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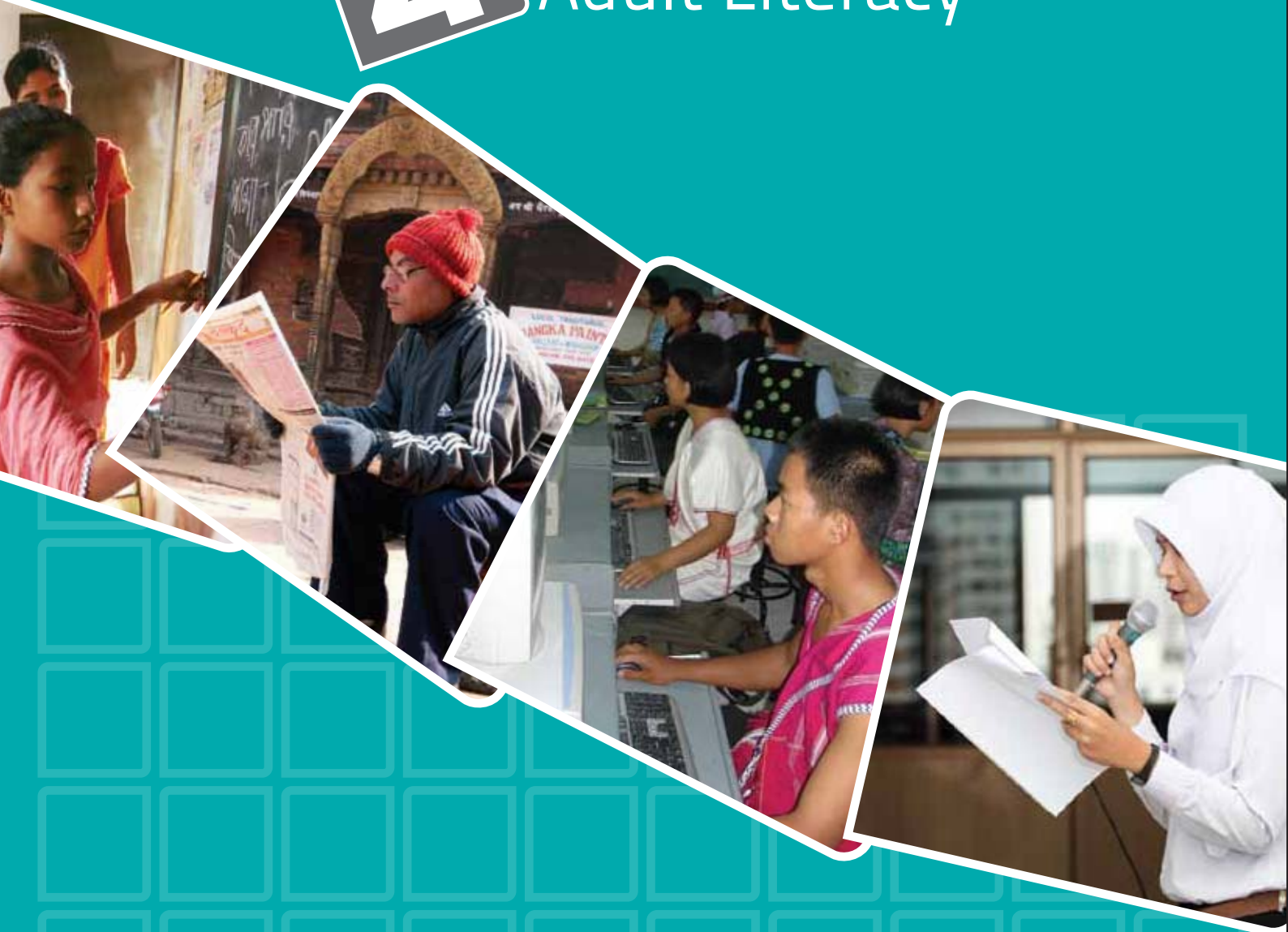
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ASIA-PACIFIC

END OF DECADE NOTES ON EDUCATION FOR ALL



Youth and Adult Literacy



ASIA-PACIFIC

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Youth and
Adult Literacy

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Contents

Acronyms	v
Preface	vii
Foreword	ix
Acknowledgements	x
Executive summary	1
1. Introduction	3
1.1 Rationale and scope of this End of Decade Note	3
1.2 Expanded vision of literacy under EFA and the United Nations Literacy Decade	4
1.3 Literacy matters.	5
2. Literacy in the world and the Asia-Pacific region.	8
2.1 Progress by subregion.	8
2.2 Literacy situation in Asian and Pacific countries.	10
2.3 Prospects for achieving EFA Goal 4 on literacy.	12
3. Disparities in literacy – Marginalized groups and patterns	16
3.1 Gender disparities in literacy, by subregion	16
3.2 Gender disparities in literacy in selected Asian and Pacific countries.	19
3.3 Disparities by age group: Population and literacy pyramids	20
3.4 Urban-rural literacy disparities and regional variations	23
3.5 Ethnic and linguistic variations in literacy.	25
3.6 Economic variation in literacy.	27
4. Major literacy initiatives	29
4.1 United Nations Literacy Decade (2003–2012)	29
4.2 Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (2005–2015)	32
4.3 Capacity Development for Education for All	34
5. Literacy policies and service delivery.	37
5.1 Literacy policies and strategies in the region	37
5.2 Strengthening capacities for policy development	38
5.3 Strengthening literacy service delivery	40
5.4 Situation analysis and needs assessment to strengthen programme delivery	44
5.5 Financing literacy activities.	46
5.6 Human resources for literacy	47
6. Prospects for achieving the EFA literacy goals by 2015	50
6.1 Country-level actions	51
6.2 Support needed from the international community.	52
7. Conclusion	54
References	55
Statistical annexes	60

List of Boxes

Box 1: Counting youth and adults who are literate or illiterate	15
Box 2: Flexible literacy programme approach to reach the unreached	31
Box 3: India develops strong political commitment to accelerate its literacy drive	37
Box 4: Policy-making for literacy in Afghanistan through capacity development	38
Box 5: Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme	40
Box 6: Literacy retention through mobile phone technologies in Pakistan	41
Box 7: Comprehensive human resource development for literacy in India	49

List of Figures

Figure 1: Relationship of literacy to poverty, to children's health and mortality in Asian and Pacific countries	6
Figure 2: Adult literacy rate in selected Asian and Pacific countries, 2005–2009	10
Figure 3: Illiterate adult population in selected Asian and Pacific countries, 2005–2009.	11
Figure 4: Adult and youth literacy rates in selected Asian and Pacific countries, 2005–2009	12
Figure 5: Progress towards EFA literacy goal in selected Asian and Pacific countries, 2005–2009	12
Figure 6: Changes in the illiterate adult population and 2015 target for selected Asian and Pacific countries	14
Figure 7: Gender disparity in adult literacy rate among selected Asian and Pacific countries, 2005–2009.	19
Figure 8: Gender disparity in youth literacy rate among selected Asian and Pacific countries, 2005–2009	20
Figure 9: Population and literacy pyramid for selected Asian and Pacific countries, 2000, 2006 and 2008.	22
Figure 10: Urban-rural disparity in literacy for selected Asian and Pacific countries, 2000–2009.	24
Figure 11: Urban-rural literacy rates, by sex in Nepal, 2006	24
Figure 12: Rural road access and urban-rural distribution of people who are literate and illiterate in Lao PDR, 2006	25
Figure 13: Number of people who are literate and illiterate, by social group in India, 2006.	26
Figure 14: Percentage of households with no literate adult member and no literate adult female member in India, 2005	27
Figure 15: Adult literacy rate, by wealth index, 2006 and 2008.	27
Figure 16: The LIFE process and components	33

List of Tables

Table 1: Adult literacy rate and illiterate population in the world and by subregions, averages for the 1995–2004 decade and the 2005–2009 period	8
Table 2: Youth literacy rate and illiterate population, in the world and by subregions, averages for the 1995–2004 decade and for the 2005–2009 period	9
Table 3: Adult literacy rates, by sex and subregion, averages for the 1995–2004 decade and for the 2005–2009 period	17
Table 4: Number of illiterate adults, by sex and subregion, averages for the 1995–2004 decade and for the 2005–2009 period	17
Table 5: Youth literacy rates, by sex and subregion, averages for the 1995–2004 decade and for the 2005–2009 period	18
Table 6: Number of illiterate youth, by sex and subregion, averages for the 1995–2004 decade and for the 2005–2009 period	19
Table 7: Literacy rate, by mother tongue of household head in Lao PDR, 2006	25
Table 8: Literacy rates, by sex, caste and ethnicity (15–49 years old) in Nepal, 2006.	26
Table 9: CapEFA focus in the nine countries	34
Table 10: Reported and tested literacy rates among 15- to 24-year-old in Lao PDR, 2000	39
Table 11: Participation of learners in literacy programmes in selected countries, 2000–2006.	40
Table 12: Number of community learning centres in Asian and Pacific countries	43
Table 13: Number of learners in theme-based programmes at community learning centres in Viet Nam, 2001–2006	43
Table 14: Literacy situation analysis, needs assessment and financing in selected countries	45
Table 15: Education expenditures and share of NFE and literacy in Nepal, 2004/2005–2009/2010, (thousands Nepali rupees).	46
Table 16: Human development plan for literacy and changes in literacy staff	48

Acronyms

ACCU	Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO
AEC	adult education centres (India)
AIMS	Assessment, Information Systems, Monitoring and Statistics (Asia-Pacific Regional Office of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics)
AKRAB	Literate to be Empowered programme (Indonesia)
APPEAL	Asia-Pacific Programme for Education for All
ARTC	APPEAL Resource and Training Consortium
ASPBAE	Asia South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education
BLCE	Basic Literacy and Continuing Education (Bangladesh)
CapEFA	Capacity Building for Education for All
CBM	Christian Blind Mission
CLC	Community Learning Centre
CONFINTEA	Conference on Adult Education (From the French: Conférence Internationale sur l'Éducation des Adultes)
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
E-9	Nine High-Population Countries
EDN	End of Decade Note (<i>Asia-Pacific End of Decade Notes on Education for All</i>)
EFA	Education for All
EFA-FTI	Education for All–Fast Track Initiative
GDP	gross domestic product
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GPI	Gender Parity Index
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IMPACT	Instructional Management by Parents, Community and Teachers
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LAMP	Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme
LDC	Least Developed Country
LIFE	Literacy Initiative for Empowerment
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDA	Mid-Decade Assessment
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NFBE	Non-Formal Basic Education (Pakistan)
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NFE-MIS	Non-Formal Education Management Information System
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NSSO	National Sample Survey Organization
NUEPA	National University of Education Planning and Administration (India)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PLCEHD	Post-Literacy and Continuing Education for Human Development (Bangladesh)

PPP	purchasing power parity
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SMS	Short Message Service
SWAP	Sector Wide Approach
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNICEF EAPRO	UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office
UNICEF ROSA	UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia
UNLD	United Nations Literacy Decade
UNPD	United Nations Population Division
VCD	Video Compact Disc

Preface

“The equation is simple: education is the most basic insurance against poverty. Education represents opportunity. At all ages, it empowers people with the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to shape a better future.”

Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO

Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “everyone has the right to education”. Not only is education a basic human right, it both equips individuals with the skills and knowledge to lead better lives and underpins human development. But education is still not a right recognized by all, and many who miss out on education miss out on the opportunity to improve their lives.

In recognition of this, governments, United Nations agencies, donors, NGOs and civil society groups made a joint commitment to provide Education for All (EFA) in March 1990 at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand. The pledge was made by 155 countries and representatives of 160 government and non-government agencies. The *World Declaration on Education for All* and the *Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs* adopted by the World Conference on EFA in Jomtien reaffirmed education as a fundamental human right and urged countries to intensify efforts to address the basic learning needs of all by 2000.

The global assessment of EFA progress in 2000 showed that the commitment made in Jomtien was not delivered. Thus in April 2000 at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, the international community reaffirmed its commitment to achieve Education for All this time by 2015.

The Dakar Framework for Action specifies the following six goals:

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.
4. Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in the levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all, so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Some of these goals were later reiterated in September 2000 when 189 nations came together at the United Nations Millennium Summit and endorsed the Millennium Declaration. The Declaration set out the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be achieved by 2015, including achieving universal primary education (MDG 2) and promoting gender equality and empowering women (MDG 3). There is clear consensus that the achievement of EFA contributes to the attainment of the other MDGs as well.

The End of Decade Notes

At the close of the 2000s, the Asia-Pacific region reviewed regional and national progress toward the EFA goals and targets. The resulting *Asia-Pacific End of Decade Notes on Education for All* take stock of the progress, persisting issues and remaining challenges in achieving each EFA goal.

The End of Decade Notes, or EDNs, highlight examples of innovative policy reforms and strategies, particularly those aimed at reducing disparities in access to and quality of education. They also emphasize the policy, capacity and governance gaps to be addressed in order to achieve EFA in the region.

The EDNs consist of six reports, one for each EFA goal, and a synthesis report summarizing the overall progress of EFA in the region. The six reports build on the findings of the Asia-Pacific EFA Mid-Decade Assessment (2006–2008), which examined EFA progress and gaps at the mid-way point of the 2000–2010 decade.

The first section of each EDN report provides an overview of progress towards the respective EFA goal. The second section discusses the remaining challenges and priority issues. Each report concludes with recommendations on what needs to be done to accelerate progress towards the 2015 targets.

While each EDN covers the Asia-Pacific region, it also highlights issues and challenges specific to subregional groupings, as per the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report*. The EDNs thus cover the subregions of Central Asia, South and West Asia, East Asia and the Pacific. Details on which countries are included in the subregional groupings are found in the statistical annex at the end of this EDN.

Foreword

In 1990, a World Declaration on Education for All was adopted in Jomtien, Thailand reaffirming the notion that education was a fundamental human right.

With less than four years remaining for the EFA goals to be achieved, it is now an opportune moment to take stock in Asia and the Pacific of both achievements and shortcomings to draw lessons and move forward. Understanding and sharing the information on how much has been accomplished during the past decade and the main hurdles to attaining the goals by 2015 will help countries and EFA partners in the region identify options and strategies for achieving the goals. Success in Education for All is critical to meeting the Millennium Development Goals, including in areas related to poverty reduction, nutrition, child survival and maternal health.

Within this context, the *Asia-Pacific End of Decade Notes on Education for All* examine what the region has attained between 2000-2010. The Notes highlight policy reforms and strategies implemented by countries, especially addressing disparities in education, as potential models and provide the latest thinking on ways forward.

The Asia-Pacific region has experienced strong economic growth, substantially reduced poverty and ensured more children are enrolled in school. This progress, however, has been skewed; rising income inequality and inequalities in access to basic human services continue to plague the region, presenting significant challenges and long-term consequences.

Progress in meeting the six goals has been uneven with some groups of children left out, such as ethnic minorities, migrant children, children with disabilities and in South Asia, girls. Slow progress has been especially noted in the expansion of early childhood care and education, in reducing out-of-school numbers, and in improving the quality of education.

To ensure regional stability and prosperity, we must address these inequities and we must ensure the provision of quality education for all learners. Many countries in the region have endeavoured to 'reach the unreached' and ensure that education is truly for all. The End of Decade Notes aim to support and strengthen this momentum, energy and commitment to EFA in the region.

With less than four years remaining before 2015, we are racing against time. We need renewed vigour and concerted action to guarantee equitable access to quality education and to ensure that children are not missing out on schooling and learning opportunities because of their sex, geographic location, ethnicity, disability, socio-economic status or other causes of marginalization.

UNESCO and UNICEF are committed to supporting countries and working with partners to speed up progress in meeting the EFA targets by 2015. The End of Decade Notes, created under the auspices of the Regional Thematic Working Group on EFA, which UNESCO and UNICEF co-chair, is one way of extending our support and advocacy for EFA.

We hope the End of Decade Notes will serve to guide actions and interventions and ultimately accelerate the progress towards the EFA goals.



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Executive summary

Literacy is a basic human right, guaranteed under the right to education enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is a fundamental tool to empower people and, through them, communities and nations. Literacy enables individual persons to know about and to enjoy their rights, such as the right to health, to information, to justice and to freedom. Literacy strengthens the capabilities of individuals, families and communities to learn and to develop. A lack of literacy is strongly correlated with poverty, and those who can use literacy skills to defend their legal rights have a marked advantage over those who cannot.

Despite the necessity of literacy for achieving other development goals, it is the Education for All (EFA) goal that is most unlikely to be achieved by most countries in the Asia-Pacific region by 2015. The world's adult literacy rate was estimated at 81.8 per cent at the beginning of the twenty-first century. To reach the EFA literacy goal of 50 per cent improvement, this global literacy rate will have to rise to 90.9 per cent by 2015. This implies an increase of 9.1 percentage points. From the 1995–2004 decade to the 2005–2009 decade, the world's literacy rate only increased by an estimated 1.9 percentage points. This was far too little and too slow. Even more alarming is that the world's illiterate adult population has not decreased but hovered around 793 million during the same period. The Asia-Pacific region remains home to the majority of the world's illiterate adult population, accounting for 513 million people, or almost two thirds (65 per cent). More than half of the world's illiterate adult population (51.8 per cent), or 411 million adults who are illiterate, live in South and West Asia.

This *Asia-Pacific End of Decade Note on Education for All Goal 4* sounds the alarm that the world as a whole and the Asia-Pacific region in particular are lagging far behind the EFA literacy target, despite marked improvements in some countries. Based on both quantitative and qualitative analysis, this End of Decade Note, or EDN, on the EFA Goal 4 on youth and adult literacy, provides a review of the progress made so far and the remaining gaps, challenges and issues, with the purpose of energizing Asian and Pacific countries to think of new strategies to accelerate progress towards the EFA literacy goal during the remaining few years.

The quantitative analysis is based on existing data on literacy to gauge the progress made and the remaining gaps in the Asia-Pacific region. The analysis focuses on the overall performance of the countries in terms of literacy rates and the number of illiterates, especially in reference to disparities among different population subgroups, using data disaggregated by sex, urban/rural locality, marginalized populations (such as ethnic linguistic groups) and economic level. Such analysis revealed the many remaining challenges, issues and gaps in achieving the 2015 EFA literacy goal.

A quick review of the global and regional initiatives to promote literacy looks at the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) and the Capacity Building for Education for All (CapEFA). Many advocacy actions and special programmes/activities developed to promote literacy at the global, regional and national levels and their impacts are highlighted. The salient experiences, innovative practices and effective strategies to promote literacy at the regional and national levels are included in the review. Literacy policies and plans and service delivery mechanism of countries in the region are presented together with success stories.

Based on the analysis, this End of Decade Note outlines the prospects and implications for achieving the EFA literacy goal by 2015 and provides recommendations for government actions and international support.

Government action

Reinforce literacy coordination mechanisms at the national and decentralized levels across a broad range of providers and actors, building on existing networks for early grade, youth and adult literacy. Governments are encouraged to promote the inclusion of literacy in major national policy frameworks and coordinating mechanisms to empower youth and adult literacy learners, teachers and providers.

- Updating the literacy situation analysis regularly is another important action that governments should be doing to identify where and who are the illiterate youth and adults so as to set more realistic benchmarks and targets for literacy policies, as well as planning and monitoring. Governments should formulate fully costed and well-targeted literacy acceleration plans and integrate them into national and subnational development plans and strategies.
- Governments should develop the capacity for literacy policy research and for literacy programme delivery, especially at the local level, by expanding links and the networking of schools, community learning centres and other local learning/training resources.
- Governments should increase post-literacy and continuing education programmes to spread and sustain literacy and other skills.
- Governments should establish systematic monitoring and evaluation of progress in literacy implementation by developing national non-formal education management information systems.

In addition to upgrading literacy policies, relentlessly pursuing literacy advocacy and communications, action-oriented partnerships with relevant NGOs, civil society groups and local communities should be promoted at all levels.

Support needed from the international community

- **International advocacy:** Take actions to generate greater commitment to literacy among national and international partners and to remind policy-makers of their commitments and the need to quickly translate commitments into effective action.
- **Technical assistance:** Provide expertise and technical assistance in areas of need, such as in-country literacy needs assessment, policy analysis, strategic planning, capacity development, monitoring and evaluation in collaboration with existing expert networks, especially those in the Asia-Pacific region, such as the APPEAL Resource and Training Consortium, the Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education and the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO.
- **Networking:** Promote the sharing of salient experiences and good practices among the LIFE countries and within the UNESCO networks under APPEAL and EFA coordination.
- **Help to mobilize support to in-country literacy initiatives and LIFE activities:** Advocate with national policy-makers, agencies and development partners.

1

Introduction

The international community, including national governments, development partners and civil society representatives, reaffirmed their commitment to achieve Education for All (EFA) by 2015 at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal in April 2000. The Dakar Framework for Action specifies six goals and 12 strategies to achieve EFA.

With the close of the 2000–2010 decade, there is a need to assess where Asia-Pacific as a region, and where countries in the region stand in achieving the EFA goals. Understanding and sharing the information on how much progress has been achieved during the decade and the difficulties to attaining the goals will help countries in the region identify strategies to accelerate the achievement of education for all.

The *Asia-Pacific End of Decade Notes on Education for All* take stock of progress and remaining challenges for each EFA goal thus far. The End of Decade Notes, or EDNs, highlight innovative approaches of policy reforms and strategies, especially in view of reducing disparities in education, as well as remaining policy, capacity and finance gaps to achieve EFA and the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The End of Decade Notes build on the findings of the Asia-Pacific EFA Mid-Decade Assessment (MDA) (2006–2008), which examined progress and gaps at the midway point of the 2000–2010 decade. The EDNs aim to maintain the momentum, energy and commitment to EFA in the region, including the focus on “reaching the unreached in education” and “EFA with equity”.

