RECOMMITTING TO LITERACY TO FACE AFRICAN CHALLENGES

THE AFRICAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN SUPPORT OF GLOBAL LITERACY

10 – 12 SEPTEMBER 2007, BAMAKO, MALI
ORGANISERS OF THE CONFERENCE
UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), the UNESCO Bamako Cluster Office, the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Africa (BREDA), the UNESCO Division of United Nations Priorities (ED/UNP), the UNESCO Division of Basic Education (ED/BAS), the Government of Mali and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) Working Group on Non-formal Education.

PARTNERS
The Government of Norway, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

INFORMATION ON THE WEB
All conference documents:
www.bamakoliteracyconference.org

All Regional Conferences in Support of Global Literacy at UNESCO’s Literacy Portal:
www.unesco.org/education/literacy

Literacy for Empowerment Initiative:
www.unesco.org/UIL/life

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The African First Ladies arriving at the conference, with their host, Lobbo Traoré Touré, First lady of Mali (right)
The African Regional Conference in Support of Global Literacy was held from 10 to 12 September 2007 in Bamako, Mali. It was a high-level advocacy initiative designed to promote literacy at the national, regional and international levels, contribute towards achieving one of the major Education for All goals, and secure the foundation for lifelong learning. It is one of a series of six Regional Conferences worldwide, organized by UNESCO within the framework of Education for All (EFA), the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) and UNESCO’s Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE). The ultimate aims of the Regional Conferences in Support of Global Literacy are to assist countries in addressing their literacy challenges, to have a real and measurable impact on the lives of their populations, and ultimately to contribute towards sustainable human development and poverty eradication. The conferences build on and follow up the work started at the White House Conference on Global Literacy in September 2006, hosted by Mrs. Laura Bush, First Lady of the United States of America and UNESCO Honorary Ambassador for the UNLD.

The African Regional Conference was a unique event in Africa, as it was devoted entirely and exclusively to literacy and has for the first time mobilised both African Ministers and Directors in charge of literacy, and Ministers of Finance from the countries with the highest literacy needs. The Government of Mali hosted the conference under the leadership of His Excellency Amadou Toumani Touré, President of the Republic of Mali. Upon the invitation of the Malian First Lady, Mrs. Lobbo Traoré Touré, 21 African First Ladies joined the initiative to act as a powerful force in enlisting fresh support for literacy in their countries and across the continent. Together with the hosts, the Director-General of UNESCO, Koïchiro Matsuura, took a leading role in making the conference – which was attended by almost 400 representatives from governments, civil society, research institutes and bi- and multilateral organizations – a resounding success. Furthermore, to highlight the importance of literacy for Africa, UNESCO celebrated International Literacy Day 2007 and held the award ceremony for its International Literacy Prizes on the first day of the African Regional Conference.

In Africa, the literacy challenge is inseparable from problems such as poverty, the HIV pandemic, and conflicts. Access to literacy and education is a basic right, while literacy skills represent a meta-tool that enables people to access multiple other tools, acquire fundamental rights and amass a wide range of competencies, information and knowledge. Out of 44 sub-Saharan African countries, only 7 have an estimated adult literacy rate above 80 per cent. 18 countries have a literacy rate under 50 per cent or an illiterate population of more than 10 million. This lack of literacy skills stems from the fact that scant attention is paid to creating a literate environment and providing education for adults who have never been to school, out-of-school youth, and young people and adults who have received primary schooling but lost a high proportion if not all of their literacy skills. Literacy efforts are allocated only minimum resources and are rarely integrated into sector-wide education policies and intersectoral development agendas.

Consequently, it is of the utmost importance that we face African and international challenges by renewing our commitment to literacy education and learning. Non-formal education should be un-
derstood not only as complementary to formal education, but as part and parcel of an integrated and holistic system that encompasses diversified forms of learning. A renewed commitment calls for new policies and new approaches. Sustained global and country level leadership must be triggered in order to promote literacy for all, generate adequate investments and incorporate literacy into adult basic education programmes that form part of a sector-wide education strategy. In this regard, the key questions addressed by the African Regional Conference were: How can Member States and partners be mobilised to make a difference, create a new momentum for literacy, chart new policies, widen and deepen their literacy efforts, generate new resources and unlock peoples’ creative forces? What should UNESCO do to achieve a turning point? What action can be taken that can really change the face and fate of Africa?

The conference reviewed literacy challenges and new paths leading to democracy, good governance and sustainable development. Effective non-formal education and literacy programmes were recognised as agents of change that are responsive to social challenges, learner-centred and innovative in their non-standardised approach. The concept of learning and earning – literacy for empowerment and economic self-sufficiency – is a successful one, as it responds to adults’ immediate need to improve their economic situation. Literacy programmes related to health and HIV/AIDS make learners aware of information vital to improving their health. Multilingual literacy programmes help to bridge existing language barriers in multilingual contexts, transforming learners into skilful and creative language users in more than one language. Family literacy programmes improve children’s reading and writing competences, as well as their parents’ ability to provide them with guidance and support. New information and communication technologies contribute both to the creation of a literate environment and to the enhancement of literacy learning opportunities.

A general consensus on six key issues was attained. Firstly, there is a need to develop and implement holistic, diversified, cross-sectoral and integrated policies and strategies which embed quality literacy at the heart of a lifelong learning framework. Secondly, truly transformative language policies that recognise and respond to the vibrant role of African languages and enhance multilingual competences in the official and national languages are crucial, for which the support of governments and international agencies will be required. Thirdly, the education sectors must increase their non-formal education budget for literacy by at least three per cent if they are to respond to existing literacy challenges and make a lasting difference. Fourthly, strategies for the recognition and professionalisation of facilitators – that constantly upgrade their status, remuneration and qualifications, must be created, and supporting policies introduced. Fifthly, innovations at the three levels of policy, classroom/programme and the literate environment should ideally occur almost simultaneously. Sixthly, strong multi-partnership coalitions involving the state, civil society and the private sector are essential for achieving the goal of literacy for all.

The Conference succeeded in its aim of creating a new momentum for and renewing commitments to literacy education and learning. As a direct result of the conference, African Governments, civil society organizations, experts, bi- and multilateral organisations and UNESCO have all formulated concrete recommendations for action. African First Ladies from 21 countries have expressed their resolve to be part of the political leadership for literacy. African Ministers from 48 countries have determined that literacy should be integrated into all development programmes. They have also underscored the need for close and diverse intersectoral cooperation between all stakeholders, including the Regional Economic Communities, and collaboration with the African Union. Participating bi- and multilateral organizations have set themselves the objective of encouraging donor agencies to take an interest in and commit to literacy and non-formal education. Furthermore, they have agreed to support African countries in establishing holistic education systems as a precondition for lifelong learning. Experts from universities and research institutions will help to address the literacy challenges through research, training and outreach; and by collaborating more closely with policy-makers and practitioners, enable these to benefit from their work. In turn, civil society organizations will emphasise advocacy, collaborative efforts and experiential exchanges at the national, regional and international levels.
In their concluding remarks, the Prime Minister of Mali, His Excellency Ousmane Issoufi Maïga, and the Assistant Director General of the Africa Department of UNESCO, Noureini Tidjani Serpos, urged for the implementation of the “Bamako Call to Action” (see the back cover of this report) as part of the African Renaissance movement. According to the Malian Prime Minister, it is unrealistic to expect Africa – despite its rich natural resources – to develop when at least half of its population is currently unable to contribute towards and compete in a global economy that is driven by higher education and the tertiary sector. Any attempt to move forward with the “brakes pulled” will be damaging to the continent on the whole.

