to trainers and supervisors. As a result of CapEFA LIFE programme support for Pakistan, four literacy organisations have improved their literacy primers in the light of the newly-developed National Literacy Curriculum. The new primers contain messages on emerging themes such as gender equality. In the LIFE project in South Sudan, Ministry of Education core staff received training in curriculum development for NFE (February 2010) and designed a broad curriculum framework for the Basic Adult Literacy programme.

In Mauritania, capacity-development enabled planners to produce guidelines and a curriculum framework for two pilot projects: a non-formal primary education project for out-of-school children and a community-based family literacy project. In this process, the needs of various groups of out-of-school children and reported illiterate young people and women were assessed; competence standards developed by international experts were reviewed and a general reference framework put in place.

### Challenges

Several LIFE countries, with technical support in the framework of CapEFA literacy programmes, developed new curriculum frameworks or programmes with a more holistic vision by integrating literacy learning with developmental and cross-cutting issues such as gender equity and HIV/AIDS. In LIFE countries with multi-lingual contexts, the challenge was to adopt bi- or multi-lingual approaches. The development of equivalency programmes and related assessment frameworks and tools is an emerging trend. However, the involved technical work poses new challenges to curriculum developers, in particular at decentralised levels, and indicates a need for training and development to upgrade their skills.

### Initial lessons

**The development of curricula and learning materials for literacy programmes, which are culturally, linguistically and gender-sensitive, works best if relevant stakeholders are consulted, especially potential learners, and if it allows for local or even personalised adaptations. This increases ownership and the likelihood that it will be accepted and followed by all.**

**The development of equivalency programmes is a highly technical and complex process which involves much consultation, negotiation and decisions. Therefore, it needs time and needs to be carried out in conjunction with the capacity development of all those involved.**

## 6.4 The creation of rich and dynamic literate environments

### Progress

The creation of a culture of reading and learning supported by literate environments has been an important focus of LIFE and has been successfully promoted, for example, in Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Morocco, Pakistan and Senegal. It includes the production of learning and reading material for newly-literate people, the use of mother tongue and local languages for literacy instruction in bi- and multilingual contexts, inter-generational approaches to learning, the use of appropriate technologies, including ICT, and the provision of learning opportunities that reach beyond basic literacy.

*Literacy classes for workers in Brazil*



### **BOX 7 Literature for All contest to nurture literate environments in Brazil**

The *Literature for All* competition was established by the Brazilian government in 2006 as a means of stimulating the development of literary works and designed specifically for new readers. The authors receiving awards in the competition have their works published in the *Literature for All* Collection. In 2008, in the second competition, an award was introduced for African authors from Portuguese-speaking countries. In 2009, nearly 300,000 collections were distributed to *Literate Brazil Programme* classes, an innovative activity that sought to confront the reality of unequal access to books and information – and principally the enormous lack of books produced for young people and adults in the process of becoming readers. As a result of this contest, the Ministries of Education and Culture teamed up to launch a new project called “reading mediators” (“*mediadores de leitura*”).

Sources: Ministry of Education of Brazil (June 2010) Country Paper: Status and Major Challenges of Literacy in Brazil, prepared for the Eighth E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting on EFA, p.12; Questionnaires Jorge Teles, 30.08.2011 and Carmen Gatto, 29.08.2011

Bangladesh, China, India and Nepal have developed strong mother tongue-based literacy programmes to cater for the needs of different ethnic and linguistic groups. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, more than 400 simple literacy booklets have been produced for newly-literate readers. In India, the NGO Nirantar initiated the production of a weekly newspaper, which is written in the local language and distributed in the rural areas by women belonging to the marginalized Dalit and Muslim communities. Another Indian NGO, PlanetRead, has reached millions of newly literates with same-language subtitling of movies broadcast on television. The use of mass media in support of literacy programmes has been reported by a number of LIFE countries: Bangladesh, Guinea-Bissau, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria (see Box 8) and Sudan with some programmes reaching learners on a large scale.

### **BOX 8 Literacy by Radio in Nigeria**

Nigeria uses the outreach effect of radio for literacy, vocational and life skills education through its Literacy by Radio Programme which lasts between three to nine months. As a consequence of its positive evaluation it is broadcast to all Nigerian states. The communities decide on the type of programmes, the language of instruction, and the time to listen to the lessons and to meet with the facilitator. Those who complete the programme are awarded the Basic Literacy Certificate which is equivalent to primary three in the formal system. Coordination and funding are the biggest challenges.

Sources: Ministry of Education of Nigeria (June 2010) Country Paper: Status and Major Challenges of Literacy in Nigeria, Eighth E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting on EFA, p.36-39

The use of **new information and communication technologies** has been piloted in some countries, and offers huge potential for promoting literacy particularly among young women. ICT devices are empowering because they facilitate being connected, communicating, obtaining information from others and being literate. A pilot project with 250 young women in three districts in Punjab, Pakistan, successfully developed literacy skills through the use of mobile phones. Similar projects involving ICT in education were implemented in Bangladesh, China, India and Indonesia. In Egypt, UNESCO has recently started a new Initiative of Using Information Technology and Communications in Literacy which consists of using mobile phones to maintain literacy levels for newly-literates. The initiative is built around using SMS to communicate with newly-literate people and encouraging them to reply to SMS messages by providing them with immediate credits for correct replies. To use ICT on a large scale, cooperation between public and private sectors will be essential.

## Challenges

The creation of rich and dynamic environments to support literacy has been an important focus of LIFE. This includes the use of local languages, community-based libraries and media to promote a culture of reading and learning. Most inspiring have been pilot experiences that use new information and communication technologies (ICT). The challenge lies in finding ways to scale-up these initiatives and establish long-term partnerships with related companies.

## Initial lessons

**The huge potential of ICT for promoting literacy and empowering particularly young women has been demonstrated through different pilot projects. To use this potential on a large scale requires cooperation between public and private sectors which has not yet become a reality.**

*Training of the Association  
Girls for the Future  
in Cairo, Egypt*

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## 6.5 Assessment of literacy skills

Stakeholders in many LIFE countries have been sensitised to the need to measure levels of literacy skills possessed by individuals through sound testing. At the same time, policy-makers and providers of literacy programmes increasingly feel the need for accurate approaches in assessing learning achievements during and at the end of literacy programmes. They also require minimum standards and assessment tools that provide comparable data, particularly in the context of equivalency programmes. Enhancing national capacities for literacy assessment is a crucial task and must be used to improve the quality of literacy programmes and to mobilise additional funds.

The Curriculum Wing of the Pakistan Ministry of Education has developed and produced a test bank and source book on literacy test items. This assessment tool provides guidance to organisations to prepare examinations at their literacy centres. These test items can be used both for formative (continuous) assessment as well for final tests at the end of a literacy course. UNESCO has initiated an innovative research project (RAMAA) which assesses the literacy competences acquired by participants of literacy programmes as related to the curriculum, literacy competences required in everyday life and envisaged as necessary for national development. This study to measure literacy learning outcomes is implemented by country teams in Burkina Faso, Mali, Morocco, Niger and Senegal.

## Challenges

While assessment of levels of literacy is an important aspect of allowing the recognition of learning achievements in literacy within equivalency or overarching qualifications systems, this requires the relevant technical expertise in programme development. The challenge consists of using assessment meaningfully to guide teaching and learning while developing a culture of feedback to maximise the effectiveness of future instruction.

