CREATING AND SUSTAINING LITERATE ENVIRONMENTS
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PREFACE

Worldwide, one in five adults are not literate while millions of children leave school without acquiring the basic literacy and numeracy skills necessary to empower them with the confidence and knowledge to make informed choices. This situation leads millions of children and youth to an uncertain future with few dreams, little hope, and limited aspirations in life.

UNESCO has developed this resource pack on Creating and Sustaining Literate Environments as a way of addressing the high illiteracy rate that continues to plague the world especially in developing countries. Believing that creating sustainable literate environments and societies that develop human resources and empower communities is essential for achieving the goals of eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy.

This resource pack is not designed to be exhaustive. It was conceptualized to initially raise awareness of policy makers and practitioners about the importance of creating and sustaining literate environments and to give ideas on how to create and sustain such environments. It is with hope that through this resource pack, the policy makers and practitioners can take concrete action towards the following:

• Analyze the multiple dimensions of literacy practices in particular literate environments and determine how to enhance these practices;
• Collect and share good practices for the development of literate environments;
• Support research on appropriate approaches to creating literate environments and formats to promote reading and writing;
• Develop guidelines for enhancing literate environments and prepare policy briefs to support appropriate national policies and programme design;
• Build on oral traditions and expressions and support diversity of cultural context and knowledge;

• Promote access to quality materials which are of interest to learners and neo-literate and involve them in material development;
• Strengthen local initiatives, such as establishment of public libraries and Community Learning Centres (CLCs), through capacity development of their staff; and promote mobile libraries and reading campaigns in schools and communities;
• Promote mutually supportive strategies for literacy between and among families, schools and communities and between formal and non-formal approaches to literacy acquisition;
• Promote the works of local authors and writers, including works written in local languages as part of a multilingual approach, and support publishing and distribution of high quality local materials; and
• Promote the use of multimedia, including ICTs, as a cost-effective way to publish and disseminate materials.
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UNDERSTANDING LITERACY AND LITERATE ENVIRONMENTS

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1.1 The Literacy Challenge

“Literacy is a right. Literacy is a foundation for all further learning. Literacy carries profound individual and social benefits. Literacy matters for poverty reduction. Literacy drives progress towards all the Education for All (EFA) goals. Literacy is at the core in meeting the EFA Dakar Goals and Millennium Development Goals by 2015” (UNESCO, 2005a). And yet, although much emphasis is placed on its importance, based on the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2010, literacy is still one of the most neglected education goals in many countries, especially among the poorest nations (UNESCO, 2009). The EFA GMR 2011 refers to it as the “forgotten goal in the EFA framework” (UNESCO, 2011, p. 65).

This is disheartening because no matter how many times countries are urged to focus on literacy, there are still governments that seem to have not displayed a sense of urgency to prioritize this goal. The entire edition of EFA GMR of 2006 was even devoted to “Literacy for Life” and still, “the world is far off track for the target of halving adult illiteracy by 2015” (UNESCO, 2011, p. 24). If this disregard of literacy continues, if countries do not prioritize literacy, then there will still be more than 700 million adults who will remain illiterate by 2015 (UNESCO, 2008a). This prediction is not far-fetched because in the EFA GMR 2010, it was reported that the adult illiterates were around 759 million and two-thirds of them were women (UNESCO, 2009). In the EFA GMR 2011, adult illiterates in the world were reported to have totalled about 796 million, and two-thirds were again women (UNESCO, 2011).

This situation is aggravated by the millions of children who leave school without acquiring the basic literacy skills necessary for them to confidently make informed choices (UNESCO, 2009). These new generations of children enter adulthood without basic literacy and numeracy skills because they either dropped out of school or received a poor-quality education. There is a need for governments to seriously improve the quality of education they are offering in order to stop this influx of new illiterate adults and at the same time, consequently address the adult illiteracy backlog (UNESCO, 2011).

Particularly, in the Asia and Pacific Region (APR), although progress has been made, problems still remain and many issues are persistent. Over 60 percent of the world’s adult illiterates live in the APR. About 70 percent of the world’s illiterate adults live in ten countries, while 80 percent of this 70 percent live in five countries in Asia and the Pacific, including Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India (Hakeem, 2010).

In the EFA GMR 2006, a three-pronged approach was suggested for nations to address the literacy challenge and to craft holistic literacy programmes. It strongly encouraged countries to adopt explicit literacy policies to (1) expand quality primary and lower-secondary education, (2) scale up youth and adult literacy programmes, and (3) develop rich literate environments (UNESCO, 2005a).
According to UNESCO, the three prongs should be anchored in a strong political commitment from government agencies and all public stakeholders (Figure 1). For the first prong, the expansion of primary and lower-secondary education should include universal quality basic education for both girls and boys. Some strategies or issues countries can focus on are school fees, teachers, gender, inclusion and language, health and nutrition and public spending. For the second prong, programmes on national coordination, partnerships, literacy educators, good curricula, language policy and public spending could be developed or enhanced.

UNESCO has already initiated projects and programmes that focus on the first and second prongs. A lot more has to be done to decrease the number of adult illiterates which is complicated by having literates lapsing back into illiteracy.

To address these challenges halving adult illiteracy by 2015, UNESCO is now focusing on the third prong, which is to develop rich literate environments that provide individuals every possible means and opportunity to become and remain literate. For example, people should have access to information. They can go to libraries. They are exposed to local language newspapers, books, and media including public broadcasting, among others. All of these should be present in a rich literate environment (Hakeem, 2010).

The task of creating a rich literate environment, however, poses greater challenges and responsibilities in communities with a large number of illiterates and neo-literates. These communities are usually located in rural and mountainous areas that are often isolated and impoverished. Some hindrances to literacy development in such communities include low school enrolment and school attendance, lack of practice or usage of acquired literacy skills, disharmony between literacy programmes and livelihood opportunities, lack of reading habits, lack of available quality reading materials, and literates and neo-literates reverting to illiteracy.

The last obstacle mentioned is most disturbing because the notion of literates becoming illiterates was not realized before. It has become apparent that certain individuals are in danger of losing their literacy skills if they do not apply or use them regularly. For instance, in communities that are rich in oral traditions and practices, many of the people are illiterate and only a few can read and write. Since most members of these communities enjoy talking, singing, dancing and socializing, the few literate people join in rather than read books. The oral mode of communication prevails. Reading materials are often overlooked in these communities which do not have a long history of a written tradition (Krolak, 2005).
Another example is the large percentage of participants in adult literacy programmes at risk of slipping back into illiteracy within a few years if they do not have access to appropriate reading materials (Mchombu and Cadbury, 2006). And if ever these materials are available, many people who struggle for daily survival cannot afford them since they are too expensive, especially the books (Krolak, 2005).

Furthermore, communities that deliver poor quality education and have shortages of developmentally appropriate reading materials already condemn many of their children to leave or finish primary school with zero to very limited literacy skills. And if these children do not enter remedial programmes, they might grow up to become illiterate adults. The situation gets more complicated in ethnically diverse communities that do not teach children during their early years of schooling in a language they already know, their mother tongue, and do not provide a culturally suitable or age-appropriate curriculum and materials (Krolak, 2005).

With these literacy challenges facing the world today, and especially the Asia and Pacific region, creating and sustaining rich literate environments has become more crucial now than ever before. But to understand this concept, there is a need to redefine literacy because it can no longer be limited to the acquisition of reading, writing, and numeracy skills nor can it be treated as an end in itself.

### 1.2 Literacy and Literate Environments

#### 1.2.1 Transformative Literacy

Literacy has been traditionally defined as the ability of a person to read, write and count with understanding. Over the past decades, the nature and scope of literacy has expanded. It has undergone constant re-definition – from acquisition of skills in reading, writing and basic numeracy to the acquisition of skills in task performance, social practices, and critical reflection (Wagner et al., 2004; Lytle and Wolfe, 1989). As a result, the international community also expanded its understanding of literacy – from viewing literacy as a simple process of acquiring basic cognitive skills to using these skills as bases for personal and social change contributing to socio-economic development and to building capacity for social awareness and critical reflection (UNESCO, 2005a).

Literacy, then, is no longer limited to reading and writing words. It involves awareness, understanding and acceptance of the meanings and contexts of these words and eventually taking reflective action. It is an educational process that unfolds the full potential of people at various stages of their lives, making each of their literacy experiences transformational.
A learner’s awareness of the difference between “what is” and “what ought to be” is an initial “awakening” to learning. It is the first sign or hint of a learning need. As mentioned earlier, literacy is a skill not only for reading words, but also for understanding words and contexts and finally taking the necessary steps in applying what has been read and learned in one’s life.

Literacy, therefore, could be viewed as transformative literacy wherein non-literate realize the value of learning for life that entails an endless journey towards developing and acquiring, positive attitudes to constantly learn new things. It inculcates in learners behaviours that build their self-confidence, self-worth, and self-dignity enabling them to take initiatives, be creative, and value excellence. Transformative literacy merges thoughts and feelings of people leading them to think, feel and act responsibly. The learning experience of Babo Pampay Usman, a Muslim woman, is a good illustration of this process. She was able to address her learning needs which enabled her to transform her life for the better. (For a detailed discussion of her experience, refer to Part 4 of this resource pack.)

Transformative literacy may be more evident in adult learners than in young learners, especially when the latter have limited decision-making power. Nevertheless, Cross (1981) developed a learning model for adult learners. This model, as shown in Figure 2, has been modified to suit it to the concept of transformative literacy (Shibao, 2010). It can be applied to all types of learners. Discussion of the interrelated factors of the modified version is shown in Figure 2.

The learning process of adult learners begins with their self-assessment (A). Non-literate and neo-literate are aware of their lack of literacy skills and because of this realization they are motivated to participate in a literacy class. This is the first major step towards learning. Their external actions are preceded by their feeling of being inadequate and awareness of their need to improve through literacy. For most of the learners, this is the beginning of their life’s journey of learning.

From self-assessment, the journey continues to attitudinal change (B) towards education and learning. For this to happen, there should be trained and qualified facilitators who can motivate and provide encouragement to their learners to learn and continue learning. Once the learners are motivated, they will act on their own and no longer on the prodding of the facilitators. They will start to value excellence and aspire to achieve it.

The learning objectives and levels of achievement (C) of learners could be dependent on the nature, type and quality of learning materials and activities the learners are exposed to. These materials and activities should be relevant, appropriate and practical, should be learner-centred and should employ experiential modes of learning.

The active participation of learners in learning activities will be reflected immediately in the transformative process of literacy if all learning conditions are conducive. This can be manifested when there is positive attitudinal or behavioural change in the learners to value learning and independently seek further learning. This pertains to their lifestyles and life stage (D). They
realize the value of education in their lives and the many benefits they have missed because of their inadequacy and lost opportunities. When educating motivated learners, they should be encouraged to do things on their own. In the early stages of their learning, they should be able to survive, thrive and take action in a quality-demanding community.

Information (F) and learning opportunities and obstacles (E) are the major factors that can enhance greater learning and sustainability of lessons learned. The learning of new information should be easy, enjoyable, and exciting for the learners to sustain their interest. Beyond the mechanical literacy skills of reading, writing and counting, the facilitators should also be able to provide a climate for self-learning, for being creative and resourceful, and to develop an inquisitive mind enabling learners to respond to and actively participate in the learning activities (G) of their classes and develop a positive attitude towards and love for lifelong learning.

This in essence is the significance of integrative and transformative literacy that develops and prepares learners to have a strong will for learning and to learn even beyond their literacy classes. The right attitude and self-interest are achieved from a constant yearning to learn, aimed at developing a consistent desire for excellence through education.

1.2.2 Literacy as a Learning Continuum

A group of UNESCO experts during a meeting on literacy assessment in 2003, described literacy as “the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and compute using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling an individual to achieve his or her goals, develop his or her knowledge and potential and participate fully in the community and wider society.” (Aspects of Literacy Assessment, 2003)

Therefore, literacy can no longer be described as a summation of skills. It can be seen as a continuum where individuals move back and forth from being non-literate to literates depending on the acquisition and application of the skills they learn at different stages and the new ideas and forms of learning which enable them to constantly yearn for knowledge and self-development (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Literacy Continuum

Exposure to these new ideas and forms of learning is important in keeping these individuals as transformative literates and lifelong learners. This depends on the quality and richness of the literate environments they live in. These environments should provide an atmosphere where new literates can develop and continuously use their literacy skills for the improvement of their lives. Learners with limited access to materials tend to slide to the left of the literacy continuum.

Literate persons, under this new view on literacy – transformative literacy and literacy as a continuum - can be described as motivated and driven to continuously thirst for more knowledge to improve the way they do things and, to be open to new ideas and information. They are determined to probe beneath the surface of facts. They are often analytical, reflective, creative, and critical individuals.