1.1 Rationale and scope of this End of Decade Note

Literacy is a determinant for long-term human development. Literacy fosters in all people – young and old, men and women – the abilities embodied in the four pillars of education for the twenty-first century: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be (Delors et al., 1996). Literacy broadens access to information, knowledge and skills, facilitates communication, creates social coherence and promotes better understanding among peoples. Literacy significantly empowers individual persons so they can improve their own quality of life and the socio-economic conditions of their family, community and nation. Literate parents promote and support children’s education. Literacy thus was one of the Education for All (EFA) goals, along with specified targets, adopted at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal in 2000.

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

This End of Decade Note sounds the alarm that the world as a whole and the Asia-Pacific region in particular are lagging far behind the EFA literacy goal of 50 per cent improvement in the adult literacy rate. Section 2 presents an analysis of the latest literacy situation and prospects based on available data and includes an estimation of the extent of efforts that must be made to turn the tide.

Literacy is a basic human right, guaranteed under the right to education enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Literacy enables individuals to know about and enjoy their other rights, including to health, to information, to justice and to freedom. Literacy strengthens the

capabilities of individuals, families and communities to learn and to develop. A lack of literacy is strongly correlated with poverty, and those who can use literacy skills to defend their legal rights have a marked advantage over those who cannot.

Despite the necessity of literacy for achieving other development goals, it is the EFA goal most unlikely to be achieved by countries in the Asia-Pacific region by 2015. This End of Decade Note on literacy reviews the progress made so far and the remaining gaps, challenges and issues, with the intent of energizing Asian and Pacific governments to develop strategies, effectively plan and implement actions for accelerating progress towards the EFA literacy goal during the remaining few years.

1.2 Expanded vision of literacy under EFA and the United Nations Literacy Decade

The World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 established literacy as an important component of the EFA initiative as well as for lifelong learning (UNESCO, 1990). Subsequent international pronouncements (United Nations General Assembly, 2002; UNESCO, 2008; UNESCO, 2009) underscored the evolving nature of literacy and its role in social practices, such as citizenship, cultural identity, human rights and equity (UNESCO, 2004).

According to the Education for All 2000 Assessment, “Literacy is the ability to read and write with understanding a simple statement related to one’s daily life. It involves a continuum of reading and writing skills, and often includes also basic arithmetic skills” (Wagner, 2001: 11). This definition has evolved in recent years: “Literacy is 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 individuals to achieve his or her goals, develop his or her knowledge and potential, and participate fully in the community and wider society” (UIS, 2008), p. 25.

Literacy lies at the heart of Education for All. It is at once an outcome (reading, writing and numeracy), a process (teaching and learning) and an input that paves the way for future development (cognitive skill development, participation in lifelong learning opportunities and broader societal development) (UNESCO, 2005b). Efforts to spread literacy are closely connected with the other five EFA goals in developing a global learning society.

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

“Literacy policies and programmes today require going beyond the limited view of literacy that has dominated in the past. Literacy for all requires a renewed vision of literacy, which will foster cultural identity, democratic participation and citizenship, tolerance and respect for others, social development, peace and progress. It must admit that literacy is not confined to any particular age (childhood or adulthood), institution (such as the school system) or sector (such as education); that it is related to various dimensions of personal and social life and development; and that it is a life-learning process. Such renewed vision towards literacy for all calls for renewed modalities of operations, monitoring and accountability procedures and mechanisms” (UNESCO Bangkok 2005b, p. 25).

The UNLD view of literacy takes political, social and economic transformations into account and recognizes that people acquire and use literacy for different purposes. It also acknowledges that practices of literacy are embedded in different cultural processes, individual circumstances and collective structures (UNESCO, 2004). This ‘plural’ vision views literacy as itself culturally, linguistically and temporally diverse. Because literacy is shaped by cultural, educational and state institutions, constraints on achieving literacy do not lie only with the individual but are also embedded in broader social relations.

The Hamburg Declaration and the Agenda for the Future of Literacy also view literacy through a broad lens, referring to it as “the basic knowledge and skills needed by all in a rapidly changing world”. The Declaration views literacy as a “catalyst for participation in social, cultural, political and economic activities, and for learning throughout life” (UNESCO, 1997).

UNESCO submitted in 2008 to the United Nations General Assembly the report *Implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade*, which notes that across the globe, many authorities recognize the multiple dimensions and evolving nature of literacy, with new literacies emerging as well as changing patterns of learning, including the use of digital technology. This fluid situation has led to a greater adaptation of literacy provision based on the needs and circumstances of learners, and to higher levels of innovation. Additionally, many innovative experiences across the Asia-Pacific region seek to adapt literacy delivery to specific conditions and needs of diverse population groups (UNESCO Bangkok, 2002).¹

Recent studies draw attention to the importance of the social context and the sources of literacy inequalities. The studies also avoid the literate/illiterate dichotomy and instead highlight a continuum of literacy competencies and the existence of multiple literacies and practices. Additionally, the concept of the literate environment has focused on the uses of literacy for new opportunities and active citizenship and has broadened the scope of literacy policy to involve work with the producers and users of everyday written texts rather than simply the providers of literacy-teaching programmes. Concepts of adequate literacy and the literate environment are now informed by rapidly changing modes of communication associated with digital technology and globalization.

Due to the changing notion of literacy, tracking progress in literacy should thus not only focus on literacy rates and provision of literacy programmes. It should go beyond to capture many other qualitative aspects, including improved ability to learn and increased life skills, work skills, skills to participate in the democratic process, etc., as targeted under EFA Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes. Changes in the scope of literacy also lead to the need for designing quality literacy programmes that help learners, young and old, acquire the necessary skills and broader perspectives for lifelong learning.

1.3 Literacy matters

The benefits derived from actions to improve the literacy situation far outweigh the cost that such actions entail. Data from national surveys and numerous country experiences indicate that literacy helps develop human capabilities, broadens earning opportunities, improves personal well-being and promotes greater social and political participation. Literacy also facilitates a healthy, equitable, gender-aware and democratic environment and contributes towards improving livelihood productivity and thus helps in reducing poverty, particularly when accompanied by broader anti-poverty efforts.

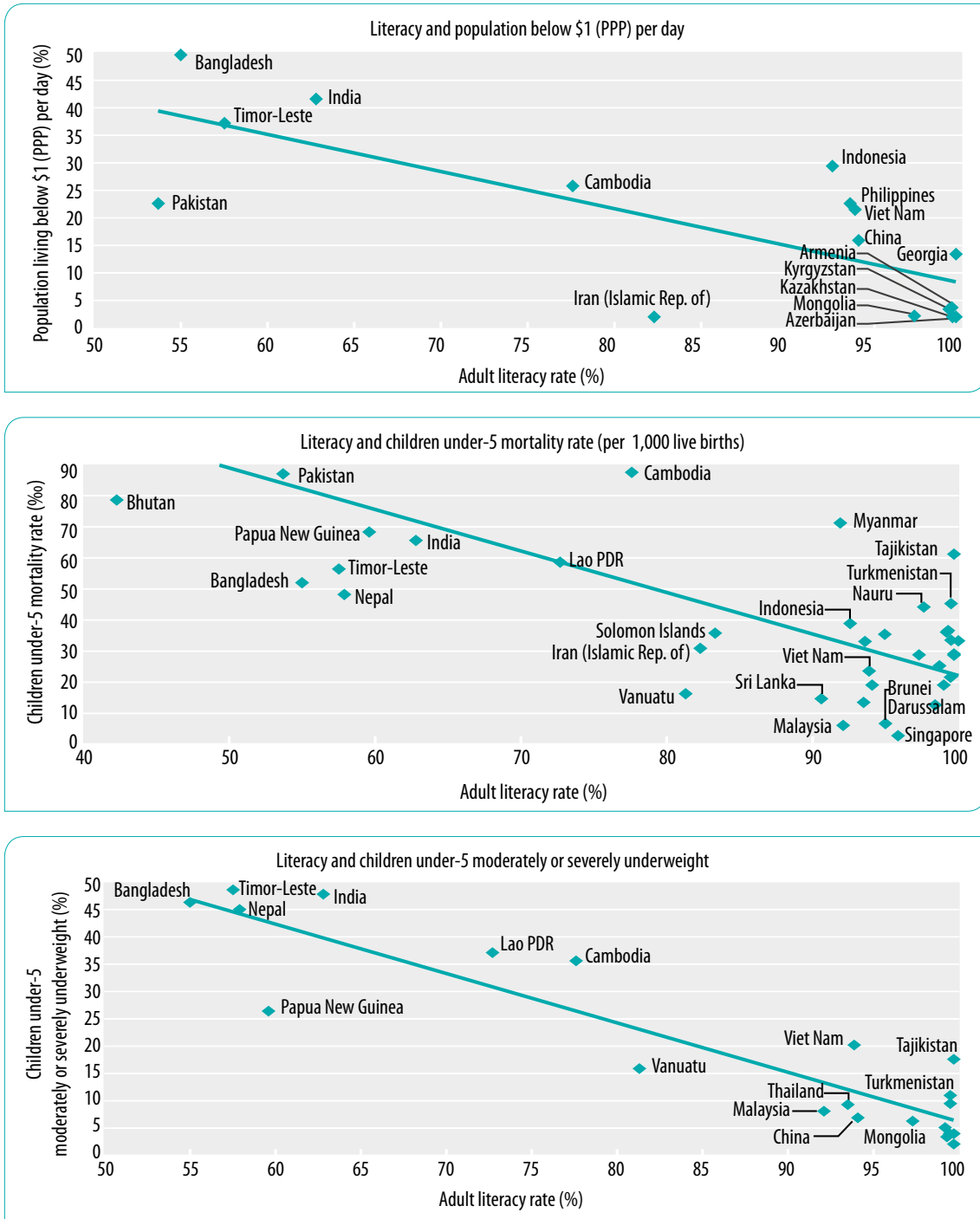
In a broad perspective, literacy is a critical condition for reducing poverty and achieving all the Millennium Development Goals. Countries with the greatest poverty are frequently those in which literacy rates are lowest. This is illustrated in the first diagram of figure 1, which depicts the close relationship between adult literacy rates and the proportion of the population living on less than US\$1 in several Asian and Pacific countries, based on purchasing power parity (PPP). This literacy-poverty connection shows that countries with a higher literacy rate are often those with the smallest proportion of the population living in poverty.

Literate individuals are more knowledgeable about family planning, HIV and AIDs, proper nutrition, immunization and other health concerns. They tend to have more positive attitudes towards

¹ See also: Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education. Available at: www.aspbae.org/ (accessed 27 November 2011).

family planning and to practise it more, in comparison with illiterate individuals. The incidence of malnutrition and deaths among children is significantly lower among literate parents. There are proven relationships between adult literacy levels and children's health and survival in early life, in terms of the mortality rate. The second diagram of figure 1 clearly reflects literacy's very close relationship with the mortality rate among children younger than 5 years, in that countries with a high adult literacy rate tend to have a low child mortality rate.

Figure 1: Relationship of literacy to poverty, to children's health and mortality in Asian and Pacific countries



Note: Data have been taken from various surveys by the indicated sources database. These graphs are meant to illustrate the situation, not to analyse a time period.

Sources: UIS; UN Population Division; World Bank; and UNICEF.

Such close relationships are further confirmed between adult literacy rates and the proportion of children younger than 5 years who are moderately or severely underweight, as shown in the last diagram in figure 1. Often this and the other problems are further exacerbated because children who are malnourished have more difficulty learning in their early years. Parents who are poor are also less likely to read to their children or encourage early learning in the household. These children are at an immediate disadvantage when they enter school and often require additional time to catch up with other learners. If not attended to properly, they risk being left behind, dropping out or, eventually, contributing to the cycle of youth and adult illiteracy. These correlations are made more explicit in the End of Decade Note for Goal 1 on early childhood care and education.

2

Literacy in the world and the Asia-Pacific region

2.1 Progress by subregion

The world will not meet the EFA literacy goal of improving the literacy rate by 50 per cent unless major efforts are made to scale up and speed up the spread of literacy in the coming few years. This alarm is based on analysis of the literacy data and estimates compiled by the UIS, which is the basis of data used throughout this note (unless otherwise specified).

The overall literacy rate for the world as a whole was estimated at 81.8 per cent at the beginning of the twenty-first century (table 1). To reach the EFA literacy goal of 50 per cent improvement, this global literacy rate will have to be raised to 90.9 per cent by 2015. This implies a needed increase of 9.1 percentage points. According to estimations, the world's literacy rate increased only by 1.9 percentage points from 2000 to 2009 – far too little and too slow.

Table 1: Adult literacy rate and illiterate population in the world and by subregions, averages for the 1995–2004 decade and the 2005–2009 period

Region	Adult (15 years and older)					
	Literacy rate (%)			Illiterate population (000)		
	1995–2004	2005–2009	Increase/decrease	1995–2004	2005–2009	Increase/decrease
World	81.8	83.7	+1.9	792,907	793,091	+184
Sub-Saharan Africa	57.2	61.9	+4.6	158,037	170,052	+12,015
Arab States	66.9	72.7	+5.8	60,183	60,411	+228
South and West Asia	58.8	62.3	+3.5	392,540	410,544	+18,004
Central Asia	99.0	99.4**	+0.4	483	331**	-152
East Asia and the Pacific	91.6	94.0	+2.4	126,745	101,900	-24,845
Latin America and the Caribbean	89.7	91.1	+1.4	38,902	36,647	-2,255
North America and Western Europe	98.8	99.0	+0.2	7,211	6,229	-982
Central and Eastern Europe	97.3	97.9	+0.6	8,808	6,977	-1,831

Notes: The data shown in the table is the average for the 1995–2004 period, which is referred to in the text as the year 2000 (when the World Education Forum took place in Dakar). The data shown in the table is the average for the 2005–2009, and is referred to in the text as the year 2009.

** UIS estimation.

Source: Statistical Annex, UIS, 2011.

What is even more alarming is that the world's illiterate adult population did not decrease as anticipated but further increased by an estimated 184,000 during the same period of 2000–2009. The Asia-Pacific region remains home to the majority of the world's illiterate adult population, accounting for a little less than 513 million, or almost two thirds (65 per cent), of all adults. South and West Asia as a subregion alone had nearly 411 million illiterate adults in 2009, which was more than half (51.8 per cent) of the world total.

Table 1 shows that the illiterate adult population decreased in most parts of the world between 2000 and 2009, except in South and West Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States. Together,

these three subregions contributed to the further increase of more than 30 million illiterates during the same period. This massive increase overshadowed the positive literacy achievements made in other subregions, especially in East Asia and the Pacific, and resulted in the world currently having more illiterate adults than at the beginning of this millennium.

Efforts to reduce illiteracy seem to have been outstripped by rapid population growth combined with the inability to enrol all young children in quality schooling and to ensure that they acquire sustainable reading, writing and numeracy skills. Low-quality teaching and learning in many primary school classrooms, and the complexity of language curricula for early learners across many countries further brought about the phenomenon of children dropping out of school before completion, hence deprived of the opportunity to properly learn to read and write.

There is sufficient evidence on the positive impact of efforts to achieve universal primary education during the past decade in most countries. These can be observed in the literacy data for youth aged 15–24 years old in table 2. Literate youth represent the direct outcome of primary education during the previous decade. Youth literacy rates reflect the proportion of young persons who have succeeded in acquiring literacy skills through primary schooling or equivalent. Conversely, the number of illiterate youth indicates the deficit of the primary education system and, at the same time, ongoing additions to the pool of illiterate adults.

Table 2: Youth literacy rate and illiterate population, in the world and by subregions, averages for the 1995–2004 decade and for the 2005–2009 period

Region	Youth (15–24 years old)					
	Literacy rate (%)			Illiterate population (000)		
	1995–2004	2005–2009	Increase/decrease	1995–2004	2005–2009	Increase/decrease
World	87.1	89.3	+2.2	141,707	127,307	-14,400
Sub-Saharan Africa	68.2	71.2	+3.0	42,154	45,496	+3,342
Arab States	82.8	87.9	+5.1	10,215	8,376	-1,839
South and West Asia	73.7	79.7	+6.0	77,607	64,868	-12,739
Central Asia	99.8	99.7**	-0.1	32	43**	+11
East Asia and the Pacific	98.0	98.8	+0.8	6,589	4,543	-2,046
Latin America and the Caribbean	96.1	97.0	+0.9	3,956	3,149	-807
North America and Western Europe	99.7	99.7	0.0	338	301	-37
Central and Eastern Europe	98.8	99.1	+0.3	816	529	-287

Notes: The data shown in the table is the average for the 1995–2004 period, which is referred to in the text as the year 2000 (when the World Education Forum took place in Dakar). The data shown in the table is the average for the 2005–2009, and is referred to in the text as the year 2009.

** UIS estimation.

Source: Statistical Annex, UIS, 2011.

Youth literacy rates across all subregions of the world have been considerably higher than adult literacy rates (tables 1 and 2). For the world as a whole, the youth literacy rate is very close to the threshold of 90 per cent, the point at which literacy becomes so pervasive that it can be self-sustained. Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab States and South and West Asia have not yet reached this level, while all other subregions achieved it early in the millennium, if not before.

Compared with the adult literacy rate in 2000, at an average of 58.8 per cent, the youth literacy rate in South and West Asia was higher by almost 15 percentage points, at 73.7 per cent; while the adult literacy rate rose to 62.3 per cent in 2009, the youth literacy rate rose even faster, to 79.7 per cent.

The youth rates are indisputably the direct results of efforts to universalize primary education over the past two decades and are mirrored by the satisfying decreases in the number of illiterate youth by more than 12 million in both South and West Asia and the world since 2000 (table 2).

Nonetheless, there remains nearly 65 million illiterate youth in South and West Asia and 127 million in the world – who then swell the ranks of illiterate adults. Further expanding efforts to universalize primary school participation and completion along with quality teaching and learning will be important strategies to stem any further bloating of the illiterate adult populations in the region.

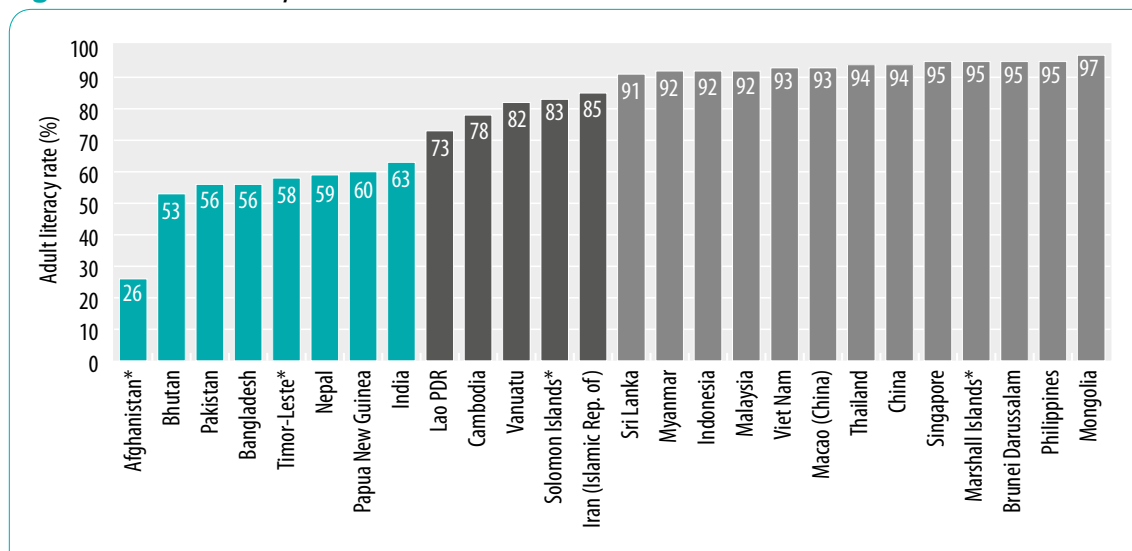
Progress in literacy in the Asia-Pacific region can thus make a big difference in the global literacy picture. The following sections provide a more detailed review of the changes and prospects for literacy in the region.

2.2 Literacy situation in Asian and Pacific countries

Of the 35 Asian and Pacific countries covered in this report (for which data are available on literacy rates and the estimated numbers of people who are illiterate, see the country list in Annex 1 and data by country in Annexes 2 and 3), only nine countries (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Samoa, Tajikistan, Tonga, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) reported attaining literacy rates of 98 per cent or higher (see the statistical annex at the end of the EDN). This level creates a pervasive literate environment in which anyone else will feel the need to become literate.

There are huge disparities in the adult literacy rates among the remaining 26 Asian and Pacific countries: from 97 per cent in Mongolia to 26 per cent in Afghanistan (figure 2). Based on data available for the period 2005–2009, 13 countries recorded adult literacy rates of between 91 and 97 per cent, which approach the sustainable literacy state. Five countries in the middle (Cambodia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Lao PDR, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu) posted rates of 73–85 per cent.

Figure 2: Adult literacy rate in selected Asian and Pacific countries, 2005–2009



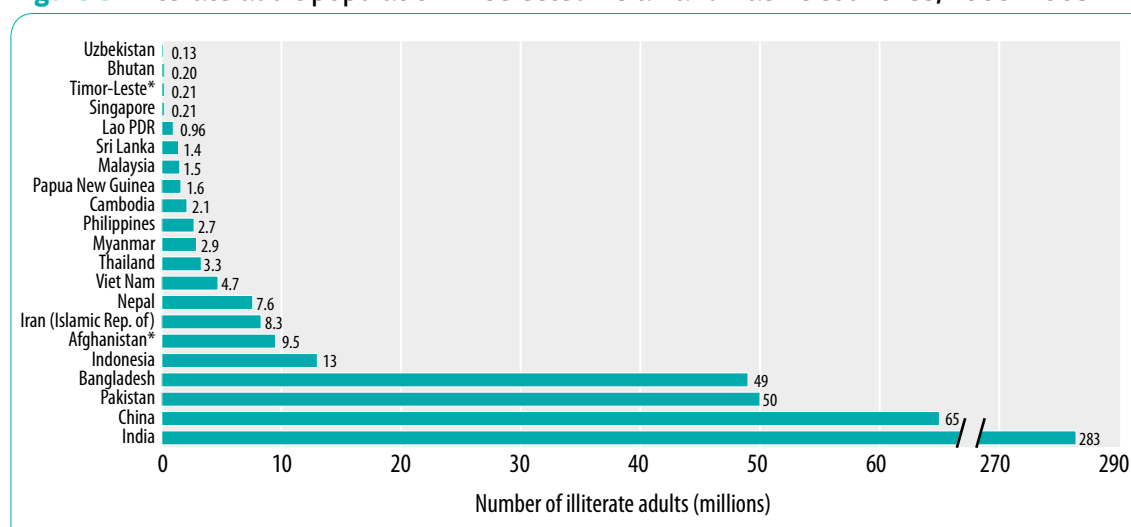
Note: * Data collected by UIS-AIMS (see Annex 3).