## **Initial lessons**

**There is an increasing demand for accurate approaches and tools to assess learning outcomes of literacy programmes. Capacity-building in this area is also essential if literacy is to be integrated into wider educational and learning systems. Initiatives such as RAMAA are of vital importance to support development of assessment frameworks and tools that will measure literacy learning outcomes in comparable ways across countries.**



## Chapter 7

# LIFE Strategic Objective 4: To enhance countries' innovative initiatives and practices in providing literacy learning opportunities

Sharing knowledge and inspiring innovations to improve literacy policies and practices continuously is the focus of this fourth strategic area of LIFE. The logical framework indicators include

- new projects focusing on women
- NFE promoted by community-based approaches
- South-South cooperation
- partnerships with the private sector
- the identification and dissemination of good practice

The generation and sharing of knowledge – in and beyond the LIFE countries – is one of the added values that UNESCO can bring to LIFE to enhance countries' innovative potential and capacities. In this regard, LIFE benefits from and contributes to UNESCO's function as a "laboratory of ideas", "clearing-house" and "catalyst for international collaboration".

### 7.1 Innovative programmes focusing on women

#### Progress

Many of the successful and innovative programmes in LIFE countries have a particular focus on women and families living below the poverty line, particularly in rural areas. Several of these successful programmes have been awarded UNESCO Literacy Prizes (Afghanistan, Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan and Senegal) in recent years (2006 to 2011) in recognition of their work.

Empowering girls and women through linking literacy to **vocational or practical skills training** and **income-generating activities** and thus supporting

their economic capabilities and earning power has been an effective approach in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Mali, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Yemen. The LIFE projects in Malakal, Jonglei and Central Equatoria, in South Sudan, contributed to the improvement of food security by training mainly young women, in literacy and improved farming skills. The innovative force in Haiti's pilot Basic Literacy and Vocational Training for Young Adults<sup>83</sup> (14-30 years) lies in it being needs-based, using the lingua franca of the population, Creole, as the language of instruction, linking literacy with vocational training (building, carpentry, cookery and horticulture) and setting up a participatory monitoring and evaluation system. Since its launch this LIFE project has reached about 2,500 young adults, almost 70 per cent of whom are women.

The focus of the key pilot activities of the CapEFA in Morocco (2006-2008) were rural women (see Box 9). The CapEFA programme in Senegal (2007-2009) – *l'éducation qualifiante des jeunes et des adultes* (EQJA) – aimed to support the implementation of national literacy strategies and skills training for excluded women and girls in the agro-food industry. Relevant gender-sensitive training modules were developed. The project benefited 300 women and 80 adolescent girls in five regions. The focus was on developing women's competencies boosting their income. On the basis of this pilot experience, the national curriculum framework was modified to focus on skills training.

83 <http://www.unesco.org/uil/litbase/?menu=16&country=HT&programme=79>





*Rural women empowerment project in Morocco*

### **BOX 9 Literacy and rural women empowerment in Morocco**

4,500 female participants received training from local NGOs in Morocco, with the aim of increasing women's involvement in society and aiding the development of income-generating activities for newly-literate women in rural areas. The post-literacy and economic integration of women in Ouarzazate and Zagora Provinces was a key component of the CapEFA literacy programme 2006-2008. As a result of their involvement in the initiative, around 300 women succeeded in setting up their own micro-credit projects and generating an income. These two pilot projects now serve as models which the National Literacy Department has applied to other skills training programmes that link post-literacy with income-generating activities. The remaining interventions of the CapEFA programme were geared towards improving the quality of literacy programmes and learning achievements; these again have benefited women in particular; annual evaluations conducted by the National Literacy Department indicate that 85 per cent of literacy learners in Morocco are female.

*Sources: UNESCO Rabat Cluster, Final Report, Capacity Building for EFA Programme 2006-2008, 14 November 2008; Questionnaire Morocco for LIFE mid-term evaluation*

Ethnic and linguistic minorities have been empowered through literacy programmes which are **culturally and linguistically sensitive**. The beneficiaries of these programmes have been mainly girls and women in rural and remote areas such as in the Lancang Lahu Autonomous County, in the Yunnan Province of south-west China, where 70 per cent of the non-literate population are women. Through the bilingual "Mothers' Education Project for Lahu Nationality" practical skills are offered to women together with literacy initially in their mother tongue and then in Mandarin.<sup>84</sup> The Ministry of Education involved the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and the All-China Women's Federation in planning for literacy programmes for ethnic minorities and women within the framework of LIFE.

Inter-generational approaches to learning, which are particularly focusing on women, are found in a number of LIFE countries, such as in Mozambique, with the "Family without illiterates" programme supported by the UNESCO Maputo Office, or in Nepal, where grandmothers and grandchildren study together in literacy classes. The Family Literacy and Independent Entrepreneurial Literacy Education Programmes, a follow-up to the Functional Literacy Programme in Indonesia, have been identified as innovative. These programmes integrate the further development of literacy skills with skills that are useful in improving the learner's quality of life as well as empowering families and surrounding communities.

<sup>84</sup> UNESCO/Division of Basic Education, 2010, p. 26

## BOX 10 National Movement to Accelerate Completion of the Nine-Year Compulsory Basic Education and the Fight Against Illiteracy in Indonesia

Among the LIFE countries, Indonesia seems to have put in place all the necessary steps and ingredients, including policy, plan, decree, coordination mechanism and implementation capacity at all levels, to advance literacy in the country. The impact of LIFE on the implementation of literacy policies in Indonesia includes:

- Issue of Presidential Instruction No. 5/2006 on the 'National Movement to Accelerate Completion of the Nine-Year Compulsory Basic Education and the Fight Against Illiteracy', followed by a Decree of the Minister of National Education (2007) on Guidelines for Implementation of the 'National Movement to Accelerate Completion of the Nine-Year Compulsory Basic Education and Fight Against Illiteracy', and Letter of Decision of the Director-General for Non-Formal and Informal Education No. 258/2009 on the structure of the literacy education programme.
- Establishment of performance indicators to measure progress in completing the eradication of illiteracy within the framework of the National Strategic Plan for the Development of Education, and Strategic Plan of the Ministry of National Education 2010-2014.
- Increases in budgetary allocation to literacy approved by the Indonesian Legislative Assembly.
- Strengthened partnership between the Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry for People's Welfare, Ministry of Home Affairs, State Ministry for the Empowerment of Women, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Finance and with provincial and district/city governments.
- A well-defined multi-level literacy and basic education implementation coordination structure has been established from central national level down to the local village level.
- Coordination meetings, operational meetings, public hearings and other meetings have increased coordination among the concerned ministries/government agencies, as well as between the Government and the Legislative Assembly – specifically with its Commission X that manages education, and the Budget Committee.
- Improvements in gender equity and gender equality, as evidenced by a decrease in gender disparities among the illiterate population, and by the development of a Gender Mainstreaming Programme in education.

Source: Chu, S.K. and Bajracharya, R. (2011), p.26 and 29



The rationale of the Indian Saakshar Bharat Scheme has been widely publicised and accepted in promoting literacy for empowerment through the emancipation and inclusion of women and other disadvantaged groups. A thorough diagnosis was undertaken prior to launching the new national literacy scheme in 2009. A gradual shift from the promotion of basic literacy among individuals towards the development of literate societies is increasingly evident as highlighted in the table below showing the major changes from the previous to the new strategy, which has integrated the Total Literacy Campaign strategy, post-literacy programme and continuing education into the Saakshar Bharat scheme.