1.2.3 Literate Persons As a Product of Literate Environments

To this end, the basic purpose of education should always be to develop among the learners a love for lifelong learning that gives inner and intrinsic rewards of self-satisfaction and fulfilment. But in order to develop a literate and learned individual, there is a need to create sustainable literate environments for that individual to live in because a learned person is a product of literate environments.
Dynamic and stimulating literate environments at home, in the classroom, workplace, and the community are essential to literacy acquisition, development and lifelong use (Easton, 2006).

For instance, research has shown that highly developed countries usually provide written, audio and visual information for their people to use and enjoy. Daily life without reading materials is unimaginable. Different types of newspapers, magazines, journals, and books are published. The Internet is found in most homes. There is a wide selection of television and radio programmes. A culture of reading is practised by almost everyone. In other words, the people, from infants to adults, are exposed to rich literate environments twenty-four hours a day resulting in high literacy rates. However, countries with low literacy rates are often not able to provide the same rich and stimulating literate environments to their people especially those who live in isolation and in poverty. Because of this lack of exposure to reading, visual, and audio materials, the less-privileged members of society have little opportunity for self-development which could explain the low literacy rates in their communities.

But creating a rich literate environment is more than just the availability and accessibility of books and materials. It is a creation of a social, political, and cultural milieu that values and nurtures all forms and functions of literacy. It involves having people embrace a literate behaviour and making them realize that individuals, families, communities, local governments and other sectors of society have a role to play within the literate environment system (Chhetri and Baker, 2005).

A rich literate environment is characterized by the following (UNESCO, 2009; UNESCO, 2008b):

- Schools, community learning centres, libraries, book shops, mobile libraries, and ICT facilities are available and accessible;
- Materials are attractive and include local indigenous content or the works of local authors and writers. Materials for all types of learners and neo-literates are of interest to them;
- Schools, community and local businesses participate in the development of local educational and literary materials. To some extent, learners are also involved in their development;
- People from all walks of life understand what it means to be literate and the importance of having a literate environment. They interact and have regular dialogue with each other to discuss the need for literacy and education programmes;
- Learners effectively apply their acquired literacy skills in their practical daily lives. They have the means and opportunity to use and sustain these skills meaningfully;
- The different sectors of the community collectively work for a successful conduct of literacy activities such as reading campaigns.
- ICT is used as one of the cost-effective ways to publish and disseminate materials; and
• Strategies for literacy acquisition in formal and non-formal settings complement one another and so are the strategies for literacy use in the home, school and community. Ways to integrate these strategies are developed.

Literacy and a literate environment are a continuing process of learning and application; a search for knowledge and skills that can be used to improve one’s status in life. Both can affect the placement of a learner in the literacy continuum. A literate person not exposed to stimulating and rich literate environments may relapse into illiteracy. Creating rich literate environments calls attention to availability and accessibility of materials that are responsive to the interests and needs of learners enabling a free exchange of information and providing opportunities for lifelong learning (UNESCO, 2006). However, a rich literate environment is not produced overnight. It evolves over time and its creation requires commitment and collaboration among different players or stakeholders. The succeeding sections discuss possible ways on how to create and sustain literate environments.

1.3 A Shared Vision: Strong Reading Culture

Reading is the foundation of all learning. Its importance led some countries to make reading a national priority. The Philippine Department of Education declared its reading motto as “Learn to Read. Read to Learn.” The reading battle cry of the Samoan Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture is “Healthy reading for a healthy future.”

Reading not only leads to the development of literacy skills. It also affects the thinking and actions of learners. Some of its benefits include the following (Ngoboka, 2011):

• **Reading exercises the mind.** As a mental exercise, reading stretches the memory muscles, thus improving memory. It keeps the mind active enabling it to absorb more information.

• **Reading develops critical thinking.** Reading improves concentration and focus. It enables learners to ponder on the things they read and develops their critical thinking skills. Learners eventually are able to interpret and analyze issues or events, making them better decision-makers.

• **Reading boosts self-esteem.** Reading enhances the self-confidence of learners. They become more self-assured about their ability to understand, question, and appreciate various aspects of life.

• **Reading improves reflective writing.** Reading increases the knowledge of learners and expands their vocabulary. Exposure to words helps them become reflective writers.

• **Reading increases understanding and sensitivity.** Reading broadens the horizon of learners cultivating their understanding and sensitivity towards people from all walks of life.
Given these benefits, a strong reading culture has become a desired outcome of having dynamic, stimulating, and rich literate environments. Developing a reading culture fosters a love for reading and a habit of reading among learners. A literate environment with a strong reading culture is characterized by the following:

1. Learners have opportunities to develop and utilize their literacy skills through authentic tasks and activities in the home, school, and community;
2. Learners use their literacy skills to interact with others, make decisions, draw conclusions, and understand the dynamics of their surroundings;
3. Learners have control over the use of their literacy skills such as what, when, and how to read and write;
4. Learners are motivated to read because of the intrinsic rewards reading brings and not because of external incentives; and
5. Learners aspire to learn new things and actively participate in their community.

Developing a reading culture builds on the notion of transformative literacy and attitudes that value the importance of lifelong learning. It makes a difference in the life and future of a person and of an entire community (Torres, 2006). This is a vision that should be shared by all sectors of a community.

1.4 Elements of Literate Environments

There is no one formula on how to create and sustain literate environments. For instance, literacy materials will vary from setting to setting. In homes there could be books, magazines, newspapers, radios, mobile phones, televisions, or computers. In the community, there could be numerous signs, posters, billboards as well as schools, libraries, banks, or offices (UNESCO, 2006). Nevertheless, whatever the setting, each has the potential to be transformed into a literate environment collectively forming a platform for a free exchange of information and an array of opportunities for lifelong learning and serve as stimulus for learners to display literate behaviours (UNESCO, 2005a).

The basic elements of literate environments include: (1) literacy materials and activities, (2) physical environment, (3) socio-cultural environment, (4) political environment, (5) assessment, and (6) partnerships. The first two elements will facilitate the setting up of learning places to be literate environments while the last four will enable the sustainability of these environments. However, one element alone does not make a literate environment. It is the dynamic relationship among these elements that provide a rich and stimulating literate environment.
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CREATING LITERATE ENVIRONMENTS
2.1 Literacy Materials

Literacy materials are tools that can facilitate literacy development, acquisition and application. These include reading and writing materials, counting objects and even audiovisual materials. With the advent of new technologies, many of these materials can be provided in electronic formats, thus making the facilitation of learning easier and sometimes faster.

2.1.1 Reading Materials

Promoting a literate environment calls for greater attention and focus on access to reading materials or manuals that are responsive to the interests and learning needs of learners in school and more particularly, at home. The relevance and meaning of the information they gain increases their knowledge, wisdom and competencies. These serve as major driving forces that encourage self-learning, learning for life, and productivity. The greatest motivation of most learners is the hope that any new information, knowledge and skills they acquire will provide immediate personal, physical and economic benefits and rewards. These benefits can encourage others to follow and create a need for a literate environment.

**Purpose.** Reading materials are opportunities for learning. Books, newspapers, magazines, restaurant menus, shop signs, mobile text messages, and even text on food boxes or candy wrappers enable learners to connect their spoken language with the written script thus making reading a natural activity for them (Krolak, 2005).

These materials also help learners gain fluency, increase their confidence, challenge them to expand their use of reading and writing to meet their daily needs and become active participants in their community. They enable learners to transfer reading and writing in their first language to their second or third language.

In other words, reading materials complement lifelong learning. Once the learners achieve fluency in their spoken languages, they will be able to use the printed words for various purposes inspiring them to access more literature thus adding to their learning after every literacy experience (Malone and Arnove, 1998).

**Format.** The most common format of reading materials is in print form. They include all materials containing the written language. These can be leisure or informational materials like books, booklets, newspapers, newsletters, journals, posters, leaflets, wall newspapers, periodicals, charts, flip charts, and cards as well as functional materials such as tax forms, bank statements, electric and water bills, among others.
Print materials have three main functions: (1) to record and convey knowledge and information, (2) to help learners develop ideas, and (3) to enable learners to express themselves. However, in a study conducted in Senegal, findings indicated that a majority of print materials were used to address the first function only. The last two functions were often neglected (Shiohata, 2003). A rich literate environment attempts to balance these three functions. Therefore it is imperative that learners help develop these materials.

**Development.** Developing and producing the right materials is critical in sustaining literacy among learners. Good quality reading materials should target all types of learners, from children to adults or from new readers to competent readers, for the purpose of entertainment as well as study (UNESCO, 2003). To do so, the following factors need to be considered:

(1) **Appropriateness and Relevance of Materials**

Reading materials should be appropriate and relevant to all types of learners. Materials based on the reading level, interests and needs of the learners, written in the languages they speak, addressing the problems they have identified, and helping to achieve their personal and community goals, will serve as a useful resource for their development (Malone and Arnove, 1998). These materials are usually referred to as authentic and real-life reading materials that learners want to read and apply in their daily lives (UNESCO, 2008b).

If the learners are only starting to read, then the reading materials should introduce the reading process that will enable the new readers to decode text of simple words and sentences. Providing them with a full novel will be overwhelming. New concepts and more complex text can be introduced gradually as the readers increase their reading competencies. In other words, there should be a wide range of reading materials (from simple to complex) that cater to learners with different reading levels.

If the learners are young children, storybooks, poems, songs and games could supplement school textbooks. It is also important that the reading materials are written in their home language and reflective of their local culture and values.
This will encourage them to read for pleasure, thus making reading an enjoyable experience.

Adult learners on the other hand, have different reading needs. Functional materials may be the most appropriate materials for this type of learner. For adult learners who are busy making a living while learning to read, materials related to their work would be more appropriate. For instance, a woman who has taken out a microfinance loan to start her own business of growing vegetables may learn best from materials linked to farming, financing and nutrition. Other examples of functional materials include banking deposit and withdrawal slips, business order forms, tax forms, medical records, government administrative forms, or financial records.

Some adult learners are also interested to learn more about the world outside their community and so reading materials that widen their horizons should also be available to keep them hooked on reading. In other words, if adult learners have access to an ongoing supply of relevant and interesting reading materials they will be encouraged to continue learning and use what they have learned (Malone and Arnove, 1998).

(2) Involvement of Learners and Community Members in the Development Process

Reading materials can be composed by the learners themselves. These are usually referred to as learner-generated materials. Their content can arise from in-class discussions about issues concerning the learners. In this process, learners discuss a relevant topic and based on the discussion they compose their own stories, poems, or songs. Using indigenous learning elements the learners then dictate to the teacher compositions of the day’s reading lesson. The teacher in turn writes the suggestions on the blackboard or poster. If the learners decide that a composition is worth preserving, it can be made into a booklet or poster and illustrated by the learners. This procedure ensures that the materials will be relevant to the feelings and needs of the learners. It also empowers the learners to preserve and communicate their ideas (ibid).

Other community members can also compose reading materials about topics that are interesting to the learners in their community. Locally developed materials can communicate functional information to learners in story form. These stories may be about a community health problem, or about a local person who overcame a certain difficulty, or about individual learners who were able to transform their lives. Moreover, oral forms of traditional stories, songs, poetry and sacred sayings passed on from generation to generation can also be put into written form (ibid.)

To enhance the abilities of the community members to share their stories, lives and culture, the local government units or sponsoring organizations can conduct workshops with local authors and illustrators, where emerging writers and illustrators such as village elders, youth, teachers, librarians, NGO workers and curriculum developers are encouraged to participate. These workshops can focus on creative processes for developing materials and writing books, including developing story plots and settings, making decisions about language, artistic renditions of characters, and age-appropriateness of content. These events can bring together and empower local talent while at the same time increase the amount of literary content available in the local language. In addition to writer’s and illustrator’s workshops, writing and art competitions for young writers can help raise the profile of literacy by encouraging young people to get involved. Spotlighting the work of young authors and illustrators can also be very motivating to the young learners who are just starting to read.

Photo 6: Picture and story books illustrated by Mon youth, Kanchanaburi, Thailand
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(3) Alternative Ways to Produce Reading Materials

Reading materials are usually produced by publishing houses and most of the time these materials are not affordable especially by impoverished communities. Furthermore, the reading materials produced are predominantly textbooks. Supplementary reading materials are published in limited numbers.

The emergence of computers, video and digital cameras has made development and production of locally relevant and culturally suitable materials easier, especially because operation of the equipment is now user-friendly. For instance, traditional puppet shows, shadow plays, drama, picture storytelling, songs and folk dances can now be easily recorded or captured in electronic format. Digital photos and computer graphics programs can also be used to enhance the attractiveness of print materials.