Source: Statistical Annex, UIS, 2011.

The literacy rates in the remaining eight countries varied, from 63 per cent in India to 26 per cent in Afghanistan. These are countries in which less than two thirds of the adult population are literate, with even less than one third in the case of Afghanistan. These are the countries in which priority attention must be given to increase literacy.

In terms of the number of people who are illiterate and the scale of literacy efforts needed, India has the biggest illiterate adult population, which was estimated at 283 million in 2006 (figure 3). This was followed by China, with nearly 65 million illiterate adults in 2009. Pakistan and Bangladesh each had around 50 million people who were illiterate in 2008 and 2009, respectively; Indonesia had about 13 million people who were illiterate in 2008. These five countries together accounted for 460 million illiterate adults, or almost 60 per cent of the world total. Accelerating the spread of literacy will not only empower the huge masses of people in these countries but also decisively contribute to addressing the illiteracy problem globally.

Figure 3: Illiterate adult population in selected Asian and Pacific countries, 2005–2009



Note: * Data collected by UIS-AIMS (see Annex 3).

Source: Statistical Annex, UIS, 2011.

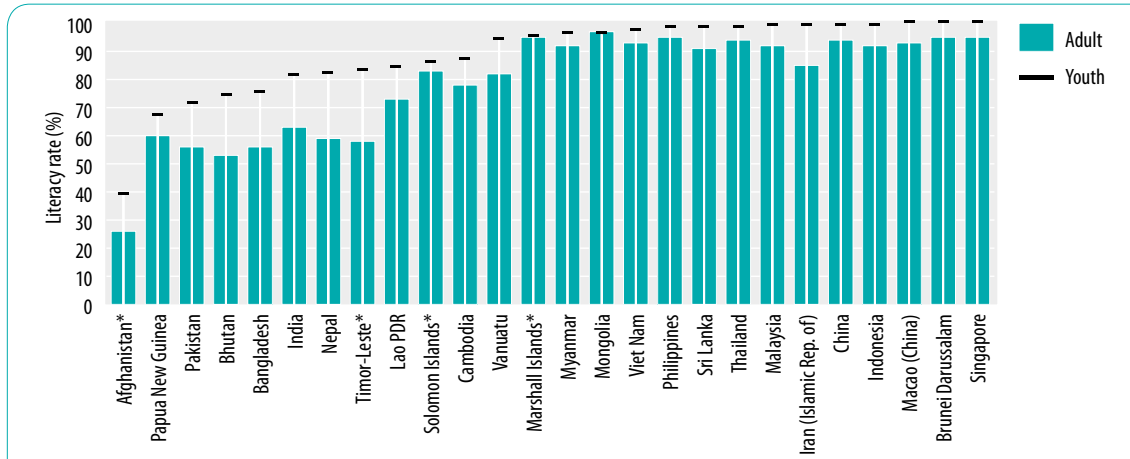
Other Asian and Pacific countries with a sizeable illiterate adult population include Afghanistan (with 9.5 million), the Islamic Republic of Iran (with 8.3 million) and Nepal (with 7.6 million). Although smaller in size, these populations nonetheless present formidable challenges in the proportion to the relative size of the corresponding national population and capacity of the national education system.

Literacy rates among youth aged 15–24 years old are higher than adult literacy rates in all countries of the Asia-Pacific region. Youth literacy rates have reached more than 90 per cent in 24 countries and surpassed the two thirds threshold in another 10 countries (figure 4), with Afghanistan as the only country posting less than 40 per cent youth literacy.

Youth literacy rates that are considerably higher than adult literacy rates raise hope of accelerating the spread of literacy (a high degree of universal primary education reduces the influx of young people who are illiterate). Promising differences between youth and adult literacy rates of more than 10 percentage points can be observed in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu (figure 4). An important literacy strategy will be further expanding actions to universalize quality basic education, which can increase the youth literacy rate to more than 90 per cent (leaving relatively smaller numbers of out-of-school children who will grow up illiterate).

Nevertheless, it cannot be assumed that universal basic education will solve the problem of illiteracy. The International Adult Literacy Survey (Statistics Canada and OECD, 1995) indicates that even in developed countries, people who attain literacy in basic education will lose these skills if they live in an area where they cannot access books, newspapers and other written material. Follow-up literacy strategies, such as the expansion of public libraries and of reading and writing practices in daily life, are thus necessary even for young people if they live in remote areas where they risk losing the ability to access reading material that can help them address their everyday needs.

Figure 4: Adult and youth literacy rates in selected Asian and Pacific countries, 2005–2009



Notes: * Data collected by UIS-AIMS (see Annex 3).

Figure 4 does not include the following countries, for which the adult literacy rates are 98 per cent or more: DPRK, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Samoa, Tajikistan, Tonga, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

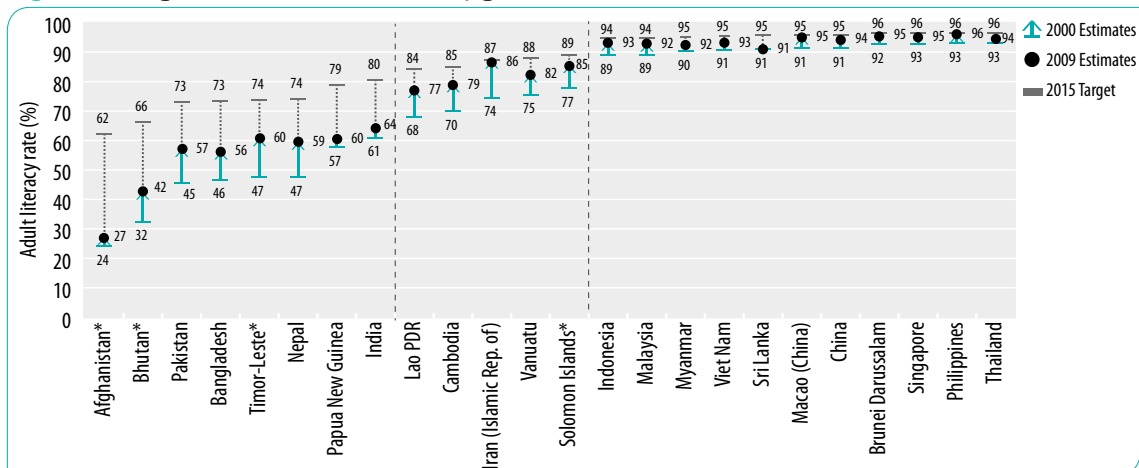
Source: Statistical Annex, UIS, 2011.

Other factors may also prevent a fully literate school population from maintaining their skills through adulthood. UNESCO stresses the importance of mother tongue education, at least in the early years (UNESCO, 2003). School graduates who return home to a community that uses a language different from the official language in which they learned to read or write may lose literacy. Standards of literacy may rise as well, leaving behind someone who only acquired basic literacy at school. As literacy expands, people may be required to read more in daily life, and their education may not have given them the degree of literacy skills to do so. For these reasons, a literate youth population may not grow into a fully literate adult population.

2.3 Prospects for achieving EFA Goal 4 on literacy

Countries that are committed to the Education for All goals are expected to improve adult literacy levels by 50 per cent by the year 2015. Based on each country's literacy rate in or around 2000, the targeted literacy rate for 2015 is determined by calculating the midway rate between the estimated 2000 rate and the ultimate full literacy rate of 100 per cent. The results of such calculations are presented in figure 5, in which the bottom marker shows the estimated literacy rate in 2000 and the top marker gives the targeted literacy rate to be achieved by 2015 for each country.

Figure 5: Progress towards EFA literacy goal in selected Asian and Pacific countries, 2005–2009



Note: * Data collected by UIS-AIMS (see Annex 3).

Source: UIS-AIMS estimates based on the data from the Statistical Annex, UIS, 2011.

The middle markers in figure 5 show the estimated literacy rates in 2009 for each country. The distance between the literacy rates for 2000 and 2009 tells how much a country's adult literacy rate has improved so far, whereas the distance between the 2009 rate and the targeted 2015 rate provides an idea on how much more the literacy rate needs to increase in the coming few years to achieve the EFA literacy goal.

Among the 11 countries with estimated 2009 adult literacy rates of more than 90 per cent, Brunei Darussalam, China, Indonesia, Macao (China), Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Viet Nam have made good progress and are likely to achieve their EFA goal of improving literacy by 50 per cent, if the momentum is maintained. In Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand, the speed of progress since 2000 appears to be a bit slow and unless some acceleration is made, they will not reach their EFA literacy target.

Of the five countries with an estimated 2009 literacy rate between 77 and 85 per cent, the Solomon Islands and the Islamic Republic of Iran are likely to fulfil their EFA literacy goal. Considerable progress in the literacy rate can be observed in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vanuatu, but the rate of progress is insufficient to guarantee attainment of their EFA target by 2015. All three countries will need to further scale up and speed up literacy actions in the coming years.

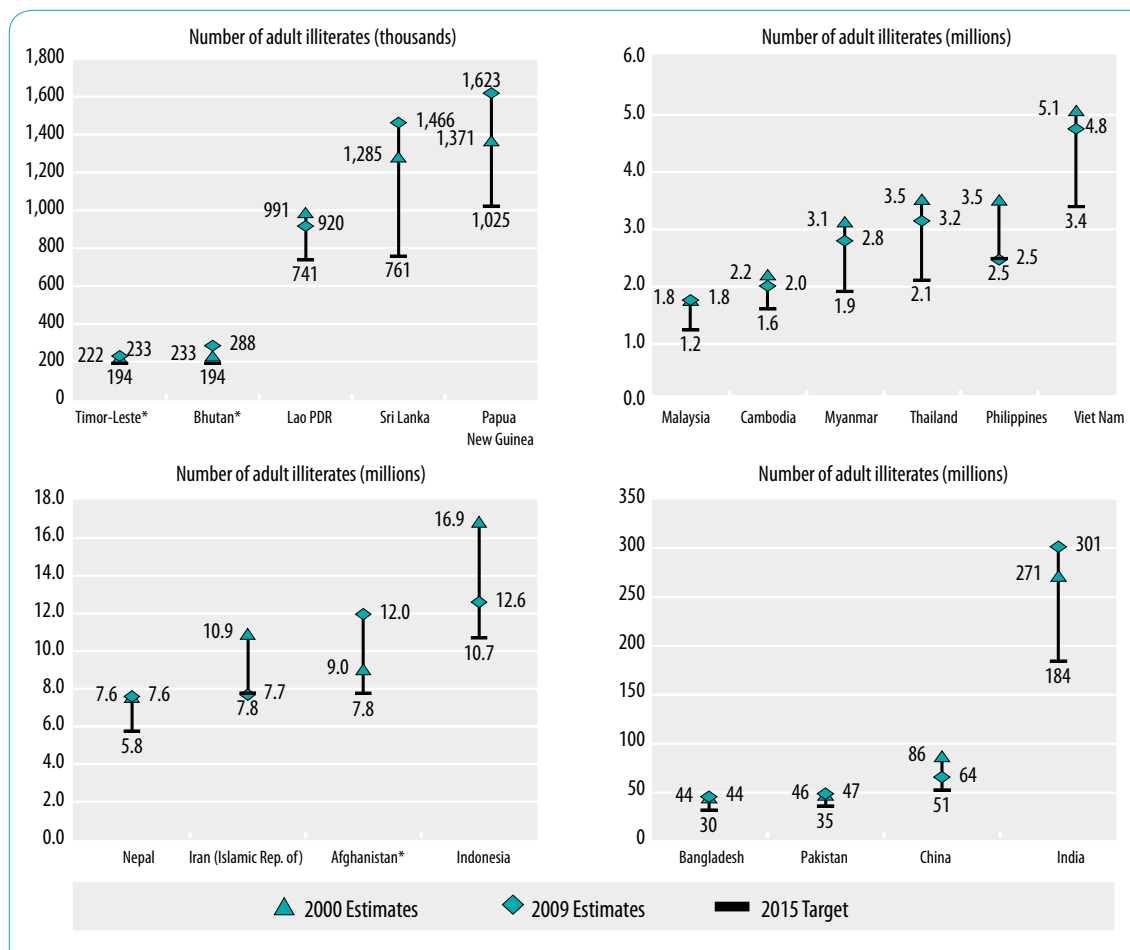
The increase of adult literacy rates in six of the eight countries with the lowest literacy rates (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea) since 2000 has been too little and too slow. Unless major two-pronged efforts are deployed to both accelerate the universalization of primary education and the spread of adult literacy, these countries are likely to miss their 2015 EFA literacy target. In Nepal and Timor-Leste, there has been real progress in reducing illiteracy, and if these efforts are sustained and intensified further, there is a possibility of their achieving the EFA goal of improving literacy rates by 50 per cent.

Figure 6 re-groups the priority Asian and Pacific countries according to the relative size of their illiterate population. As in figure 5, these charts present for each country the number of adults estimated to be illiterate in 2000 and 2009 and the reduction of the illiterate adult population each of them should aim at reaching by 2015. These targets were derived by multiplying the estimated target literacy rates given in figure 5 by the corresponding adult population, as projected by the United Nations Population Division revision of 2008 (UNPD, 2009).

Among the countries with 180,000 to 1.8 million illiterate adults (the upper-left diagram in figure 6), only Lao PDR has been able to reduce its number of illiterate adults, from almost 1 million to an estimated 920,000. To improve the literacy rate by 50 per cent by 2015, the Lao Government should aim to further reduce that population to about 741,000 people.

Changes in the illiterate adult population in the other countries in the same chart, namely Bhutan, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste, appear to follow a different trend, one that is characterized by increases in the estimated number of illiterate adults between 2000 and 2009. These countries will have to reverse this trend to actually reduce such numbers. Compared with its respective EFA literacy targets, the number of illiterate adults in Timor-Leste rose from some 222,000 in 2000 to an estimated 233,000 in 2009, which should be reduced to 194,000 by 2015 – or a decrease of 39,000. Having increased from 233,000 to 288,000, Bhutan will have to lower the number of illiterate adults to 194,000 to meet its EFA literacy goal by 2015. Similarly, Sri Lanka may need to halve its illiterate adult population to an estimated 761,000, and Papua New Guinea needs to reduce its illiterate population from 1.6 million to 1 million.

Figure 6: Changes in the illiterate adult population and 2015 target for selected Asian and Pacific countries



Note: * Data collected by UIS-AIMS (see Annex 3).

Sources: UIS-AIMS estimates based on data from and the Statistical Annex, UIS, 2011 and UNPD data.

All six South-East Asian countries in the upper-right diagram in figure 6 have recorded reductions in the number of illiterate adults during the past decade. Based on estimates, the Philippines appears to have attained its EFA literacy goal in 2009 and can further lower the number of illiterate adults in the coming years. For the other five countries (Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam), additional efforts will be needed to accelerate literacy among adults to reach their respective EFA literacy goals.

Of the four countries with between 5 million and 17 million illiterate adults (lower-left diagram in figure 6), the situation in Afghanistan worsened while it improved in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Indonesia. To achieve the EFA literacy goal by 2015, Nepal must reduce the number of illiterate adults to around 5.8 million. The corresponding targets for both Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran will be 7.8 million and 10.7 million for Indonesia.

Among the four Asian and Pacific countries with the biggest illiterate adult population (lower-right diagram in figure 6), China has experienced an actual decrease in the number of illiterate adults, from 86 million in 2000 to some 64 million in 2009. But the further reduction needed to reach the 2015 EFA target of 51 million requires major efforts to achieve a reduction of some 13 million.

Bangladesh, Pakistan and India have to overcome major challenges in reducing their illiterate adult populations to drop to the respective targets of 30 million, 35 million and 184 million by 2015. This will entail an estimated reduction in the coming years of some 14 million illiterate adults in Bangladesh, 12 million in Pakistan and a gigantic decrease of 117 million in India. While India is taking

major literacy action with its Saakshar Bharat programme (see section 5.1), the size of the problem requires determined effort across the country, especially at the community level.

To reduce the illiterate population to the EFA target size, each country must adopt strategies that prioritize literacy action that singles out the main illiterate population groups, such as women, girls, youth, persons of working age, those living in poor or remote areas, ethnic or linguistic minorities, lower castes and migrant workers. These groups are further analysed in the next section on disparities in literacy status.

Box 1: Counting youth and adults who are literate or illiterate

Literacy data collected through the population census are mostly based on the answer to a simple question each person in a household is asked: whether they can read and write. The person (or sometimes the head of household would answer on behalf of each person in the household) may say 'yes', 'no' or 'don't know'. The reliability of such self-declaration can be affected by a variety of factors, including what the person understands as being able to read and write and to what degree; there may also be other intentional or unintentional errors.

Experiences have shown that data on people self-declaring as literate can suffer from problems of overreporting. For example, a person who has studied in primary school but who has weak or even very weak reading abilities may still declare himself/herself as literate. Also, for reasons of self-esteem or status in the local community, people may tend to declare themselves as literate even though they have severe difficulties reading a simple text. Therefore, data on the number of self-declared literates are often overestimated.

However, data on persons declaring themselves as illiterate tend to be more explicit and more 'reliable'. There is less probability and less at stake for someone who is literate to want to declare himself/herself as illiterate, except, for example, when the head of household does not know about the reading or writing abilities of some household members when declaring them illiterate.

Population census data on the number of illiterates can thus be used as the minimum basis for targeting and planning literacy action, bearing in mind that the number of self-declared people who are illiterate may be underestimated because of overreporting of who is literate. Succeeding in spreading literacy to all such identified illiterates will already be a major step forward in the fight against illiteracy.

Some Asian and Pacific countries have begun pilot development of a non-formal education management information system to monitor what is happening outside the formal education system. Unfortunately, the coverage and quality of data collected so far on access to basic and continuing education for adults are not adequate for use as the basis to reliably assess attainment of the second part of the EFA Goal 4. Sections 4 and 5 of this note discuss some partial information.

3

Disparities in literacy – Marginalized groups and patterns

The lingering problem of illiteracy in the world over the past couple decades can be characterized as due to persisting literacy disparities among population subgroups, especially women and girls, people living in rural or remote areas, those from poor or disadvantaged households, ethnic and linguistic minorities, migrants, people with a disability and other marginalized or vulnerable groups.

3.1 Gender disparities in literacy, by subregion

Literacy has been known to develop confidence among women and facilitate their greater participation in social and economic activities. Increased confidence and empowerment impact the most on family and reproductive health, the education of children, livelihood success and poverty reduction. Empowerment of women through literacy can exert fundamental and far-reaching impact on the development of society. Studies by Oxenham (2004), Burchfield et al. (2002), Nordtveit (2004) and the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE, 2007, 2008 and 2009) point to the positive outcomes of female literacy programmes in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Literate women tend to marry at a later age and have fewer children when compared with illiterate women. They tend to be more mobile and participate more actively in making decisions about family and household matters. They are less vulnerable to spousal abuse and are less likely to experience domestic violence compared with illiterate females. Affirmative action is needed to improve women's literacy and life skills, reproductive health and livelihood success; to strengthen their participation and leadership in the public sphere; and to ensure gender justice through equal access to adult education and lifelong learning processes.

With an estimated global male literacy rate of 88.3 per cent and female literacy rate of 79.2 per cent in 2009, there was a literacy gender gap of 9.1 percentage points (table 3). This gender gap was only slightly smaller than the 9.9 percentage points observed in 2000. The global gender parity index for literacy also increased very slightly, from 0.89 to 0.90, during the same period. This indicates that the gender disparity in adult literacy did not reduce by much during the first decade of the twenty-first century and remains significant.

Viewed by subregion, gender disparity in literacy rate was greatest in South and West Asia (table 3), where 73.5 per cent of adult men but only 51.3 per cent of adult women had the ability to read and write – a gender gap of 22.2 percentage points which was much higher than the world average of 9.1 percentage points. This gender gap only narrowed marginally from 23.5 percentage points in 2000. In 2009, the literacy gender parity index (GPI) in South and West Asia was 0.7, while it was 0.95 in East Asia and the Pacific and 1.00 in Central Asia, which indicates gender parity in literacy.

Table 3: Adult literacy rates, by sex and subregion, averages for the 1995–2004 decade and for the 2005–2009 period

Region	Adult literacy rate (15 years and older) (%)							
	1995–2004				2005–2009			
	M	F	Gap	GPI	M	F	Gap	GPI
World	86.8	76.9	9.9	0.89	88.3	79.2	9.1	0.90
Sub-Saharan Africa	67.3	48.0	19.3	0.71	70.7	53.4	17.3	0.76
Arab States	77.2	56.1	21.1	0.73	81.4	63.5	17.9	0.78
South and West Asia	70.3	46.8	23.5	0.67	73.5	51.3	22.2	0.70
Central Asia	99.4	98.6	0.8	0.99	99.6**	99.3**	0.3	1.00**
East Asia and the Pacific	95.1	88.0	7.1	0.93	96.5	91.4	5.1	0.95
Latin America and the Caribbean	90.5	88.9	1.6	0.98	91.9	90.4	1.5	0.98
North America and Western Europe	98.9	98.7	0.2	1.00	99.1	98.9	0.2	1.00
Central and Eastern Europe	98.8	96.0	2.8	0.97	99.0	96.9	2.1	0.98

Notes: The data shown in the table is the average for the 1995–2004 period, which is referred to in the text as the year 2000 (when the World Education Forum took place in Dakar). The data shown in the table is the average for the 2005–2009, and is referred to in the text as the year 2009.