*Skills training in Indonesia*

OLD STRATEGY (Total Literacy Campaign)	NEW STRATEGY (Saakshar Bharat Scheme)
Focus on basic literacy, no stress on further education	Focus on lifelong learning, emphasis on equivalency
Campaign model, non-formal implementation structure	Institutional model, formal implementation structure
For all and gender unspecific	For all, but special emphasis on women, gender-specific
District as unit of programme implementation, run by bureaucrats, rigid approach	Gram Panchayats (village) as unit of programme implementation, elected representatives, flexible
Isolated programme	Linked with poverty alleviation programmes
Three-stage programme	Single-level multi-focus programme
Learner assessment inadequate	National-level learner assessment
Inadequate Volunteer Teacher's Qualification	Literacy educator must have at least a high-school leaving certificate
1980s curriculum, teaching-learning materials (TLM) only in print form, non-standardised and not for equivalency classes	New curriculum framework for Literacy, digitised TLM-available online, Logo and Seal on TLM, Specially-prepared TLM for equivalency classes
Infrequent use of ICT	Integration of ICT
No networking with training	Networking with professional training institutions
Infrequent monitoring	Online web-based monitoring
Meagre budgetary support	Adequate budgetary support
Old method of fund disbursement	Web based fund flow and management
Government's programme – low community participation	People's programme – strong community ownership

Source: Presentation by India in the Asia-Pacific Regional LIFE Mid-Term Evaluation Workshop, with minor changes.

## Challenges

Most of the “innovative” initiatives, which have been developed and implemented in recent years in LIFE countries, build on many years of experience and mirror relevant lessons learned. A gradual shift from the promotion of basic literacy among individuals towards the creation of literate societies is discernible in some LIFE countries. A major challenge is to systematically evaluate and document successful programmes and assess the feasibility of scaling up the innovative approaches in cost-effective and efficient way. The success stories often build on small scale and intensive interventions which are difficult to reproduce.

While several of the successful and innovative programmes have a particular focus on women and are integrating literacy with life skills, programmes which are specially designed for (and by) women are still rather an exception than the rule. In addition, very little research-based evidence is available on the enabling (and empowering) factors of such learning programmes.

## Initial lessons

**Ingredients for a successful literacy programme are clear policies, well-targeted plans, adequate financial allocations, well-defined coordination mechanisms and strong implementation and evaluation capacities at all levels (from central level through to local village).**

**Empowering girls and women by linking literacy to vocational training and income-generating activities has proven to be effective. Literacy programmes which are culturally and linguistically sensitive and use community-based, flexible and intergenerational approaches to learning generated empowering impact, too.**



## 7.2 Community-based approaches to NFE

### Progress

Community-based and more flexible approaches to literacy with a strong support for community participation and ownership can be observed as a general trend in LIFE countries, in particular through the strengthening, expansion or piloting of Community Learning Centres (CLC) as a delivery mechanism for providing literacy and NFE at local level. CLCs seem to be a particularly effective approach for outreach with relevant learning opportunities to rural girls and women. While the numbers of CLCs have increased significantly in the Asia and Pacific Region,<sup>85</sup> a number of LIFE countries in the Arab Region are piloting CLCs. Although community-based approaches are also a visible feature in African LIFE countries, these are not called CLCs and are mainly delivered through NGOs (e.g. within the *faire-faire* strategy in the case of the West-African LIFE countries).

In Asia and the Pacific Region, eight LIFE countries – Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nepal, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea have developed their CLC models to provide literacy and continuing education programmes at grassroots level. Egypt, Mauritania and Morocco benefited from the Asian experience when setting up their own pilot projects in the framework of the CapEFA programme. In June 2011 UNESCO Iraq launched the “NGO Literacy and Life Skills Grant Programme” which aims to ensure the provision of literacy and life skills training to more than 7,000 vulnerable young people and women through the establishment of 150 community learning centres in Iraq in partnership with national NGOs and the Ministry of Education.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Indonesia: 4,513 CLCs. Islamic Republic of Iran: 3,500 CLCs. Nepal: 905 CLCs. Pakistan: 150 CLCs. (Asia and the Pacific End-of-Decade Notes on EFA Progress: Youth and Adult Literacy (Goal 4), Working Draft April 2011, p.43)

<sup>86</sup> UNESCO Iraq Office Newsletter, Vol. I, Issue 1, June 2011, p.4 and Vol. I, Issue 2, June-October 2011, p.4

### Challenges

The issue of improving CLC quality and coordination among different stakeholders is very challenging and the nature of CLCs means that they are not uniform as they must respond to their differing circumstances. Therefore it will be important to create quality assurance systems with clear standards that which allow for regular monitoring of the CLC activities.

### Initial lessons

**Community-based approaches to NFE and literacy provision have shown themselves effective at reaching women and excluded groups and need to be encouraged. However, by their very nature CLCs cannot be “standard” and need to tailor their activities to local needs and contexts. Monitoring of quality is therefore complex but essential.**

## 7.3 South-South Cooperation: activating the principle of solidarity

### Progress

South-South and triangular South-South-North cooperation, promoted by UNESCO was a key part of the LIFE coordination process. The LIFE framework provides participating countries and regions with many opportunities for mutual learning and support. South-South cooperation has proven to be an effective means to promote collaboration, the exchange of experiences and innovative practice, and to establish networks for literacy and non-formal education. The E-9 initiative has evolved into a powerful mechanism in the framework of EFA, UNLD and LIFE for achieving progress towards the goal of literacy for all. Another example of effective South-South cooperation is the Regional Council for Education and Literacy in Africa (CREAA), a group of 15 countries, most of them participating in LIFE. Under the auspices of UNESCO and the Brazilian government, all Portuguese-speaking countries of the South – three of them LIFE countries – created the Lusophone Network for Youth and Adult Education in August 2006 (see Box 11).

### **BOX 11 Working together: South-South cooperation through the Lusophone Network for Youth and Adult Education**

The Lusophone Network for South-South Cooperation in the field of Youth and Adult Education (formed by Angola, **Brazil**, Cape Verde, **Guinea-Bissau**, **Mozambique**, São Tomé and Príncipe, East Timor and, more recently, Portugal) was created in 2006 as an important democratic instrument for stimulating dialogue, the joint construction of knowledge and the exchange of experience between countries with a common heritage. The challenge posed by literacy, understood as a continuum, is one of the Network's priorities for which LIFE has proved a valuable reference.

Initial activities have centred on regular workshops – the first two held in Brazil (2006 and 2008) and the last two in Africa – Cape Verde (2009) and Mozambique (2010) – with the fifth already planned for July 2012 in Angola. The network is coordinated on a rotation basis by two countries from the group. Angola will replace Cape Verde from 2012, with Mozambique as partner.

Preparation for participation at CONFINTEA VI (Belém, Brazil) in 2009 provided the Network with an excellent opportunity for joint action and common demands largely contemplated in the *Belém Framework for Action*.