Because of this new technology, communities can now produce their own reading materials. For example, desktop publishing programs can make every computer a potential production centre. Learner-generated materials can be quickly edited and reproduced through these computer programs. Limited quantities of materials can also be reproduced on photocopiers. However, in areas where electronic technology is not available, hand-operated duplicators and silk-screen printers can still be used to produce books, posters, newsletters, and other materials to meet the needs of learners.

(4) Local Publishing

The local publishing industry can help develop materials that express and record local culture and knowledge and translate relevant materials into indigenous languages. The local publishing industry should be able to print the short stories, poems, songs, commentaries, or essays written by the community members in books, newspapers, magazines, bulletins or other forms of learning materials. When the local people read their published work, they will be motivated to read and write more. It will also encourage other members of the community to do the same.

Moreover, the content of local publishing should be designed based on the needs of the community. For instance, a community in the mountains may be interested in preserving forests, while a community in the coastal area may be more interested in learning about fisheries.

In case there is a lack of local publishing capacity, other learning institutions or organizations such as libraries, community centres, or non-government organizations (NGOs) can record, transcribe and publish the thoughts and experiences of local authors either in print or audiovisual format.

2.1.2 Audiovisual Materials

In creating literate environments, while the written word is important, it is not the “final” word. Oral stories, visuals, and ideas expressed in dialogue, folktales, art, rituals and traditions are also bearers of literacy, educational context and meaning. Today’s world has become more visual than before and the ability to understand images and symbols is just as important as understanding words (Lim, 2010). Learning from these materials is even made easier with the advent of modern technology that enables learners to view images and hear sounds repeatedly. This has resulted in the development and production of audiovisual materials.
Audiovisual materials are materials captured in non-print format such as video tapes and DVDs using modern technology like digital cameras, videos and audio recordings among others. In this era of information and communications technology (ICT), these materials have become very useful. They have become a central part of reading and writing and have been used to complement and supplement print materials. Literacy development and application increasingly involve the use of computers and other forms of digital technology such as mobile phones (UNESCO, 2008b). These audiovisual materials are mostly viewed or heard as films, slides, radio programmes, or television shows.

2.2 Literacy Activities
The acquisition of literacy skills can be extended beyond books and audiovisual materials. Interactive and enjoyable activities such as competitions and storytelling, debate, role play, solo and group songs can be combined with reading. Various games such as card games, jigsaw puzzles, futures games, finance games, board games and simulation games can also develop literacy skills and enrich literate environments.

Activities stimulate learning by encouraging learners to interact with their environment and engage in discussions and critical thinking exercises. These let the learners expand their experience by taking action, forming new ideas and gaining new perspectives.

2.3 Physical Environment
The physical environment is a “literacy stimuli.” It has an effect on the development and functioning of learners. An attractive, organized and inviting environment that encourages conversations among learners or allows them to work on their own or in small groups, can accelerate their literacy development and promote good reading behaviour and habits. The availability of literacy materials as well as how they are organized in space can greatly influence learning and enhance the acquisition of reading and writing skills by learners.

Rich literate environments should be learner friendly and have appropriate, adequate, and accessible materials, attractive and enticing physical settings and a learner-friendly socio-cultural atmosphere to engage learners to experience a transformative learning process. These environments can be created at home, schools, community learning centres, libraries and museums, among others.

2.3.1 Homes
The earliest learning happens in the home environment and learning continues at home as well. To have a stimulating literate environment at home there should be an abundance of reading materials or communication and electronic media. There should also be a regular time and place for daily reading, talking about various topics and sharing ideas.
Materials at home include books, newspapers, magazines, catalogues, television, radio, mobile phone, computers and karaoke.

The home, indeed, offers an excellent opportunity for literacy development of children (Baker, Scher and Mackler, 1997). Children start to form their reading habits at an early age and they are primarily influenced by their parents or other family members. The development of reading habits depends on the overall frequency and duration of a shared book reading experience, the number of books at home, the frequency of literacy activities like shared trips to the library or parents’ private reading to their children (Payne et al., 1994). Family engagement, therefore, in the literacy practices of young learners is very crucial. Parents should ensure that they conduct activities at their homes that will help their children acquire literacy skills. These activities must help children read, write and develop their language abilities. There should also be activities that will develop their numeracy skills.

Here are some literacy activities that literate parents can do with their children (Adapted from DB Knowledge, Literacy Activities in the Home):

• Start the day by reading the newspaper, pointing out interesting pictures to their children and read the captions together.
• Read to their children a story in a comfortable and quiet place. Let the children interact with the story by asking them to predict what will happen next or asking them simple questions about the story.
• Boost their children’s word power by taking a “naming walk” indoors or outdoors, naming each item seen such as dog, chair, car, tree or look for things that start with the first letter of their child’s name. For example, if their child’s name is Jack, then identify in your home jar, juice, jam, etc.
• Sing the alphabet and move about, clapping and making up dance steps.
• Visit the library together. Let their children pick out a book to read and let them turn the pages.
• Ask children about their day using open-ended questions like “What did you have for breakfast?”
• Ask their children to count objects aloud, add up, subtract and gradually move to multiplication and division.
• Tell their children the denominations of your money and make them count it.
• Show children the numerals, say 1 to 10, and make them practice copying them.
• Cut out big letters from a magazine then show their children how they can add or take away letters to make new words.

Unfortunately, providing abundant reading materials at home may be difficult and expensive for poor families and for parents who are illiterates. But still, these families can make their own collection of inexpensive materials. They can use candy wrappers, food cartons, old newspapers or magazines and their natural habitat to encourage
their children to learn. Parents who cannot read and write can even do the following activities with their children:

- If books are available, ask their children to read to them while looking at the pictures in a book or talk about pictures in a book.
- Encourage study time.
- Have a conversation with their children about the day’s events.
- Tell a story to their children about something in the village, from their childhood or a person in the community.
- Take a nature trip and name the things they see to their children.

When a rich and stimulating literate environment is difficult to create at home due to economic circumstances and the poor literacy level of family members, other learning places of the community should be able to fill the gap and reach out to these families. Support from them can make up for a lack of resources at home.

2.3.2 Schools

A school is usually a permanent structure offering formal education to its learners. It is operated by a government agency prescribing a curriculum to be followed. A school is expected to provide a stimulating literate environment to its learners by having available and accessible literacy materials and spaces for literacy activities.

Literacy materials to be provided in schools can include the following:

- Culturally relevant and developmentally appropriate reading materials
- Appropriately graded books by reading difficulty level
- Attractive books of good quality
- Books of varied genres, subjects and sizes
- Books and other reading materials written in the home language
- Posters or charts
- Picture stories, compositions, or cards

Photo 10: A kindergarten classroom in Kanchanaburi, Thailand
These materials should not be locked inside cabinets but must be strategically placed on shelves or in areas that are accessible to learners. It is, then, important to design the interiors of schools to encourage browsing and reading. In designing the interior, the following should be considered:

• Inclusion of display boards for hanging posters or student work;
• Placement of chalkboards around the classroom close to the floor to make them more accessible to small children;
• Provision of interior storage for supplementary educational materials;
• Appropriateness of literacy tools placed in strategic locations so learners can have the option to use them independently;
• Availability of technological resources to support literacy events. These include having projector, computer with printer, cassette or CD player, TV and VCR with recorded stories;
• Availability of furniture such as student desks, tables, and chairs;
• Availability of support reading and writing materials like text pointer, book marks, clipboards, collection of pictures;
• Allocation of areas for specific activities or functions. For instance, the entire classroom can be divided into smaller areas for library, publishing area, listening centre, or even meeting/conference area; and
• Adequate space to accommodate the increasing number of students to work on literacy products, and to store and display literacy tools.

However, there are cases where classrooms do not have the luxury of space. In such cases, literacy materials can be displayed in areas outside the classroom or can be reflected in non-print form. Spaces for learning can be as elaborate as a formal library, or it can be a simple platform, an outside bench, under a tree, or a comfortable corner in a corridor. The resources that need to be built into this space, however, are crucial. For activities that promote the use of language and literacy – speaking, listening, reading and writing – there can be built-in boards for riddles, stories, paintings, and writing thoughts. All these can be integrated on the floor, walls, windows, and doors (K. Vajpeyi Vinyas, personal communication, 17 November 2010).

Community Learning Centres (CLCs) are located within the community and managed by local people. A CLC can be the learning place, besides the home, closest to the local people and so it can have a considerable impact on the literacy promotion and continuing education among learners. A CLC also has the potential to reach the unreached, promising wide access to basic education, literacy and lifelong learning for people in remote areas or belonging to ethnic and linguistic minorities, the unemployed, out of school children and youth, non-literate adults as well as the physically challenged (Rachmiati, 2010).

The major function of a CLC is to provide information, activities, and special services that will improve the knowledge, skills, and attitude needed for self-development of learners as well as development of the community. It
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The major function of a CLC is to provide information, activities, and special services that will improve the knowledge, skills, and attitude needed for self-development of learners as well as development of the community. It can also serve as an information centre or a network centre in addition to being a learning centre.

The community initiates the establishment of a CLC. Its operation or management is carried out by local people, empowering the community to identify services or programmes that really target the needs of its members. Some of these programmes may include basic literacy classes for young and adult learners, livelihood programs, health and nutrition programs, or cultural programs. The CLC can partner with government institutions and other private groups in delivering or implementing these programs.

Similar to schools, CLCs should be able to provide a wide selection of reading materials catering to all types of learners. Most of these materials should be written in the language of the community. The contents should also be localized for better appreciation and understanding by the community.

2.3.4 Libraries

Libraries play a key role in creating, developing and sustaining literate environments. They can be stand-alone buildings or located in schools or community centres. By providing and sharing a wide range of reading and literacy materials for all age groups and literacy levels (including books, newspapers, magazines, games and audiovisual media) they ensure equitable and free access to relevant information and materials for the whole community. Their provision has a far wider range of materials and wider choice of titles than home or school can afford and offer.

Libraries assist in finding, using, and interpreting appropriate information which opens up opportunities for lifelong learning, literacy enhancement, recreation, creative imagination, individual research, and ultimately empowerment in an increasingly complex world. By providing equitable
access to information for all, libraries encourage critical citizenship in a global democratic society. They also play an important role in helping to bridge the information gap by providing free access to information and communication technologies, especially the Internet (Krolak, 2005).

In particular, they play an important role in the acquisition, maintenance and development of literacy skills (Mchombu and Cadbury, 2006). As they provide materials and services to all reading levels and age groups, they are perfect locations for offering literacy classes. Furthermore, they are often friendly and inviting places, they might have additional working and meeting spaces and they are often located centrally in the community. They are also ideal places to break the cycle of non- and semi-literate families by offering family literacy and inter-generational activities. By using the library with their children, parents and care-givers are setting a good example and help to establish motivation for reading and a pattern for lifelong learning.

The absolute key to making a library a successful literate environment is the librarian’s ability to collect and make accessible relevant and appropriate materials and to make the library a welcoming and interesting place to visit regularly. Merely providing a collection of well-organised reading and literacy materials will reach only those community members who are already interested in using the library. The challenge is to pro-actively reach out to the remaining part of the community, for example by visiting them with appropriate reading and literacy materials in their classrooms, families, workplace or other community locations. Another option is to organise creative and interesting programmes in the library, such as reading and writing competitions, book clubs, author readings, creative writing classes, summer reading programmes, study support, discussion groups, celebrations and festivities, exhibitions or storytelling sessions. Such programmes can also enable adults with low literacy levels, who might have negative memories of formal schooling, to take their first step back into learning (Krolak, 2005).

Modern librarians are facilitators of information and lifelong learning opportunities with an emphasis on service, identifying user needs and communicating solutions. They are unfolding the community’s learning potential by providing relevant materials and information on community issues. To understand the needs of potential users, they should conduct surveys and studies in their particular community or area. By participating in or even organising and sponsoring need-based materials development processes, they can ensure that their literacy and library materials are relevant for their target groups.

Since libraries and literacy go together in a manner similar to schools and literacy, and since the school library has a direct relationship with the education system, it can be used to reinforce basic literacy instruction by supporting curriculum and instructional goals. Primary school libraries, for example, can be very effective in supporting development of reading skills and promoting a habit of reading. However, they should be stocked with books appropriately levelled for the students. Educators also need to be trained on how to utilise school
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Libraries effectively and how to make them inviting places for children to visit. For children from disadvantaged communities and for youth and adults removed from an established educational system, libraries might be their only opportunity to have easy access to books. Where school libraries are scarce, the public or community library could fill this gap and vice versa. The ideal is that each learner should have access to both, school and public libraries. If a school has limited resources, the public or community library can assist by delivering rotating boxes with reading materials. Where there are no libraries, mobile libraries can fill the gap.