The momentum created by this conference and the hope expressed by UNESCO’s Africa Department ADG that the “fruits will surpass the promise of the flowers” will be maintained in many ways, including through UNESCO’s role as a partner for the implementation of the Second Decade of Education for Africa, the LIFE initiative, and the Sixth UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI).

In the wake of the conference, the recommendations found an immediate and very favourable resonance within Africa and beyond. The General Conference of UNESCO, for instance, adopted a resolution supporting the implementation of the “Bamako Call to Action”, and called for greater cooperation among Member States. Three countries have already laid the foundations to channel their renewed commitments. The new Malian cabinet features a Ministry of Literacy and National Languages as an integral part of their basic education provisions and the President has announced a sharp increase in the national literacy budget. In Burkina Faso, the President and First Lady have established a Task Force to implement concrete measures that follow up on the recommendation of the Bamako Conference. In Niger, the President and the First Lady were instrumental in rallying broad support for a broader programme of literacy, to which agencies like the African Development Bank and international organisations like UNDP have committed funding.

The initial actions and reactions in the wake of the African Regional Conference have thus been highly encouraging; yet we must take care not to lose the valuable momentum gained. Now is the time to harness this new force for change, respond with renewed vigour to the “Bamako Call to Action” and take literacy efforts in Africa further still.

Adama Ouane
Director, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
WATER WASHES, BUT IT IS KNOWLEDGE THAT LIBERATES...
Trends and innovations responding to African and international challenges were central to the conference. In his opening statement to the Ministerial Forum, the Minister of Education and Human Resources of Mauritius, His Excellency Mr Dharambeer Gokhool, pointed out that “the pertinent issues are to know whether the right things are being done, whether what is being done is effective and what the ways forward could be”. The Ministerial Forum and panels on effective practices acted as a platform for Ministers and Directors of education, literacy, language and finance to raise concerns, challenges, questions, critiques or issues with regard to the promotion of quality literacy education and literate environments in their respective countries. In response, these Ministers and Directors were presented with evidence highlighting the vital role of literacy and the priority it must be allocated. As the African proverb of the title suggests, although we may have the material resources to survive, we can only overcome challenges once we can acquire and share relevant knowledge and skills.

The conference participants strongly supported the directions described and the recommendations made by the keynote speaker, Mamadou Ndoye, Executive Secretary of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa. Consequently, it was generally agreed that there was a need for a diversified, integrated and holistic approach to education that takes into account the diversity of learners and their individual circumstances, and thus helps forge a path to sustainable development. There is a great deal of experience to draw upon and a wide range of outstanding initiatives to assist us in choosing this path. Together, these have shaped a major paradigm shift in the field of teaching and learning – a shift led by a new vision that no longer views education and training merely as an end in itself. Such an approach has proven to be a precondition for empowerment, capacity and democracy building, as well as the creation of literate societies. Intersectoral approaches and collaborative arrangements have been set up accordingly. If the literacy drive is to be renewed to face and resolve African and international challenges while enhancing Africa’s endogenous potential, all sectors of society must be mobilized.

Mamadou Ndoye identified low funding and inappropriate language policies as the two major obstacles to progress. The former exacerbates social inequalities because the “geography of illiteracy coincides with that of poverty while atrophying the transformative capacities of the popular economy in both urban and rural areas”. The latter stands in the way of transformative language and education policies. Thus, the keynote speaker urged “African states to understand that transformative [multilingual] language policies are a necessary condition if universal knowledge and scientific and technical progress are to penetrate broadly and deeply into African societies, in order to develop the endogenous potential for reception, adaptation, ownership and technological innovation which triggers the virtuous circle of education and development”.

Stakeholders’ demands for capacity building must be met to enable the reforms needed to implement innovative, effective literacy programmes and design effective holistic, integrated and diversified education policies for lifelong and life-wide learning. The strongest of these demands

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1 From the opening address by H.E. Amadou Toumani Touré, President of the Republic of Mali.
relate to: (i) qualitative and quantitative research on assessing, monitoring and evaluating literacy requirements and achievements, (ii) continuous training for facilitators, (iii) costs and funding issues, and (iv) ways and means of understanding and developing diversified, integrated and holistic education sectors that foster intersectoral cooperation and enable the development of national lifelong learning frameworks.

The following sections of this report summarise the discussions on the aforementioned issues with a view to setting in motion (1) policy and institutional development, and (2) innovative and effective programme delivery on a large scale. The key concerns with regard to policy and institutional development centred on: finding reforms that would lead to a diversified and holistic education sector capable of intersectoral collaboration; adapting costing and financing approaches to suit this form of the education sector; and refining existing means of assessment, evaluation and monitoring accordingly. The main issues with regard to innovative and effective programme delivery focused on raising awareness of literacy and non-formal education as a strong and viable response to societal needs and demands. Special attention will be given to the themes that were selected for the conference, namely: language in literacy and basic education; health; mother-child and intergenerational learning; economic self-sufficiency and empowerment; and information and communication technologies.
1. POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

African governments have made significant progress by adopting policies and strategies designed to achieve the aims set out in various international frameworks (e.g. the Education for All objectives and the Millennium Development Goals). However, national strategies often pay only scant attention to adult literacy and non-formal education, despite the fact that non-formal education responds to those needs that the formal education system leaves unfulfilled and offers educational programmes relevant to a wide range of target groups. In addition to national strategies, regional frameworks represent a further means of supporting the implementation of internationally defined goals. Hence, the Second Decade of Education for Africa could broaden its current focus on formal and higher education to address the need and demand for non-formal education and alternative modalities of learning. Joint efforts could strengthen the links between formal and non-formal education, enable them to complement one another more effectively, and improve the integration of non-formal education into national frameworks.

Three major demands were made with regard to policy development: firstly that the overall concept and vision for the education sector be adapted to encompass lifelong and life-wide learning; secondly, that the way in which assessment, evaluation and monitoring are carried out be reviewed; and thirdly, that the costing and financing approach be revised. The respective lessons learned and ways forward are summarised below.

► Way forward: Governments and international agencies shall take the lead in encouraging innovations.

DEVELOPING A DIVERSIFIED, INTEGRATED AND HOLISTIC EDUCATION SECTOR

A diversified approach is also a pluralistic one, i.e. it views literacy in all its forms, takes into account all the languages of communication it entails and covers all the methods used to teach and learn related skills. Hence, literacy is seen as an integral part of a lifelong learning process in all social domains requiring literacy competencies. An integrated and holistic education system combines, recognises and validates all forms of education and learning across all domains of life. Such a system supports the emergence and development of information and knowledge societies. To do this, it must necessarily start by building learning societies. Globally speaking, the establishment of lifelong learning frameworks is a new trend and one that is currently being adopted in a number of African countries.

Literacy and basic education are the foundation that enables us to access, participate in, make use of and shape the contemporary education and learning opportunities that nourish literate communities and societies. Non-formal literacy and basic education provisions must be valued equally and implemented in the same way as formal literacy and primary/basic education provisions. The Ministers furthermore stated that the reform must improve the performance of the formal education system. Koranic schools, for example, need to be modernised and must adapt their curriculum to ensure that literacy is integrated into their methodological programme. The lessons learned and effective practices from literacy teaching and learning in the area of non-formal education are a good resource in this regard.

► Way forward: When conceiving lifelong learning frameworks, governments shall build on effective practices and lessons learned in the areas of literacy and non-formal education, e.g. with regard to learners’ and facilitators’ needs and demands. Research and broad national and
international consultation processes can make valuable contributions to the process for informed decision-making.

- **Way forward:** Reformed Koranic schools and improved non-formal education approaches shall be used as venues for literacy and basic education.