A new project using radio and web-based technologies for the training of trainers is now in preparation. With support from the Brazilian Ministry of Education, the project is being developed by a group at the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB) in Brazil. It will be implemented initially in Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe.

In order to improve the coordination of cooperative action, the Network and its partners, with support from the Brazilian Ministry of Education and UNESCO, are discussing ways of working more closely together to develop

a website, training opportunities, research projects to recover the historical memory of adult education in Lusophone countries and other activities designed to contribute to sustainable development in the region.

*Source: Timothy Ireland*

For the Arab Region, the possibility of networking and South-South cooperation across the countries of the region and beyond has been a major asset of LIFE. Study visits within the Arab Region and to Caribbean and Asian countries provided stakeholders with first-hand learning experiences. Useful study visits to other South countries were also reported by other LIFE countries (e.g. Madagascar).

### **Challenges**

UNESCO has succeeded in the promotion of effective innovative experiences by making LIFE into an important South-South platform for exchange and cooperation. The challenge is to secure sufficient financial resources in order to sustain levels of activity.

### **Initial lessons**

**South-South cooperation among LIFE countries and networking has worked best when organised around concrete tasks, with rotating coordination responsibilities and by using web-based technologies for communication.**

## **7.4 Partnerships with the private sector: an insufficiently exploited field**

### **Progress**

There is little evidence of new partnerships with the private sector to mobilise sustained support for literacy. The Africa Regional LIFE Mid-term evaluation meeting diagnosed a weak mobilisation of resources from the private sector in all countries due to the lack of an effective strategy. However, there are isolated examples of encouraging practices such as the creation of a national network of private providers for the promotion of literacy and languages

in Benin, in 2008 (see Box 12). Madagascar reported partnerships with the private sector to organise advocacy campaigns for literacy (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, international football, rugby, and athletics stars, civil society, renowned Malgache artists). In Egypt new partnerships have been developed with the private sector including with the phone company *Vodafone* and through Businessmen Associations. New public and private partners have been brought in to support the national literacy scheme in India, such as the Open Universities, the National Informatics Centre (NIC), National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Institute of Public Auditors of India (IPAI), Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), the TATA Consultancy, media and aid agencies. They all play key roles within the Saakshar Bharat Programme launched in October 2009.

### **BOX 12 National network of private providers promoting literacy and language in Benin**

LIFE has boosted the creation of a national network of private providers for the promotion of literacy and languages (Réseau National des Opérateurs Privés pour la Promotion de l'Alphabétisation et des Langues, ReNOPAL) which was set up in 2008 during the launching of LIFE. This in turn has made the network aware of UNESCO and LIFE. The network is of strategic relevance as it reinforces the synergy of activities in the field of literacy and adult education. Benin's "Déclaration de Politique Nationale d'Alphabétisation" delegates the implementation of these programmes in a *faire-faire* approach to the private providers. Representatives of ReNOPAL are members of the national steering group which has also developed the LIFE action plan. Non-governmental and governmental actors in literacy and adult education had not worked so closely together for a long time.

*Source: Ministère de la culture, de l'alphabétisation et de la promotion des langues nationales, République du Bénin. Octobre 2009. Enquête nationale pour l'évaluation à mi-parcours de l'initiative pour l'alphabétisation : savoir pour pouvoir (LIFE).*

## **Challenges**

The low numbers of examples of new or developing private/public partnerships in literacy indicate that the mobilisation of resources from and the establishment of sustainable cooperation schemes with the private sector to enhance literacy efforts remain a major challenge in most LIFE countries.

## **Initial lessons**

**Within LIFE countries there is little evidence of strategies for alliances and partnerships with the private sector and the LIFE framework has not been sufficiently used as a catalyst for such development.**

## **7.5 Knowledge generation and sharing of good practice**

### **Progress**

Literacy problems are not always (nor only) the result of a lack of financial resources, but also a lack of knowledge and ideas regarding innovative practice. By sharing knowledge on innovative approaches to literacy, LIFE has served in different countries to question and overcome traditional patterns of literacy promotion by framing the literacy issue in a different and broader perspective.

In several LIFE countries, good practice in literacy and NFE was identified, compiled and disseminated, as in Bangladesh, Brazil, Pakistan and Yemen. The Brazilian Ministry of Education supported the establishment of a national network of Reference Centres for Adult Education. Each of these centres identifies, documents and disseminates good practice. In most LIFE countries, information and knowledge is shared online. For example, within the CapEFA Pakistan programme an online database with literacy materials was created. In Egypt the CapEFA programme assisted in establishing an electronic database. All materials generated within the Literate Brazil Programme, including research studies, are accessible to the public online. APPEAL/UNESCO has developed LIFE web portals for the nine LIFE countries in the Asian region. In addition, all relevant materials are being collected to develop a regional web portal, which also covers and benefits non-LIFE countries. Other UNESCO Regional Bureaux and UIL have developed databases on effective literacy practice.



*Literacy web training at the UNESCO Bangkok office for officers from Papua New Guinea*

Another trend that can be observed is the establishment of interactive platforms for exchange and knowledge-sharing within and among LIFE countries. Since summer 2011, and within the framework of LIFE, 260 national NGOs and community-based organisations<sup>87</sup> are connected in the Literacy Network for Iraq.<sup>88</sup> This was jointly established by UNESCO Iraq and the Iraqi Ministry of Education to facilitate and provide a platform for dialogue and debate. LIFeline was launched by UIL in 2008 to promote exchange between LIFE focal points and other key stakeholders from the different LIFE countries. It is through these channels and platforms that inspiring experiences and innovations can be shared, discussed and adapted to specific needs and contexts.

<sup>87</sup> These NGOs have been accredited by the Ministry of Education as of December 2010 and as a result of the coordinated work and support from UNESCO and the Ministry of Education the number of members has been increasing since then.

<sup>88</sup> Literacy Network for Iraq

### **BOX 13 Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and Senegal LIFE Websites**

Five countries – namely Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and Senegal – create visibility for literacy, support the coordination of national stakeholders in literacy and make information on literacy accessible to the public through new websites: [www.life-afg.org/](http://www.life-afg.org/) – [www.lifeforiraq.org](http://www.lifeforiraq.org) – <http://paklife.net/> – [www.literacyportal.net/png/](http://www.literacyportal.net/png/) – [www.senalphaenf.org /](http://www.senalphaenf.org/). In the case of Papua New Guinea the UNESCO Bangkok office, together with media and ICT experts, trained officers from the National Literacy Awareness Secretariat (NLAS) and Department of Education (DOE) in online journalism, social media, video production, e-library and archives and web management. The resulting website will serve as an effective information, coordination and communication tool and meet the increasing demands of literacy programmes providers and other national and international stakeholders. The maintenance and attractiveness of such websites are common challenges which require skilled human resources and financial resources. Recently, UNESCO Bangkok has also supported the development of new website for the other Asian LIFE countries: [www.literacyportal.net/iran/](http://www.literacyportal.net/iran/) – [www.literacyportal.net/bangladesh/](http://www.literacyportal.net/bangladesh/) – [www.literacyportal.net/india/](http://www.literacyportal.net/india/) – [www.literacyportal.net/china](http://www.literacyportal.net/china) – [www.literacyportal.net/nepal/](http://www.literacyportal.net/nepal/) – [www.literacyportal.net/indonesia/](http://www.literacyportal.net/indonesia/).