** UIS estimation. GPI=gender parity index.

Source: Statistical Annex, UIS, 2011.

Over the past decade, women continued to account for nearly two thirds (64 per cent) of all illiterate adults in the world (table 4). Illiterate men worldwide decreased in numbers, by about 1.6 million during this period, but illiterate women further increased, by some 1.8 million, to reach 508 million in 2009. This confirms the need to give special attention to stopping the further increase of illiteracy among women and to bring down this number to parity with men.

There were some 261 million women who were illiterate in South and West Asia in 2009, and more than 72 million in East Asia and the Pacific. That number of illiterate women had expanded by almost 15 million in South and West Asia, from nearly 247 million around 2004. This increase combined with those in sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States more than cancelled the reductions made in Central Asia, East Asia and the Pacific and in other subregions. Prioritizing a substantial reduction in the number of women who are illiterate will be an important strategy to reach the EFA literacy goal for all those countries in which women account for a large proportion of illiterate adults.

Table 4: Number of illiterate adults, by sex and subregion, averages for the 1995–2004 decade and for the 2005–2009 period

Region	Illiterate adults (15 years and older) (000)						
	1995–2004			2005–2009			Change in %F
	M	F	%F	M	F	%F	
World	286,717	506,191	63.8	285,089	508,002	64.1	0.3
Sub-Saharan Africa	59,715	98,322	62.2	64,528	105,524	62.1	-0.1
Arab States	21,220	38,963	64.7	21,008	39,403	65.2	0.5
South and West Asia	145,904	246,636	62.8	149,336	261,208	63.6	0.8
Central Asia	136	347	71.8	110**	221**	66.7**	-5.1
East Asia and the Pacific	37,405	89,339	70.5	29,525	72,376	71.0	0.5
Latin America and the Caribbean	17,443	21,459	55.2	16,313	20,334	55.5	0.3
North America and Western Europe	3,074	4,137	57.4	2,679	3,550	57.0	-0.4
Central and Eastern Europe	1,819	6,989	79.3	1,590	5,387	77.2	-2.1

Notes: The data shown in the table is the average for the 1995–2004 period, which is referred to in the text as the year 2000 (when the World Education Forum took place in Dakar). The data shown in the table is the average for the 2005–2009, as is referred to in the text as the year 2009.

** UIS estimation.

Source: Statistical Annex, UIS, 2011.

The global youth literacy rate in 2009 was 91.9 per cent for males and 86.8 per cent for females, with a gender gap of 5.1 percentage points and a gender parity index of 0.94 (table 5). With subregional youth literacy rates of more than 98 per cent for both young men and women, Central Asia, East Asia and the Pacific posted very little gender disparities, which can be observed in the gender parity index of 1.00. The youth literacy rate was 85.9 per cent for males and 73.8 per cent for females in South and West Asia – or a gender gap of 12.1 percentage points and a gender parity index of 0.86.

Table 5: Youth literacy rates, by sex and subregion, averages for the 1995–2004 decade and for the 2005–2009 period

Region	Youth literacy rate (15–24 years old) (%)							
	1995–2004				2005–2009			
	M	F	Gap	GPI	M	F	Gap	GPI
World	90.3	83.8	6.5	0.93	91.9	86.8	5.1	0.94
Sub-Saharan Africa	75.1	61.8	13.3	0.82	76.0	66.4	9.6	0.87
Arab States	88.4	77.1	11.3	0.87	91.3	84.4	6.9	0.92
South and West Asia	81.1	65.6	15.5	0.81	85.9	73.8	12.1	0.86
Central Asia	99.7	99.8	-0.1	1.00	99.7**	99.8**	-0.1	1.00**
East Asia and the Pacific	98.3	97.7	0.6	0.99	98.9	98.7	0.2	1.00
Latin America and the Caribbean	95.8	96.5	-0.7	1.01	96.8	97.2	-0.4	1.00
North America and Western Europe	99.6	99.7	-0.1	1.00	99.7	99.7	0	1.00
Central and Eastern Europe	99.2	98.3	0.9	0.99	99.4	98.9	0.5	1.00

Notes: The data shown in the table is the average for the 1995–2004 period, which is referred to in the text as the year 2000 (when the World Education Forum took place in Dakar). The data shown in the table is the average for the 2005–2009, and is referred to in the text as the year 2009.

** UIS estimation. GPI=gender parity index

Source: Statistical Annex, UIS, 2011.

Estimated at around 77 million in 2009, illiterate young females outnumbered illiterate young males globally by more than 27 million and accounted for 60.7 per cent of the global total (table 6). Young females who are illiterate are approaching parity in number with males in East Asia and the Pacific (with a percentage of young female illiterates at 52.4 per cent). There are more male than female youth who are illiterate in Central Asia, but for both sexes, the literacy rate is more than 99 per cent. However, the 41 million illiterate young females in South and West Asia are a much more significant problem, accounting for 53.2 per cent of the world total and 63.4 per cent of illiterate youth. The global movement against illiteracy must prioritize females, together with special action to enrol young girls into primary education.

Table 6: Number of illiterate youth, by sex and subregion, averages for the 1995–2004 decade and for the 2005–2009 period

Region	Illiterate youth (15–24 years old) (000)						Change in %F
	1995–2004			2005–2009			
	M	F	%F	M	F	%F	
World	54,398	87,309	61.6	50,079	77,228	60.7	-0.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	16,632	25,522	60.5	18,998	26,498	58.2	-2.3
Arab States	3,521	6,694	65.5	3,078	5,298	63.3	-2.2
South and West Asia	28,751	48,856	63.0	23,743	41,125	63.4	0.4
Central Asia	20	13	39.5	29**	14**	32.4**	-7.1
East Asia and the Pacific	2,869	3,720	56.5	2,164	2,379	52.4	-4.1
Latin America and the Caribbean	2,164	1,792	45.3	1,695	1,455	46.2	0.9
North America and Western Europe	176	162	47.8	170	131	43.6	-4.2
Central and Eastern Europe	265	550	67.5	201	328	62.0	-5.5

Notes: The data shown in the table is the average for the 1995–2004 period, which is referred to in the text as the year 2000 (when the World Education Forum took place in Dakar). The data shown in the table is the average for the 2005–2009, and is referred to in the text as the year 2009.

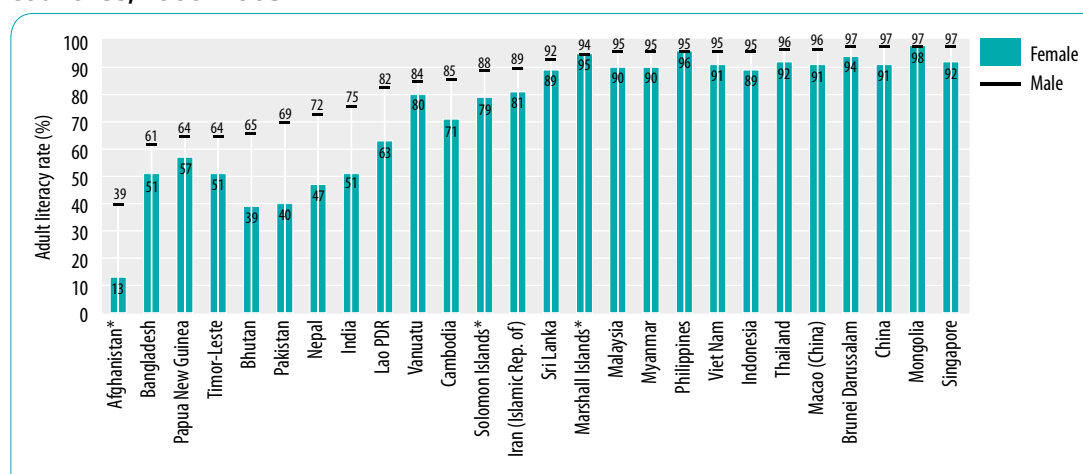
** UIS estimation.

Source: Statistical Annex, UIS, 2011.

3.2 Gender disparities in literacy in selected Asian and Pacific countries

Gender gaps in adult literacy rates among selected Asian and Pacific countries ranged from 0.8 percentage points in Philippines and Mongolia in favour of women, to 28.8 and 26.8 percentage points, respectively, in Pakistan and Afghanistan (figure 7), in favour of men. With gender gaps of less than 6 percentage points, Brunei Darussalam, China, Macao (China), Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Myanmar, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vanuatu and Viet Nam are close to achieving gender parity in their adult literacy rate.

Figure 7: Gender disparity in adult literacy rate among selected Asian and Pacific countries, 2005–2009



Note: * Data collected by UIS-AIMS (see Annex 3).

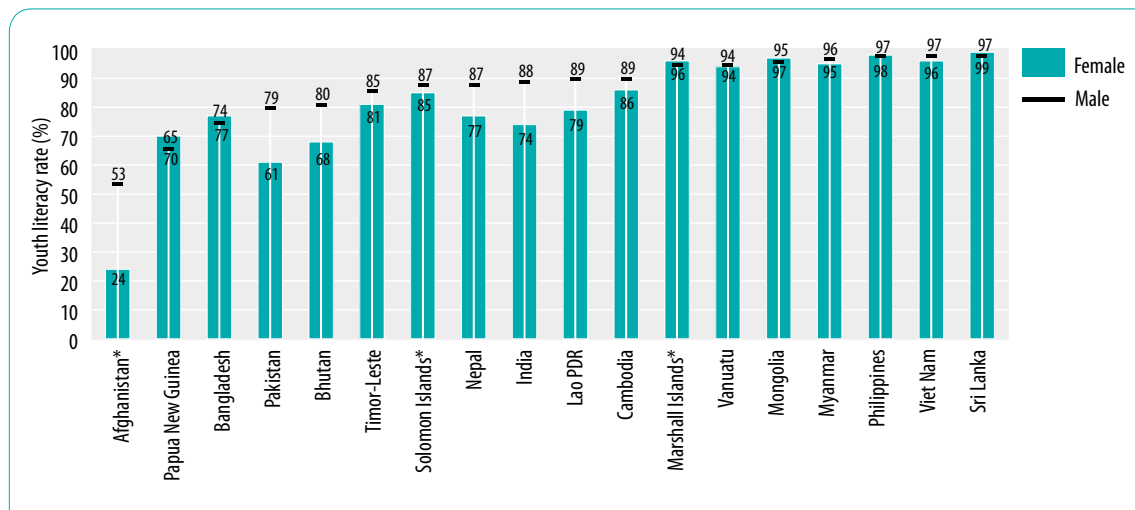
Source: Statistical Annex, UIS, 2011.

Based on 2005–2009 data, seven Asian and Pacific countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste) that posted literacy gender gaps between 6 and 15 percentage points demonstrate good potential for approaching gender parity in literacy; but additional effort is needed to spread literacy, especially among women and girls.

With literacy gender gaps of more than 15 percentage points, Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Lao PDR, Nepal and Pakistan will each have to devote special priority to spreading literacy among women and girls in order to close the gender gap, which in turn will accelerate their overall literacy rates.

Gender disparity in literacy is less prevalent among youth as compared with adults in Asian and Pacific countries (figure 8). During the 2005–2009 period, most countries posted gender gaps in youth literacy rates of less than 6 percentage points; thus, it will be feasible for them to further approach gender parity among youth in the years ahead by further improving primary schooling for girls.

Figure 8: Gender disparity in youth literacy rate among selected Asian and Pacific countries, 2005–2009



Note: * Data collected by UIS-AIMS (see Annex 3).

Source: Statistical Annex, UIS, 2011.

With respective gender gaps of 29 percentage points and 18.2 percentage points in youth literacy, Afghanistan and Pakistan will have to pay special attention to enrolling and retaining young girls in primary school and to providing literacy and non-formal education to all those who cannot attend formal school for various reasons. India (with a gender gap of 14.1 percentage points), Bhutan (12.1 percentage points), Lao PDR (10.4 percentage points) and Nepal (10.2 percentage points) will also have to adopt a similar affirmative strategy in the coming years. Because these countries have large gender gaps in adult literacy, they also need to consider follow-up support to school leavers to ensure that those who acquired basic literacy will continue to use and develop their literacy skills.

3.3 Disparities by age group: Population and literacy pyramids

It is particularly useful to review the changing dynamics of literacy among different age groups within a country's population structure. This can be done by analysing the population pyramid, which shows the population for each age group by sex and the corresponding number of people who are illiterate and literate (figure 9). Such analyses are best carried out using the latest national population census results.

Three patterns can be observed in the middle core of the population pyramids in figure 9, which show the number of people who are illiterate by age group and sex. Both Afghanistan and Bangladesh present a typical bottom-up triangular population pyramid in which each younger age group population continues to expand, as seen in the widening pyramid base. The illiterate population in these two countries exhibits the same pyramidal distribution across the age groups, which signifies masses of young people who are illiterate, with each age group who, by not having studied in or completed primary school, grow up illiterate and feed into the illiterate adult population (see also section 2.1). For more details on the importance of early year stimulation and learning and the links to later performance and success in school, see the EDN on Goal 1 on early childhood care and education.

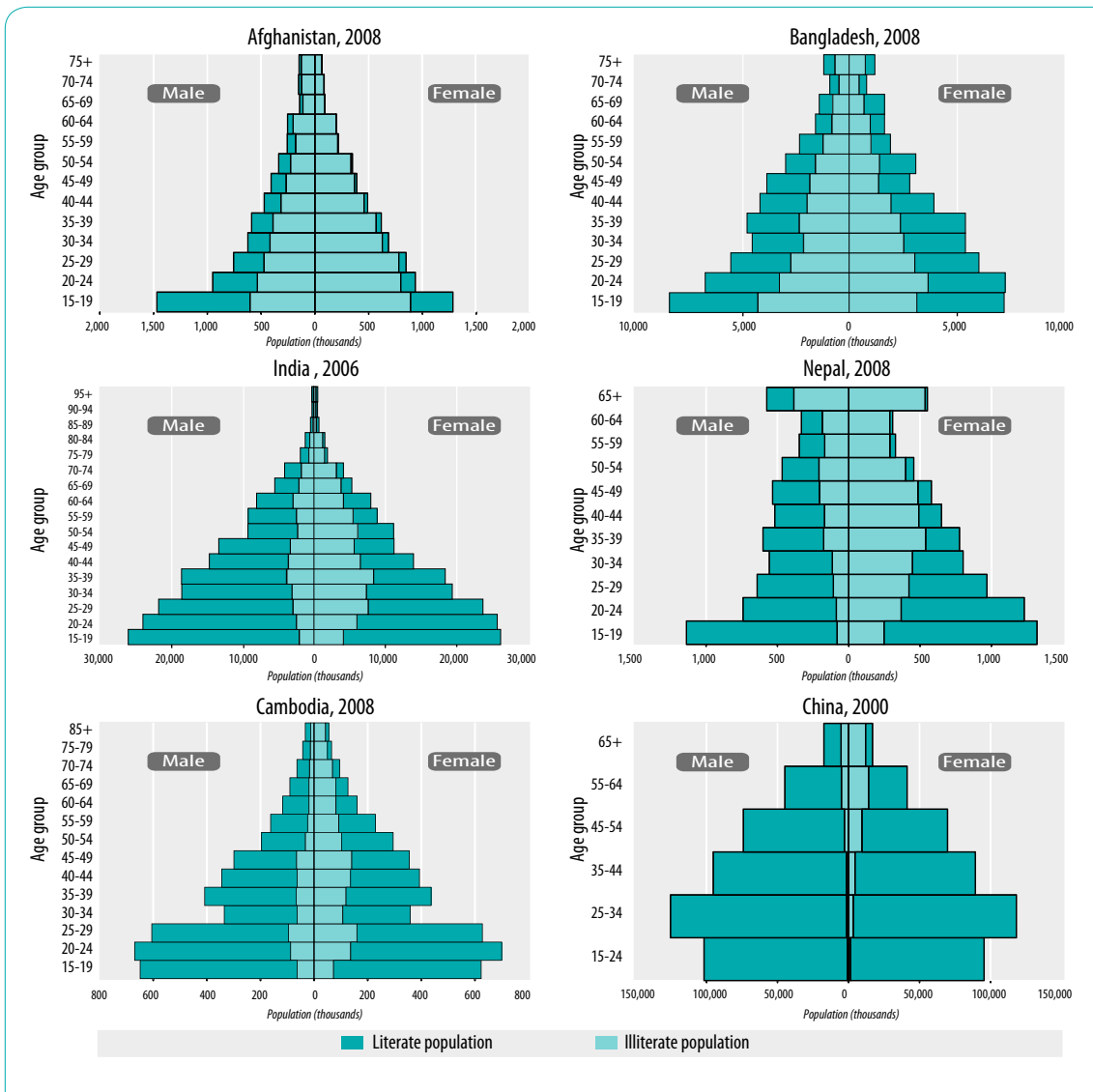
In the case of Afghanistan, people who are illiterate outnumber those who are literate in every age group except perhaps for males in the 15–19 age group, which may reflect the initial impact of the recent expansion of primary school attendance for boys. Females who are illiterate also far outnumber both females who are literate and males who are illiterate, except among those aged 65 years and older. This is a situation in which a major two-pronged literacy and enrolment drive will be needed across the country, adopting a variety of strategies adapted to the conditions and needs of different age groups, females (young and old) who are illiterate and other disadvantaged population groups.

A similar pattern can be observed in the population-illiterate pyramid of Bangladesh, with the notable difference that the disparities between males and females who are illiterate across the age groups are less drastic than in Afghanistan. Also, the relative sizes of the literate and illiterate populations are more or less equal across all age groups and both sexes.

India presents a literacy situation that has further evolved from those of Afghanistan and Bangladesh. Just as with those two countries, the base of the population pyramid continues to expand, demonstrating rapid increases in the younger age group population. Unlike Afghanistan and Bangladesh, however, the illiterate population by age group in the middle part of the pyramid shows a diamond-shaped pattern which reflects a steady reduction in the number of people who are illiterate within each younger age group towards the bottom. This is accompanied by a corresponding expansion of younger literate populations, which bears witness to the positive effect of improvements in primary school enrolment in recent years. There remain, nonetheless, conspicuous gender disparities in literacy for India, in which illiterate females outnumber illiterate males in practically all age groups, and by a large margin. Further improvement of girls' enrolment in and completion of primary education, together with the multiplication of literacy initiatives for adult women, may help to redress such gender imbalances.

Compared with India, the population pyramid of Nepal exhibits a somewhat different trend in population growth. A rapid expansion of the 15–19 age group population can be observed; but the same diamond-shaped pyramid points to the positive impact of improved primary schooling over recent years. There are noticeable gender imbalances in both the population and the number of people who are illiterate for most age groups. Also, the imbalances between males and females who are illiterate are even more pronounced in Nepal, as compared with India, especially for the 35–39 to 60–64 age groups.

Figure 9: Population and literacy pyramid for selected Asian and Pacific countries, 2000, 2006 and 2008



- Sources:**
1. European Union, 2009.
 2. Bureau of Statistics, Bangladesh, 2008.
 3. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, India, 2007.
 4. Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepal, 2009.
 5. National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, Cambodia, 2008.
 6. State Statistical Bureau, China, 2004.

The population and literacy pyramid of Cambodia illustrates a further evolved situation. The 15–19 age group population on the bottom has started to shrink in comparison with the 20–24 age group, giving signs of a slow-down in population growth. The balance between the literate and illiterate populations has further tilted in favour of those who are literate with each younger age group. The gaps between the size of female and male illiterate populations also have further narrowed, compared with India and Nepal. In addition to pursuing universal primary education so as to eradicate illiteracy among the younger generations, priority should be given to organizing literacy and non-formal education programmes, especially for people within the 20–49 age bracket, who represent the biggest group and who are in the most productive period of their life.

The results of decades of birth control, enrolment and literacy drives in China are evidenced in its population and literacy pyramid, which is characterized by a striking reduction in the 15–24 age

group population. The size of both the male and female groups who are illiterate continues to shrink with each younger age group, to relatively negligible proportions. There are nonetheless traces of the legacy of gender disparities in literacy, as can be seen in the persisting imbalance between the males and females who are illiterate across all age groups. The sheer size of China's population still means a remaining illiterate population of almost 65 million, which will have to reduce to some 50 million to meet the EFA literacy goal. Many of the people who are illiterate in China live in remote areas or are vulnerable groups, including ethnic minorities. They have been targeted as priorities in recent national literacy policies.

These examples of population and literacy pyramids clearly demonstrate the long-term evolving patterns of illiteracy within populations and the priority gender and age groups to be targeted and which thus suggests the strategies to adopt to eradicate illiteracy among them. The pattern that demands immediate major action is the bottom-up triangular literacy pyramid represented by Afghanistan and Bangladesh, which signals serious problems of illiteracy persisting and expanding from generation to generation. Diamond-shape literacy pyramids like those of Cambodia, India and Nepal reveal that the efforts at universal primary education are turning the illiteracy tide. The inverted triangular literacy pyramid in China and other countries with high literacy represents a state in which both universal primary education and a predominantly literate environment exist to eradicate basic illiteracy and to move towards post-literacy and lifelong learning.

These literacy patterns in the Asia-Pacific region, however, share a common characteristic: the shape of the literacy pyramids are mostly skewed in favour of males. This confirms that priority still must be given to literacy for girls and women. All countries can make good use of their latest national population census results to first identify the whereabouts of those remaining people who are illiterate, by sex and age group, and to probe for their family, social, economic and cultural characteristics so as to then design and implement literacy action that is most adapted and effective for each of the illiterate population groups.