The pluralistic view of literacy embraces new ways of creating synergies between the different forms of learning and favours broader partnerships for the mobilisation of resources. Creating synergies between different sectors – such as education and agriculture – and between different educational sub-sectors – such as primary education and non-formal education – have proven to have a very positive impact on learners and their environment.

- **Way forward:** The positive impacts of literacy on social and economic well-being shall be communicated to wider society in order to motivate more people to invest in learning (see example in the box, below).

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### Example showing the benefits of non-formal literacy programmes:

**THE TESTIMONIES BY MS FATOUMATA SY (MALI) AND MS DJEYNABA BOUBOU SOW (SENEGAL)**

His Excellency Mr Amadou Toumani Touré, President of the Republic of Mali, expressed his admiration for Ms Sy from Mali and Ms Sow from Senegal, both of whom have made very good use of the knowledge they have gained from non-formal literacy programmes. They show that change is possible if the individual is determined and has the chance to overcome illiteracy and poverty.

Becoming literate has been beneficial for their personal and professional well-being. Both women come from rural and poor social settings. Ms Sy, a former cleaning lady, has become a literacy facilitator and teacher of civic rights thanks to education offered by the Institute for Popular Education (Mali). Ms Sow has become literate through non-formal literacy classes provided by the organization Associates in Research and Education for Development (Senegal). She is now a strong leader in her local community, a teacher of literacy classes and a writer. Her first book is written in Pulaar and is about raising girls in her culture. In 2006, she was invited to the Frankfurt Book Fair in Germany, one of the largest book fairs in the world.

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The development of inter-sectorally linked, integrated, diversified and holistic education sectors that support lifelong and life-wide learning is a new trend in Africa. There is thus a demand for capacity building and exchange at all levels to enable a clearer understanding of the concept and to facilitate its transfer to practice.

- **Way forward:** Ministers shall act upon their consensus that sustained country-level leadership is the key both to developing viable literacy policies and priorities and to addressing the issue of large illiterate populations. They shall work to support the development of lifelong learning attitudes and infrastructures that recognise and validate learning (e.g. national qualification frameworks).

Several African countries are working on national lifelong learning frameworks. As there can be no “one size fits all” approach, national visions for learning societies, policies and strategies must be adapted to suit different countries. This is exemplified by the results of two background studies from Morocco and Brazil on the impact of literacy programmes. The Brazilian study shows that such programmes have a clear and positive economic impact on learners’ lives. Being literate increases their chances to access the labour market and earn better salaries. In Morocco, the employment market is structured in such a way that jobs either require no educational qualifications, or they require a university degree. This discourages workers from taking basic...
education courses, as basic qualifications will not increase their chances of advancement. Here, new or adjusted labour market policies are needed to diversify job and qualification profiles and incite employers to acknowledge their employees’ learning achievements.

**Way forward:** The experiences of other countries shall be drawn upon in order to accompany and stimulate reform processes. Furthermore, these processes shall be adapted to suit the circumstances of each individual country.

**REVIEWING THE COSTING AND FINANCING OF LITERACY IN THE 21st CENTURY**

One of the major issues debated during the conference was how to review the costing and financing of literacy. As the Director-General of UNESCO emphasised, African countries have been successful in placing formal education at the heart of their budgets and goals. Some countries have seen a 10 per cent rise in their literacy rates since 1990. The enrolment of girls in primary education has increased considerably in countries such as Benin, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea and Equatorial Guinea. In 2005, several countries spent 20 per cent of their budget on education, and, in the case of Lesotho and Kenya, in some cases even 30 per cent. Benin, Cameroon, Madagascar, Malawi and Zambia raised their education expenditure by 30 per cent. Nevertheless, most countries continue to allocate less than one per cent of their educational budgets to literacy. This is not sufficient; in order to contribute effectively to literacy and non-formal education efforts, an allocation of at least three per cent is required. Consequently, the Director-General requested that the donor community in particular increase its contributions to basic education. In the period between 2000 and 2005, donor contributions to basic education had decreased from 8.8 per cent to just 5.1 per cent of the total financial aid provided – and the sum total actually spent on literacy was minimal.

**Way forward:** Measures shall be developed to strengthen the capacities of ministries in charge of literacy and non-formal education so that they can carry out successful cost analyses and develop appropriate financing strategies.

Three issues emerged from the exchange on costing and financing experiences: firstly, there is a need to verify that optimal use is being made of the available resources; secondly, the capacities of the ministries in charge of literacy and non-formal education must be strengthened if their cost analyses and financing strategies are to succeed; and thirdly, the ministries require accurate data on which to base their analyses and strategies.

**Way forward:**: The experiences of other countries shall be drawn upon in order to accompany and stimulate reform processes. Furthermore, these processes shall be adapted to suit the circumstances of each individual country.

To date, little research has centred on cost calculations and sources of funding. Data on costs are largely absent from widely-available reports or evaluations of literacy programmes. Yet a lack of cost-related data hinders the development of financing strategies because it is only through accurate cost analyses that financial needs and gaps can be identified.

**Way forward:**: The experiences of other countries shall be drawn upon in order to accompany and stimulate reform processes. Furthermore, these processes shall be adapted to suit the circumstances of each individual country.

Local research institutions’ capacities in data collection and analysis shall be enhanced.
For the purpose of this conference, three in-depth studies on costing and financing were conducted. The aim of these studies was to gain a clearer insight into the approaches used and gather evidence to justify and shape related policies. In order to estimate costs at a national level, Jan van Ravens and Carlos Aggio developed an analytical framework and interactive spreadsheets to be used as a tool to monitor the number of adults in need of basic literacy. Roy Carr-Hill and Fiona Roberts analysed the costs and budgeting frameworks of nine successful literacy programmes run by government ministries and international or national non-governmental organizations, with the aim of providing broad recommendations on how to calculate programme costs. Amadou Wade Diagne analysed and compared different ways of costing and financing literacy programmes in Senegal in order to make recommendations on how to provide quality literacy education without exceeding the country’s capacities.

To gain a realistic picture of the policy challenges to be addressed, national-level costing must take into account a number of trends in adult literacy policy, primary education, demography, the literate environment and migration.

With regard to costing literacy programmes there is still no clear understanding as to how the costing and outcomes of specific literacy programmes vary over their respective lifetimes. The unit costs of literacy programmes vary widely, as is reflected in their diverse modalities, objectives, target audiences, approaches and country contexts. For the literacy programmes analysed, the minimum cost of making an adult literate is in the region of USD70–100. Studies indicate that the most important factor in determining the unit cost of a programme is not the remuneration of facilitators but central management and overhead costs. This is perhaps unsurprising in view of the fact that the latter include the costs of constructing, developing and managing institutions that ensure that educational programmes can be offered and broadened on a continuous basis.

In the few programme budgets that itemise development costs, these account for a large proportion of the total costs. Although recurring development costs may be substantial, they are also important, as they respond to the specialised nature of non-formal education programmes.

**Way forward:** In order to better understand what constitutes an acceptable range of unit costs, countries shall take steps to draw up an inventory of good literacy programmes that are already in place or in the process of being developed. This list shall subsequently serve as a basis to decide whether a costing framework should be imposed, or to propose a specific range of unit costs.

**Way forward:** Following a number of suggestions from researchers, a general agreement is needed with regard to the components that should be taken into account when costing an adult literacy programme in a given country. By harmonising monitoring and reporting practices, and rationalising accounting practices, each programme will be able to articulate its objectives and intended outcomes clearly, and stipulate how each of these will be monitored.