Libraries, whether in the school, public or community, play an important role in creating and supporting a reading culture and fostering a love for reading. Pleasure in reading, which in turn helps to foster a lifelong reading habit, is often experienced in the library when readers gain their first opportunity to pick a book of their own choice (Mchombu and Cadbury, 2006).

To be most effective, libraries need to be an essential part of a long-term policy framework for the whole education sector, embracing literacy, information provision and lifelong learning, and co-operating and networking with other education stakeholders, including the local publishing industry. They must be supported by specific legislation and adequately financed by national and local governments.

Setting up and running a professional library can be resource-intensive, but the investment will pay off. And there are many inspiring examples from poorer countries where library services provide practical, creative and cost-effective solutions for creating literate environments. With innovative ideas, they share books and supplementary reading materials with excluded communities, for example using donkeys in Zimbabwe and Columbia, using camels and motor bikes in Kenya, using elephants in India and boats in Benin and Argentina (Krolak, 2005; Sarjant, 2005).

2.3.5 Museums

A museum can play a vital role in supplementing school programmes and lifelong learning. Its visual approach to learning which can appeal to all age groups at all stages of development is its special contribution to the promotion of education and support of a literate environment. For instance, it has been observed that museums have a positive impact on slow learners and poor readers. Teachers reported how well these learners responded to questions after looking at real objects. These learners were able to connect with the artifacts found in the museum (Senteza, 1973).
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There are many practices that museums or galleries can do, such as:

• Offer classes for both children and parents;
• Arrange discussions and lecture sessions in which learners are allowed to teach as part of their practical training;
• Set-up children’s clubs and adult centres organized by the learners or by organizations;
• Create studio space where children can meet regularly during free time to enjoy competitions, quizzes and various kinds of creative activities like modelling, painting or drawing; and
• Organize symposia and discussion groups for the public.

With these activities and more, museums are helping adults as well as children enjoy their cultural heritage. But there is still a great need for museums to extend their influence socially and educationally. In this regard, exhibitions are one instrument amongst many. Travelling exhibitions can be organized in cooperation with museums, cultural agencies, educational authorities, adult education services, government and regional bodies, and groups of artists to reach the unreached and provide a supportive literate environment.

Furthermore, a local museum can be established by collecting traditional tools and equipment made by local people such as traditional musical instruments, cooking equipment, or animal hunting equipment and displayed in a showroom where they can be seen, heard and touched.

In some African countries, museums play a vital role in their educational programmes. In attracting the public to come to the museum, the following activities can be practised: (1) conduct an introductory talk or demonstration in a separate classroom attached to the museum; (2) present film or slide shows; (3) organize a lecture-recital of traditional music and musical instruments to promote understanding and enjoyment of local music; and (4) give tours of the various galleries which may involve a general survey or a detailed practical study of a certain subject by a group or individuals.

In taking the museum to the public, create miniature mobile museums in the form of vans equipped with a source of electric power supply, projectors to show films as well as loan display boxes, films, slides, and specimens for teachers wishing to use them in their teaching.

These and many other examples of services bear testimony to the vital role that museums can play in education and support for the literate environment of any country.

2.3.6 Electronic Literate Environment

In this era of information and communications technology (ICT), modern gadgets and equipment are being developed at a fast rate. The advent of radios, televisions and other audiovisual media aided the development and production of literacy materials. Now, with computers, mobile phones, internet and online services like email and social networking, there are new opportunities to apply them to literacy development and lifelong learning. This new technology can be used to provide information quickly, leading to an electronic literate environment or an e-literate environment.

Among these various developments, it is the internet that has made a big impact on the way people live. It offers so many possibilities that were unthinkable in the past. It has made learning without borders possible. For instance, millions of learning materials in print, audio, or video formats are now being electronically scanned or digitized and uploaded on the internet to be shared with other users.
In August 2010, Google, in collaboration with 18 universities including Harvard, Oxford, and Stanford, announced that it intends to scan all known existing 129,864,880 books resulting in over four billion digital pages equivalent to about two trillion words.

Similarly, companies like Amazon and Apple have started selling books online. Their books can be read on their networked devices like Kindle, iPhone, iPod and iPad. For Amazon’s Kindle, there are already more than 810,000 books available. For Apple devices like iBooks, thousands of books in various languages are also available online. Many classic books are provided for free of charge.

Newspaper companies have also gone online, enabling internet users all over the world to quickly access their websites for headline and breaking news.

Searching for information has also become easier and quicker online. Through search engines, learners can type keywords related to their interest and all available materials related to their search will appear on their screen and can be accessed by them anytime, anywhere either for free or for a fee.

Truly, the internet has become a world wide web, capable of connecting people living in different countries and continents with one another. It is also capable of providing all sorts of data to everyone connected to it. It has become a very rich source of information for the purpose of education and entertainment.

The drawback to this is the need for an internet connection. Those who do not have internet access cannot experience this e-literate environment. And this is a concern raised by many who are worried that this new technology creates a digital divide between rich and poor learners or between developed and developing countries.

In 2009, 64 percent internet penetration was reported in developed countries, while it was only 14 percent in developing countries and 4 percent in China. In addition, mobile phone usage exceeded 100 percent in developing countries while in developing nations it was only 57 percent (Measuring the Information Society 2010, ITU). That is why it has been cautioned that introducing ICT in education without careful deliberation might result in further marginalization of disadvantaged groups who do not have the economic, educational and geographical means to acquire this modern technology (Tinio, 2003).

But nowadays, personal computers, mobile phones, internet access, and other ICT gadgets have become quicker, broader, and more affordable. For instance, the Minister of Human Resource of the Government of India announced in 2010 that a tablet type computer with internet functions will only cost US$20 in the near future. Besides this, the internet can now be accessed through mobile phones and these are cheaper, with longer battery life, can be quickly charged, easier to use, and easier to maintain than traditional desktop computers.
Creating and Sustaining Literate Environments

It cannot be ignored that in the present time, ICT facilities like radio, television, video players, disc players, fixed and mobile phones, computers and internet access have become part of the daily lives of many people including those belonging to disadvantaged groups. ICT users have multiplied day by day. ICT has become a way of life and the most common ICT resource is the mobile hand phone. Out of the world’s population of 6.7 billion, there are about 5.2 billion mobile phone subscribers (ITU, n.d.).

If ICT is now affordable and accessible to people from different socio-economic groups, then educators should take advantage of this situation and make use of ICT to facilitate lifelong learning. Although still in its early stages, worth exploring and pursuing is mobile learning (Trucano, 2009). Mobile phones have become more sophisticated and advanced. They have become hand held computers and not just communication devices. Mobile learning is simply learning delivered through mobile phones. Through this medium, educators can exchange ideas and good practices. Mobile learning has the flexibility of remote “anytime, anywhere” learning (Barker and Gardiner, 2007). In other words, mobile phones may be used not only to disseminate or share information and knowledge but also to facilitate lifelong learning (Thornton and Houser, 2004; UNESCO, 2005b; Cohen, n.d.; Cagiltay and Seferoglu, 2008; Hartnell-Young and Heym, 2008).

Mobile learning or m-learning has a positive impact on learners. For instance, in a three year (2001-2004) mobile learning project sponsored by the European Union, unemployed, underemployed, and homeless youth were provided with mobile phones through which various lessons, such as language courses, were administered. It was found that through this project, they were able to improve their literacy and numerical skills. They remained focused and were able to identify areas where they needed support. It raised their confidence and encouraged independent and collaborative learning. It removed formality from the learning experience and helped combat resistance to using ICT.

Following are some ways to consider creating an e-literate environment:

• Make use of radio and television to provide practical information and as a medium for public discussion;
• Provide television programmes that can support learners with special needs by incorporating visual aids, audio aids, or subtitles;
• Invite partners like mobile phone companies or internet service providers to sponsor the creation of an e-literate environment such as mobile learning; and
• Use more graphics or images and less text script or characters to make learning more enticing.

The development of e-literate environments is also based on the premise that the learners must know how to use ICT gadgets and equipment, especially computers. Schools, community learning centres, and even libraries can conduct training for learners to acquire basic ICT literacy skills. Moreover, since young learners have become

Out of the 6.7 billion world population, about 5.2 billion people are mobile phone subscribers (ITU, n.d.) and so mobile learning is something worth pursuing (Trucano, 2009).
adept in using the internet, it cannot be denied that the internet can also be a risky place for them if they are left unmonitored. Adults should be able to give them guidance or be able to block their access to certain websites. An e-literate environment should be a safe virtual place for all learners who should be taught how to use the internet wisely.

Educators should be active players in the development and spread of ICT instead of being distant observers held hostage by the fear of creating a digital divide between groups of learners. They should be able to realize the potential of ICT as tools for narrowing this perceived digital divide instead of widening it, especially when research findings have shown that the use of ICT in schools can enhance a learner’s academic performance, motivation, engagement, independence, and self-management (Barker and Gardiner, 2007; Schmitt and Wadsworth, 2004; Pasey et al., 2004). Creating an e-literate environment has a huge potential to eradicate illiteracy all over the world. Educators and other stakeholders just need to be creative and innovative in exploring all the possibilities of crafting a stimulating e-literate environment for all learners.
PART THREE

SUSTAINING LITERATE ENVIRONMENTS

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It is a challenge to create rich literate environments. But it is more challenging to sustain them. Sustainability is beyond creation and that is why it is harder to achieve. For learners to be exposed to lifelong learning opportunities there is a need to ensure the sustainability of the literate environments. Creating such environments for only a short period of time is detrimental to the goal of transformative literacy. If these environments cannot be maintained, it is very difficult for learners to keep and improve their literacy abilities.

There is no one formula on how to do this. But there are some strategies that can be considered and these include building supportive socio-cultural and political environments, regularly assessing the state of literate environments, and developing strong public-private partnerships.

### 3.1 Socio-Cultural Environment

Literacy is not only about individuals but also of supportive families and communities. The interest and strong motivation to become literate is closely related to the quality of support, motivation and encouragement given at home, school, work, and the larger community. Research shows that parents who provide stimulating and encouraging learning environments for their children produce children with better reading abilities and school performance.

It has been strongly established that environment plays a central role in one’s learning and behaviour. The family and local community have a critical role in making literacy accessible, necessary and enjoyable not only in early childhood but throughout life.

The availability of literacy supportive materials at home, in communities, libraries, community learning centres and schools has a powerful impact on the development of literate behaviour among learners of different age groups. Although there may be reading materials and a literate environment in a community, when learners are not taught during their early years to value books and develop a reading habit they become non-readers and unmotivated to learn more (Wolfersberger et al., 2004). And so it is important that to develop a reading habit or reading culture, young and adult learners must live in families, work places, and communities that are characterized to be literacy rich environments (RIF, 2006).

Initially, a family constitutes the entire socio-cultural environment of a child and other neo-literate youth and adults. Positive attitudes and guidance of parents and the availability of reading materials at home are the most important factors for motivating lifelong reading habits in children and neo-literate youth and adults.

Needless to say, the earliest learning happens in the home environment and learning continues at home even when the child goes to school. Children’s lifelong habits start to form at an early age and they are primarily influenced by their parents or other family members. The development of reading habits at home depends on the overall frequency and duration of a shared book reading experience, the number of books at home, frequency of shared trips to the library, frequency of parents/caregivers’ private reading and their enjoyment towards reading, among others (Payne et al., 1994).

The learner’s development is further influenced by his/her membership in social groups. Those who belong to the same socio-economic class, profession, or church often share similar opinions, values, and habits. If a group sees reading to be important, then the group can motivate and encourage its own members to read.

There are also particular sub-cultures and socio-cultural practices that impact the development of a reading habit and reading culture. These include language, culture, ethnicity, sex, type of neighbourhood, and the life experiences of individuals. Literacy practices have different meanings for members of different groups. Understanding and attitudes towards literacy are thus conditioned by the literacy used in their home, school, workplace, and community environment.
For some learners, opportunities to engage in pleasurable reading regularly occur at home. For these learners, the supportive atmosphere of a home which values books and reading is probably sufficient to ensure that they too will share these values. For others, schools, libraries, clubs, institutions, or community learning centres can give the best opportunity to read and promote reading habits. Teachers should encourage reading for pleasure and as a pre-requisite for continuing education.

Furthermore, school librarians should be warm and welcoming, helping learners find books appropriate to their reading levels and facilitating pleasure reading. Unfortunately, many young learners only learn the technique of reading at school and often do not experience anything more challenging than textbook-based learning and textbook-based teaching.

A rich literate environment in neighbourhoods and communities will have numerous signs, posters, and handbills as well as literacy promoting institutions such as schools, CLCs, work places, offices, courts, libraries, banks, and training centres. And yet literate environments are more than places offering access to printed matter, written records, visual materials or advanced technologies. Ideally, they should enable the free exchange of information and provide an array of opportunities for lifelong learning to stimulate the literate behaviour (UNESCO, 2005a).