Source: UNESCO Bangkok

### **Challenges**

LIFE has evolved into an initiative that has started to expand its outreach beyond the participating countries. Even if requests from Member States to be included in the initiative could not be accommodated formally, these and other countries undoubtedly benefit from experience, knowledge and resources generated within the LIFE framework. A challenge consists in making these “products” available in more languages. There is still untapped potential for the advancement of good practice in literacy through peer learning and networks of solidarity, knowledge-sharing and mutual support.

## **Initial lessons**

**There is still considerable scope to expand and build on information exchange between countries where starting points are often uneven and access to Internet and resources vary widely. LIFeline<sup>89</sup> needs to be further developed and better used as a tool for exchange of practice.**

**Communication among LIFE countries, as a means of sharing experience and knowledge, has worked best when organised around concrete activities and projects, while using web-based technologies.**

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<sup>89</sup> See chapter 2.3 on page 19





## Chapter 8

# LIFE: A learning process in itself

LIFE is UNESCO's response to the urgent need for collaborative action to accelerate literacy efforts. The continuing need for such an initiative becomes evident when analysing the modest progress in literacy rates and the lack of the reduction in gender disparities. The experiences and lessons, which can be drawn from achievements and challenges of the first half of LIFE implementation (2006-2011), should be applied in the subsequent years of the initiative. Much of the potential of LIFE is still to be unlocked by continuing to engage all actors in this process of mutual support and learning.

### 8.1 Learning from LIFE experiences and evaluation

The analysis of progress and results against the four LIFE Strategic Objectives shows a mosaic of achievements from different LIFE countries. In addition to substantial results indicating progress with regard to the LIFE Strategic Objectives, there are countless success stories directly or indirectly attributable to LIFE, leading to a renewed commitment to literacy, increased budgetary allocations, new partnerships, enhanced capacities among policy-makers and literacy providers, and the piloting and dissemination of successful experiences and innovative approaches to literacy.

Analysis also shows that there is a huge diversity in starting points, in the ways countries address their literacy challenge, and in innovative potential to mobilise for and accelerate literacy efforts. Information is uneven and there are "blind spots" in the landscape of countries participating in the initiative. The most visible results and impact have been reported within the framework of the LIFE projects receiving funds from UNESCO's CapEFA Programme. Often the available information has

been shaped by different interpretations and uses of the LIFE framework. Furthermore, the need to tailor strategic responses to suit the specificities of each country makes it very difficult – if not impossible – to compare progress across countries and regions. In summary, a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation of LIFE has been a challenge in itself.

At the same time, the achievements show that LIFE has further evolved since its inception. It has gone beyond both the scope of what has been laid out in the *Vision and Strategy Paper* and the borders of participating countries. LIFE, as a learning process in itself, has assisted many stakeholders and actors to access and generate new knowledge, experiences and ideas, and thereby has expanded horizons and visions.



*Learners improving their livelihood skills in Senegal*



*Above: Mother tongue literacy in Niger*

*Below: Learners from ethnic minority groups in literacy class, Hualong Hui Autonomous County, northwest China*



## 8.2 The value added by LIFE

LIFE has enhanced UNESCO's comparative advantage in efforts to achieve literacy for all within the frameworks of UNLD, EFA, CONFITEA, DESD and the MDGs. While performing its mandate through its five principal functions,<sup>90</sup> UNESCO has made a visible contribution by adding to these missions and the mandates of the UN System through LIFE including:

- promotion of a broader concept of literacy and integrated, holistic and sector-wide approaches to address national literacy challenges;
- availability of know-how and technical assistance to improve national data on literacy levels and learning achievements as well as on management information systems;
- coordination of a framework to strengthen partnerships, the development of networks and effective South-South cooperation;
- promotion of effective coordination structures and mechanisms, harmonisation and synergies among literacy-related activities and improved relationships between governments and civil society;
- increased commitment to literacy through advocacy events that have helped in keeping the literacy theme high on political agendas;
- increased sensitivity among policy-makers and practitioners to the need to respect linguistic and cultural diversity ("mother tongue literacy") and to address gender disparities;
- improved literacy policy and practice based on the analysis of evidence and effective practice;
- sustained enhancement of capacity by interventions mainly carried out under extra-budgetary-funded literacy projects;
- mobilisation of international partners through its role as lead technical partner in literacy and non-formal education within the UN System;
- rich experience and significant lessons learned from the first five years of implementing LIFE which can be applied in subsequent years.

<sup>90</sup> As a laboratory of ideas, a standard-setter, a clearing-house, a capacity-builder in Member States and a catalyst for international cooperation

**LIFE**

**LONG**

**LEARNING**



# Chapter 9

## Looking Forward with LIFE

The LIFE mid-term evaluation has offered a significant opportunity for collective reflection on progress made by LIFE countries, on challenges in achieving its strategic objectives, and on the improvements needed in order to change the lives of non- or semi-literate children, adolescents, young people and adults. It has shown the necessity for a paradigm shift towards more coherent and comprehensive approaches to literacy and non-formal education within a perspective of lifelong learning. These efforts need to capitalise on shared experience, knowledge and resources to create synergies that cannot be achieved individually. The ambitious goal of empowering literacy for all requires vision and action, based on a shared conviction that literacy is fundamental to personal, economic, social and cultural development.

Consideration of the achievements, challenges and lessons discussed in the previous chapters together with recommendations formulated in the regional LIFE mid-term evaluation meetings has led to the development of the following strategies and action points which will build on experience to improve continuously the implementation and impact of LIFE during the remaining years of the initiative.

### **LIFE: Relevant and fit for purpose in accelerating literacy**

The mid-term evaluation confirms the relevance and added value brought to literacy development by LIFE. Stakeholders believe that LIFE is an important framework that can boost their literacy efforts and UNESCO has been praised as an important partner of national governments in achieving their literacy goals. But it is important to communicate clearly what the LIFE initiative can offer to avoid the initial misunderstandings that have bedevilled this initiative. LIFE has evolved as a strategic framework

to meet the needs of participating countries through collaborative action, which is country-led, country-specific and embedded in national policies and processes.

**The strategy for the future** should see the LIFE framework used by UNESCO, LIFE countries and the donor community more resolutely to develop and support global and country-specific solutions to address the major causes of the slow progress towards the EFA literacy goal.

### **Action points:**

- All stakeholders should endeavour to engage political commitment at the highest level within LIFE countries in order to attain a higher degree of mobilisation and cooperation for literacy. This should lead to more formalised and institutionalised approaches, including reliable budgetary commitments.
- UNESCO should document, analyse and disseminate successful advocacy, communication and resource mobilisation strategies and approaches and make available research-based advocacy tools which can be adjusted and used by LIFE countries.
- With regard to advocacy at international level, UNESCO should continue to work for greater commitment to literacy among national and international partners, to remind policy-makers of their commitments and to highlight the need to translate commitment quickly into concrete and effective action.
- While LIFE should prioritise efforts towards achieving the EFA literacy goal, Member States should also be encouraged to discuss, plan and work on their longer-term strategies beyond 2015.

## **LIFE: Built on coordination and communication**

The success of LIFE depends on the ability to improve and sustain processes at country level that will ensure ownership and mobilise all relevant partners around literacy. These processes require high levels of coordination, effective communication and flexible responses.