Many countries have already established innovative financing approaches, generating a wealth of experiences that can be shared with other countries. The trend is towards multi-stakeholder funding and intersectoral cooperation. Brazil, for example, has adopted a multi-partnership approach that brings together federal and municipal governments, private companies, civil society organizations, business foundations, and establishments of higher learning; Burkina Faso has set up a national fund; and Uganda’s governmental literacy programme is mainly financed by the Poverty Action Fund. Many governments have ventured into intersectoral cooperations, e.g. by working with ministries of agriculture and fisheries. Burkina Faso has initiated a fundraising and lobbying campaign that integrates all of the social sectors. Interesting strategies from India include levying a 2 per cent tax on corporate sector profits and using the proceeds to fund education, and reducing electricity costs by installing solar panels. Furthermore, there were indications that human resources – and, by extension, their costs – could feasibly
be shared across the lifelong learning system as a whole, if, for example, teachers and trainers were professionally trained to work in all areas of lifelong learning.

- **Way forward:** Now that the efficacy of allowing a range of domestic, foreign, public and private partners to share responsibility for funding literacy efforts has been proven, it is time to consider increasing the role of the private sector in future. Partnerships and coalitions shall be forged and innovative models for financing the venture shall be developed.

- **Way forward:** South-South exchanges on costing and financing strategies shall be reinforced.

### REFINING ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION AND MONITORING MEASURES

To develop new policies and strategies, more accurate data is needed on the competences and learning outcomes achieved through literacy programmes offered in the different languages of the population. Direct tests, evaluations and impact research provide a differentiated means of assessing the current literacy competencies and inform decision-makers of the priority areas in need of additional investment. Thus, there is a demand for appropriate, locally relevant instruments to measure the progress and impact of literacy programmes, and obtain results that can be used to advocate for an increased commitment to literacy and adult education and learning.

- **Way forward:** As governments inside and outside Africa struggle to obtain appropriate quantitative and qualitative literacy data, there is a need to generate such data by establishing strong, intersectoral research teams – underpinned by a strong political will – to investigate adults’ level of literacy skills and the impact of literacy programmes.

The conference offered the opportunity to share experiences on a number of recent assessment, monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking measures, namely: the UNESCO Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP); the Kenya National Adult Literacy Survey (KNAL); impact research in Brazil and Morocco; and the international Benchmarking Initiative. KNAL drew on Kenya’s experiences as a member of LAMP since 2004 and the results of the survey carried out by the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ). The Kenyan government appreciated these initiatives as they gave a much clearer picture of the scale of the challenges that needed to be addressed.

The KNAL survey enabled the literacy rate in Kenya to be determined with greater precision than ever before. It turned out to be lower when direct assessments based on tests (61 per cent) were used in place of indirect assessments based on individuals’ self-evaluation or number of years of schooling (83 per cent). The 2006 EFA Global Monitoring Report on literacy identifies the same bias in other countries, particularly those in which educational attainment is low and school quality is lacking.

KNAL differentiates between five levels of literacy. According to the results of the survey, only 29.6 per cent of adults (15 years +) succeeded in mastering the required literacy skills, while 61.5 per cent attained the minimum level of competence. It was found that many relapsed into illiteracy after having completed primary school (30 per cent). It should be noted that the literacy and numeracy rates were much lower in rural than in urban areas.

The survey clearly demonstrated that low levels of literacy correlate with poverty and low school attendance. The director of the Kenyan Department of Adult Education pointed out that over 40 per cent of adult women in Kenya are illiterate. At the same time, women constitute 75 per cent of the agricultural labour force. Hence, a significant proportion of this labour force must be illiterate. Given the clear link between literacy skills and improved productivity, it is clear that the labour force – particularly in rural areas – is in need of educational support.
Way forward: The experience of Kenya raised conference participants’ awareness of the potential of literacy surveys, as a result of which a number of countries shall consider implementing in-depth capacity-building measures and allocating funds to conduct similar surveys.

Impact research suggests that national job market structures determine to a high degree the economic impact that the skills acquired in a literacy programme will have on an individual. For this conference, a first attempt was made to analyse the impact of literacy programmes in Brazil and Morocco by interpreting data from household surveys and censuses, i.e. conventional means of measuring literacy. In Brazil, adult literacy programmes were shown to have a positive and statistically significant impact on increasing child education (54.4 per cent), reducing child labour (36.1 per cent) and increasing access to the labour market (50 per cent). The estimated impacts of programmes comparable in size and scope to Brazil Alfabetizado were used to simulate the social return of literacy, which was found to be over 14 per cent. The Moroccan labour market and employment system differ structurally from their Brazilian counterparts. Morocco’s labour market offers jobs designed either for non-qualified workers who have received no education or for university graduates. The study suggests that the current lack of diversity of job profiles hinders the development of literacy skills because non-qualified learners and their employers experience no economic benefit in attending literacy courses.

Way forward: In view of the need for more appropriate, refined and illuminating national literacy data, and in view of the fact that international and comparative qualitative and quantitative studies increase the understanding of learning and its impact in different societal environments, it is recommended that national and collaborative international studies be used to evaluate the quality, learning outcomes and impacts of learning through literacy programmes.

For the purpose of this conference, Sonja Fagerberg-Diallo conducted an in-depth study on pedagogical innovations in literacy programmes. A number of effective literacy programmes were invited to share their experiences. The study identified several trends with regard to the specific challenges facing literacy programmes in the non-formal education sector and the particular strengths that such programmes must demonstrate. These were confirmed and further elaborated in the course of the discussions held during the conference. This section provides a synthesis of the findings and recommendations on the innovative aspects and features of effective programme delivery and ways forward to reaching wider is provided in this section.

A particular strength of the multi-partner, non-standardised non-formal education sector is that the constant need for innovation in education can be realised much faster than in the standardised, formal education sector. Major pedagogical innovations in literacy programmes across Africa have been developed in response to various challenges such as conflict resolution and prevention, HIV and AIDS mitigation and prevention, democratisation, decentralisation, gender mainstreaming, cultural diversity, poverty reduction and other economic issues.

Good quality programmes are learner-centred, i.e. neither curriculum-centric nor standardised, which allows them to respond to diversity in terms of language, age, learning styles, timing, and to access “hard-to-reach” populations (e.g. mobile populations, people with disabilities, people with HIV and AIDS). Hence, the programme adapts to the learner and not vice versa, enabling diversity to become a source of inspiration rather than a barrier. In such programmes, literacy teaching is embedded in a social context and takes individual and community interests
2. EXPANDING INNOVATIVE AND EFFECTIVE PROGRAMME DELIVERY

Recognising and building on learners’ existing knowledge is an important means of anchoring and valuing new knowledge. In non-formal education, this approach is reflected at all programme levels through participatory processes that are applied both to organisational and managerial matters and to the methods used in the classroom. For adolescent and adult learners, it is the use and transfer of acquired knowledge to their everyday lives that matters. The literacy practices that appeal to this heterogeneous group of learners are very diverse. Therefore, the learning opportunities offered to them must be equally diverse. When adults take part in programmes that they see as relevant and beneficial, they will automatically value the potential of adult education for improving their living conditions and well-being.

Way forward: Tailor-made programmes for diverse target groups shall be scaled up, not primarily by increasing the number of learners, but by creating new spaces for negotiation and exchange that reflect and promote the participatory nature of the sector. Innovations shall be introduced simultaneously at three levels: policy, the classroom and the literate environment.

Way forward: Links shall be established between non-formal and formal education by exploring the option of additive multilingual education and learning that responds to linguistic diversity and builds bridges for social cohesion.

Way forward: In collaboration with specialised institutions, a means of recognising and validating learners’ achievements in non-formal education shall be developed based on techniques of self-evaluation rather than standardised tests.