3.4 Urban-rural literacy disparities and regional variations

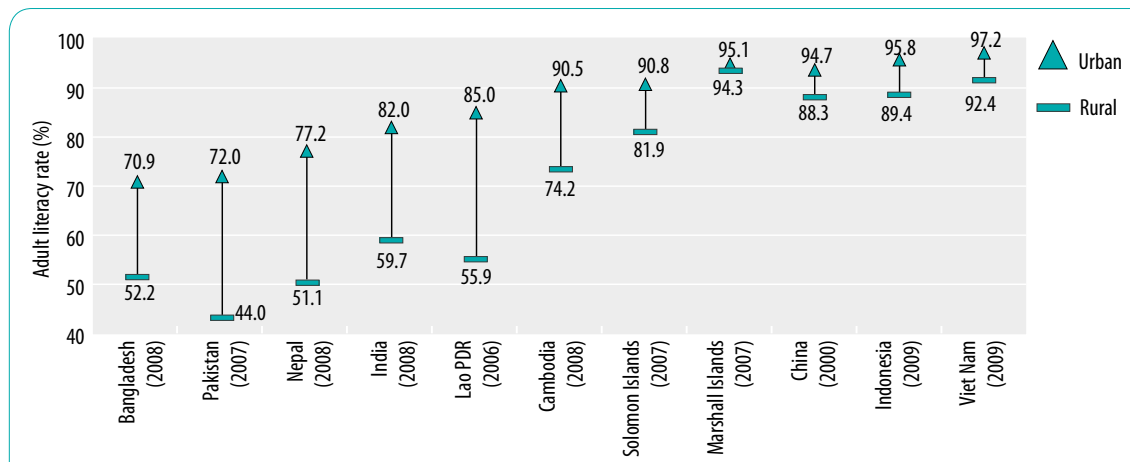
Literacy rates differ considerably between rural and urban areas in the Asia-Pacific region. Variations can also be seen among geographical regions, ethnic minority population, castes and linguistic groups in some countries.

Available data from national population censuses and household surveys show that urban literacy rates have in most countries surpassed 70 per cent, but rural literacy hovers around 50 per cent in at least five Asian and Pacific countries (figure 10). Urban-rural literacy gaps can be as high as 29.1 percentage points in Lao PDR, 28 in Pakistan, 26.1 in Nepal and 22.3 in India. Considering most people live in rural areas in Asian and Pacific countries (UNESCAP, 2011) low rural literacy has to a large extent, diluted achievements in urban areas to raise literacy levels. Such urban-rural literacy gaps mirror the overall urban-rural development dichotomy in Asia and contribute to maintaining such dichotomies. Closing this urban-rural literacy gap is a priority in ongoing efforts to reach the EFA and MDG targets. Literacy policies, strategies and plans must include components that give priority to reducing rural illiteracy, accompanied by systematic monitoring in rural areas.

Urban-rural literacy gaps also exist in other Asian and Pacific countries with higher overall literacy rates. For example, in Indonesia, the urban literacy rate was 6.4 percentage points higher than the rural literacy rate (figure 10). The gap was 4.8 in Viet Nam and 4 percentage points in China. Spreading literacy, especially among the rural population, is one of the priorities in these countries. In some countries, these gaps can be explained by the presence of ethnic minority groups who may not speak the official language used in the schools or in surveys. In some cases, Asian minorities

can have a different script than that used for the official national language and may have their own substantial literature to serve as the basis and content for literacy delivery.

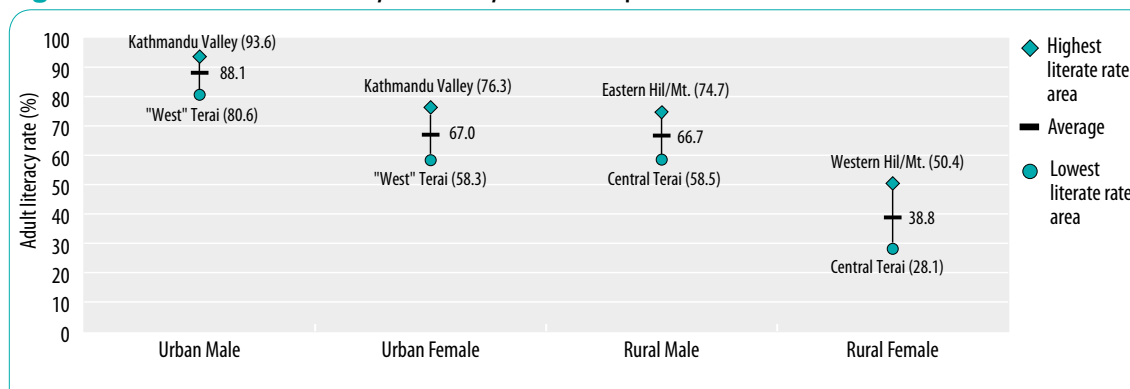
Figure 10: Urban-rural disparity in literacy for selected Asian and Pacific countries, 2000–2009



- Sources:**
1. Bureau of Statistics, Bangladesh, 2008.
 2. Federal Bureau of Statistics, Pakistan, 2007.
 3. Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepal, 2009.
 4. NUEPA, India, 2008.
 5. Statistics Bureau, Lao PDR, 2006.
 6. National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, Cambodia, 2008.
 7. National Statistics Office, Solomon Islands, 2009.
 8. Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office, Marshall Islands, 2007.
 9. State Statistics Bureau, China, 2004.
 10. Statistics Indonesia, Indonesia, 2010.
 11. General Statistics Office, Viet Nam, 2009.

The urban-rural literacy gaps can further exacerbate disparities. In Nepal in 2006 (figure 11), for example, 93.6 per cent of urban men in the Kathmandu Valley were literate, whereas the literacy rate of urban men in West Terai was 80.6 per cent – a gap of 13 percentage points. In rural areas, there was a 22.3 percentage point difference between rural women in Western Hills and Mountains region (50.4 per cent) and Central Terai (28.1 per cent). The problem looks worse when the most disadvantaged group is compared with the most advantaged – namely the difference between the literacy rate of urban men in Kathmandu Valley (93.6 per cent) and rural women in Central Terai (28.1 per cent) – the difference in literacy rates can be as large as 65.5 percentage points. As well, rural men are only as literate as urban women from advantaged areas. This illustrates how urban-rural disparity, when coupled with gender disparity, further aggravates literacy gaps.

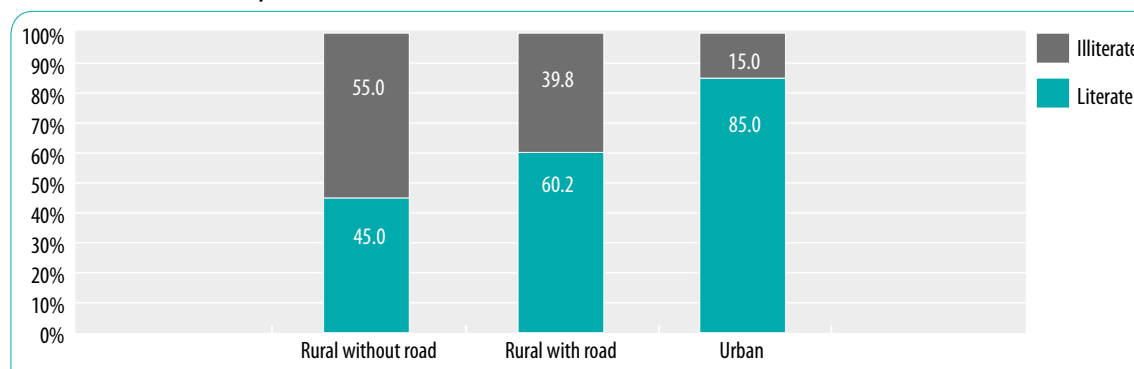
Figure 11: Urban-rural literacy rates, by sex in Nepal, 2006



Source: Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal, 2007.

Improvement in public infrastructure, such as roads and other communication channels, can help to alleviate the literacy gap between urban and rural areas as well as within rural areas. In Lao PDR, the literacy rate in rural areas with access to a road was higher than those areas without access to a road (figure 12). Access to roads and other communication means facilitates participation in literacy classes and for literacy facilitators to reach out to people who are illiterate in remote villages and households.

Figure 12: Rural road access and urban-rural distribution of people who are literate and illiterate in Lao PDR, 2006



Source: Statistics Bureau, Lao PDR, 2006.

3.5 Ethnic and linguistic variations in literacy

The Asia-Pacific region is well-known for great diversities in culture, traditions and languages. Looking at the literacy situation, small ethnic groups who speak languages other than the state language are most vulnerable to missing educational opportunities. Literacy levels of such groups are often very low, and they are not much interested in attending literacy activities that use the official state language in the teaching-learning process.

In Lao PDR in 2006, the literacy rate was 75.7 per cent among persons of whom the mother tongue of the head of household was the national language – Lao (table 7). The literacy levels were much lower among other linguistic groups: Khamu (47.5 per cent), H’mong (38.8 per cent) and only 34.5 per cent among other language speakers.

Table 7: Literacy rate, by mother tongue of household head in Lao PDR, 2006

Literacy status	Mother tongue of household head				Average
	Lao	Khamu	H’mong	Other language	
Illiterate	24.3%	52.5%	61.2%	65.5%	35.7%
Literate	75.7%	47.5%	38.8%	34.5%	64.3%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

Source: Statistics Bureau, Lao PDR, 2006a.

In Nepal in 2006, the literacy rates among the higher castes and Nepali-speaking linguistic groups were much higher than the national average, with more than 90 per cent literacy among male adults (table 8). For persons from lower castes and other ethnic groups who speak languages other than the national language, the literacy rate can be much lower. Literacy gender gaps are also lower among the higher castes and Nepali-speaking linguistic groups.

Table 8: Literacy rates, by sex, caste and ethnicity (15–49 years old) in Nepal, 2006

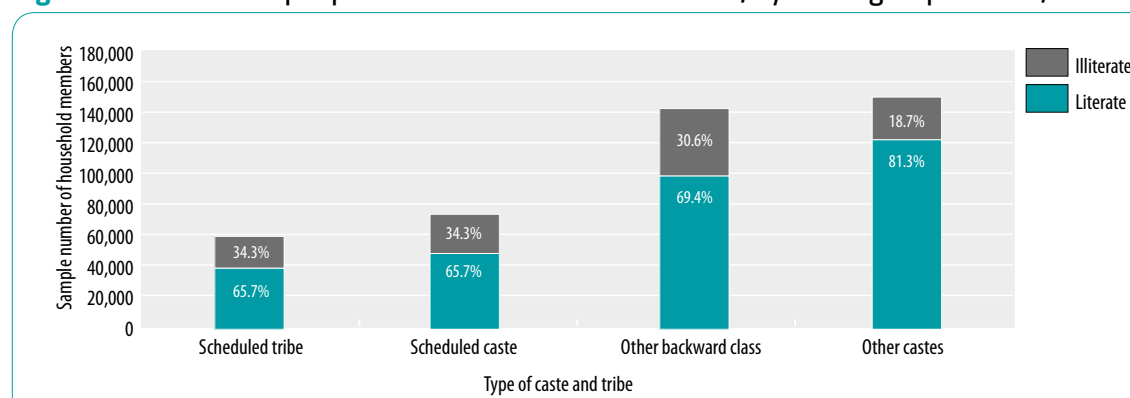
Ethnic group/caste	Literacy rate (%)		Male-female gap (% points)
	Female	Male	
All Nepalese	54.5	81.0	26.5
All Brahman/Chhetri	68.6	92.8	24.2
Hill Brahman	82.1	96.9	14.8
Hill Chhetri	59.4	90.0	30.6
Madhesi Brahman/Chhetri	82.5	93.9	11.4
Newar	74.6	93.5	18.9
Madhesi Other Castes	24.2	72.0	47.8
All Dalits (Scheduled Caste)	34.8	59.9	25.1
Hill Dalit	46.3	69.0	22.7
Madhesi Dalit	17.2	48.5	31.3
All Janajatis	56.9	79.6	22.7
Muslim	26.5	61.8	35.3
All hill/mountain groups	63.4	86.9	23.5

Source: UNDP, 2009.

Illiteracy among social groups: A case study of India

India's Demographic and Health Survey 2006 showed that among the social groups, literacy was lowest among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes: both at 65.7 per cent. Literacy among the Other Backward Classes was slightly higher, at 69.4 per cent, whereas all the other castes have a much higher average literacy rate, at 81.3 per cent (figure 13).

Figure 13: Number of people who are literate and illiterate, by social group in India, 2006

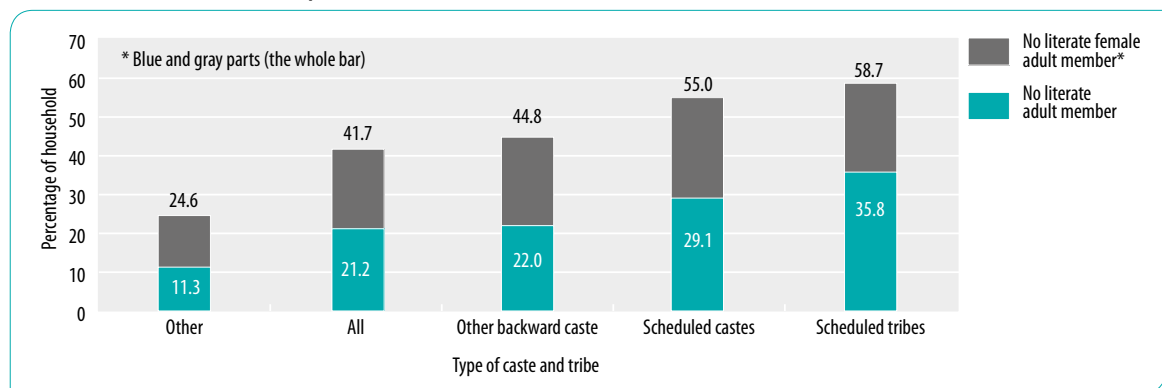


Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, India, 2007.

In its report No. 516 of 2006, the National Sample Survey Organization of India reported that illiteracy was highest among socio-economically disadvantaged communities. The proportion of households without a single literate adult member was much higher among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes households, at, respectively, 29.1 and 35.8 per cent, as compared with other backward castes, at 22 per cent, and other households, at 11.3 per cent (figure 14).

The proportion of households without any literate adult females was very high across all social groups in India (figure 14). Such households accounted for 58.7 per cent among the Scheduled Tribes, 55 per cent among the Scheduled Castes and 44.8 per cent among the Other Backward Castes. This represents a major setback to the development of these communities and must be addressed to prevent it from perpetuating from generation to generation, especially from mothers to daughters.

Figure 14: Percentage of households with no literate adult member and no literate adult female member in India, 2005



Source: National Sample Survey Organization of India (NSSO), 2006.

Other evidence shows that family members play a vital role in children’s literacy development. According to the National Governors’ Association Task Force on Adult Literacy (1990), literacy is an inter-generational problem following a parent-to-child pattern.

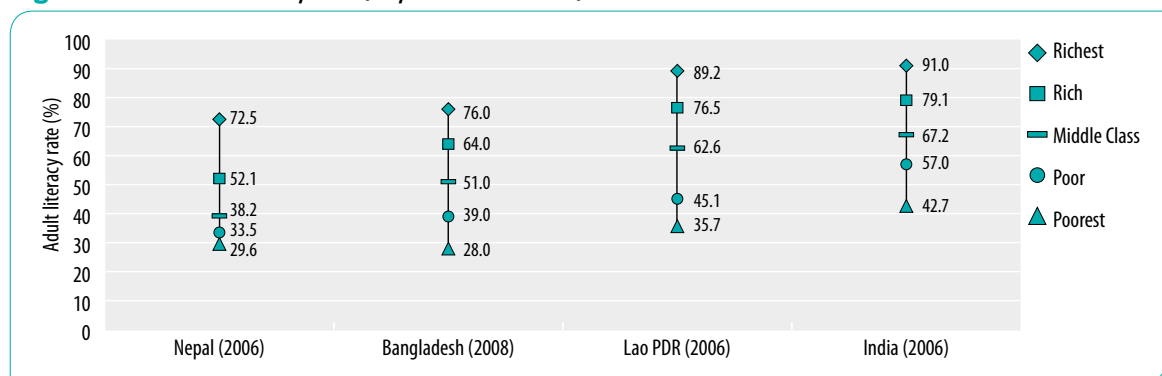
Often students in school have no support at home because their parents are uneducated or illiterate, which results in poor achievement and dropping out before completing school. Because the parents are illiterate, they have more difficulty in providing an environment conducive for their children to learn how to read and write. Lack of reading materials and opportunity to model reading habits on the part of parents and the inability of parents to teach their children in turn perpetuates the inter-generational cycle of illiteracy and cause children to grow up with severe literacy deficiencies.

It is often assumed that illiterate parents from disadvantaged groups are an important factor in ensuring their children acquire literacy to break out of this vicious cycle. It will be important to monitor, such as in India, the proportion of households with no literate adult member or no literate adult female member to study the inter-generational problem of literacy in more depth.

3.6 Economic variation in literacy

Poverty appears to be a significant factor and, at the same time, a direct result of disparities in literacy. Among the four low-income and low-middle-income countries shown in figure 15, literacy rates for the highest wealth index quintile range from 72.5 to 91 per cent, which indicate that the vast majority of the wealthy people in those countries are already literate. The remaining people who are illiterate in this income group will most likely become literate because they live in a strongly literate environment.

Figure 15: Adult literacy rate, by wealth index, 2006 and 2008



Sources: Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal, 2007; Bureau of Statistics, Bangladesh, 2008; Lao Statistics Bureau, Lao PDR, 2006a; Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, India, 2006.

However, at the lowest wealth index quintile, literacy rates were low, from 28 to 42.7 per cent, signalling that fewer than half of the poorest people are literate. In Nepal, the poorest quintile of the population had less than 30 per cent literacy, whereas the richest quintile was more than 72 per cent literate, with a gap of 42.9 percentage points in 2006. In Bangladesh in 2008, 76 per cent of people from the richest wealth index were literate, which was almost three times more than that of people from the poorest wealth index. With slightly higher overall literacy rates than Bangladesh and Nepal, Lao PDR's literacy rates between the poorest and the richest quintiles in 2006 varied from a low of 35.7 per cent to a high of 89.2 per cent – or a gap of 53.5 percentage points. These are poignant testimonies to the close relationship between illiteracy and poverty.

Figure 15 also shows that there is a relatively even fall in literacy rates with each wealth quintile except for the case of Nepal, in which the literacy rates among the middle class and poor quintiles in 2006 were much closer to that of the poorest. This pattern gives evidence of the close match between wealth and literacy and that the richer people are, the more likely they are literate, and vice versa, which underscores how literacy is a crucial factor in the fight against poverty.

4

Major literacy initiatives

4.1 United Nations Literacy Decade (2003–2012)

The United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) was launched in 2003 to increase literacy levels and “enable people everywhere to communicate effectively within their own communities and with the outside world” (UNESCO, 2005a: 1). It contributes to achieving the Education for All goals of increasing literacy rates by 50 per cent by 2015. In declaring the UNLD, the international community recognized that “creating literate environments and societies is essential for achieving the goals of eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy” (United Nations General Assembly, 2002: 3). At the request of the UN General Assembly, UNESCO coordinates the UNLD and its activities.

The UNLD International Plan of Action (United Nations General Assembly, 2002: 3) contains six pillars as the basis for literacy activities:

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

Halfway through the United Nations Literacy Decade, UNESCO conducted (in 2007 and 2008) a mid-decade review (UNESCO, 2007) of progress, with results submitted to the UN General Assembly in October 2008. The review allowed opportunity to take stock and fine-tune the direction for promoting literacy in all areas of the UNLD plan of action. The review determined the actions to emphasize for the second half of the Decade. It also used the momentum generated from regional conferences to promote stronger policies and greater investment in literacy. UNESCO set up a UNLD Expert Group to advise on the further development of activities and other literacy-related matters.

The three strategic objectives of the second half of the UNLD reflect both the plan of action outcomes and insights from the first half of the decade. By the end of 2012, they aim to have:

- mobilized stronger commitment to literacy;
- reinforced effective literacy programme delivery;
- harnessed new resources for literacy.

With its goal of literacy for all, the UNLD offers an international policy framework for UNESCO to promote the importance of literacy, raise awareness of its challenges and encourage partnerships

to achieve and sustain the literacy goals. The UNESCO strategy to promote the UNLD includes advocacy events, conferences, meetings and the production of resource materials in partnership with governments, NGOs, international agencies, community-based organizations, the media and other parties. In 2005, UNESCO launched the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) to help achieve the UNLD and EFA literacy goals.

UNESCO and the Thai Ministry of Education jointly organized the Asia-Pacific launch of the UNLD on the 2003 International Literacy Day (8 September), which highlighted the need for advocacy and building partnerships. Approximately 100 international participants from UNESCO Member States and a number of practitioners working in non-formal education in Thailand attended. The launch was organized in conjunction with the Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) V review meeting and the EFA Coordinators Meeting for East and South-East Asia (UNESCO, 2005b).

Many of the region's countries also launched the UNLD nationally: Bangladesh, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand and Viet Nam, with members of parliament, government representatives and practitioners working in education and development attending those events.

Drawing upon existing networks in the region, UNESCO Bangkok formed a Regional Resource Team to assist Asian and Pacific countries in carrying out activities that promote the UNLD. The team is reviewed every two years and engages the following members: Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), the Asia-Pacific Programme for Education for All (APPEAL), the Resource and Training Consortium (ARTC), the Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE), the Christian Blind Mission (CBM) and SIL International (formerly known as the Summer Institute of Linguistics).

Due to funding limitations, the action plans that the Regional Resource Team devised have been handled by individual organizations, based on their expertise and in coordination with UNESCO-APPEAL. The ACCU took on the development of audio-visual and printed materials, while ASPBAE focused on training, research and advocacy. The ARTC introduced a number of innovative literacy activities, conducted research and provided ongoing technical assistance to support country programmes. The CBM focused on people with disabilities, while SIL concentrated on language and ethnic minority issues.