### **Mobilising partners around literacy through improved coordination and communication**

**The strategy for the future** should strengthen, reactivate or create effective coordination structures at global (UNESCO and international partners) and national levels to mobilise all relevant partners around literacy, facilitate cooperation and use and improve existing communication channels, platforms and networks for exchange, support and mutual learning.

#### **Action points:**

- Governments of LIFE countries should make use of the support offered through LIFE to establish, further reinforce and sustain literacy coordination mechanisms at national and decentralised levels, developing clear terms of reference or guidelines and building on existing networks to involve a broader range of literacy providers and stakeholders.
- UNESCO should improve communication and exchange of information, experience and knowledge among LIFE partners through a more dynamic use of the potential of LIFeline, and similar platforms, as an interactive network as well as through increasing (online) access to state-of-the-art research evidence and effective practice in literacy policies and programmes.
- UNESCO and international partners should improve articulation and coordination among existing international initiatives relating to literacy – including MDGs, DESD, CONFINTEA, EFA, UNLD and LIFE – in order to avoid confusion, overlaps and duplications.

- The links between literacy and other development goals and UNESCO's Education Sector and UN priorities (e.g. EDUCAIDS, TTISSA, ESD, Global Campaign for Education, Global Partnership for Girl's and Women's Education, etc.) should be made more visible by UNESCO and used to create synergies.

## **LIFE: Elementary literacy will not be enough**

Many LIFE countries aspire to becoming knowledge-based societies. The mastery of higher-order literacy skills is essential for individuals and societies if this is to happen. There is a growing acceptance that literacy involves a continuum of learning and that the achievement of sustainable reading, writing and numeracy skills requires levels of basic education beyond elementary literacy. Strategies should deal with literacy and basic education as foundation levels within comprehensive national education reforms that aim to build lifelong learning systems for all. Relevant plans need to be based on sound data and evidence of the scale of need.

### **Working towards an enlarged concept of literacy as a continuum of learning**

**The strategy for the future** should use the LIFE framework to promote an enlarged concept of literacy as a continuum and part of lifelong learning. Its integration in national learning systems and development strategies within sector-wide and cross-sectoral approaches should be encouraged. Special efforts are necessary to improve the availability, reliability and comparability of literacy data for better planning and targeting.

#### **Action points:**

- Member States should consider addressing their literacy challenge in holistic ways across education sectors and in coordination with other government sectors. Literacy should be embedded in national development strategies and provided in different settings to enable all to acquire basic skills and qualifications.
- Member States should be encouraged to improve their literacy statistics by using sound approaches to measurement (such as LAMP) as a means to better target and schedule the delivery of demand-oriented and effective literacy programmes over

the next five years. Statistics should be used to monitor changes in the illiterate population, literate environment and literacy programme performance.

- UNESCO should provide technical assistance on demand to support Member States with developing equivalency programmes, adequately integrating adult literacy and non-formal education into national qualifications frameworks and setting up operational mechanisms for the recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning.

### LIFE: The resources gap

This evaluation demonstrates that national budgets for literacy and NFE have increased and there are reports of newly-created funds and the mobilisation of additional financial resources. But the size of the literacy challenge shows that the majority of LIFE countries are far from allocating the resources necessary to accelerate the increase of literacy rates. There has been a failure on the part of all partners to convince the private sector of the value of literacy to national development.

### Increasing investment in literacy to address the resources gap

**The strategy for the future** should ensure that the LIFE framework is to be used to mobilise sufficient, adequate and additional resources to accelerate the increase of literacy rates by engaging governments, non-governmental and particularly the private sector, as well as bilateral and multilateral donors. By bringing together human and financial resources and utilising them in strategically planned ways, LIFE Programmes within CapEFA will generate more resources.

### Action points:

- Governments of LIFE countries should increase their budget allocations for literacy to meet the size and needs of target populations. This requires, in turn, undertaking efforts to measure properly the magnitude of the needs and the costs of addressing them.
- UNESCO and other international organisations and global foundations should play a more pro-active role in advocacy to mobilise support from the international donor community for literacy. Effective pooling of potential resources among national and international partners for the direct funding of literacy action should be promoted.



*Soldiers attending lessons in South Sudan*

- UNESCO needs to participate actively in the technical and financial partners' coordination meetings and use the Capacity Building for EFA (CapEFA) funds for literacy more efficiently. Additional financial and technical support should be provided to LIFE countries who have already received CapEFA support to consolidate and up-scale their achievements.

### LIFE: Better policies, better programmes

In the first five years of LIFE major efforts have been made to strengthen national capacities for policy development and delivery of good quality programmes. While significant change processes were initiated mainly in the context of the CapEFA LIFE programmes, sustained capacity development at all levels will be a key factor for the improvement of literacy rates. Effective capacity development works simultaneously upstream (policy level, governments) and downstream (actions on the ground) in coordinated ways. It is expected that policy and planning work will increase in coming years, especially as the EFA target year 2015 approaches and with ongoing decentralisation of decision-making. Most LIFE countries are moving from the advocacy and policy formulation stage to strengthening their action-oriented partnerships and implementation.

### Developing capacities for better policies and programmes

**The strategy for the future** should see more concrete collaborative actions agreed by all actors – LIFE countries, UNESCO and the international partners – to strengthen capacities at all levels. Related capacity development strategies should include effective sub-regional and regional as well as sub-national and local strategies as well as a systematic approach to sharing knowledge and innovation.

#### Action points:

- LIFE countries should plan for and invest in developing capacity for the design, management and implementation of literacy programmes at both national and sub-national levels with a long-term perspective.
- In their capacity-developing efforts, LIFE countries with the support of UNESCO should emphasise improvement in the quality of literacy programmes.



*Tuareg woman in a literacy centre in Tchimbiran, Niger*

- The CapEFA Programme should develop interventions in literacy and NFE in LIFE countries with a long-term vision and in line with national human resource development strategies.
- UNESCO should support regional and sub-regional institutes specialised in literacy training as well as national agencies and institutions to strengthen and build their ability to train literacy managers at all levels.

### LIFE: Quality teaching and learning

The assessment of progress in literacy and NFE in LIFE countries supports the need to put stronger emphasis on improved quality of literacy programmes although there are many examples of LIFE countries recognising the importance of good materials, literate environments, trained staff and the use of ICT in literacy provision. It is not easy to strike a good balance between the strategic challenge to take literacy programmes rapidly to scale, particularly in the most populous LIFE countries, and the need to work towards achieving a certain standard of quality.

### Putting strong emphasis on improved quality in teaching and learning

**The strategy for the future** years of the LIFE initiative should bring a clear focus on areas that are of strategic importance for improved quality of literacy programmes: teacher training, curriculum design, development and support of literate environments and the exploitation of the potential of ICT.



### Action points:

- LIFE countries should develop quality criteria for curricula, learning materials, teaching methodologies and assessment strategies and initiate exchanges on these criteria.
- LIFE countries should put in place strategies for the professionalisation of literacy managers and adult educators and establish training courses in partnership with higher education institutions.
- LIFE countries should support the review of curricula or development of new curriculum frameworks (outcome-based, modular, flexibly adaptable to local contexts and needs), which allow for equivalency with formal basic education, and integrate life skills and developmental issues. The involvement of learners in the shaping of literacy and adult education courses should be considered and promoted.
- LIFE countries should promote the development of literate environments to sustain and further develop literacy skills. This includes the development of materials and instruction in local languages.
- The potential that ICT offers for enhancing traditional and alternative modes of literacy and learning, including training, should be exploited better by different partners in LIFE countries. UNESCO should support this process through documenting and disseminating effective practice in the use of ICT in literacy training.
- UNESCO should support partners in LIFE countries to develop monitoring and evaluation systems as well as to conduct action-oriented research to provide sound evidence and understanding of what works well and makes for effective literacy and adult basic education programmes.