The competence of facilitators is one of the key components of quality learning. These are the people who attract, train and retain learners. It is regrettable that unfavourable working conditions force many experienced facilitators to seek better employment opportunities elsewhere. Their task is highly complex, as good programmes need to stimulate learners, use a wide range of participatory methods, be relevant to the lives of the learners and respond to multilingual contexts by allowing learners to choose both their language of instruction and the languages that are taught as subjects. It is crucial that all teachers and facilitators be provided with initial and continuing training in literacy, numeracy and language acquisition methodologies for first and second language teaching.

Way forward: Conference participants agreed that concerted and sustained efforts shall be made to improve facilitators’ working conditions and training, thereby confirming the Global Campaign for Education’s International Benchmarking Initiative, which contains two benchmarks calling for facilitators to be provided with appropriate remuneration, training and networking opportunities that will encourage them to remain in the profession.

For a literate environment to develop and for learner’s various needs to be met, materials must be supplied on a wide range of topics and in a variety of languages. It is evident that a standard literacy class limited to 300 hours of teaching at most will not enable participants to become fluent readers and writers. Some sources estimate that such fluency requires around 900 contact hours of intense and relevant interaction and a great deal of practice. It is obvious that this fluency is easier to achieve if the participants enjoy learning to read and write and some programmes have demonstrated that literature, especially fiction written in African languages, helps encourage learners to read for pleasure.
Way forward: Action shall be taken to create literate environments and reflect learners’ interests and needs by developing and using African languages (e.g. by carrying out linguistic studies, training editors in African languages, producing African-language keyboards, etc.). To achieve this, spaces shall be established in which the various actors may negotiate and budgetary allocations earmarked to finance the publication of books in African languages. To ensure that learners maintain the literacy skills they have acquired, these shall include further reading materials (fiction and non-fiction) and continuing learning opportunities.

LANGUAGE IN LITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION

A range of innovative and effective practices have already been established and are making a real difference to learners’ lives. Effective programmes have improved the understanding of adult literacy and non-formal education and their potential for improving people’s living conditions and reducing poverty. These programmes lay the foundations for and are conducive to lifelong learning and the development of learning communities and societies. As a consequence, these programmes have received policy recognition and increased financial support.

The literacy programmes presented during the conference were selected according to the following criteria: (i) their impact on learners; (ii) the quality of the outputs; (iii) innovative methods used; (iv) the number of participants and vulnerable groups included; (v) the sustainability of the programme and its results; and (vi) evaluative data from independent sources. The programmes responded innovatively and effectively to issues of language use, health, intergenerational learning, economic self-sufficiency and empowerment, and information and communication technologies (ICTs). This section is not designed to provide details of the individual programmes; it’s aim is to offer a synthesis of the valuable lessons learned that could be derived from the discussions during the conference and the educational programmes that were presented (for names see the conference programme in the appendix). Detailed descriptions of the selected literacy programmes can be found in the brochure “Making a Difference: Effective Practices in Literacy in Africa” which can be downloaded in electronic form at www.unesco.orgUIL and http://www.unesco.org/UIL/nesico/bamako/bamako.htm or requested in print form from the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

This conference centred on the themes of language and health, and the role of language in literacy and basic education in particular was selected as a theme of special interest to the African region as a whole. The conference was also included in the wider range of events marking the Year of African Languages 2007. The first day of the conference celebrated UNESCO International Literacy Day 2007 and its motto, “Literacy as a key to good health and well-being”, hosting the awards ceremony for the winners of the 2007 UNESCO International Literacy Prizes.

3. LESSONS LEARNED FROM INNOVATIVE AND EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMES

Evidence from research and practice demonstrates that using African languages and multilingual approaches in programmes of education is a highly efficient means of 1) ensuring that learners acquire strong cognitive literacy and livelihood skills both in their mother tongue(s) and in non-native languages; 2) creating a literate environment; 3) promoting social justice; and 4) supporting sustainable development. Literacy programmes focus on imparting the skills needed not only to become literate, but also to teach and learn different languages.

The effective practices presented during the conferences highlighted the internal and external efficiency of mother tongue-based additive bilingual education for all age groups. Furthermore, they provided indications as to how to select a language of instruction, while underscoring the potential of literacy and publishing in African languages for the creation of a literate environment, and the usefulness of research for effective literacy teaching and learning.

Even today, building on multilingual social contexts and linguistic competences remains a challenge for African governments. Hence, national education systems do not yet adequately reflect, respond to or expand multilingual environments. There is

In the additive bilingual education model, the mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction for no less than 50% of the “school day”/subject. It is common for Africans to have more than one mother tongue, as families and communities often speak a variety of languages. The additive education approach ensures that tuition is provided in one of these first languages.
still a wide communication gap between the Francophone, Anglophone, Lusophone and Hispanophone elites and the majority of the population that communicates in African languages. Appreciation was expressed for the effective measures taken by the African Union to promote African languages through literacy programmes and education during the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006 – 2015). Furthermore, the creation of the Academy for African Languages, the decision to declare 2006 the Year of African Languages and the subsequent move to extend the latter through 2007 clearly signal that there is a strong commitment at the highest level to addressing the language issue.

Way forward: African governments are urged to make African languages national working languages that are equal in status to the languages inherited from colonial times.

Numerous studies and the results of recent research in South Africa and Burkina Faso that were presented at the conference all indicate that mother tongue and additive bilingual education increases learner’s literacy skills and academic achievement in all languages while at the same time reducing the drop-out rate. Furthermore, the bilingual education centres in Burkina Faso have demonstrated that their programmes fostered cognitive skills so effectively that when learners migrated to a different linguistic area, they were better equipped to learn the new language of instruction than students who learned conventionally through an unfamiliar language of instruction.

Social negotiation is one effective means of selecting the language of instruction and the languages to be acquired through multilingual programmes. Communities and parents associations identify the most widely spoken and understood language in the community, and approve its use as a language of instruction. This language enables learners to develop into valuable community resources, unlike the “official language only” approach, which effectively alienates learners from their local communities, both linguistically and culturally. It is furthermore beneficial and productive to ensure that researchers, policymakers, communities, parents and educators support one another and engage in ongoing dialogue as the language of instruction is selected and implemented.

African languages have long been undervalued, which has affected the literate environment in that very little has been published in most of these languages. Many have argued that African languages cannot be used for complex subjects such as science and technology; however, there are linguistic communities – for example the Fulani or the Kiswahili speech communities – whose languages have evolved to encompass all forms of written communication. This proves that African languages can be used not only to produce basic and functional literacy materials, but also to publish highly complex materials on issues of importance to the wider community. Publications of this nature can be used nationally when translated into related dialects, other African languages, or international languages.

Way forward: Citizens’ competences in a variety of languages shall be an important feature of diversified, integrated and holistic education systems and literate environments in African countries.

Way forward: Multilingual/bilingual education experts call upon policy-makers to draw on effective, multilingual literacy programmes in order to revise the education system currently in place in their respective countries. The latter shall be improved continuously through monitoring and evaluation, and by integrating the need for multilingual/bilingual education at the macro planning level. The choice of a multilingual/bilingual model and a language of instruction shall be guided by the population’s specific development needs.

Way forward: The potential of cross-border languages shall be harnessed to benefit the publishing sector, facilitate cross-border education, and promote peace, cultural exchange and good neighbourly relations among African countries.