Indeed, whether they are in households, neighbourhoods, workplaces or communities or schools, literate environments influence not only those directly exposed to them but also other members of society.

For an e-literate environment, on the other hand, especially for online learning, there is a need to have a socio-cultural environment that includes conscious censorship of what is being downloaded and uploaded to the internet. Learners should be trained in online ethics. Family members should be able to provide guidance to their children on how to access information. Parents can spend time with their children exploring child-friendly websites. Teachers should show their students the sources of reliable information. The learners should be taught that not all information on the internet is true. ICT, indeed, offers a world of knowledge but knowledge from sources that are unreliable and destructive does not contribute to a positive learning experience.

3.2 Political Environment

The political environment pertains to the legal framework developed to support the creation of literate environments. It also includes active involvement of government officials in advocacy campaigns.

Policy support is needed to have greater investment and effective coordination of effort among different stakeholders in creating literate environments. When a legal framework exists, creation of literate environments will be sustained for a long time even if there are numerous changes in political leadership. Policies do not always have to be national policies. They can include institutional, local, and regional policies.

One hindrance to developing these policies is that policy makers have little knowledge of the importance of literate environments. They are aware of the literacy challenges that their countries are facing, but they often do not seem aware of the connection between literacy development and application and literate environments. As a starting point, policy makers need to answer at least the following questions to get some ideas on the literacy context in their country or community (UNESCO, 2008c):

- What do people read? For what purpose - learning, information, entertainment, communication with others? Who reads?
- What does literacy give access to? Employment and jobs? A better job? New media and communication tools? Capacity to claim rights and services? Essential information for daily life? Capacity to read and understand various administrative forms, charts and procedures to apply for public sector services?
- What do people write? Who writes? How is it published or disseminated? In print or electronically? Who controls the channels of publication and distribution?
- How do people acquire literacy? In what institutions? Who teaches literacy and why?
In what languages and scripts do people acquire literacy? What purpose does literacy in different languages serve? How is literacy acquired in different languages? What are the gender patterns of literacy use in different languages?

Based on this context, policies to be developed can take into account the following areas:

- Use of home language for beginning reading materials
- Incentives or benefits of the private sector when they partner with the public sector
- Provision of free newspapers to schools
- Sale of literacy materials to teachers at a lower or discounted price
- Professional development of staff of the various learning places
- Training of community members

UNESCO has identified some indicators of a supportive political environment as follows:

- Existence of a national authority such as a literacy department or centre to look after literacy work in the country with clear roles and responsibilities
- Existence of policies and strategies to expand literacy programmes and promote continuing education programmes
- Existence of policies and strategies to establish learning centres, libraries and other learning venues in communities/villages
- Rights have been established to access or generate information from newspapers, radio, TV, online media, etc.
- Provision of low cost books and learning materials publication and distribution to rural areas
- Clear strategies for use of ICT including mobile phone, radio, TV and online media for disseminating literacy content
- Active policy to provide literacy learning programmes using mother tongue approaches for ethnic minority groups
- Active policies to provide distance courses and online courses using various channels
• Expenditure on literacy as percentage of total education expenditure
• Foreign grants for literacy received by government and by national NGOs
• Number and percent of literacy personnel at various levels by sex and by expertise
• Availability of a national framework of literacy and continuing education with clear goals, objectives and targets for each of the levels of literacy
• Number and percentage of civil societies and IGOs/NGOs working in the field of literacy and non-formal education (NFE)
• Increasing number of private sector organizations establishing publication houses in different areas of the country

3.3 Assessment

Assessment of a literate environment involves gathering and analyzing information or evidence in order to make informed and consistent judgments about its creation and sustainability. It can determine the existing situation and gaps in a literate environment, which can guide future actions that will meet the needs of learners. It can also examine whether the environment is really supportive of literacy development and application. The results of the assessment can be used to set priorities and take further action for creating a rich and stimulating literate environment. For instance, there might be a need to conduct more advocacy campaigns or develop more policies that will promote the creation of literate environments.

Assessment can be done at the institutional, community, regional, or national level. Regardless of what level the assessment is being made, decisions of concerned stakeholders should always be based on reliable data. Thus there is a need to have a structured assessment that examines standard indicators which can help analyze the status of literate environment in various perspectives. Literate environments can be assessed in five areas: (1) context, (2) availability, (3) accessibility, (4) usage and practice, and (5) sensitizing and capacity-building. Each area should have a set of measurable indicators. The indicators to be developed should have the following characteristics (UNESCO, 2008c):

• Pertinent: Indicators should provide relevant data aiding decision-making.
• Timely: Data to be collected can be made available quickly before they become out-of-date.
• Accurate: Indicators can be correctly calculated and not subject to error.
• Frequency: Indicators can be collected on a regular cycle to measure trends.
• Cost: Indicators should not be too expensive to collect.
Valid: Indicators should be clearly defined so that data to be gathered are the data that are intended to be measured.

Reliable: Indicators should give stable data that do not change too quickly to be captured.

Consistency: Indicators should not result in contradictory responses.

Economy: There should be a minimum number of indicators to avoid the burden of collection.

Independence: Indicators should measure different aspects of a topic.

Transparency: The sources of data and how indicators have been calculated should be clearly communicated.

Comparability: Data to be gathered can be comparable across different cultures and economies.

Some indicators for each of these areas are as follows (UNESCO, 2008c). Specific indicators can be found in Annex 1:

1. **Context** - Context refers to the existence of policies and infrastructure promoting a literate environment. Policy context can help in designing appropriate literacy programmes, selecting appropriate media, methods, or building capacities. Infrastructure includes the set up and use of ICT in facilitating lifelong learning.

2. **Availability** - Availability refers to availability of literacy materials, facilities, and places that provide and promote reading and writing which can create the needed circumstances for maintaining or improving the literacy skills of learners (UNESCO, 2008b). Indicators should be able to measure the number of reading materials and facilities available that are supportive of lifelong learning. Availability should also be measured according to sufficiency, diversity and response to the needs of the learners.

3. **Accessibility** - Accessibility is learners’ access to literacy materials, facilities, and places that provide and promote reading and writing. For example, books may be available but if these are locked up in cabinets, then they are not accessible to learners and learning will not take place. There might be learning places, but if it takes a long time to get there, then accessibility is in question. In other words, usage of these materials and places will be limited if the learners are not given the chance to access adequate information and to fulfil their learning potential from these materials and places. Indicators should include whether literacy materials are readily accessible in the various learning places.

4. **Usage and Practice** - Usage and practice refer to how learners use their literacy skills (reading, writing and calculation) for their own development as well as the development of their community. Usage may include the ability of the learners to read or write personal messages, road signs, names of stores, posters, announcements, notice boards as well as newspapers, magazines, books, manuals, tables and government forms and legal documents. It also includes frequency of visiting various learning places to access literacy materials such as books. Existence of opportunities to use newly acquired literacy skills may include assuming new organizational roles in communities, managing a business, or helping out in community cooperatives which can lead to continued use of literacy skills ensuring retention of the skills.

5. **Capacity-building** - Capacity-building refers to the capacity of individuals, organizations and institutions at all levels to create literate environments. The capacity of individuals, organizations, or institutions is important in sustaining the effort of creating a rich and stimulating literate environment.

Results from the assessment can serve as a means of establishing accountability – and thus increased trust – between government, civil society and even funding agencies. It is clear that different actors have very different purposes for assessment (Aspects of Literacy Assessment, 2005). The analysis of the results from the literate environment assessment can help us find out the existing situation and identify the gaps. This will in turn enable changes in the existing literate environment to ensure that it is developed and sustained in accordance with the needs of the learners.
Creating and Sustaining Literate Environments

Assessment results can also be used to inform policy makers and literacy programme managers on the areas that still need to be strengthened. This will enable them to develop policies and make decisions that are based on facts and evidence.

Besides using surveys to assess literate environments, authentic and participatory assessment can also be conducted to achieve more rich, sufficient and reliable data.

Some good assessment practices involve careful development and selection of appropriate methodologies and instruments, and assessments being done regularly.

3.4 Public-Private Partnerships

The public sector is the primary provider of education services, but many developing nations have governments that are struggling to provide quality education to their citizens. These countries need help or assistance from the private sector to supplement what their governments are already giving. Of course, the private sector has been helping already, often in collaboration with public agencies, while some are working independently. However, there is a need to build more partnerships and strengthen existing partnerships to have a more concerted effort towards creating and sustaining literate environments.

The Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships defines public-private partnerships as a shared venture between the public sector agencies and the private sector bodies, built on the expertise, capability and resources of each partner, to meet the needs of target beneficiaries (NASCIO, 2006). It can be initiated by the public agencies or by the private organizations and “can take various forms and include collaborative (non-legal binding) or contractual (legally binding) agreements” (NASCIO, 2006, p. 3).

For the public sector agencies, potential partners may include the national government, local government departments, schools, community learning centres, and libraries and museums which are operated by the national or local government agencies. Potential partners among private sector bodies include local or international non-government organizations (NGOs), business corporations, publishing houses, media, banks, multinational companies, religious organizations, educational institutions, foundations and other philanthropic associations. Other potential partners are international governmental organizations (IGOs) like the United Nations, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank and SEAMEO.

The societal context differs from country to country and this can affect the building of a strong partnership between the public and private sectors. Nevertheless, there are some factors that should be present in the environment that will contain this relationship. The National Association of State Chief Information Officers (2006) identified eight building blocks for a successful partnership:
The building blocks for a successful public-private partnership include:

1. A commitment from executive leadership - The executive leadership, i.e. the top officials, of the public and private agencies should be fully committed to the partnership.
2. A statutory foundation for partnering - There should be legal frameworks supportive of establishing the partnership.
3. Direct public sector involvement - The public agency must remain actively involved in the project at all levels of development and implementation.
4. A well-crafted plan - There should be a well-crafted plan or extensive and detailed contract that clearly specifies the roles and responsibilities of the public and private partners.
5. Effective communication with stakeholders - The public and private partners should openly and candidly communicate to all stakeholders or interested groups about the establishment of the partnership to avoid misconceptions or resistance to the partnership. A communication strategy should consider when to share information and giving accurate, consistent, reliable, and realistic messages.
6. The right opportunity - Not all problems are ripe for a true partnership. A problem that has a high level of uncertainty, high complexity and is challenging might offer the right opportunity for a partnership.
7. The right partner - The private agency that offers the lowest bid may not necessarily be the right partner. The right partner is one that can offer the "best value."
8. Well-defined management processes - There should be a well-defined management process early in the establishment of the partnership that both public and private sectors agree on.

Meanwhile, Mckinsley and Company (2005), based on its study of the Jordan Education Initiative and other initiatives, identified seven elements of successful public-private partnerships:

1. Attractive governmental, social and geo-strategic conditions – Countries must have the following macro-conditions: a well-respected, transparent and effective government system; demonstrated willingness to undertake reform initiatives; perceived accessibility and openness of culture, society and economy to partnerships; and sufficient local private sector capacity to actively partner with the private sector.
2. Clear vision and objectives, powerfully articulated in appropriate forums – A clear vision is one that has tangible objectives and outputs. This should be articulated by the high profile champions from the public and private sectors in different forums or platforms to raise awareness of the project and probably attract more partners.
3. Motivated partners, whose interests are aligned with initiative, providing sufficient inputs – The project must tap into the interests of partners to produce sustained engagement. Requirements should be clearly communicated to avoid unrealistic expectations and misunderstandings.

4. Programme activities that leverage appropriate partner competences – Partners must come together and identify their respective expertise in order to have effective project delivery.

5. Well-supported coordinating mechanisms – There should be a full time project management office staffed with people from the public and private partners that will coordinate activities and maintain communication between or among partners.

6. Consistent monitoring and evaluation – There should be a system that will monitor and evaluate the inputs, outputs and outcomes of the project in order to make improvements on the project design or implementation.

7. Effective governance to set strategic direction and align partners – A steering committee should be established at the start of the project to ensure decision-making on major strategic issues and partners is always aligned within the programme framework.

In other words, to build a strong public-private partnership to create and sustain a rich literate environment, there should be a setting that can nurture and strengthen the partnership and people, from top to bottom, who will be fully committed and supportive of the partnership.

Below are examples of the roles of the public and private sectors that can strengthen their partnership:

Public Sector
- Provide policy and regulatory support.
- Express general appeal and call on the private sector agencies to extend their assistance to their government in solving their country's priority problems. The private sector should be reminded of their social responsibility.
- Help identify the target beneficiaries (learners or communities) for the proposed support.
- Give financial and business rewards and incentives to those who help.
- Create an overall enabling environment.
- If necessary, take part in equity sharing both in kind or cash.
- Ensure accountability, lessons sharing and support for replication of good practices.