### LIFE: Women in focus

The results of the mid-term review show that much more needs to be done to address the existing gender disparities in adult literacy. Girls, women and families living below the poverty line, particularly in rural areas, need to remain the identified priority of LIFE in future.

### Bringing a clear focus on women to reduce gender disparities

**The strategy for the future** needs to concentrate even more clearly on women and highly-disadvantaged adults, with a particular focus on rural populations. A systematic “gender lens” needs to be integrated into both the LIFE initiative and the monitoring and evaluation of literacy strategies. Stakeholders need to operationalise the concept of “empowerment” and develop an understanding of “gender mainstreaming” in the specific contexts in which they work.

### Action points:

- LIFE countries with high levels of gender disparities in adult literacy should develop specific strategies and programmes for girls and women that help remove potential barriers to access and successful completion of learning opportunities.
- Partners in LIFE countries need to ensure that the issue of gender equity is mainstreamed into all dimensions of programme development, management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, particularly in curricula, learning materials, and recruitment and training of teachers.
- UNESCO should support research on successful approaches to reducing gender disparities in adult literacy and the empowerment of women and promote the use of research evidence in the improvement of literacy provision.

### LIFE: An arena for South-South cooperation

The mid-term evaluation results show that LIFE has become an important South-South platform for exchange and co-operation and one of the most obvious achievements of UNESCO’s efforts to promote effective, innovative experiences in literacy. There are many examples of how the principle of solidarity has been successfully activated through South-South – and at times triangular South-South-North – cooperation. LIFE can play a key role in supporting South-South cooperation, which has already started to expand its reach beyond the 35 participating countries.

## Using LIFE as a platform for South-South cooperation

**The strategy for the future** should involve exploiting the potential of LIFE within the context of a broader network of collaborative action to strengthen South-South cooperation, networking and exchange of experience and knowledge.

### Action points:

- More advanced and richer LIFE countries (Brazil, China, India, Indonesia) should consider offering financial and technical support to needy LIFE countries, turning South-South cooperation into an effective strategy of support for literacy.
- UNESCO should create (virtual) platforms of exchange on innovative experiences, know-how and resources between LIFE (and other) countries, and mobilise both international and in-country support for effective literacy delivery under LIFE, with a particular emphasis on South-South cooperation.

## LIFE: The next five years

The next steps of implementing LIFE should include the review of the LIFE *Vision and Strategy Paper*, the development of international and national road maps or action plans for the second half of the LIFE initiative, and the refinement of the framework to monitor and evaluate progress.

### Reviewing the LIFE strategy to plan the next five years

**The strategy for the future** will build on the results of this evaluation, the strategies identified and the action points to implement them. National and underpinning international road maps or action plans will be developed by all the actors to ensure accelerating progress during the remaining years of the LIFE initiative.

### Action points:

- All partners in the LIFE countries and UNESCO will need to analyse, on the basis of this mid-term evaluation, how LIFE can best be utilised in the next five years to update and upgrade national literacy strategies, develop and implement more effective national literacy plans, and build national capacities and on this basis develop international and national road maps or action plans.
- UNESCO, within its clearing-house mandate, should accompany the further implementation of LIFE with policy-driven and action-oriented research activities.
- The results of this mid-term evaluation will be presented and discussed in the context of forthcoming events related to EFA, UNLD, CONFINTEA follow-up, DESD and MDGs with the aim of integrating literacy within related action plans developing and increasing synergies.
- LIFE should be made one of the platforms to advance the new Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education, launched on 26 May 2011 at UNESCO with a High-Level Forum.
- Progress in implementing international and national LIFE road maps or action plans should be reviewed on a regular basis and relevant reports made available on LIFeline or a similar shared platform.



*Literacy learners in Brazil*

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## Annex 1

# Objectives of the LIFE mid-term evaluation process

- 1) To strengthen the public and political commitment of stakeholders by keeping literacy a priority on national, regional and international agendas.
- 2) To strengthen LIFE as a framework for collaborative action (partnerships) and a network of mutual learning, support and cooperation (South-South cooperation).
- 3) To review, assess and document progress and trends in literacy at national, regional and international levels by using a set of objectively verifiable indicators from the LIFE logical framework.
- 4) To identify challenges as well as inspiring innovations with the acceleration of literacy efforts and LIFE implementation.
- 5) To draw lessons from country experiences and formulate action points for the strategic orientation for the remaining five years of LIFE.
- 6) To generate inputs for the final evaluation of the UNLD and the *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)*
- 7) To discuss the results of the LIFE mid-term evaluation in the context of an international expert seminar on literacy at UIL in December 2011.

## Annex 2

### Countries participating in LIFE

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3*
<b>Africa (18)</b>	Mali Niger Nigeria Senegal	Benin, Burkina Faso Gambia Democratic Republic of Congo Ethiopia Mozambique	Central African Republic Chad Djibouti Eritrea Guinea Guinea-Bissau Madagascar Sierra Leone
<b>Arab States (6)</b>	Egypt Morocco Yemen Sudan	Mauritania	Iraq
<b>Asia &amp; the Pacific (9)</b>	Bangladesh Pakistan	Afghanistan China India Indonesia Papua New Guinea	Iran, Islamic Republic of Nepal
<b>Latin America &amp; the Caribbean (2)</b>	Haiti	Brazil	