4.1.1 Selected country experiences with the UNLD international plan of action

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

Most countries have realized the need for specific policies and strategies to overcome illiteracy. Countries such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Nepal and Thailand developed their literacy and non-formal education (NFE) policies and strategies in line with their poverty-reduction strategies. Lao PDR, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea also developed policies and strategies for promoting literacy and NFE programmes that focus on increasing local participation and linking literacy programmes to other development issues, including income generation and skills training.

2. More flexible literacy programmes adapted to local conditions that enable learners to move on to more formal learning opportunities

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam developed mother tongue-based literacy and/or NFE programmes to reach unreached ethnic minority groups (box 2). Nonetheless, there remains much room for more relevant and flexible literacy activities and programmes that cater to learners' needs in a way that reflects the characteristics of illiterate people.

With technical support from UNESCO Bangkok, 12 countries (Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam) embraced information and communication technologies (ICT) to promote various types of literacy programmes. These entail distance learning, community radio, computer-based literacy programmes and many other innovative solutions that help to reach learners in remote areas.

Box 2: Flexible literacy programme approach to reach the unreached

Countries are focusing on the development of more flexible learning activities to reach unreached groups, using various approaches such as mother tongue-based education, ICT and alternative education programmes. Such innovative approaches not only help to reach the unreached but also help improve the quality of literacy programmes.

Selected countries in the Asia-Pacific region that have developed flexible learning

Countries	Mother tongue literacy	Use of ICT	Equivalency programme
Afghanistan	✓	-	-
Bangladesh	✓	✓	✓
Cambodia	✓	-	✓
China	✓	✓	-
India	✓	✓	✓
Indonesia	✓	✓	✓
Islamic Republic of Iran	✓	-	-
Lao PDR	✓	✓	✓
Nepal	✓	✓	✓
Pakistan	-	✓	-
Papua New Guinea	✓	-	-
Philippines	✓	✓	✓
Thailand	✓	✓	✓
Viet Nam	✓	✓	✓

Source: UNESCO Bangkok, 2008c; UNESCO Bangkok, 2008d; UNESCO Bangkok, 2005a.

Equivalency programmes is another approach for providing education to children, youth and adults who are either not in school or who have dropped out; they provide proper certification and accreditation to enable people to continue learning in formal education. Many innovative programmes for out-of-school children and youth were organized in Philippines, such as the Alternative Learning System (Department of Education, Philippines, 2009a), the e-IMPACT (Instructional Management by Parents, Community and Teachers) learning system and applications of the alternative delivery mode concept under the No Child Left Behind programme (Bureau of Secondary Education, Philippines, 2008). It is important that equivalency is established on a strong base of learning achievement. If a formal approach is adopted in which learners are awarded equivalency without any relevant learning taking place, the results can be counter-productive if learners (re)enter formal education or the workplace with inadequate skills for making progress. They may then become even more discouraged from pursuing education.

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

Building up the skills and know-how of service delivery is integral to the success of literacy programmes. Most Asian and Pacific countries have improved their capacity-building strategies using a variety of options other than the traditional mode of training. The use of ICT in training

literacy personnel and study visits to learn from successful countries are recognized as effective ways to strengthen the skills of national literacy personnel. Many capacity-building workshops focusing on various literacy themes and issues have been organized both regionally and nationally, resulting in improvement on curriculum (Lao PDR, Pakistan, Nepal) and integration of life skills into literacy programmes (Bangladesh, China, India, Lao PDR, Thailand).

4. More empirical research to support policy change and innovation

To generate concrete evidence to support policy change, countries carried out many in-depth analytical studies on literacy and non-formal education during 2007–2010. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Nepal, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea each conducted in-depth situation analyses of literacy, while Cambodia, India, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam engaged in studies and policy reviews of literacy to identify the gaps in their policies, programmes and service delivery. These analyses and studies helped governments to develop or improve effective plans and policies to achieve the EFA literacy goal. For example, based on situation analysis, Nepal developed a concrete action plan and launched a literacy campaign targeting more than 7 million illiterate adults in the country (Chu and Bajracharya, 2011).

5. Community participation and ownership of literacy programmes

Many countries developed policies and guidelines on community learning centres, citing such a mechanism for providing literacy and non-formal education in their EFA national plan of action as well as other development plans and strategies. For example, Nepal's Tenth National Development Plan and its Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme both include community learning centres as one strategy for providing literacy skills help and thus working towards reducing poverty. The number of community learning centres per country is increasing very fast across the region. In 2002, there were only a handful of such centres in Nepal; in 2011, there were more than 1,831 (Government of Nepal, 2011). Similarly, Indonesia now has more than 4,500 centres, while Thailand has more than 8,000 and Viet Nam has more than 7,000 (UNESCO Bangkok, 2008b).

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

Monitoring and evaluation is one of the weakest parts of literacy programmes across the region. The lack of relevant, reliable and timely data has hindered the design and progress of effective literacy programmes. First of all, there is a serious lack of capacity in undertaking monitoring and evaluation of literacy and NFE programmes. Some countries, such as Timor-Leste and Cambodia, have started developing NFE information management systems to monitor and evaluate their literacy and NFE programmes, with technical support from UNESCO through the Capacity Development for Education for All, or CapEFA, funding (see section 4.3c for more details on efforts being made to strengthen the monitoring of literacy programmes).

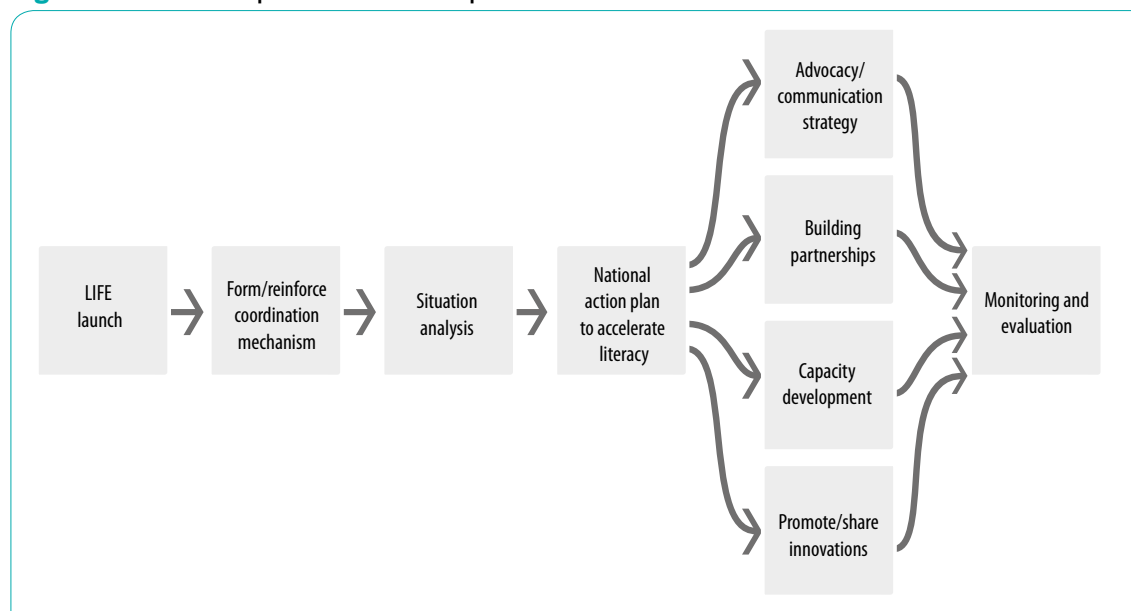
4.2 Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (2005–2015)

In 2005, UNESCO launched the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) to accelerate progress towards achieving the UNLD and EFA literacy goals. LIFE targets countries with the greatest literacy needs – currently 35 countries with literacy rates of less than 50 per cent and/or with more than 10 million illiterate adults. When LIFE was launched, 85 per cent of the global population without literacy competencies and skills were living in those 35 countries, the majority of them girls and women (UNESCO, 2006).

In the Asia-Pacific region, the nine countries participating in the LIFE are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Nepal, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea.

LIFE aims to reinforce national and international commitments to literacy, support the articulation of sustainable literacy policies, strengthen national capacities and generally improve countries' innovative initiatives in providing literacy learning opportunities.

Figure 16: The LIFE process and components



To achieve these goals, the LIFE strategies organize around advocacy, policy, capacity development, partnership building and knowledge sharing. Based on the principles of i) country ownership and diversity, ii) links to national policy and iii) progressive phasing out of UNESCO support, LIFE (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2007):

- engages in advocacy and communication to create national and international momentum, mobilizing awareness, commitment, partnerships and adequate resources for its expeditious implementation;
- reinforces national capacities to develop appropriate policies and programmes, adequate human resources and institutions, including operational infrastructure;
- supports countries in the delivery of programmes that effectively address poverty, gender inequalities and disadvantages related to health and social exclusion;
- facilitates the sharing of information to improve policies and practice by conducting research, supporting innovative and scalable programmes, promoting good practices and assessing the progress through monitoring and evaluation.

To begin, each country carried out preparatory work in 2005 to produce a country profile, which included the literacy status. They then formed a steering committee and conducted a needs assessment before producing an action plan. The main objective of LIFE is for a country-led programme to strengthen partnerships, coordination and synergy among its literacy actors to then develop and update literacy policies, plans and implementing mechanisms. Cooperation with international development partners serves to accelerate progress towards the UNLD and EFA literacy goals.

A mid-term regional evaluation of LIFE in the Asia-Pacific region was conducted in 2010 (Chu and Bajracharya, 2011); country representatives reviewed the draft report at a regional LIFE meeting in December 2010; this EDN incorporates many elements from that report.

4.3 Capacity Development for Education for All

Capacity Development for Education for All (CapEFA) is a UNESCO extra-budgetary programme to support activities that improve service delivery of quality education and related initiatives in selected Member States. In the Asia-Pacific region, nine countries have been implementing CapEFA projects (table 9).

Table 9: CapEFA focus in the nine countries

	Countries	Status	Focus of the project
1.	Nepal	LDC	Literacy and NFE
2.	Pakistan	E9	Literacy and NFE
3.	Bangladesh	LDC, E9	Literacy and NFE
4.	Lao PDR	LDC	Sector-wide, but literacy is a major subcomponent
5.	Cambodia	LDC	Literacy and NFE
6.	Viet Nam (2005–2007)	GPE (formerly known as the EFA-FTI)	Literacy and NFE
7.	Papua New Guinea	SIDS	Literacy and NFE
8.	Afghanistan	LDC/post-conflict	Technical and vocational education and training
9.	Timor-Leste	LDC/post-conflict	Literacy and NFE

Note: LDC=least developed country; E9=nine high-population countries; GPE=Global Partnership for Education; EFA-FTI= Education for all–Fast Track Initiative; SIDS=small island developing states.

CapEFA projects focus on literacy and NFE, except in Afghanistan where there are other major donors supporting literacy initiatives. The CapEFA project in Lao PDR covers sector-wide priorities, with literacy as a pivotal subcomponent.

Most of the CapEFA implementing countries that focus on literacy and NFE have streamlined and aligned their activities with the UNLD and LIFE strategies, which include developing a broader framework for literacy, strengthening partnerships, monitoring and evaluating and improving delivery mechanisms. The CapEFA initiatives look to cultivate a holistic approach towards fulfilling the EFA goal; the following highlights achievements in the Asia-Pacific region:

a) National ownership, partnership building and harmonizing

Periodic project progress reports have shown that CapEFA projects (2008–2010) have helped raise awareness on literacy issues among policy-makers and brought about a greater sense of country ownership of activities.

- Although the overall country framework is sector-wide, CapEFA in Cambodia has concentrated on literacy and non-formal education, bolstering planning, monitoring and evaluating skills and processes.
- CapEFA in Timor-Leste is building stronger national literacy frameworks as well as developing comprehensive literacy data. There are plans to set up community learning centres in areas that will reach marginalized groups with the literacy and NFE programmes. A national literacy curriculum and literacy and teaching materials eventually will be developed.
- In Bangladesh, the CapEFA project has worked with a coalition of NGOs in education; the Campaign for Popular Education, for instance, took the leading position in advocacy for mobilizing resources for literacy and NFE. Training was carried out at the central and regional levels on strengthening advocacy skills among policy-makers (around 250), civil society organization staff (25 NGO directors and managers) and other development officers. This led to 600 volunteers being trained who then managed advocacy campaigns that benefited some 6,000 women and girls from marginalized and illiterate communities through the literacy and NFE programmes.

- Nepal and Pakistan built up partnerships among the different organizations working in literacy and NFE areas (such as government organizations, academia, research institutions, NGOs, international NGOs, UNICEF, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), DANIDA and the World Bank) to harmonize the different approaches on literacy work that each partner takes.

b) Institutional capacity

The CapEFA project is not just to help countries set up innovative programmes but also to build capacities in institutional development to sustain the initiatives, maintain support from all sectors and generate commitments from politicians, education planners, technicians, etc. at different levels. Participating countries are able to develop new policies, plans and activities that can boost literacy drives in a sustainable manner.

- Through CapEFA, the Pakistan Parliament Standing Committee on Education recommended a 10 per cent increase in budget funding for adult literacy and non-formal basic education, and the Government set the target of reaching an 85 per cent literacy rate by 2015. The Ministry of Education and the National Commission for Human Development drew up provincial plans for literacy. The province of Punjab issued its own Ten-Year Strategic Plan for Literacy, which aims for 100 per cent literacy by 2019. CapEFA helped fine-tune the data collection tools of the Population Census Organization so it could obtain literacy-related information (Iqbal, 2010).
- In Nepal, training for community learning centres was integrated into the Non-Formal Education Centre. The CapEFA assessment of community learning centres influenced the literacy policy, and its findings were reflected in policies on community education in the School Sector Reform Plan. An information management component has been used as a foundation for developing a broader education information management system.

c) Organizational capacity

The CapEFA programme includes a component to establish an effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, and almost all countries have recognized the need for systematic monitoring and evaluation of their literacy and NFE activities.

- Lao PDR piloted an NFE information management system in one province and plans to roll out the system to other provinces. Nepal and Bangladesh have also piloted a similar system. Papua New Guinea and Cambodia conducted a diagnostic study to develop a similar system; the CapEFA programme in Cambodia is supporting the piloting of a system that draws on the experiences in Lao PDR.
- Pakistan established four literacy resource centres. One centre is at the National Commission for Human Development and the others are located in provinces in order to move resources closer to the communities for better delivery of technical input to literacy programmes. All of the literacy resource centres are attached to public sector organizations in charge of implementing literacy programmes.

d) Quality and equity

NFE curricula and programmes in many countries focus separately on literacy and livelihood, and in isolation. It is important to integrate literacy with life skills and livelihoods skills. Through a regional workshop organized with support from the Japanese Funds-in-Trust in Bangladesh, in April 2009, the CapEFA countries in the Asia-Pacific region, along with China, India and Indonesia, were trained on strategies for integrating literacy and life skills into their NFE curriculum and teaching-learning processes. As a follow-up to the workshop, LIFE countries planned to improve their NFE curriculum and teaching-learning processes through a review of the existing curricula and materials to better integrate health, livelihood, HIV prevention, environmental issues and global warming components.

Equivalency programmes can help to accelerate achievement of EFA goals by providing young people who are unable to attend regular school access to primary and basic education through a non-formal approach. In particular, equivalency programmes offer learning opportunities to disadvantaged and excluded children and youth by providing literacy and basic education through NFE modes of learning. Literacy links with equivalency programmes through accreditation. Some countries have determined that literacy can be equivalent to grade 2 of primary education, and thus equivalency programme learners can continue to primary and then secondary education. Based on the experiences and insights gained from a regional workshop (2005) on equivalency programming in Philippines, UNESCO Bangkok provided technical and financial support to LIFE countries to carry out follow-up activities. Bangladesh organized a workshop to develop a national framework on equivalency programming in which a number of agencies participated. Pakistan is reviewing its curriculum and studying policy guidelines for developing an equivalency programme. Nepal will soon begin to review its policy on equivalency programmes, while Lao PDR is completing a situation analysis and will develop accreditation and learning assessment processes.

e) Knowledge generation for capacity development

Various research studies and reviews of policies, curricula and the delivery of literacy programmes have been undertaken. Nepal assessed its community learning centres to determine gaps and ways to improve them. Papua New Guinea conducted a literacy policy review as a first step in upgrading and strengthening its literacy and non-formal education approaches. Officials from several countries have made observation visits to other countries to learn from other experiences on a variety of literacy issues.

Overall, there has been an increase in understanding and commitment to literacy education and non-formal education among policy-makers and planners in the Asia-Pacific region. Lack of coordination among the involved agencies and players remains a critical issue. Countries are working towards meeting this challenge by establishing appropriate coordinating mechanisms among the literacy players that will harmonize their efforts and strengthen their synergy and collaboration. Attention is being given in some countries to strengthening national capacity in raising commitment among policy-makers for increasing government funding and mobilizing funds from the United Nations and bilateral agencies to support the expansion of literacy training. Innovations and good practices in teaching literacy that also demonstrate the contribution that literacy makes towards both individual and community development can help make the case for increased support.

5

Literacy policies and service delivery

5.1 Literacy policies and strategies in the region

Strong political commitment and appropriate policies are the prime preconditions for making the literacy drive successful in a country. Many countries in the region have reinforced their political commitment and developed policies for increasing literacy across their populations. Both UNLD and LIFE have assumed a prominent role in promoting national commitment and national policies.

After the launch of LIFE in Afghanistan, for example, two important documents were developed through initiatives of the Literacy Department, in close collaboration with development partners: i) the *Needs Assessment Report* (Literacy Department of Afghan Ministry of Education, 2008), which provides an analysis of the literacy situation in Afghanistan and cites gaps and priority areas for future literacy intervention; and ii) the National Literacy Action Plan (2010–2014), based on the *Needs Assessment Report*, which provides the Government, donors and all other literacy actors with a common vision, guiding principles and a national strategy for literacy programmes. The vision and targets envisaged in the action plan were integrated into the recent National Education Strategic Plan II (NESP II) for 2010–2014.

Box 3: India develops strong political commitment to accelerate its literacy drive

A series of consultative meetings were conducted across with relevant government officials, NGO officers, literacy practitioners, managers, administrators, State Resource Center staff, academics, social activists and other actors. The resulting broad strategy for literacy in India was discussed with education secretaries of all states. Within this process, reviews of literacy trends, policy provisions and critical analysis of previous programmes led to the Saakshar Bharat Programme as a new initiative for bridging gaps and ensuring sustainable literacy and empowerment. The programme strategically targets females, irrespective of caste, class and regional diversity, and includes reformed teacher training, equivalency and continuing education components, as well as ICT and updated skill development. The process set the following targets for the number of females to reach over a three-year period:

	2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012	Total
Basic and post literacy	10 million	25 million	35 million	70 million
Equivalency	0.1 million	0.6 million	0.8 million	1.5 million
Vocational	0.4 million	0.5 million	0.5 million	1.4 million
Lifelong learning through AECs*	25,000	60,000	85,000	170,000

Note: * AECs are adult education centres that provide various educational activities based on community needs.

Source: Department of School Education and Literacy, India, 2010.

- In Bangladesh, the Non-Formal Education Policy 2006 and Strategic Actions 2010 set out to develop continuing education and lifelong learning opportunities to sustain literacy by linking with life skills and quality of life improvements.
- India, Nepal and Pakistan also strengthened their literacy policies and strategies to make them more focused and to mobilize resources for seeing them carried out.

- Cambodia and Lao PDR included literacy in their education sector-wide approach (SWAP) documents.²
- Indonesia and Thailand strengthened their policies to move from a simple literacy focus to lifelong learning.
- In China, 12 ministries, led by the Ministry of Education, issued the Proposal on Further Strengthening Literacy Implementation (2007), which prioritized literacy achievements among ethnic minorities and women. In 2010, targets for literacy were included in China's National Plan Outline for Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010–2020).
- Literacy issues were given prominence in Papua New Guinea in: i) the National Education Plan (2004–2014); ii) the Universal Basic Education Plan (2009); iii) the Medium-Term Development Strategy (2004–2010) and iv) the Papua New Guinea Vision 2050 Plan.

5.2 Strengthening capacities for policy development

Since the launch of the UNLD and LIFE, more and more governments have developed and adopted policies and plans for improving literacy among their population and expanding non-formal education access. Others are in need of re-assessment, updating and upgrading to take into account progress achieved thus far and emerging challenges. Such policy and planning work are expected to expand in the near future, especially as 2015 draws nearer. Decentralization of decision-making in many countries means that there is a need to strengthen and spread the capacities for policy analysis, research, formulation and strategic planning for local administrations as well as central authorities so that they can more effectively contribute to literacy policy-making, action planning and implementing.

Box 4: Policy-making for literacy in Afghanistan through capacity development

Various partners are working on strengthening the capacity for literacy policy development in Afghanistan. Notably, UNESCO is supporting the development of a literacy and non-formal education information management system and conducting the first Afghanistan Literacy Assessment Survey. Both will augment the national competency in conducting situation analyses and planning strategic literacy interventions. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) started a four-year programme to build up knowledge-based planning skills within the Literacy Department by improving the monitoring and supervising system. UN-HABITAT's efforts to establish national learners and teachers qualification standards and the Literacy Teachers Training Institute are also significant contributions towards developing policies regarding quality literacy interventions based on common standards. In addition, coordination with the National Qualification Framework strengthens government staff's ability to integrate literacy policies into broader national development policies in a way that makes literacy more sustainable and more relevant in the Afghan context.

Source: Chu and Bajracharya, 2011.