Private Sector
- Assess the context, needs, people, environment.
- Review policy and regulatory frameworks and identify the relevant parts under which they can respond, plan, participate and extend support.
- Conduct feasibility studies.
- Make people realize the importance of extending support and participation.
- Design and propose initiatives.
- Get administrative clearance.
- Establish and sign contracts.
- Supply the planned financial, technical and human resources to implement the initiative.
- Monitor and give feedback.
- Ensure accountability and transparency in using given resources.
- Ensure flexibility in planning and resource allocation.
- Help organizational development and local capacity-building for taking increased responsibility and future ownership.
- Make a phase-out plan and keep follow-up support
- Make a happy ending with added value in literacy and educational development of the people and the geographical area.
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The following caselets and guides illustrate rich literate environments and how these can transform the lives of learners. This section includes exemplary examples of literacy activities that are currently being implemented in different countries. These examples of good practices are a source of inspiration and provide insights to practitioners and policy makers on how creation of sustainable rich literate environments is possible.

4.1 The Road to a Lively School Library in Lao PDR: Action with Lao Children (ALC)

Action with Lao Children (ALC) has been dedicated to improve the educational environment especially the reading environment of children in Lao PDR since 1982.

ALC (1) publishes books in the Lao language by local authors and illustrators, (2) distributes books by setting up school libraries, (3) builds the capacity of school teachers, government staff, and instructors of teacher training schools, and (4) offers assistance for Children’s Cultural Centres where children can read, learn music, art and traditional Lao dance and drama which are not taught in schools.

When ALC was established nearly 30 years ago, there was only one library, the National Library and one bookstore in Vientiane, the capital. There were no books available for children. Even today, children in remote areas have a limited opportunity to read and write in their daily lives. In urban areas where books and libraries are more accessible, the vast majority of teachers and parents still do not recognize the value of reading. Not only children, but adults are not familiar with books or libraries since they did not have access to them during their childhood.

Teachers are often excessively dedicated to locking a library door or book shelves because they are afraid of losing the books. Another problem is the transfer or turnover of trained teachers. As a trained teacher leaves her/his school due to the transfer order, maternity leave or retirement, a library can be abandoned.

In order to tackle the first challenge, the teachers’ fear for losing books, a book exchange system has been introduced. Every book in the library has a date card in order to record names of borrowers and dates of check-out/in. Every time a book is lent out, a column on its date card is filled with the borrower’s name.

When a school has three cards with the borrowers’ names on both sides, they can exchange the card with a new book from a local government supervisor or ALC. Hence, the more books children lend and the more full date cards a school accumulates the more new books it can obtain. Teachers are no longer hesitant about lending books, because they can obtain more books even if a few books are lost.

The ALC introduced this exchange system as a stepping stone for self-sustained operation of school libraries. In most cases, schools in Lao PDR receive libraries, books, and training as aid from non-governmental organizations or other aid agencies. But this often fails to create ownership among teachers. A budget for purchasing books is not allocated for schools. ALC attempts to prepare schools to obtain books in return for some other costs or efforts they provide. ALC works with local government supervisors in the operation of book exchange and follow-up of schools’ reading activities, so that schools can obtain new books and assistance locally and promptly.

Furthermore, ALC changed its training workshops after finding many abandoned libraries when trained teachers leave. Now, ALC trainers travel to each school and deliver training to all the teachers including the principle, rather than training just two teachers from each school in the area. With this new approach, many teachers share the responsibility for reading activities and they can avoid the discontinuity of service even if a few trained teachers leave. Though this approach is a costly and time-consuming way for capacity-building as it requires ALC staff to constantly travel to remote schools, it is more effective in the long term.

Photo 22: Date cards of books
As teachers feel more comfortable with reading activities and lending books, many home-room teachers take a set of books to their classroom, use them as supplementary books during their classes and lend them before pupils go home. Many schools increased the use of books especially at those schools where books are kept in their teachers’ office because there is no spare room for a library.

ALC publishes picture books and kamishibai (picture-story shows) with rhyming poems which Lao children and teachers grow up with as part of their rich oral tradition. While untangling teachers’ difficulties and apprehension about the unaccustomed activity—reading, it triggers a joy of reading among the children creating feelings of “hak am” – love to read in Lao, a nickname for the school libraries ALC supports.

4.2 Transformative Literacy: The Case of Babo Pampay Usman

Babo Pampay Usman is a Muslim woman from Maguindanao, Philippines. She grew up to be a non-literate and was not allowed to go to school because of her gender. She started a family. She is a mother to Tohamie, a son, and Suad, a daughter.

She joined an adult literacy class being conducted in her community, Katuli. She was very hesitant to enrol at first for fear of being embarrassed by her illiteracy, but her strong desire to learn overcame her fear.

1 Babo Pampay Usman was a learner of Notre Dame Foundation for Charitable Activities, Inc.—WED Philippines.
A fast and eager learner, she learned to write her name in just a few days and read simple sentences in her local language in six weeks. She was even elected as class officer. When she graduated, she received awards in communication, mathematics, and leadership. She can now go to the market without a companion, read letters, understand food labels, and read prices.

Having literacy skills also empowered her to assert herself and seek a better future for her children. For instance, while listening to a programme of a local radio station, DXMS, Babo heard that a local bank was offering college scholarships for young girls and boys. Seeing this as a great opportunity for her daughter who had just graduated from high school, she immediately went to the local bank and inquired about the scholarship. Initially, the security guard would not allow Babo and her daughter to enter the bank and talk with the manager, but because of her persistence she finally was able to talk with the manager. Her daughter was given an application form and was allowed to take the qualifying examination, which Suad passed.

In the words of Babo, “My becoming literate has made me a strong and empowered woman, giving me many options in life. I listen to news, drama and announcements over the radio, I now understand symbols and images. All these help me to continue learning for life. My literacy allowed me to go confidently to a bank to get an application for my daughter to get a college scholarship. But most specially, I travelled long hours by plane to be the Guest Speaker during the 2003 United Nations Literacy Decade Formal Launching, in the UN Assembly Hall, New York, USA. This for me is freedom from bondage of ignorance.”

4.3 Room to Read Programme: Local Language Publishing

Room to Read (RtR) established the Local Language Publishing (LLP) Programme in Nepal in 2003 in response to the need for local language books in RtR libraries. It is now being implemented in eight other countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Viet Nam, Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, Zambia and South Africa). Through this programme, RtR works with local authors and illustrators to develop new culturally relevant children’s books that are distributed to RtR libraries. Many of the books contents are adapted from local folktales and stories originating from writing competitions and writers’ workshops. They contribute to the creation of stimulating literate environments in schools and communities by filling the gaps in children’s literature.

The RtR LLP programme aims for children and teachers to have access to a wide variety of reading materials that encourage learner-teacher engagement through library and classroom activities. The development of these books requires training for both the authors and illustrators and the teachers who use them.
RtR works with authors and illustrators to develop concepts for new books, field tests them with children to gauge relative interest in the content, and revises them to develop a final copy. Through this process, RtR identifies emerging local authors and illustrators and builds their capacity to produce contents for children's books.

In order to expand the talent pool of emerging writers and illustrators and source content for children's titles, RtR implements the following capacity-building initiatives:

• Training to improve the skills of local writers and illustrators that will guide them in developing creative stories for children designed to enhance students' learning of classroom subject matter;
• Training for writers and illustrators to develop their understanding of how to integrate gender-based themes into children's books;
• Training for teachers and librarians to build their understanding of how to identify high-quality children's books for classroom learning;
• Promotional events, including writing competitions, to encourage young writers and illustrators to create children's books and to raise awareness within the community about children's book writing and the importance of literacy; and
• Hiring opportunities for local talent to create books and reading materials for Room to Read libraries.

These activities help ensure that libraries and schools have books and materials that appeal to a young audience; that local writers and illustrators have the skills they need to enter the field of children's book writing; and that local communities understand the value of supplying their schools with books that appeal to young readers.

The following are samples of recently published titles written by local authors and illustrated by local artists, some as young as 15 years old:

Who Makes the Best Papaya Salad? (Lao PDR) The animals in the forest take pride in their own – often secret – recipes. But in order to make the most delicious papaya salad, a traditional dish in Lao PDR, the animals need to learn to work together. (Author: Ms. Manivanh Siphonesay; Illustrator: Mr. Nivong Sengsakoun)

The Red Flower (Nepal) A rabbit froze in the cold weather. Nearby, a fox and a vulture argue about who will take the rabbit away. Will the rabbit manage to escape? This book was developed during a Room to Read writers’ workshop held in collaboration with the Danish Writers Association and the Nepal Society for Children's Literature. (Author: Mr. Yashu Shrestha; Illustrator: Bhisma K.C.)

The Snake Who Wants to Buy a Shoe (Cambodia) This charming picture book tells the story of a little snake who asks the crab, the spider, the cricket, the frog, and a little girl to estimate how much he should spend if he only needs to buy one shoe. This book introduces everyday math concepts to children. (Author: Mr. Sun Try, a senior student of Khmer Literature; Illustrator: Mr. Yuom Kosal)

Traditional Riddles (Viet Nam) This book promises to engage and delight Vietnamese children in riddle-solving. A compilation of humorous folk riddles passed on for generations. (Compiler: Ms. Le Phuong Lien; Illustrator: Do Bien Thuy)

Mini’s Rainbow (Bangladesh) Mini the kitten wakes up one morning and sadly sees that the rainbow had lost its colours. To bring the rainbow back to life, Mini seeks the help of the blue sky, the rooster, the kingfisher, the mustard field and the orange tree. (Author: Shaheen Aziz; Illustrator: Sabyasachi Hazra)

Baby Fish Goes to School, 2nd ed. (Sri Lanka) Originally published in 2006, this is the story of a baby fish who wants to go to school but discovers...
he can’t because he lives in water. Written by a 15-year old girl, the story won an RtR writing competition and was illustrated by a 17-year old student. The new edition has been updated by the author and artist and published with separate Sinhala and Tamil language versions. It is aimed at beginners with less text and more basic vocabulary. It also includes an illustrated learning activity to teach about other animals that live in water.

4.4 The Case of Chinit Chou, an RtR LLP Author

Twenty-four year old Chinit Chou, a primary school teacher of Khmer literature and librarian at the Regional Teacher Training Centre, came all the way from the northwestern province of Battambang to attend Room to Read’s Writers and Illustrators Workshop.

His journey from teacher to children’s book author began in 1999 when he won a UNICEF short story for children writing competition. Ten years later, while attending his class at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, he learned about Room to Read’s workshops.

“I just wanted to share my ideas and learn from others. I learned a lot, learned how to write stories, especially the kind that would promote reading. I learned about incorporating a gender lens in developing books. I appreciate the workshop style, where published authors and emerging talents like me share ideas. The knowledge I have gained at the workshop has inspired me to continue writing educational stories for children.”

Chinit’s stories include non-fiction material for children on common breakfast meals in Cambodia and two fiction stories that are linked to words learned in early grade textbooks, about a duck trying to fly a kite, and another about the sun joining forest animals in a game of hide and seek.

In 2010, Chinit began co-facilitating RtR workshops and is now training other writers and illustrators in Cambodia.

4.5 Reading Programmes: DEAR and SSR

Reading programmes such as Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) and Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) started in the United States to develop the habit of reading for enjoyment. Some learners may not have “quiet times” at home to enjoy reading on their own, so they never read entire books in their own personal way. During silent reading in school, they can choose their own books, read for their own pleasure, re-read favourite books, discuss books with their peers and friends, exchange opinions on good books to read and share their books in a number of informal ways.
4.6 READ Global

Rural Education and Development (READ) Global is an international non-profit organization focused on making rural communities in Bhutan, India and Nepal viable places for people to learn and prosper. Back in 1991, READ Nepal launched a grassroots-level organization to address the problem of illiteracy with the creation of its first Community Library and Resource Centre (CLRC). To date, READ Global has built more than 50 CLRCs in Bhutan, India and Nepal, seeded more than 50 for-profit enterprises, and impacted the lives of more than 800,000 rural villagers.

Each CLRC is owned and managed by a local community which has the legal authority to conduct programmes according to the needs of its members. Each CLRC is self-sustainable as each has locally relevant businesses attached to it, such as ambulance services, a furniture factory, store front rentals, cable television, a student hostel or a souvenir shop, which generate income to sustain the library.

Villages contribute between 10-15 percent of the total cost of the project along with land and labour and READ Global makes up the rest, such as providing professional training and a first stock of appropriate reading and literacy materials. Community ownership of the for-profit businesses and the CLRCs ensures that the villagers have a clear stake in the success of both.