LITERACY AND HEALTH

The effective practices presented during the conference highlighted that literacy and health are both the tools and the products of learning and development. Good health is a prerequisite for well-being, for learning and for healthy cognitive and language development. Poor health has a serious social and economic impact, not only on the affected individual but on the wider community, and can make it impossible to run local institutions reliably and effectively.
While effective literacy programmes designed to promote health and prevent and mitigate HIV/AIDS provide knowledge and skills, they also help to shape attitudes and boost self-awareness, thus helping learners to assume responsibility for their own, health-related decisions. Additionally, community members who learn to recognise, prevent and treat illnesses can act as a health-care resource for other community members.

Gender relations play an important role, e.g. in preventing or reducing the number of cases of HIV/AIDS or female circumcision. In many parts of Africa, sex and HIV/AIDS are still taboo topics. Participatory and interactive learning approaches are an effective means of breaking the silence surrounding sex, sexuality and HIV. Initially, health programmes focused on women as the traditional caregivers and targets of sexual violence and genital mutilation. However, women’s social roles are tightly interlinked with men’s social roles and programmes are now taking this into account in order to include men as well.

**Way forward:** Strategies shall be developed to involve men and women equally in health-related literacy programmes.

Many health-related literacy initiatives are embedded in programmes that address a variety of issues (e.g. gender, relationships, rights, citizenship, work and environmental degradation), because all of these issues are interrelated. Preventing and mitigating diseases affects an individual’s overall lifestyle and social environment. Many literacy and health programmes that adopt a similarly holistic approach work together with multiple partners, such as community committees, health associations and schools. When an intersectoral approach is adopted, it is quite possible that non-education institutions assume responsibility for literacy programmes. In a number of countries, for example, intergenerational literacy projects are being carried out in health facilities by doctors and nurses who provide vulnerable parents living in (near) poverty with literacy guidance and reading materials designed to raise the awareness and benefit their children. Health institutions can also correct poor eyesight, which prevents many children and adults from participating effectively in literacy classes.

**Way forward:** More innovative, intersectoral approaches shall be developed to reach vulnerable, hard-to-reach groups in both urban and rural areas.

**Way forward:** It is strongly recommended that free eye tests and spectacles be made available.

Family literacy and intergenerational learning programmes emphasise and support the role played by families and caregivers in improving the literacy skills of children and adults. Intergenerational learning is rooted in Africa, where a variety of family literacy approaches are practised. The effective practices presented during the conferences highlighted the immediate impact of intergenerational education on and the interdependencies between the learning careers of parents/caregivers and children.

The intergenerational transfer of language and literacy from parents to children can break the cycle of educational failure. Lower school drop-out rates and improved school performance were observed after the intervention of family literacy programmes. Children who receive support from their parents do better in school, while parents who see their children doing well are motivated to continue supporting them.

Family literacy programmes encourage adults and children to become lifelong learners – which is vital if they are to maintain and expand their literacy skills. Activities that make use of literacy outside the classroom such as pen pal exchanges, keeping journals with children and writing newsletter contributions are important because they motivate learners to use their reading and writing skills and to derive pleasure and meaning from linking these skills to their everyday lives. Transforming literacy into a shared and pleasurable activity is one of the keys to sustainable literacy learning. Children love reading when the parents whom they love read with them. Family literacy programmes contribute to the development of a critical mass of people who are literate and actively involved in creating a literate environment.

Family literacy programmes not only enhance literacy skills, they also have wider effects such as increasing parents’ ability
3. LESSONS LEARNED FROM INNOVATIVE AND EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMES

to support their children in school, boosting their self-confidence as parents and individuals, and encouraging them to enrol in further education after the programme comes to an end. Furthermore, family literacy programmes have a positive influence on school culture and family relationships, with programme managers noting that instances of domestic violence towards girls subsequently decreased, while family and community relations grew stronger.

Effective programmes provide initial and ongoing teacher training, and monitor the programme to ensure that it is continually improved. Furthermore, they reinforce the literate environment, e.g. by establishing community libraries, developing reading materials locally and creating sustainable learners’ groups or literacy centres.

► Way forward: Family literacy and intergenerational learning are important for the development of literate and learning societies and shall thus be mainstreamed.

LITERACY FOR ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND EMPOWERMENT

Woodwork training

Literacy programmes for economic self-sufficiency and empowerment are designed primarily to support adolescents and adults from poor areas which either offer few educational opportunities or suffer from a low educational take-up rate. Learning programmes of this type boost the economic development of individuals, their social environments and, ultimately, their countries. In countries such as Ethiopia, which lacks qualified professionals, the national labour market will immediately absorb trained individuals.

The effective practices presented during the conferences highlighted the status of literacy training within vocational or professional development programmes that have been adapted to suit local economic demands. These programmes address people with different qualification levels and do more than teach basic literacy skills. They offer learning opportunities that aim to help individuals re-enter the formal education system or opt for further vocational training. Literacy and economic self-sufficiency empower individuals, encouraging them to establish self-employment initiatives – which in turn create new employment opportunities – and making it easier to obtain loans to support and enhance income-generating activities.

Effective programmes offer needs-based and demand-driven entrepreneurial and vocational training that builds literacy and numeracy competencies. Thus, the subjects they cover and the skills they foster respond to current learner and market demands. To ensure that these skills are expanded and post-literacy provisions are established, many countries are constructing learning and community centres that allow users to access information, use advisory services and enrol courses of education.

If poor and illiterate learners are to remain motivated to learn, they must be able to see that their learning efforts have immediate effects. The further the learners’ livelihood and entrepreneurial skills advance, the more useful literacy will become to them, e.g. for the purposes of accounting or applying for microloans. Literacy skills are hence gradually introduced so that learners can use them in administrative or financial contexts.

Some programmes have become agents of change for gender roles in the economic sector. Programmatic components designed to develop learners’ literacy and income generating skills have transformed women and men’s attitudes towards the idea of women taking up certain technical and traditionally male-dominated professions.

The trend towards adopting a multi-sectoral approach that promotes economic self-sufficiency and empowerment is a new and beneficial one. This approach links learning with practice, for example by involving institutions from the economic sector in training programmes, or by interconnecting social, economic and cultural development. Furthermore, this approach mainstreams training from the outset by anchoring it in the relevant national institutions. Hence, a multi-sectoral approach both establishes the basis for quality education and contributes towards a relevant and conducive learning and work environment.

► Way forward: Further vocational and literacy training provisions for newly literate people shall be expanded, with the aim of building a learning society.

► Way forward: The non-formal education sector has the potential to strengthen a country’s economic development. Hence, skills shall be developed, vocational training provided and enterprise promoted within communities using multi- and inter-sectoral approaches that empower those communities and enable them to meet the social and economic challenges with which they are faced.
Programmes that use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) effectively are laying the foundation for modern knowledge societies and putting ICTs such as radio, television, mobile phones, video/DVDs and computers at the service of lifelong learning. Non-formal education and literacy programmes have adopted ICTs in order to exploit existing means of communication more fully and to teach learners how to use them. Furthermore, ICTs can be used to practise reading and writing when they are linked to everyday communication (e.g. sending text messages by mobile phone or reading programme subtitles on television). They are also instrumental in enabling specific groups (e.g. people on the move) to be reached. The use of these technologies is often unconventional and requires a new way of thinking.

The effective practices presented during the conferences highlighted how ICTs can be used to bridge long distances. ICT-based programmes such as Interactive Radio Instruction access mobile or hard-to-reach people and enable them to benefit from distance learning opportunities. Subtitling popular television programmes or videos/DVDs can help enhance reading, and is a practice that has proven very successful in India. Broader e-learning initiatives have also helped boost reading skills by linking them to leisure activities.