The literacy policies and strategies for ethnic minorities and women in China as well as the literacy consolidation programmes have closely informed and involved relevant sector staff and strengthened their capacity to implement the country's literacy priorities. The Chinese Government continues to develop national capacity in line with their goal of building a learning society and

² In a SWAP, all significant donor funding supports a single sector policy and expenditure programme, under government leadership; common approaches to planning, implementing and monitoring and evaluation are adopted; and donor funding progresses towards relying on government procedures to disburse and account for all funds.

a system of lifelong education for all, as proposed in the seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China as well as in the National Plan Outline for Medium- and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010–2020).

Coordination meetings organized regularly in Indonesia with all literacy-related ministries, the Central Bureau of Statistics and implementing partner organizations helped to considerably improve individual officers' understanding of literacy issues and their collaboration in addressing them. The Annual Evaluation of the Eradication of Illiteracy, involving all Education Office directors and/or the directors of Non-Formal and Informal Education Offices throughout Indonesia as well as the provincial development planning agencies, provincial bureaus of statistics and selected district government offices, has been instrumental in strengthening competencies to monitor and manage literacy work. Cooperation with UNESCO in conducting a situation analysis of literacy in Indonesia and in developing the mid-decade assessment report on EFA also provided good opportunities to reinforce skills for managing literacy information and policy analysis.

Strong monitoring and evaluation and timely data on literacy are essential for developing effective policies, strategies and plans. A significant number of Asian and Pacific countries have strengthened or are in the process of strengthening their M&E system for literacy and non-formal education by setting up a non-formal education management information system (NFE-MIS).

- Countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Nepal have initiated pilot projects to develop an NFE-MIS. Some are planning to roll out the piloted NFE-MIS to all provinces and to operate a full-scale national system. Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste have started preparatory work to establish an M&E system for literacy and non-formal education, with the intention of using the data for policy revisions and development planning.
- Aiming to better understand the conditions affecting whether individuals become literate or not, how literacy skills are used and in which first language the population becomes literate, Bangladesh, Nepal and Papua New Guinea collected literacy-related data through in-depth household surveys in 2010.
- Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Pakistan each carried out a literacy survey (in 2001, 2005, 2008 and 2010, respectively) to test or discover finer literacy skills within the population rather than limit their knowledge to only the traditional self-reported literacy rate. There is a huge gap between reported and tested literacy rates in these countries. The Lao National Literacy Survey 2001, for example, showed that although 78 per cent of 15- to 24-year-olds reported themselves as literate, the tested basic literacy rate for the same age group was only 51 per cent. Of them, only 43 per cent were functionally literate (table 10).

Table 10: Reported and tested literacy rates among 15- to 24-year-old in Lao PDR, 2000

Age	Reported (%)	Tested (%)		
		Basic	Functional	Secured
15–19	80	51	43	36
20–24	76	51	44	37
15–24	78	51	43	36

Source: Ministry of Education, Lao PDR, 2004.

- Lao PDR, Mongolia and Viet Nam each set up a Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP) to assess the levels of literacy skill within their populations (box 5). The assessment uses more scientific test methods, and the data will help develop more refined literacy policies for populations with different levels of literacy skills.

Box 5: Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics launched the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP) in 2003 for the purpose of: i) developing a methodology to measure, in a cost-effective way, key elements related to literacy, such as the literate environment, self-perception, socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and reading and numeracy skills; ii) working collaboratively with countries to ensure that they develop both ownership of the approach and tools as well as the technical capabilities to conduct the different stages of the LAMP process; and iii) generating sound evidence on literacy that can inform policy and literacy programme design and implementation. The LAMP design consists of the following tools: an enumeration area information sheet, a background questionnaire for households and individuals, a set of reading and numeracy tests and a set of reading component exercises.

As of mid-2010, LAMP was pre-tested in eight countries, including Mongolia, which has conducted the main assessment. Three other countries (Afghanistan, Lao PDR and Viet Nam) recently initiated the LAMP.

Source: Guadalupe and Cardoso, 2011.

5.3 Strengthening literacy service delivery

5.3.1 Access and participation in literacy programmes

Providing literacy to illiterate adults requires effective and innovative approaches. Adults that might not be interested in reading and writing activities may be interested in programmes that directly reflect and respond to their needs in daily life. Some countries have been developing and implementing a variety of literacy programmes, including functional and advanced literacy programmes (table 11).

Table 11: Participation of learners in literacy programmes in selected countries, 2000–2006

Country	No. of participants	Male	Female
Cambodia	548,249	-	-
Myanmar	66,669	-	-
Lao PDR*	44,357	19,692	24,664
Nepal	1,000,000	200,000	800,000
Bhutan**	14,674	4,692	10,002

Notes: * Data for 2005/2006 only.

** Data for 2007 only.

Sources: UNESCO Bangkok, 2009 and UNESCO Bangkok, 2008a.

Available data from the Asian countries included in table 11 show more female than male participants in literacy programmes. In Nepal, 1 million people were included in literacy training from 2001 to 2007; however, 7.6 million people remain illiterate (UNESCO Bangkok, 2009). It would seem that such past and existing efforts are not sufficient for addressing the huge numbers of people who are illiterate in the region.

5.3.2 Innovative programmes for literacy drive

To accelerate the literacy drive, countries have been developing and using various innovative approaches. ICT has been effective in reaching people who are illiterate in remote areas. China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines and Sri Lanka have developed successful models of ICT-based literacy programmes.

Box 6: Literacy retention through mobile phone technologies in Pakistan

A pilot project in Pakistan has found an innovative way to confront the literacy retention problem among youth and keep them motivated to further consolidate their literacy skills. With mobile phones now the most desired daily means of communication among young people, the creative solution has turned the handsets into a teaching tool.

After a basic course of one month, learners (semi-literate) are given mobile handsets to receive Short Message Service (SMS) messages in Urdu. They receive a number of messages each day and night. When a message is received, the young person can practise writing it out on their workbook and read it out several times. The messages are about life skills, health, religious lessons, sanitation, etc. They promote the habit among learners to communicate through SMS by using their literacy skills. More than once a week, learners meet with a teacher at the community learning centre where they do a weekly assessment test and discuss any questions they have. They also do monthly examinations to check their learning achievements.

In the first month of the project, 90 per cent of the learners in a Punjab district failed the monthly examination; four months after the project started the participants' literacy skills had remarkably improved, and 86 per cent passed the examination. Because learners learn at home, they can teach their sisters and mothers. Additionally, the mobile phone doubles as an effective device for improving their security through the life skills based messaging.

Source: Mobile-based Literacy Programme, UNESCO. Available at: www.unesco.org.pk/education/mlp.html

ICT increases people's access to knowledge that can help them improve their quality of life. With a basic understanding of ICT, learners can access information and services that empower them to bring about changes in their own lives and communities. This is most likely to occur if ICT opportunities are tailored to local needs, priorities and circumstances. If the digital divide in terms of access can be overcome, efforts can target economically disadvantaged people who are illiterate but living in rural or remote areas and ensure that they benefit from effective ICT-based literacy programmes.

- The innovative experience of a pilot project using mobile phones to spread literacy in Pakistan deserves consideration for broader replication (box 6).
- In India, the Tata Computer-Based Functional Literacy programme uses ICT to develop literacy. Reading skills are taught using computer software, animated graphics and multimedia presentations. Lessons are based on materials developed by the National Literacy Mission that were carefully researched. Computers deliver the lessons in multimedia form; the lessons are supplemented with textbook work. Audio voice-overs explain how letters combine to give structure and meaning to various words and to help with pronunciation (which is particularly useful for such languages as Tamil, in which a letter can be pronounced differently depending on the context). Lessons are designed to be visually stimulating and entertaining. The process can be tailored to a learner's needs and learning speed. Within the project, a number of learning centres were established, each with a computer and an instructor. Because the project relies on computer programmes, it has less need for highly trained teachers, which is an advantage in areas that lack teachers. A typical class has between 15 and 20 people and is offered in the evening hours (UNESCO Bangkok, 2006).
- Innovative ICT for literacy projects have also been undertaken in China. In 2001, the Ministry of Science and Technology, in cooperation with UNDP, established rural community Internet information centres in five provinces in central China. These centres function as information hubs and online libraries. Each centre has computer terminals with Internet access, a phone and fax machine and a video compact disc (VCD) player. VCDs provide information and training on farming techniques and other subjects related to community needs. The centres also provide lessons in typing, computer operations and Internet use. Each centre has a staff of two to five people, one of whom manages the centre while others provide training and assist users in searching for information online (UNESCO Bangkok, 2006).

5.3.3 Mother tongue-based literacy programmes

Many people who are illiterate in the region are from ethnic or non-national language-speaking groups. It can be difficult to draw people from these groups into literacy programmes using the national language. For those who join, it is often difficult to keep them until they complete the programme. Realizing this fact, countries in the region have developed mother tongue-based literacy programmes to reach ethnic minorities.

- A number of countries in South-East Asia, such as Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam, have developed and implemented mother tongue-based literacy programmes. In South Asia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Nepal have developed strong mother tongue-based literacy programmes to reach their ethnic groups. In East Asia, China and Mongolia also implemented similar programmes. Such initiatives, however, are not yet seen in Central Asia.

To improve gains in literacy rates among ethnic minorities, mother tongue-based education is also critically important in the initial years of education when children acquire the necessary linguistic and cognitive foundations essential to their overall learning. Many countries have thus made vital steps towards expanding mother tongue learning in basic education through various policy and programmatic changes.

- In Philippines, the country's 35-year-old bilingual education policy was replaced with a policy on the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction from pre-school to at least grade 3 (Department of Education, Philippines, 2009b).
- In Viet Nam, the Government initiated a mother tongue-based education programme for select ethnic minority primary schools in 2008, beginning with the H'mong in northern Lao Cai, Jrai in central Gia Lai and Khmer in southern Lao Cai. Children begin school in their first language, and in grade 3, begin the transition into learning in Vietnamese with expectations to be bilingual by grade 5. Initial results of the programme reflect the significant value of mother tongue-based education in boosting achievement in both the mother tongue and other competency areas, including Vietnamese. Ethnic minority students in mother tongue-based programmes scored higher than those who learned in Vietnamese in listening comprehension (17 out of a possible 20 points for mother tongue versus 12 for non-mother tongue), following instructions (16 versus 12) and arranging pictures based on stories (13 compared with 8) (IRIN news, 2011).

5.3.4 Community learning centres

Community learning centres are learning and training venues that complement and supplement the formal schools in providing educational opportunities in local communities. The centres are typically set up for local people and managed by local people. These grass-roots organizations aim to increase participation in literacy and continuing education, particularly among the poor and disadvantaged. The centres also include a range of community-based development programmes in health, agriculture, education and entrepreneurial skills for out-of-school children, youth, women, the rural poor and other vulnerable populations.

Community learning centres provide education and training, community information and resource services, community development activities and networking. Through these services and activities, they support empowerment, social transformation and quality-of-life improvement of community members.

- In Indonesia, participation in the literacy programmes has enabled community members to obtain employment in industrial companies, security services and small home industries (UNESCO Bangkok, 2008b).

In recent years, networks of a successful community learning centre model that provides literacy and continuing education programmes at the grass-roots level have expanded across the region (table 12).

Table 12: Number of community learning centres in Asian and Pacific countries

Countries	No. of community learning centres
Afghanistan	-
Bangladesh	-
Bhutan	646
Cambodia	215
China	-
Indonesia	4,513
Islamic Republic of Iran	3,500
Kazakhstan	7
Kyrgyzstan	147
Lao PDR	300
Myanmar	216
Nepal	905
Pakistan	150
Philippines	522
Thailand	8,057
Uzbekistan	10
Viet Nam	7,384

Source: Various country reports.

- In Viet Nam, the Government instituted policies to promote community learning centres as part of the effort to realize the country's EFA goals. In 2003, the prime minister issued a Decision announcing that the Ministry of Education and Training with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Viet Nam Learning Encouragement Association, the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs and People's Committees of provinces were to expand the use of community learning centres.³ According to the Amended Law of Education, community learning centres are now institutionalized as part of the Vietnamese national education system. As a result of these policies, the community learning centre model developed very quickly in Viet Nam. In 1999, there were 15 such centres, but by June 2006 the number had grown to 7,384. Many provinces and cities have established a centre in all communes/quarters.⁴ Consequently, the number of people provided with continuing and lifelong learning opportunities has dramatically increased from 250,000 in 2001 to nearly 6.3 million in 2005 (table 13).⁵

The institutionalization of the community learning centre model as an official continuing education institution in Viet Nam and the drive to establish centres in every commune have provided an effective means for reaching unreached population groups and dramatically increasing the number of learners in literacy and life skills programmes.

Table 13: Number of learners in theme-based programmes at community learning centres in Viet Nam, 2001–2006

2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004	2004–2005	2005–2006
250,000	416,667	2,333,656	4,114,994	6,297,194

Source: Ministry of Education and Training, Viet Nam, Continuing Education Department, 2008.

3 Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Office of the Prime Minister, Decision No. 26/2003/QT-TTg of 17 February 2003 Approving the National Target Programme on Education and Training until 2005. Article 1, Item 4 (a-b) and Article 2.

4 Thai Binh, Phu Tho, Ninh Binh, Vinh Phuc, Da Nang, Bac Kan, Nam Dinh, Vinh Long, Dong Nai, Dong Thap, Bac Ninh.

5 Viet Nam Mid-Decade Assessment Report on EFA, February 2008, pp. 18-19.

The numbers of community learning centres have increased significantly in most Asian and Pacific countries. But the quality of learning in the centres remains an issue; in many countries, there is inadequate capacity for delivering quality learning services. Lack of coordination among different parties is also hindering synergy-building in establishing and ensuring quality standards.

5.4 Situation analysis and needs assessment to strengthen programme delivery

To accelerate the progress towards reaching the EFA goal of improving literacy rates by 50 per cent, UNLD and LIFE seek to strengthen and expand partnerships among literacy providers to better buttress their capacities and the cooperation among ministries, departments, agencies, NGOs, centres and all the people involved. Expanded institutional and individual capacities will be needed for better policy analysis, strategic planning, design and delivery of literacy programmes, management, inclusion of vulnerable population groups, networking and involvement of the private sector, local communities and other partners, and monitoring and evaluation that includes literacy assessments – to cite but a few essential factors for success.

Taking stock of both existing needs and delivery capacities is a very important step for identifying the strengths, weaknesses, gaps and priorities, especially in capacity building. The importance of a literacy situation analysis has been stressed in the LIFE vision and strategy and the UNLD plan of action.

Such updated literacy needs assessments should identify where and who are the people who are illiterate, based on their geographical distribution and their demographic, socio-economic and cultural characteristics, so that their needs can be addressed more effectively. Many countries in the region have used their literacy needs assessment to develop appropriate policies and programmes that target literacy activities to the most needy groups.

A literacy needs assessment can be used as the basis for planning realistic and responsive literacy actions and programmes. The UNESCO Bangkok office recently developed a *Guide to Accelerating Literacy Actions* to help countries quickly scale up progress towards the EFA literacy goal (UNESCO Bangkok, 2011). This guide introduces innovative approaches in literacy mapping using the Geographic Information System (GIS) and decentralized literacy action planning.

Table 14: Literacy situation analysis, needs assessment and financing in selected countries

Country	Literacy situation analysis	Changes in financing of literacy activities
Afghanistan	1. Where Literacy Stands situation analysis for Afghanistan in 2008 2. Needs assessment report	Very significant increase since 2005. Several large-scale literacy interventions started by international agencies, such as UNESCO, UN-Habitat, UNICEF and JICA. Modest increase of literacy budget within the Government's core budget.
Bangladesh	1. Baseline survey of Post-Literacy and Continuing Education for Human Development (PLCEHD) in 2004 2. <i>Literacy Assessment Survey 2008</i> 3. Mapping of NFE activities in 2008	Significant increase (CapEFA project of UNESCO and the proposed BLCE in addition to the PLCEHD, which commenced prior to the LIFE).
Cambodia	Needs assessment and NFE mapping to understand literacy needs and capacity gaps in 2011; results were used to integrate literacy issues into the SWAP.	-
China	Situation analysis in 2009 (completed 2010); has relevant assessment framework on literacy but not especially for the LIFE.	Very significant increase.
India	Extensive in-house and external review and evaluation of previous literacy programmes under the Saakshar Bharat.	Very significant increase: almost a five-fold increase in government budget allocations for adult literacy, to US\$1.075 billion for three years (2009–2012).
Indonesia	1. <i>Situational Analysis of Literacy Education in Indonesia, 2005–2009</i> , in cooperation with UNESCO. 2. Academic analysis of the literate to be Empowered (AKRAB) programme.	Very significant increase from 2005 to 2007 and 2009, but then reduced in 2010.
Islamic Republic of Iran	Situation analysis in 2009 (completed 2010) and different types of needs assessment through scientific research; the results were used to develop literacy programmes.	Significant literacy budget increases every year, according to educational needs and inflation increases.
Lao PDR	Situation analysis in 2009; results were used to develop various literacy programmes, improve the NFE mechanism and strengthen the M&E system.	Not significant.
Nepal	Situation analysis in 2008 and many studies commissioned by UNESCO in preparation for the national policy.	Very significant increase.
Pakistan	Situation analysis in 2008; needs assessment studies for literacy were conducted in all four provinces and areas.	A little significant increase, but only in some provinces; the National Commission For Human Development budget for literacy has increased; second-highest priority assigned to literacy and NFBE under the One UN programme.
Papua New Guinea	Situation analysis in 2008; CapEFA project is taking care of needs assessment and identification of gaps.	Financial allocation for LIFE declined over the years.

Source: Chu and Bajracharya, 2011.

5.5 Financing literacy activities

Most countries recognize the value of literacy for overall human development in their policies and plans. But when it comes to implementing activities, there is only a relatively small budget to finance an extensive amount of work to be done. Most countries in the region allocate little more than 1 per cent of the total education budget for creating a fully literate population.

After the launch of the UNLD, the LIFE countries in the Asia-Pacific region reported a significant or very significant increase in government funding for literacy (table 15). However careful analysis of the budget allocation to literacy in different countries shows that it is still not that promising.

- A Draft report of a study on financing of literacy programmes in Pakistan, commissioned by UNESCO Islamabad, shows that there was only a small budget increase in some provinces (UNESCO Islamabad, 2010).
- Government financial allocation for literacy has been on the decline over the years in Papua New Guinea, where the budget for the National Literacy and Awareness Secretariat, which is tasked to coordinate literacy activities in the country, has remained at 3–4 per cent of the Department of Education's annual budget in recent years (National Literacy and Awareness Secretariat and Literacy Taskforce, Papua New Guinea, 2008).
- In Nepal, NFE and literacy expenditure accounted for only 0.52 per cent of total education expenditure in 2004–2005 (table 15). Similar levels of expenditure are evident for 2005–2006, 2006–2007 and 2007–2008. In late 2008, the Government announced a literacy campaign for which a modest proportion (2.85 per cent) of the national budget was allocated. This proportion in relation to the national budget has not increased but rather slightly decreased (2.25 per cent) over the past few years.

Table 15: Education expenditures and share of NFE and literacy in Nepal, 2004/2005–2009/2010, (thousands Nepali rupees)

Description	2004–2005 (actual expenditure)	2005–2006 (actual expenditure)	2006–2007 (actual expenditure)	2007–2008 (actual expenditure)	2008–2009 (revised estimate)	2009–2010 (allocation)
Total national expenditure	102,560,471	110,889,158	133,606,606	161,349,894	213,578,374	285,930,000
% of GDP	18.70	18.15	19.77	21.36	23.47	26.59
Total education expenditure	17,269,888	19,420,639	21,500,962	27,060,918	35,975,298	46,616,672
% of GDP	3.15	3.18	3.18	3.58	3.95	4.34
% of national expenditure	16.84	17.51	16.09	16.77	16.84	16.30
NFE and literacy	90,657	122,662	115,698	140,113	1,024,738	1,046,593
% of education expenditure	0.52	0.63	0.54	0.52	2.85	2.25

Source: Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009.

In addition to spreading awareness about the need to allocate sufficient government budget to literacy, there is substantial potential for mobilizing additional support from non-government sources, such as NGOs, businesses, employers, religious bodies, civil society groups and local communities. For example, ideas may be drawn from the Philippine Adopt-a-School Program, which was initiated by the Department of Education and based on the principles of volunteerism and participation for education,⁶ in promoting partnerships with and support from non-government entities within the country and abroad.

⁶ Department of Education, Philippines, Adopt-a-School Program; see www.adopt-a-school.ph (accessed 4 October 2011).

The Global Campaign for Education and ActionAid recommended in 2006 a unit cost benchmark for literacy of between US\$50 and \$100 per learner. Such a benchmark was based on a literacy costing methodology developed in a study by Van Ravens and Aggio (2005), which also recommended that at least 3 per cent of an education budget (6 per cent for LIFE countries) should be allocated for adult literacy programmes. The study aimed to add new dimensions to the discourse on literacy costing. It was an interesting study in that it first assumed gender parity in the literacy goal and disaggregated the targeted illiterate adults by sex. Second, the researchers factored a higher cost for adult female learners, to take into account the multiple hurdles they experience. Third, the researchers assessed the capability of countries to cover the financial cost of addressing illiterate adults and achieving EFA Goal 4.

Many countries in the Asia-Pacific region still do not apply a unit cost even close to the recommended benchmark. For example, in 2010–2011 in Nepal, the unit cost per learner for basic literacy programme was only about US\$12; for post literacy programmes, the unit cost was about US\$21.50 (Annex 4).

5.6 Human resources for literacy

The mid-term evaluation of LIFE in the Asia-Pacific region found that government decisions were taken in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal and Pakistan to increase literacy teaching staff. Most increases in literacy staffing extend from the central down to the local levels, including the community learning centres (table 16). These are major efforts to meet national commitments to EFA and literacy, but few significant increases in human resources for literacy have taken place in other Asian and Pacific countries.