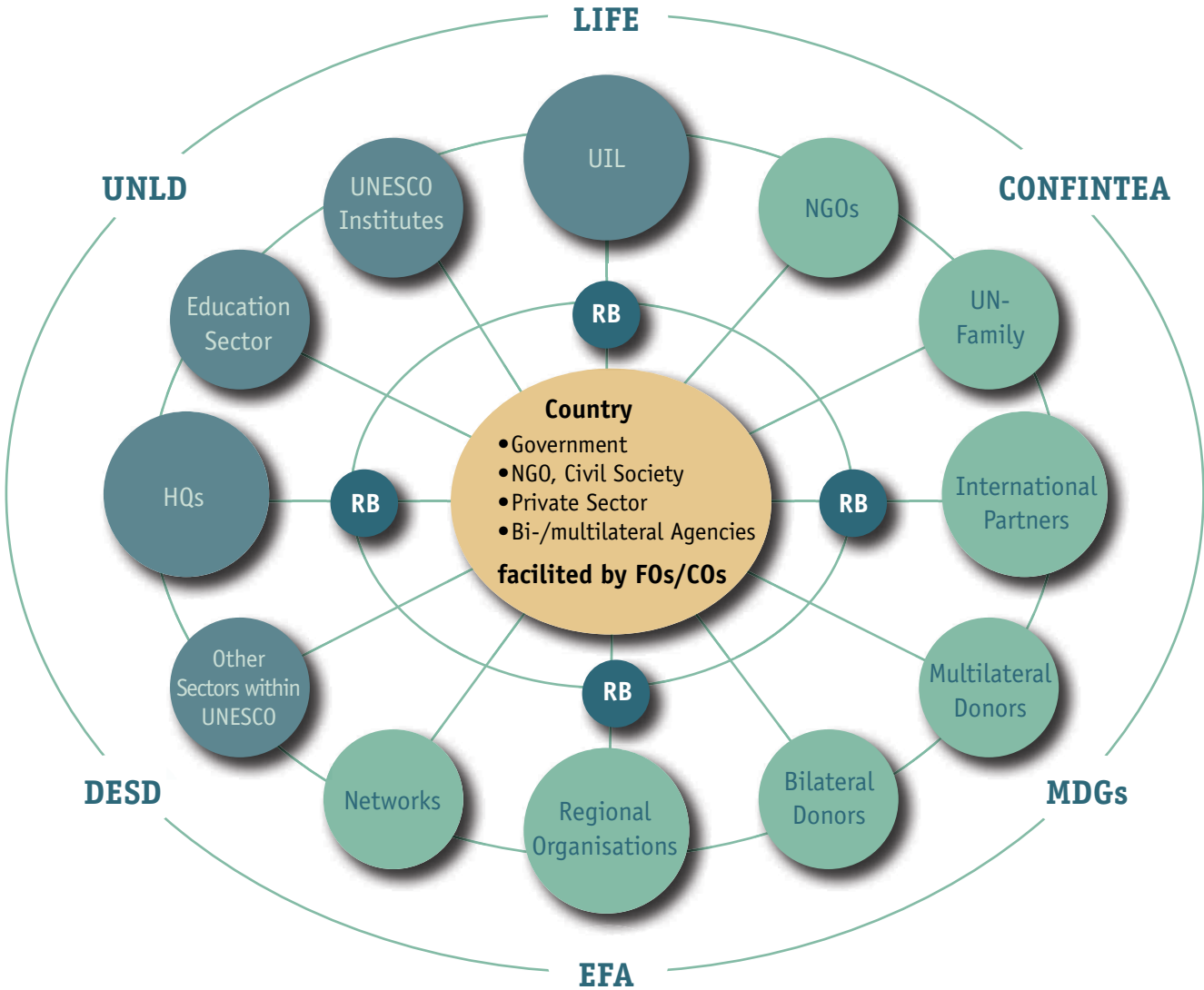
# Annex 3

## LIFE logframe matrix

**Overall Development Objective of LIFE: To empower people, especially rural women and girls, who have inadequate literacy skills and competencies.**

Immediate objectives	Expected results
To reinforce the national and international commitment to literacy through advocacy and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnerships developed with UN agencies to engage in joint planning with government through a shared agenda for basic education.</li> <li>Comprehensive advocacy campaign for LIFE designed and implemented through newspapers, radio and television.</li> <li>New partnerships to engage in the programme at national and international, public and private, traditional and non-traditional levels.</li> <li>Political lobbying at country and international level encouraging commitment to LIFE</li> <li>Additional funding for literacy at national and international levels</li> </ul>
To support the articulation of policies for sustainable literacy within sector-wide and national development frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education policies and systems reviewed and monitored in selected countries.</li> <li>Review of PRSP in particular to assess government commitment to EFA and literacy.</li> <li>National policies and programmes to integrate literacy into all appropriate development activities: joined-up thinking.</li> <li>Good practices in literacy policy analysed and disseminated to all target countries, with realistic implementation strategies.</li> <li>Mechanisms to support the participation of socially excluded groups within the education system.</li> <li>Cooperation with Government, UN, bilateral and multilateral agencies in joint planning and shared agendas for collaboration</li> </ul>
To strengthen national capacities for programme design, management and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country assessment of needs, including capacity to manage and technical support requirements.</li> <li>Scale and quality of literacy provision enhancing focus on women and girls.</li> <li>Appropriate programmes are designed and undertaken within targeted countries.</li> <li>Human resources are adequately developed and allocated to deliver programmes in a sustainable fashion.</li> <li>Programmes for multi-tasked teachers developed.</li> </ul>
To enhance countries' innovative initiatives and practices in providing literacy learning opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New projects formulated focusing on women and girls and implemented taking into consideration needs assessments, review findings and lessons learned from past practice.</li> <li>Non-formal education promoted through broad community based development programmes.</li> <li>Civil society literacy and EFA networks supported and established at country level to promote LIFE and South to South cooperation with literacy projects.</li> <li>Partnerships with the private sector developed to undertake interventions within the workplace.</li> <li>Examples of good practices identified and disseminated.</li> </ul>

# Annex 4 Partnership and coordination structure for LIFE



**HQ** - Headquarters  
**RB** - Regional Bureau  
**FO** - Field Office  
**CO** - Cluster Office



# Annex 5

## Situation analysis and needs assessment studies

REGION / Country	
<b>AFRICA</b>	
Benin	Situation Analysis 2009
Burkina Faso	-
Central African Republic	Situation Analysis 2009
Chad	Situation Analysis 2009
Democratic Republic of Congo	Situation Analysis 2010
Djibouti	Situation Analysis 2009
Eritrea	Situation Analysis 2008 (draft revised 2010/11)
Ethiopia	-
Gambia	-
Guinea	-
Guinea-Bissau	Situation analysis process has started
Madagascar	Needs assessment by UNDP 2010
Mali	Situation Analysis 2008
Mozambique	Situation Analysis 2008 (Report in English 2011)
Niger	Situation Analysis 2008
Nigeria	Needs Assessment 2006 (Workshop Report)
Senegal	Needs Assessment 2007
Sierra Leone	Situation Analysis 2011
<b>ARAB REGION</b>	
Egypt	Needs Assessment 2007
Iraq	National Consultation based on Participatory Rapid Appraisal and Literacy/ NFE Needs Assessment 2009/10
Mauritania	Situation Analysis (Bilan et Diagnostic) 2008
Morocco	Needs Assessment (Revue de la littérature) 2006
Sudan (without South Sudan)	Needs assessment study on literacy in multilingual contexts 2006/07
South Sudan	- Study on literacy in multilingual contexts 2006/07 - Needs Assessment 2009 (within LIFE project)
Yemen	LIFE situation analysis 2008
<b>ASIA &amp; the PACIFIC</b>	
Afghanistan	Situation Analysis 2008 (Needs Assessment Report 2009)
Bangladesh	- Baseline Survey of PLCEHD 2004 - Literacy Assessment Survey 2008 - NFE Mapping 2008
China	Situation Analysis 2009 (completed 2010)
India	Extensive in-house and external review and evaluation of previous literacy programmes under Saakshar Bharat
Indonesia	Situational Analysis of Literacy Education in Indonesia, 2005-2009
Iran, Islamic Republic of	Situation Analysis 2009/2010
Nepal	Situation Analysis 2008
Pakistan	Situation Analysis 2008 (needs assessment studies for literacy conducted in all four provinces and areas)
Papua New Guinea	Situation Analysis 2008
<b>LATIN AMERICA &amp; the CARIBBEAN</b>	
Brazil	Diagnostic of situation in youth and adult education prepared in the context of CONFITEA VI 2008
Haiti	Needs Assessment 2007



**UIL** UNESCO Institute  
for Lifelong Learning

*Lifelong Learning*