Learners – particularly if they are young – do not struggle to use ICTs as a means of communication and learning. Instead, the main challenge of ICT-based programmes is how to meet their infrastructural and financial requirements. Such programmes must include relevant content and be taught by suitably qualified facilitators using adequate learning materials/technologies and stimulating, learner-centred and participatory teaching methods. Furthermore, the methods used must be adapted to the technologies involved and respond to the learners’ specific communication needs. All of this requires financial support. Hence, facilitators must be trained, a technological infrastructure set up and stakeholders convinced of the need to establish and fund such initiatives. Yet it takes time and expertise to design appropriate educational processes that will ensure that the ICT capacities needed can be built – and it can be difficult to find funding, particularly when high-technology infrastructures such as digital recording equipment or satellite broadcasting facilities are not yet available or stable. Hence, in order to implement ICT-based programmes, multi-partnership platforms must be set up and adapted to the technology and aims of the programme.

**Way forward:** The conference participants agreed that the potential of ICTs shall be further explored, e.g. to promote an interest in scientific and technological innovation by creating and disseminating scientific terms in African languages and implementing audio-visual educational materials to explain scientific concepts through indigenous practices.

**Way forward:** Governments shall foster the use of ICTs in education by responding faster and more flexibly to the need for related regulations, e.g. by approving broadcasting licences for community radios and adopting a policy for same-language subtitling on TVs. The government shall tap into the potential of private sector ICT providers such as Microsoft Africa.
Pictures of the literate environment in Mali
From left to right, top to bottom:

- Medicine on display in a market;
- A satellite in a compound;
- A restaurant’s signpost in a market;
- A historical site;
- A savings group treasurer.
Caravan for Literacy and the prevention of HIV/AIDS handing over their declaration to Lalla Aicha Ben Barka, Director, UNESCO Regional Office, Dakar.
One of the main objectives of the conference was to build coalitions and partnerships at international, regional, sub-regional and national levels to generate new resources and unlock creative forces. This in turn would enable literacy competences and literate environments to be built, thus making a huge difference to people’s lives in sub-Saharan Africa – a region where less than 60% of the adult population on average is able to read and write. As a population’s literacy skills have an impact on the economy, such skills are of interest to all societal sectors; hence it is important that these sectors be reflected in the coalitions and partnerships forged. At the same time, these partnerships should seek to increase their visibility and influence through the inclusion of new actors such as First Ladies’ foundations and the mass media.

Such multi-partnerships are a recent trend and have the advantage of being particularly inclusive and being able to draw on a broad range of technical and funding resources. Such partnerships are needed to promote literacy for three main reasons. First of all, from a legal perspective, literacy is a human right and a tool that allows individuals to enjoy other human rights. Secondly, the written word must be integrated into mainstream communication practices to ensure that literacy can be broadened and sustained. Thirdly, multi-partner cooperations are the most effective approach if the new vision of an intersectoral, diversified, integrated and holistic approach to literacy is to be achieved. All conference participants recognised the vital importance of coalition building and multi-partnerships for the acceleration of progress in creating literate African societies and making a real difference to people’s lives in the near future.

Demonstrating the validity of this consensus, the “Bamako Call to Action” was elaborated as a joint appeal for a renewed commitment to literacy across Africa. The full text of the call to action is included on the back cover of this report.

In keeping with its function as a coalition and partnership building agency, UNESCO immediately reacted to the conference’s call to action and strong drive for a new and bolder political commitment to developing an integrated, holistic and diversified education system with literacy as the keystone of lifelong learning. UNESCO Resolution 17 was adopted during the 34th General Conference in 2007. This resolution encourages African Member States to implement the recommendations of the Bamako Call to Action, calls upon other Member States to support Africa through South-South and South-North cooperations, and guarantees UNESCO’s support.

The conference enabled existing stakeholder groups (i.e. First Ladies, Ministers and Directors of Education, civil society organizations, multilateral and bilateral agencies and academics) to meet for a mutual exchange of ideas and information. This generated concrete strategies for building coalitions and partnerships, which are summarised below.

The African First Ladies expressed their intention to advocate for literacy through action, in particular by including literacy in the activities of their foundations. They emphasised the close link between literacy, health and nutrition.

The Ministers expressed the need for multilateral partnerships that will mobilise political will in favour of literacy. They would like to see literacy integrated into all development programmes. Consequently, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) – which is linked to the African Union and whose members include African government representatives and educ-
Delivering as One for Literacy

At the conference, national donors – will build partnerships with the African Development Bank and the Regional Economic Communities (REC) to promote and support literacy and non-formal education. Furthermore, the Ministers of Education also endorsed the launch of an Inter-Country Quality Node (ICQN) on Literacy as part of ADEA. The ICQN will be headed by African government representatives, with additional expertise from the ADEA Working Group on Non-Formal Education, technical assistance from the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The ICQN will be instrumental in maintaining the spirit of the Bamako conference and reinforcing the transmission and use of literacy skills in Africa to maintain and increase people’s well-being.

The multilateral and bilateral agencies called upon all donors to commit to literacy and non-formal education and promote a holistic approach to lifelong learning, its component ingredients (non-formal, formal and informal education) and its role in boosting development in a process driven by policy and social dialogues at the government and community levels. In terms of partnerships, the multilateral and bilateral agencies emphasised the promotion of a coordinated private sector that would allow financial resources and human capital to be mobilised in support of literacy and non formal education.

The civil society organizations consisted of a diversity of alternative service providers, innovators, critical thinkers, advocates and partners, and consequently had many experiences to share. They, too, requested that a range of partnerships in the fields of policy and capacity building be maintained and reinforced at the national, sub-regional and international levels. They also expressed civil society’s desire to see an effective consultation of all the actors involved in the development of non-formal literacy and education policies, and called for close partnerships between governments and UNESCO that would promote the international benchmarks laid down in the Global Campaign for Education, the Abuja Call to Action and the Bamako Call to Action. From 27 August to 11 September 2007 the following civil society organizations toured 3467 km through Guinea, Senegal and Mali to deliver information and sensitisation materials on literacy: Jeunesse & Développement, Pamoja West Africa and the national Pamoja networks in Guinea, Senegal and Mali, DVV International, and Action Aid International. The caravan ended with a march in the streets of Bamako and the handing over of a declaration to the conference participants. The declaration asked governments to dedicate at least 3 per cent of their education budgets to literacy and called on donors to provide the funds they promised for Education for All (see http://www.jeunesse-et-developpement.org/english/advocacy.html).

Researchers recommended increasing efforts to work in synergy with agencies such as ADEA and the ADEA Working Group on Non-formal Education that bring together policy makers and researchers. Academics and universities furthermore expressed an interest in strengthening their own networks. African scholars will draw on existing African networks and research organizations such as the Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa and the Council for the Development of Social Science Research. At the international level, they will use the Global Education Consortium of Colleges and Universities (www.glp.net), a portal established by Georgetown University, USA, in support of Education for All to act as an open forum for the sharing and dis-
semination of research findings and ideas. The researchers emphasised the importance of ensuring that the different networks are complementary rather than mutually exclusive.