CLRCs give services to all sectors of the community, with a special focus on women and children. Apart from housing an attractive library, CLRCs can have a meeting hall, an early childhood development centre, an audiovisual section and a computer laboratory. To establish itself as a real development centre, each CLRC partners with different local and national organizations to conduct programmes on literacy, economic development, health, vocational training programmes, and other issues.

Creating literate environments is a key objective of READ Global CLRCs, by including books for the newly literate, by conducting literacy classes in collaboration with different governmental and non-governmental organizations and by including materials for self-training and retention of literacy skills. As becoming literate is just a start, newly literate members of the community are involved in different kinds of CLRC activities where they can use and improve their literacy skills, such as income-generating programmes, livelihood development, saving and credit programmes, and computer literacy.

For more information visit www.readglobal.org

4.7 Developing a Reading Culture through Experiential Learning: The ‘Aas Pass ki Khoj’ Pilot Project

The ‘Aas Pass ki Khoj’ (Discover your Surroundings) pilot project was taken up in India under the Education for All initiative to engage students in experiential learning and strengthening their literacy skills. The programme enabled students to delve into their own surroundings and in the process create a literate and learning environment for themselves. The programme focused on a discovery approach, headed by children, to understand the local dynamics of people, water, forest and land resources, their effect on day-to-day living and the overall development of their village.

The project was based on the premise that all children are endowed with basic abilities and skills. If they are given an opportunity, they have the potential to grow into eager and curious learners.

The pilot focused on lower secondary school students who formed teams of 10 to 15 persons with local animators and teachers. The teachers and students were provided with an orientation of the project, agreed on the tasks that needed to be fulfilled and, from them, students defined their own group activities such as exploring, interviewing and meeting people in their local village.

Through the process, groups met with senior citizens and community members to discuss the issues and provide a basis for observing and
monitoring progress. They carried out village mapping activities, administered a questionnaire to elicit details about the socio-cultural background of the community, visited places of historical importance in their community, collected and documented information and data, and consolidated findings in book form.

The experience had a positive impact on the reading culture of the community. Students, for example, developed skills in analytical thinking and organizing knowledge, communication and reading and writing. The project also gave teachers an opportunity to move beyond traditional teacher-centred learning practices. They were able to act as facilitators in the learning process by supporting students in the exploration of their community and reading and writing. The project also provided an opportunity for interaction with the community, created interest and a need for literacy and motivated the community to come forward to help students improve their village.

4.8 Bidayuh MLE Program, Sarawak, Malaysia

The Bidayuh Multilingual Education (MLE) programme aimed to provide Bidayuh children with a firm foundation for and a head start in their education by starting education in their mother tongues, then gradually introducing Bahasa Malaysia and English. In January 2007, seven pilot Bidayuh-language playschools were launched, spread out though the five Bidayuh language regions. In January 2009, five pilot MLE kindergartens (and one supplementary Bidayuh kindergarten programme) were launched in the same villages that were already hosting the pilot playschools. In January 2010, three playschools were started in new villages.

The Bidayuh MLE programme consists of playschool and kindergarten Year 1. The activities for each level are as follows:

**Stage 1: MLE Playschool (3-4 years old)**

The language of instruction is entirely in the local Bidayuh language (i.e. Rara, Salako, Bau Bidayuh, Biatah or Bukar-Sadung). Children who are three years old can join, and they benefit from going through the whole curriculum again when they are four years old. Both skills and knowledge are acquired through guided play and discovery activities. In particular, the children develop confidence and ability in their mother tongue by interacting with the teacher who tells stories. They also do pre-reading activities such as learning to distinguish sounds at the beginning and the end of words. Rather than just repeating after the teacher, the children are fully interested and engaged in the learning process.

The children also have the opportunity to begin learning some cultural skills, such as dancing and playing musical instruments. Here is where the older people in the community have an opportunity to pass on their traditional skills and wisdom.

**Stage 2: MLE Kindergarten Year 1 (5 years old)**

The children who are most ready to benefit from this are five-year-olds who have first been through the MLE playschool. Children coming into it without any previous schooling need time to catch up. The kindergarten year 1 level, has a heavy academic load: children learn to read and write in Bidayuh. There is a story track with theme-related listening stories and big books (shared reading), and a primer track with primers (which are quite substantial, about 200 pages). Also included is mathematics (for which a mathematics workbook has been prepared), science, health, physical education and arts and culture – all of it in the local Bidayuh language. Bahasa Malaysia is orally introduced through a variety of activities and games. A curriculum with daily activities for all subjects was specially developed for this programme.

The programme for kindergarten year 2 and primary education is still being developed depending on availability of financial resources. As of now, the programme implementers are strengthening what is currently being offered.

The Bidayuh MLE Programme showed positive results at the end of its first year of implementation. The Bidayuh children could read and do simple arithmetic with understanding. They were able to learn cultural skills such
4.9 ALADIN Toolkit

The Adult Learning Documentation and Information Network (ALADIN) of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning has developed a toolkit for setting up basic documentation centres and libraries on adult learning and literacy. The toolkit gives full-text access to relevant training manuals in basic library management, various cataloguing tools and tailor-made cataloguing software, lists of donation agencies for bookstand computer equipment, as well as funding sources for basic libraries. All these can be downloaded from www.unesco.org/education/aladin/toolkit.

4.10 A Network of Rural Libraries in Cajamarca, Peru

In the District of Cajamarca in Peru, a network of over 600 rural libraries was formed to achieve a combination of cultural and learning objectives. Community members wanted to learn more about their culture and ensure that it thrives. They also wanted to produce reading materials based on the indigenous knowledge of the Andes.

The network does not view oral culture as an obstacle to the development of reading habits and so the approach of the network is to strengthen oral culture.

The reading method of the Cajamarca communities involves a social activity which includes reading a few pages and then discussing what has been read with others in order to jointly assess how to apply the ideas in the local environment. The rationale for this activity is that the relationship between the reader and the book does not have to be individualistic, but should be rooted in the culture and environment of the Andes people as an integrative socio-cultural process.

4.11 Reading Room of Shree Shanti Primary School, Nepal

The Reading Room is the flagship programme of Room to Read. It establishes children’s libraries in communities where poverty, ethnicity or other social and cultural barriers put children at a significant educational disadvantage. Its primary goal is to help children develop a lifelong habit of reading. There are currently more than 10,000 Reading Room libraries established in nine countries – Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Lao PDR, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam, South Africa and Zambia.

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The reading room programme aims to promote a habit of reading among children by (1) increasing student and teacher access to and use of libraries; and (2) improving school administration, librarian, and/or teacher capacity to ensure the libraries are well run.

The reading rooms come in all shapes and sizes, but all share a common element – local country teams work directly with their communities to determine how best to create a child-friendly, print-rich environment and provide students with access to children’s books. Room to Read then co-invests with these communities over a period of three years to provide books and other learning materials, train teachers and librarians, and work with schools to ensure there is time and space for children to regularly access books.

One of the communities that implemented the Reading Room Programme is Shree Shanti Primary School which is located in the Palpa District, a part of the Lumbini Zone within the Western Region of Nepal. The school has approximately 98 students with six teachers ranging from early childhood to fifth grade. The community and the school have very few resources. However, the school provides a high quality education to its students because its school leaders and educators are actively engaged in the learning of their students. They encourage development of critical thinking skills using a child-centred approach and cultivate a positive attitude towards reading.

Before launching their reading room, the Shree Shanti school leadership, educators and community members jointly created a Library Management Committee. The Committee meets frequently to discuss various issues such as increasing community involvement and how to use its library fund.

With school leadership support, Shree Shanti educators also meet monthly to plan library activities, discuss library updates and set literacy goals. This resulted in better communication between the reading room librarian and educators regarding library activities, library books being used in classrooms, and consistent support and encouragement for students during scheduled library time.

Now in its third year of implementation, all six classrooms at Shree Shanti have 45 minutes per week in the reading room library with an average checkout of 285 books from the library per quarter.

4.12 Classroom Library: RtR Model

In 2008, Room to Read began looking for alternative ways to have a more direct impact on literacy acquisition for students beyond its traditional Reading Room library model. It piloted the classroom library model in 3 countries: Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam. This model has grown into a viable model in 5 additional countries – Bangladesh, India, Lao PDR, Nepal and South Africa – with 860 classroom libraries currently in operation.
The RtR classroom libraries consist of small collections of age and reading level appropriate books that are provided directly in the classroom. These libraries are located in at least one classroom per grade and consist of 100-250 books depending on the number of children in the grade. Teachers are trained on how to manage the books, integrate books into classroom activities and support recreational reading. Training, monitoring and ongoing support is then provided for the following three years.

These libraries perform four functions:

1. **Work directly with teachers** – Classroom libraries provide an entry point for RtR staff to work directly with teachers and help them integrate reading in their class.

2. **Respond to infrastructure constraints** – Since classroom libraries are located within the classrooms, this set-up makes them a very viable option for schools that do not have space for a separate library. This also ensures that the books have a long-term home and will not be moved due to increased student enrolment.

3. **Focus on reading** – Classroom libraries provide children with easy access to books and reading throughout the school day, thus making it easier for students to read whenever they choose.

4. **Engage key stakeholders** – Classroom libraries allow direct access to teachers who have the most important and substantive contact with students. In addition, because they provide resources directly to the classroom and train all teachers in a school, classroom libraries are quickly gaining recognition from government representatives as a potential model for replication.

Through the experience of pilot classroom libraries over the last couple of years, RtR country teams have identified three components of successful classroom libraries to ensure their effective implementation:

1. **High quality and appropriate resources** - Establishing a classroom library requires the provision of several types of resources to schools, including:
   a. Books at the appropriate reading level for the children in each classroom
   b. Supplementary reading materials
   c. Activity sheets that provide teachers guidance on doing reading activities with children
   d. Posters and charts to help create a print-rich environment
   e. Bookshelves at the appropriate height for the students
   f. Mats located near the books

2. **Participatory and engaging training** - An integral component of running successful classroom libraries is developing the capacity of educators through participatory. Training gives special focus on how educators can utilize books in their classrooms through engaging reading activities.

3. **Monitoring and support** - Providing ongoing monitoring and support to classroom libraries is also critical to their long term success. The key method in which monitoring and support are delivered is through...
ongoing, quality teacher coaching that provides opportunities for reflection, practice, learning and problem-solving on managing libraries, integrating books into the teaching process and school day, and working with students to make them independent readers.

4.13 Community Reading Centres in Indonesia

In Indonesia, the policies and development programmes of Community Reading Centres (CRCs) are designed according to the social, economic and geographic characteristics of the communities being served. For example, a CRC may target community villages in coastal areas or mountain ranges where members are mostly fishermen or farmers, respectively. These people may need knowledge about their jobs and a CRC can be established to address their needs. On the other hand, a CRC based on a community around industrial areas or urban areas may need specific skills to get employed or start a small business. And so training may be on skills development or entrepreneurship.

In 2009, more CRCs were built to facilitate a reading culture development in Indonesia. There were 2,681 CRCs in 2005, 3,505 CRCs in 2006 and in 2009 the total increased to 4,320 CRCs. The CRC development programme has been further realized after the facilitation of the national budget 2006 establishing village-based and urban-based CRCs.

The number of CRCs surpassed the target of the “Strategic Planning of Ministry of National Education (2005-2009)” which was to establish 500 CRCs each year. The reason for this was the interest and involvement of the communities to develop a reading culture in their localities. Because of this success, the national government is now planning for the establishment of mobile CRCs targeting isolated communities in far-flung areas.

The national government has also thought of an innovative strategy integrating CRCs within public places in a community. Many of these places have the potential to be CRCs such as coffee shops, department stores, mosques, churches, or bus stations. The government will also use various media promoting reading as a way to improve the quality of human resources. It will also use CRCs to revive areas in Indonesia devastated by natural disasters such as Mentawi, which was shattered by a tsunami, and the Merapi mountain area which suffered a volcanic eruption. Through CRCs, it is hoped that people from these areas will be able to sustain literate environment under difficult conditions.

4.14 The Museum of Niamey

The Museum of Niamey organizes different kinds of activities every day for the public. Below is an example of a one-week schedule:

Monday: Legends, stories and historical narratives are introduced and commented on by Niger radio and television staff. The children discuss what they have heard and retell these stories as they understood them. Their versions of the stories are recorded and broadcasted by Radio Niger.

Tuesday: Practical hygiene and first-aid courses are given by the Niger Red Cross.

Wednesday: Introduction to the spoken arts and dance, music appreciation, drawing and free painting courses are taught by the Franco-Niger Cultural Centre.

Thursday: The American Cultural Centre sponsored the showing of educational films. The theme of each film was explained to the children beforehand. After the film, the children after the film express their opinions.