**UNESCO** will follow up the Bamako Call to Action, in particular through the UNLD/LIFE initiative, the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI, to be held in Brazil in May 2009) and cooperations with African Members States and organizations such as the African Union, ADEA and the African First Ladies’ foundations. In view of the fact that 18 of the 35 LIFE countries are located in sub-Saharan Africa, UNESCO has reinforced its support for literacy through LIFE and is working together with the African Union to implement the Second Decade of Education. Literacy is also high on the agenda of the high-level world conference, CONFINTEA VI, which will push forward the recognition of adult learning and education as a keystone of lifelong learning. As the conference and preparatory activities progress from rhetoric to action, the tools needed to enable, shape and implement lifelong learning will be presented and developed. The CONFINTEA VI preparatory conference for the African region is scheduled to take place from 5 to 7 November 2008 in Nairobi, Kenia.
THE CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

DAY 1
10 SEPTEMBER 2007

OPENING CEREMONY

Master of Ceremonies: Salif Sanogo, Journalist, Radio Télévision du Mali

Welcome address
H.E. Cheikh Omar Sissoko, Minister of Education, Mali

Testimonies by two learners
- Djeynaba Boubou Sow, Senegal
- Fatoumata Sy, Mali

Opening statements
- Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO
- Laura Bush, First Lady of the United States of America, Honorary Ambassador for the United Nations Literacy Decade, message presented by Sarah Moten, Director, Africa Education Division, USAID and by video from the U.S.A.
- H. E. Amadou Toumani Touré, President, Mali

“Literacy matters” (video)

Keynote speech
Literacy Challenges and New Paths for Democracy, Good Governance and Sustainable Development in Africa
Chair: Marie Odile Bonkoungou, Minister of Education, Burkina Faso
Speaker: Mamadou Ndoye, Executive Secretary of ADEA
“LITERACY – KEY TO GOOD HEALTH AND WELL BEING”

Official Celebration of the International Literacy Day 2007 and Award Ceremony for the UNESCO Literacy Prizes

Master of Ceremonies: Mark Richmond, Director of the Division for the Coordination of United Nations Priorities in Education at UNESCO

Messages

- Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO
- Laura Bush, UNESCO Honorary Ambassador for the United Nations Literacy Decade, read by Sarah Moten, Director, Africa Education Division, USAID, U.S.A.
- Cheikh Modibo Diarra, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador

The Laureates

1. The UNESCO International Reading Association
   - Literacy Prize: Community Education Administration Centre, Longsheng Ethnic Minority Autonomous County (China). H.E. Zhang Guoqing, Chinese Ambassador to Mali, accepted the award and made a statement on behalf of the project

2. The UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize: Children’s Book Project (United Republic of Tanzania). Salma Kikwete, First Lady, Tanzania accepted the prize and made a statement on behalf of the Children’s Book Project

3. The Confucius Prize for Literacy: Reach Out and Read (United States of America), collected by Perri Klaas, Medical Director of Reach Out and Read Acceptance speech by Perri Klaas

4. The Honourable Mention of the UNESCO International Reading Association Literacy Prize: The Fundación Adunare, CODEF Adult Education Centre (Spain), collected by María Jesús Ruiz Antorán, Director of CODEF

Concluding remarks
Lobbo Traoré Touré, First Lady, Mali

DAKAR +7: AFRICA’S ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN EDUCATION FOR ALL

Chair: H. E. Igwe Aja-Nwachukwu, Minister of Education of Nigeria, Chairperson of the EFA Forum for Africa
Moderator: Laila Aicha Ben Barka, Director of the UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar, Senegal
Speakers: Jean Pierre Jarousse and Magatte Faye

REVIEW OF LIFE IMPLEMENTATION IN AFRICA

Speakers:
- Carolyn Medel-Añonuevo, Deputy Director, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
- H.E. Mamadou Makalou, Minister in charge of National Languages and Francophone, Senegal
- Maria Luz da Guebuza, First Lady, Mozambique

CAUCUS OF FIRST LADIES

Chair: Lobbo Traoré Touré, First Lady, Mali

CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY

Reception with Cultural Event
Gala dinner hosted by H.E. Amadou Toumani Touré, President, Mali
MINISTERIAL CAUCUS

Chairs: Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, and H.E. Cheick Omar Sissoko, Minister of Education, Mali

RENEWING LITERACY – EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN AFRICA

Panel 1: Mother-Child Literacy and Intergenerational Learning
Chair: Soungalo Quédraogo, Director of Education and Training, International Organisation of the Francophonie, France
Moderator: Benita Somerfield, Executive Director, Barbara Bush Foundation, U.S.A.

Resource Persons:
- Lynn Stefano, Family Literacy Project, South Africa
DAY 3
13 SEPTEMBER 2007

Master of Ceremonies: Carolyn Medel-Añonuevo, Deputy Director, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

REPORTING ON VISIONS AND GOOD PRACTICES FOR LITERACY EMERGING FROM THE CONFERENCE

Koumba Boly, Coordinator, ADEA Working Group on Non-formal Education

MEETINGS OF DIFFERENT GROUPS OF STAKEHOLDERS

Government representatives/ADEA, universities/academicians, civil society, bi- and multilateral agencies

ROUNDTABLE: EXISTING AND FUTURE WAYS OF COALITION AND PARTNERSHIP BUILDING FOR LITERACY AND NFE

Chair: Mamadou Ndoye, Executive Secretary, ADEA
Moderator: Anne-Thérèse Ndong-Jatta, Director of the Division for the Promotion of Basic Education, UNESCO
Reports of the Rapporteurs of each stakeholder group

CLOSING CEREMONY

Master of Ceremonies: Salif Sanogo, Journalist, Radio Télévision du Mali

Messages from:
The First Ladies' Caucus: Lobbo Traoré Touré, First Lady, Mali
The Ministers’ Caucus: H.E. Cheick Omar Sissoko, Minister of National Education and Culture, Mali
The Bamako Call to Action: Koumba Boly Barry, Coordinator of ADEA Working Group on Non Formal Education

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Closing Speech:
H. E. Ousmane Issoufi Maiga, Prime Minister, Mali
GRAPHIC DESIGN AND LAYOUT
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Brij Kothari;
dvv international;
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THE BAMAKO CALL TO ACTION

The aspiration of nations to achieve sustainable development is a collective undertaking. Literacy, as a fundamental right of all human beings and an essential tool for sustainable development, plays a major role in this. Efforts to address the problem of illiteracy will require the involvement of the whole of Africa and all Africans, their technical and financial partners, and the international community as a whole. The successful delivery of literacy training will open up new paths to peace, democracy, social justice, gender equality and critical citizenship leading to sustainable human development.

**Why must we address the challenge of literacy?**

Literacy is still not receiving the attention it deserves in Africa. Over 150 million adults, 60% of them women, have no literacy skills whatsoever. The level of need and demand is even higher if one also takes account of those who have an inadequate command of this precious tool. The participants at this Conference have a duty to remember that history and future generations will be our judge. The writer Joseph Ki Zerbo’s assertion that we must “educate or perish” serves as a warning. This conference has resolved to work towards a better destiny for Africa involving high-quality lifelong learning and training for all.

**When must we act to address the challenge of literacy?**

This must be done here and now, on a huge scale and as a matter of urgency, as required by the Education For All (EFA) policy, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) and the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE).

**How can we tackle the challenge of literacy?**

**Through political will affirmed by**
- African populations
- heads of state and governments
- First Ladies
- leaders of decentralised communities

**By mobilising social partners at the level of**
- communities
- civil society
- researchers
- the private sector

All this must occur through multi-agency partnerships in which roles, responsibilities and conditions for implementation are clearly defined.

**Let us work together to**
- promote literacy as a fundamental right for all groups, but also as an essential tool for economic, social and political participation;
- advocate greater mobilisation and large-scale support to accelerate literacy efforts;
- develop an integrated, holistic and diversified educational vision;
- mobilise internal resources commensurate with the scale of our ambitions regarding the interests and wellbeing of African populations;
- put in place efficient, effective and transparent mechanisms for the management of internal and external resources;
- create partnerships to share innovative experiences and practices;
- make large-scale investment in literacy and training for young people and adults (a minimum of 3% of national education budgets);
- improve the status, working conditions and salaries of trainers and adult educators;
- promote national languages in education and all other spheres of life;
- consolidate literacy skills through the creation of literate environments.

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