Friday: Some instructors from training and education centres teach boys various do-it-yourself techniques that need a minimum number of tools.

Saturday: Master-craftsmen talk about traditional techniques and handicrafts.
The above activities were conducted in the mornings. The afternoon activities were devoted to reading and writing classes for illiterate children, which were handled by a teacher assigned to the museum.

### 4.15 Literacy for a Billion: Same Language Subtitling on TV in India

#### Problem
There are an estimated 650 million literate people in India. In reality, half the so-called ‘literates,’ more than 300 million people, can best be called ‘early-literates.’ They cannot read, for example, newspaper headlines.

#### Goal
The goal of the Same Language Subtitling (SLS) initiative, pioneered by Planet Read (USA and India) and the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, is to transition over 300 million people in India, from a state of early-reading, to functional and fluent reading. SLS could also be implemented in many other countries saddled with the problem of weak reading skills among a large number of citizens.

#### Solution
Same Language Subtitling (SLS) is simply the idea of subtitling the lyrics of film songs (or music videos) in the ‘same’ language they are sung in. It is a deceptively simple idea for what it achieves. Over the last decade, SLS has woven regular reading practice into the lives of 150 million early-readers in India.

SLS has been implemented using existing Bollywood film songs on TV, in 10 languages: Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Oriya, and Punjabi. A Hindi song is shown with the lyrics subtitled in Hindi, Tamil songs with Tamil subtitles, and so on. What you hear is what you read. The subtitles are designed to change the colour of every word in perfect timing with the song.

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3 Source: www.planetread.org
Research studies have consistently found that exposure to SLS leads to a measurable improvement in reading ability. Reading skills are practiced automatically and subconsciously as a part of staple entertainment already consumed by millions. SLS is popular among viewers and known to improve TV programme ratings.

Cost

SLS is cost-effective. On a Hindi program: One US dollar gives 30 minutes of reading practice per week to 5,000 people for one year.

Partners

Planet Read and IIM Ahmedabad have nationally implemented SLS in partnership with Doordarshan (National TV). Major donors have included: Google Foundation, Sir Ratan Tata Trust, Development Marketplace (World Bank), DELL Giving, and the Department of School Education and Literacy, Government of India.

4.16 Household Survey Module: An Attempt to Assess Literate Environments

The Household Survey-based Literacy Module consists of a set of questions that can be attached to existing household surveys, thus making it a cost-effective way to generate more reliable literacy statistics. Through the use of the module, survey responses will provide more detailed information about characteristics and factors that underlie differences in the acquisition and use of literacy skills.

UNESCO, with funding from the Japanese Funds-in-Trust (JFIT), has developed this module to help social surveyors plan effectively and conduct household surveys. The module is primarily meant for statistical and planning units dealing with literacy within education ministries and for statisticians in charge of household survey design within national statistical offices (NSOs) of developing countries. Government officials who are concerned with literacy and education, survey managers, programme officers of relevant international agencies, local and/or international experts in literacy and education and non-governmental organizations will also find this publication useful.

The module contains a set of questions to collect information about the literate environment, access to facilities, stock of reading materials, and use of literacy skills by household members. It was developed to respond to the countries’ need for literacy statistics, which they can use for policy formulation, and to assess and monitor their progress towards national and international literacy-related goals.

Rather than just asking respondents if they are literate or not, the literacy module asks a series of questions that examine literacy levels and gather information about the literacy environment and use of literacy skills in a respondent’s daily life. Module results ultimately provide a better sense of a country’s literacy levels, and do so in a cost-effective way. The important point to note in this context is the fact that the module does not use any cognitive testing for assessing an individual’s literacy skill level. Instead, it captures details about the literacy environment and an individual’s behaviour in accessing and using available resources in daily life.

4.17 Alternative Learning System for Adult Learners, Philippines

The Bureau of Alternative Learning System of the Department of Education of the Philippines identifies three levels of literacy. It starts with Basic Literacy or Level 0 to Level 2 (equivalent to Grade 1 and 2), then the Elementary Level or Level 3 to 4 (equivalent to Grade 3 to 6), and finally Secondary Level, from Level 5 onwards.

Basic Literacy level learners are aided by adult facilitators who are well trained on the concepts, methodologies and approaches of adult
Through applications of adult learning principles, the facilitators encourage their learners to enjoy using learned literacy skills in their daily life and eventually progress to the self-learning level which is self-directed, independent and includes motivation to learn for life. The Alternative Learning System (ALS) highlights the fact that literacy and learning is a continuing process of learning to learn and not only “learning to read but reading to learn”. This in effect is the meaning of the lifelong learning continuum, that learning is a continuing and constant quest for knowledge and self-development.

In the ALS, effective non-formal education is learner-centred and learner-lead, where the adult facilitator through their skilful handling and facilitation of learning class activities provides guided instruction towards literacy skills building and enhancement. The love for lifelong learning and its many benefits requires teaching that is integrated and not segmented, holistic and flexible, inculcating new attitudes and mindsets towards nurturing a love for learning.

Unlike traditional formal education that is anchored on rote learning, of memorization and accepted patterns of structured learning, the Alternative Learning System seeks to transform learners, helping them “to learn to learn”. Because they are adults, they are taught to be creative, critical, reflective and analytical learners. The experience of ALS practitioners is that in many literacy classes, adults are more interested in practical learning that can be applied immediately in their daily lives because they are benefits-focused persons. They are motivated because they desire practical solutions and relevant lessons.

Furthermore, it has been observed in the Philippines that sometimes adult literacy completers revert back to being non-literate because of lack of access to sustaining learning materials or reading materials. Meanwhile, successful adult learners exhibit strong motivation and interest to constantly use, repeat, apply, and practice their literacy skills. For these adult learners, any reading material they see, even old newspapers or magazines discarded and used for bought items in the public markets, even the old used books of their children, are carefully kept and used as reading materials. They love to write, read and compute, because for them literacy and education are the means to greater learning and better lives.
PART FIVE

CONCLUSION
This resource pack has been developed to raise the awareness of policymakers and practitioners about the importance of creating and sustaining literate environments which provide the opportunity for learners of all ages to develop the literacy skills for all facets of their daily lives.

The literacy challenge facing the world today is to create and sustain literate environments. The definition of literacy has been expanded to include the recent realization that literate people can lapse back to illiteracy thus showing that literacy is part of a continuum of lifelong learning wherein learners hopefully move forward from one end to the other. The placement of learners on the literacy continuum is directly related to the type of literate environments they are exposed to.

The resource pack also discusses the underlying vision of rich literate environments which develop strong reading habits among learners serving them as a gateway for more acquisition and application of learning. Examples of literacy materials and activities that can be made available and accessible in different physical environments such as homes, schools, community learning centres, libraries, and museums are given. The potential of electronic-literate environments to address the literacy challenge is noted.

But beyond the creation of literate environments, it is stressed that rich and stimulating literate environments should be sustained over time to ensure that there is a continuous occurrence of learning. Such environments can be sustained if learners live in supportive socio-cultural environments; if communities have strong political environments which have well-thought out literacy and literate environment policies and fully involved policymakers; and if public and private sectors build strong partnerships with one another to attain a common literacy goal.

The resource pack also includes caselets and guides to illustrate how some organizations have successfully helped create and sustain literate environments in the different countries they have targeted.

The resource pack is not exhaustive. Its purpose is to encourage policymakers and practitioners to create and sustain literate environments as crucial inputs to developing human resources and empowering communities. These collective efforts will help us move one step closer to the shared global goal of enabling all children and adults to acquire the literacy and nurturing skills needed to maximize their potential, improve their quality of life and realize their dreams and aspirations.
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Sample Indicators of Rich Literate Environments

Some sample indicators for five areas (context, availability, accessibility, usage and practice, capacity-building) are listed below. These indicators can be applied at different levels depending on who is commissioning the assessment. They can also be scaled down to minimize difficulty and cost if assessment is done at the community or local level.

1. Context

Policy Indicators
- Existence of a national authority such as a literacy department or centre to look after literacy works in the country with clear roles and responsibilities
- Existence of policies and strategies to expand literacy programmes and promote continuing education programmes
- Existence of policies and strategies to establish learning centres, libraries and other learning venues in communities/villages
- Rights have been established to access or generate information from newspapers, radio, TV, online media, etc.
- Provision of low cost books and learning materials publication and distribution to rural areas
- Clear strategies on the use of ICT including mobile phone, radio, TV and online media for disseminating literacy content
- Active policies to provide literacy learning programmes using mother tongue approaches for ethnic minority groups
- Active policies to provide distance courses and online courses using various channels
- Expenditure on literacy as percentage of total education expenditure
- Foreign grants for literacy received by government and by national NGOs
- Number and percentage of literacy personnel at various levels by sex and by expertise

Infrastructure Indicators
- Availability of a national framework of literacy and continuing education with clear goals, objectives and target for each of the levels of literacy
- Number and percentage of civil societies and IGOs/NGOs working in the field of literacy and non-formal education (NFE)
- Increasing number of private sector publication houses established in different areas of the country

- Number of learning centres, libraries and other learning venues by location
- Number and percent distribution of districts covered by telecommunication and internet connectivity
- Geographical expansion of radios and TV stations providing learning content
- Number and percent of schools with library facilities
- Number and percent of villages with access to libraries, bookshops and newsstands
- Increasing number of book distribution kiosks established by location
- Increased number of literacy and reading promotion projects by types of implementers
- Existence of a system for digitizing information in libraries and the existence of digital libraries
- Proportion of schools with computer labs
- Proportion of learning centres with computer labs
- Number of personal computers per 1,000 habitants
- Percent of localities with public internet access centres by number of inhabitants
- Percent of households with internet access
- Internet subscribers per 1,000 inhabitants
2. Availability
• Percent of households with books available at their home by location
• Number of households with subscriptions to newspapers/magazines
• Number of households with a radio, TV, computer, etc.
• Fixed telephone lines per 100 inhabitants
• Mobile cellular telephone subscriptions per 100 inhabitants
• Proportion of households with Internet access at home
• Internet users per 100 inhabitants
• Annual number and percent of learning programmes organized by village, district and province and by types of courses

3. Accessibility
• Gross enrolment ratio for primary and secondary education
• Percent distribution of individual household members by the highest level of formal schooling
• Number of learning centres which provide learning activities by location
• Annual number and percent of learning courses organized by providers (national, state/provincial government, IGOs/NGOs, religious organizations, etc.)
• Number of distance and online courses organized by providers and by types
• Book fairs and reading campaign activities
• Number of public libraries in the country
• Number of new titles acquired by library in the last 12 months
• Increased number of learning materials (printed and e-materials) in various languages
• Percent distribution of individual household members by language first learned in childhood and still understood, by location, sex, and age group
• Percent distribution of individual household members by language in which he/she first learned to read and write by location, sex and age group

4. Usage And Practice
• Percent distribution of individual members having literacy skills by type (reading only, reading and writing or cannot read and write by age group, sex and location)
• Percent distribution of individual household members with literacy skills by source of literacy (formal, NFE or Informal)
• Percent distribution of individuals having ability to read by type of text (personal letter, newspaper, mobile text messages, email, etc.) and by sex, age group, location, etc.
• Percent distribution of individuals having ability to write text by types (personal letter, short notes, newspaper, mobile text messages, email etc.) and by sex, age group, location etc.
• Percent distribution of individuals in terms of their frequency of reading text materials (road signs or names of stores, posters, pamphlets, announcements, notice boards, personal messages, letters, mobile messages, email, newspaper or magazines, books, manuals or reference books, bills, vouchers, budget tables, charts, diagrams or maps) in the past 12 months by sex, age group, location, etc.
• Percent distribution of individuals in terms of their frequency of writing text materials (personal messages, letters, mobile messages, email, official letter, filled in forms, reports or articles, bills, vouchers, budget tables, charts, diagrams or maps) in the past 12 months by sex, age group, location, etc.
• Percent distribution of individuals in terms of their frequency of visiting learning places (public libraries, book stores, newsstands, community centres, internet cafés, museums) in the past 12 months by sex, age group, location, etc.
• Percent distribution of individuals who have registered on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.
• Distribution of individuals who listen to the radio by hours in a week
• Distribution of individuals who watch TV by hours in a week
5. Capacity-building

- Number of events such as reading campaigns to promote the issue of literacy and creating a literate environment organized for policy makers, planners, facilitators, etc.
- Number of training programmes which include a literate environment as one of the topics
- Number and percent of skilled manpower in developing learning materials and content using different media at various levels by fields of expertise
- Number of experts working in the field of content generation and maintaining online courses
- Number and percent of trained facilitators by location and by types of programmes
- Number of experts who have been contextualizing content in the local setting
- Number and percent of literacy experts working in producing learning materials and developing ICT learning materials