Table 16: Human development plan for literacy and changes in literacy staff

Country	Human development plan for literacy?	Changes in literacy staff
Afghanistan	No	Increase in number of literacy-related officials, professionals and managers at provincial and district levels.
Bangladesh	Yes, under: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLCEHD 2nd phase • Basic Literacy and Continuing Education Project 1 and 2 (2009) • NFE Policy Implementation: Strategic Action 2010 	Project posts funded under PLCEHD 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry: 1 project director, 3 deputy directors; 6 assistant directors • Province/districts: 1 project officer and 1 assistant project officer in 29 districts • Local level: facilitators and supervisors • Technical staff deployed from NGOs
India	Yes, under the Saakshar Bharat programme	At state, district, block and village panchayat levels under the Saakshar Bharat programme
Indonesia	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Education: professional staff (implementation units), administrative staff, and technical/operational staff • Province/district: professional, administrative and technical/operational staff • District/city: administrative and technical/operational staff • Local: professional staff (tutors, resource persons), managers/administrators and technical/operational staff
Nepal	When the non-formal education centre will be upgraded to a non-formal education department	Yes in non-formal education centres, districts, community learning centres, part-time facilitators and supervisors.
Pakistan	No national or provincial-level human resources development plan prepared as yet; mainly project-based capacity building of literacy managers and teachers, etc. Literacy plans being prepared by federal and provincial governments include professional development research and training centres for literacy and non-formal education; literacy resource centres are being established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 155 posts of district literacy officers and social mobilizers were created in Punjab province (46 new posts at the secretariat level). • In Sindh, 23 new posts of assistant field officers were created. • In Baluchistan, 9 new posts (officers/officials) were created. • In the National Education Foundation, new posts of teachers, administrators and managers were created.
Papua New Guinea	No	Staff numbers for National Literacy and Awareness Secretariat has not increased; positions of provincial literacy coordinators were abolished by merging this function with the TVET one; currently there are only five provinces with an active provincial learning centre.

Source: Chu and Bajracharya, 2011.

- In India (box 7) and Pakistan, professional development is being addressed in various literacy plans that are being prepared by the central and provincial governments, representing major human and financial commitment to tackling illiteracy. Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan reported that literacy managers and teachers have received project-based training, but such schemes are rare within the region.

Box 7: Comprehensive human resource development for literacy in India

The human resources development plan of India's Saakshar Bharat programme includes the following:

- Training of trainers, literacy facilitators and supervisors using learner-centred, learning-by-doing, participatory techniques
- Total Quality Management, which emphasizes quality of literacy workers and literacy educators
- Volunteer teachers given intensive pre- and in-service training in andragogy in local languages
- Cascade approach in training of literacy personnel
- Model manuals and resource books with participatory training techniques distributed for adaptation at State Resource Centres and State Literacy Mission Authorities
- Ongoing training of resource persons at the district level
- Orientation and managerial training for literacy managers
- Various workshops organized by different bodies for targeted literacy personnel.

Literacy personnel in India increased during 2010 at the state, district, block and the village panchayat levels and the recruitment and deployment of volunteer teachers expanded.

Source: Department of School Education and Literacy, India, 2010.

6

Prospects for achieving the EFA literacy goals by 2015

Adult literacy remains one of the most neglected of the six EFA goals. Addressing adult illiteracy to achieve EFA Goal 4 is a huge but not impossible task. Pursuing adult literacy will require strong political will on the part of governments to strengthen their literacy policies, develop credible literacy action plans, mobilize increased financial support, scale up existing programmes and speed up their deployment to reach the millions of illiterate adults, especially women and disadvantaged learners, living in this region.

Investing in literacy means taking an important step to tackle the pervasiveness of poverty. There is a need to mobilize and increase internal and external resources and expertise to implement literacy programmes with greater scale, range, coverage and quality. Governments must fulfil their commitment to allocate adequate budgets to adult education, half of which must be earmarked for adult literacy programmes where required.

Affirmative actions are needed to effectively address the socio-cultural barriers and multiple burdens that prevent girls and women from attending school and becoming literate. Current trends of literacy action are insufficient to address the problem, even though the number of people who are literate has increased in several countries. Adapted strategies, innovative programmes and institutional mechanisms must be developed to reach out to the millions of illiterate women and girls in poor, remote, ethnic, disaster-prone and conflict-affected areas. Adult literacy and learning programmes for women can incorporate modules on women's rights, gender sensitivity, reproductive health, family life and women's participation in community affairs. Such programmes must also be culturally sensitive, relevant to everyday life and delivered in local languages.

To accelerate the spread of adult literacy, governments must consistently upgrade girls' access to quality primary schooling, expand literacy programmes for adult women and ensure an environment conducive to lifelong learning (by increasing the scope of local libraries and community learning centres, for example). Considering the dire consequences of massive female illiteracy on all aspects of life, government policies must include a clear gender bias in favour of females to ensure that they are prioritized and targeted. Adult education and literacy programmes can be developed that are flexible, participatory and appropriate to women to improve their life skills, health and livelihoods. Adequate and priority resources for women's education and literacy can be earmarked, including the use of incentive and support systems for girls and women learners.

Accelerating the spread of literacy in the Asia-Pacific region will determine the future of Education for All and the advent of a global learning society. There are signs indicating strong awareness among policy-makers and the general public of the need to spread reading and writing skills so as to allow everyone to effectively access information and communicate using information and communications technologies. Like health and nutrition for the human body, information and knowledge for the human mind can truly empower people and society. Literacy opens the door to allow everyone to find their own solutions to everyday problems of health, education and employment.

The analysis in this End of Decade Note reflects the progress in literacy made by the majority of countries in this region. It also points out the sheer size of the illiterate population in the region and its predominant weight on the global literacy scene, if not also its drag on the progress of human society. A critical shift in the worldwide literacy balance can be made if the governments of

countries that are home to large illiterate populations can re-invigorate their valiant commitment to accelerate the movement against illiteracy, take the lead in mobilizing all parties, including the international community, and free their people from this handicap and to further their personal and community development.

Learning from successful country experiences, such commitments can include the following actions by the government and other actors within each country and the international community.

6.1 Country-level actions

- Reinforce literacy coordination mechanisms at the national and decentralized levels across a broad range of providers and actors, building on existing networks for early grade, youth and adult literacy.
- Promote the inclusion into major national policy frameworks and coordination mechanisms provisions to empower youth and adult literacy learners, teachers and providers.
- Assess children's reading and writing abilities to better understand the link between the quality of primary schooling, early grade reading and youth and adult illiteracy.
- Update the literacy situation analysis to identify where and who are the people who are illiterate so as to set more realistic benchmarks and targets for literacy policies, planning and monitoring.
- Formulate fully costed and well-targeted country literacy acceleration plans and integrate them into national and subnational development plans and strategies.
- Design and carry out mass advocacy and communication strategies for literacy.
- Mobilize adequate funding for literacy within government budgets and from other sources.
- Develop capacities for literacy policy research and for literacy programme delivery, especially at the local level, by expanding links and the networking of schools, community learning centres and other local learning and training resources.
- Increase post-literacy and continuing education programmes to spread and sustain literacy and other skills.
- Establish a systematic monitoring and evaluation of progress in literacy implementation by developing national non-formal education management information systems.
- Regularly disseminate information to providers on literacy achievements, impact, issues, innovations, good practices, challenges, issues and needs.
- Discuss literacy and empowerment issues and actions frequently in national, provincial, district and local development councils and forums.
- Further increase international advocacy and communication to spread awareness and mobilize support for literacy across all age groups.

In addition to upgrading literacy policies and relentlessly pursuing literacy advocacy and communications, action-oriented partnerships with relevant NGOs, civil society groups and local communities should focus on:⁷

- Implementing literacy education programmes in phases, prioritizing areas with the largest number of people who are illiterate.
- Developing specific policies and programmes to reach the hard-to-reach illiterate population.
- Broadening inter-sector cooperation in literacy actions.

⁷ Based on Indonesia's reply to the Asia-Pacific Regional LIFE Evaluation 2011.

- Strengthening cooperation with universities, out-of-school education-implementing bodies and various NGOs and community social organizations.
- Making use of resources available in the country and in the community to support literacy programmes.
- Strengthening literacy education programmes that are integrated with life skills and poverty alleviation programmes.
- Introducing quality assurance at the learning group level to ensure quality learning processes and outcomes.
- Developing a valid and accountable literacy education assessment measuring tools, based on well-defined literacy competency standards.
- Sustaining literacy capacities by providing community reading facilities in villages or subdistricts.
- Holding government accountable to implement policies and to fully finance plans and programmes.

Data from the latest 2010 round of national population censuses (and from household surveys) can be used to follow through on several of these recommendations; the data can help map the geographical distribution of people who are illiterate and known characteristics about them. This would enable better targeting and delivery of more adapted and effective literacy programmes over the next few years, as detailed in the UNESCO *Guide to Accelerating Literacy Actions* (UNESCO Bangkok, 2011). The use of forthcoming household surveys as well as systematic application of literacy programme information management and assessment processes can help to closely monitor changes in the illiterate population, literacy environment and literacy programme performance and thus guide timely adjustments to country literacy acceleration plans, targets, priorities and programmes.

6.2 Support needed from the international community

In their response to the recent regional LIFE evaluation, a number of Asian and Pacific countries requested the following support from the international community:

- **International advocacy:** Take actions to generate greater commitment to literacy among national and international partners and to remind policy-makers of their commitments and the need to quickly translate commitments into effective action.
- **Technical assistance:** Provide expertise and technical assistance in areas of need, such as in-country literacy needs assessment, policy analysis, strategic planning, capacity development, monitoring and evaluation in collaboration with existing expert networks, especially those in the Asia-Pacific region, such as the APPEAL Resource and Training Consortium, the Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education and the Asia Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO.
- **Networking:** Promote sharing of salient experiences and good practices among the LIFE countries and within the UNESCO networks under APPEAL and EFA coordination.
- **Help to mobilize support to in-country literacy initiatives and LIFE activities:** Advocacy with national policy-makers, agencies and development partners.

The LIFE countries representatives who participated in the mid-term evaluation recommended that UNESCO and international development partners:

- Continue to advise high-level policy-makers and education administrators on the importance of literacy and the need to put literacy high on the policy agenda and commit to supporting related actions.

- Emphasize the need to build partnerships among literacy actors and mutual support to increase synergy in literacy actions.
- Disseminate literacy experience, know-how and resources from other countries, and mobilize both international and in-country support for effective literacy delivery, with special emphasis on South-South cooperation.
- Strengthen the capabilities of literacy and NFE planners and managers in conducting literacy needs assessment, policy analysis and formulation, strategic planning, building partnerships, coordinating networks, promoting innovations, facilitating sharing of experiences and resources and in monitoring and evaluation.
- Help central agencies to build capacities of decentralized-level education administrators and literacy managers to coordinate the planning and implementing of literacy activities in their respective provinces and local areas.

7

Conclusion

The EFA Goal 4 on literacy will become a ‘missed opportunity’ if no commitment or action is taken to follow through on the recommendations presented here, especially updating the literacy situation analysis, defining well-targeted and feasible country literacy acceleration plans and mobilizing all partners and parties to help put in place adequate implementing capacities. With a well-organized and dynamic literacy coordination mechanism at the national level, an updated situation analysis and country literacy acceleration plan can be completed with relatively minor effort but it can generate major support from central, provincial and local governments – not to mention from local communities and external donors. The UNESCO CapEFA projects can provide technical support to promote such upstream work as the evidence base for quickly scaling up literacy activities.

Despite many constraints, literacy has made considerable but inadequate progress in Asian and Pacific countries, and there is hope that much better progress is forthcoming. With strong commitments from all parties and concerted steps taken to plan and accelerate literacy actions, all countries in the Asia-Pacific region can put the spread of literacy onto the fast track by decisively achieving the UNLD and EFA literacy goals.

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Statistical annexes

Annex 1: Subregions and countries covered for the End of Decade Notes on Education for All

- **Central Asia (6 of 6 countries):**

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

- **East Asia (14 of 17 countries or territories):**

Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Macao (China), Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, * Timor-Leste, Viet Nam

No data for: Hong Kong (China), Japan, Republic of Korea

- **Pacific (6 of 17 countries):**

* Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, * Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu

No data for: Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Tuvalu, Tokelau

- **South and West Asia (9 of 9 countries):**

* Afghanistan, Bangladesh, * Bhutan, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

* Data collected by UIS-AIMS Unit (see Annex 3 for the data and sources information).

Annex 2: Adult and youth literacy rates and number of people who are illiterate

Region Country or territory	Decade	Reference year	Adult (15 years and older)						Youth (15 to 24 years)					
			Literacy rate				Illiterate population		Literacy rate				Illiterate population	
			MF	M	F	GPI	MF (000)	% F	MF	M	F	GPI	MF (000)	% F
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)			
Central Asia														
Kazakhstan	2005-2009	2009	100**	100**	100**	1.00**	38**	71**	100**	100**	100**	1.00**	5.4**	38**
	1995-2004	1999	100	100	99	1.00	53	77	100	100	100	1.00	4.1	40
	1985-1994	1989	98	99	96	0.97	278	82	100	100	100	1.00	7.7	44
Kyrgyzstan	2005-2009	2009	99	100	99	0.99	29	69	100	100	100	1.00	2.9	40
	1995-2004	1999	99	99	98	0.99	41	74	100	100	100	1.00	2.9	42
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Mongolia	2005-2009	2009	97**	97**	98**	1.01**	50**	43**	96**	95**	97**	1.03**	24**	32**
	1995-2004	2000	98	98	98	1.00	35	56	98	97	98	1.01	12	34
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tajikistan	2005-2009	2009	100**	100**	100**	1.00**	14**	69**	100**	100**	100**	1.00**	2.2**	46**
	1995-2004	2000	99	100	99	1.00	20	71	100	100	100	1.00	1.9	49
	1985-1994	1989	98	99	97	0.98	68	74	100	100	100	1.00	3.0	56
Turkmenistan	2005-2009	2009	100**	100**	99**	1.00**	16**	68**	100**	100**	100**	1.00**	1.9**	34**
	1995-2004	1995	99	99	98	0.99	31	73	100	100	100	1.00	1.5	49
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Uzbekistan	2005-2009	2009	99**	100**	99**	0.99**	129**	70**	100**	100**	100**	1.00**	4.1**	10**
	1995-2004	2000	99	99	98	0.99	211	70	100	100	100	1.00	6.3	41
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
East Asia														
Brunei Darussalam	2005-2009	2009	95**	97**	94**	0.97**	14**	65**	100**	100**	100**	1.00**	0.22**	55**
	1995-2004	2001	93	95	90	0.95	17	65	99	99	99	1.00	0.70	49
	1985-1994	1991	88	92	82	0.89	21	67	98	98	98	1.00	0.95	49
Cambodia	2005-2009	2008	78	85	71	0.83	2,143	68	87	89	86	0.96	436	57
	1995-2004	2004	74	85	64	0.76	2,216	72	83	88	79	0.90	522	63
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
China	2005-2009	2009	94**	97**	91**	0.94**	64,604**	73**	99**	99**	99**	1.00**	1,457**	55**
	1995-2004	2000	91	95	87	0.91	85,307	73	99	99	99	0.99	2,242	64
	1985-1994	1990	78	87	68	0.78	181,415	70	94	97	91	0.94	14,096	73
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	2005-2009	2008	100	100	100	1.00	0.32	71	100	100	100	1.00	0.01	33
	1995-2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Hong Kong (China)	2005-2009	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1995-2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Indonesia	2005-2009	2008	92	95	89	0.93	12,859	71	99	100	99	1.00	222	57
	1995-2004	2004	90	94	87	0.92	14,824	69	99	99	99	1.00	538	56
	1985-1994	1990	82	88	75	0.86	20,936	68	96	97	95	0.98	1,378	65
Japan	2005-2009	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1995-2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Lao People's Democratic Republic	2005-2009	2005	73	82	63	0.77	961	69	84	89	79	0.88	197	66
	1995-2004	2001	69	77	61	0.79	984	64	78	83	75	0.90	232	59
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Region Country or territory	Decade	Reference year	Adult (15 years and older)						Youth (15 to 24 years)					
			Literacy rate				Illiterate population		Literacy rate				Illiterate population	
			MF	M	F	GPI	MF (000)	% F	MF	M	F	GPI	MF (000)	% F
			(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Macao (China)	2005-2009	2006	93	96	91	0.94	28	75	100	100	100	1.00	0.30	44
	1995-2004	2001	91	95	88	0.92	31	74	100	99	100	1.00	0.25	27
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Malaysia	2005-2009	2009	92**	95**	90**	0.95**	1,461**	64**	99**	98**	99**	1.00**	75**	45**
	1995-2004	2000	89	92	85	0.93	1,749	64	97	97	97	1.00	122	49
	1985-1994	1991	83	89	77	0.87	1,989	66	96	96	95	0.99	155	53
Myanmar	2005-2009	2009	92**	95**	90**	0.94**	2,918**	68**	96**	96**	95**	0.99**	398**	54**
	1995-2004	2000	90	94	86	0.92	3,229	70	95	96	93	0.98	520	61
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Philippines	2005-2009	2008	95	95	96	1.01	2,720	46	98	97	98	1.02	410	33
	1995-2004	2000	93	93	93	1.00	3,578	50	95	94	96	1.01	767	43
	1985-1994	1990	94	94	93	0.99	2,378	53	97	96	97	1.01	432	45
Republic of Korea	2005-2009	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1995-2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Singapore	2005-2009	2009	95**	97**	92**	0.94**	210**	76**	100**	100**	100**	1.00**	1.4**	35**
	1995-2004	2000	93	97	89	0.92	233	77	100	99	100	1.00	2.5	38
	1985-1994	1990	89	95	83	0.87	259	78	99	99	99	1.00	5.8	44
Thailand	2005-2009	2005	94	96	92	0.96	3,298	67	98	98	98	1.00	210	53
	1995-2004	2000	93	95	91	0.95	3,433	66	98	98	98	1.00	209	53
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Timor-Leste	2005-2009	2007	51	59	43	0.73	287	57	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1995-2004	2001	38	45	30	0.66	262	55	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Viet Nam	2005-2009	2009	93**	95**	91**	0.95**	4,723**	68**	97**	97**	96**	0.99**	538**	55**
	1995-2004	1999	90	94	87	0.93	4,957	70	94	94	94	0.99	946	52
	1985-1994	1989	88	93	83	0.89	4,856	74	94	94	93	0.99	828	54
Pacific														
Australia	2005-2009	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1995-2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cook Islands	2005-2009	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1995-2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Fiji	2005-2009	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1995-2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kiribati	2005-2009	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1995-2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Marshall Islands	2005-2009	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1995-2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Micronesia (Federated States of)	2005-2009	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1995-2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nauru	2005-2009	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1995-2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Region Country or territory	Decade	Reference year	Adult (15 years and older)						Youth (15 to 24 years)					
			Literacy rate				Illiterate population		Literacy rate				Illiterate population	
			MF	M	F	GPI	MF (000)	% F	MF	M	F	GPI	MF (000)	% F
			(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
New Zealand	2005-2009	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1995-2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Niue	2005-2009	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1995-2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Palau	2005-2009	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1995-2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Papua New Guinea	2005-2009	2009	60**	64**	57**	0.89**	1,618**	54**	67**	65**	70**	1.09**	425**	44**
	1995-2004	2000	57	63	51	0.80	1,351	57	67	69	64	0.93	349	53
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Samoa	2005-2009	2009	99**	99**	99**	1.00**	1.3**	58**	99**	99**	100**	1.00**	0.20**	40**
	1995-2004	2004	99**	99**	98**	0.99**	1.5**	59**	99**	99**	98**	1.00**	0.40**	70**
	1985-1994	1991	98	98	97	0.99	2.0	60	99	99	99	1.00	0.35	49
Solomon Islands	2005-2009	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1995-2004	1999	77	84	69	0.82	55	64	85	90	80	0.89	13	65
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tokelau	2005-2009	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1995-2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tonga	2005-2009	2006	99	99	99	1.00	0.63	47	99	99	100	1.00	0.11	37
	1995-2004	1996	99	99	99	1.00	0.64	47	99	99	99	1.00	0.13	45
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tuvalu	2005-2009	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1995-2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vanuatu	2005-2009	2009	82**	84**	80**	0.96**	26**	54**	94**	94**	94**	1.00**	3.0**	47**
	1995-2004	2004	78**	80**	76**	0.95**	27**	54**	92**	92**	92**	1.00**	3.4**	49**
	1985-1994	1994	68**	71**	66**	0.92**	30**	54**	86**	87**	85**	0.97**	4.3**	54**
South and West Asia														
Afghanistan	2005-2009	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1995-2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bangladesh	2005-2009	2009	56**	61**	51**	0.84**	49,037**	55**	75**	74**	77**	1.04**	8,103**	46**
	1995-2004	2001	47	54	41	0.76	48,059	56	64	67	60	0.90	11,335	54
	1985-1994	1991	35	44	26	0.58	43,939	56	45	52	38	0.73	13,272	56
Bhutan	2005-2009	2005	53	65	39	0.59	202	60	74	80	68	0.85	38	59
	1995-2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
India	2005-2009	2006	63	75	51	0.68	283,105	65	81	88	74	0.84	40,682	67
	1995-2004	2001	61	73	48	0.65	269,823	65	76	84	68	0.80	48,713	65
	1985-1994	1991	48	62	34	0.55	284,027	61	62	74	49	0.67	63,946	64
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	2005-2009	2008	85	89	81	0.90	8,292	64	99	99	99	1.00	237	54
	1995-2004	2002	77	84	70	0.84	11,099	63	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1985-1994	1991	66	74	56	0.76	11,127	62	87	92	81	0.88	1,474	70
Maldives	2005-2009	2006	98	98	98	1.00	3.3	49	99	99	99	1.00	0.52	45
	1995-2004	2000	96	96	96	1.00	6.0	48	98	98	98	1.00	1.1	45
	1985-1994	1990	96	96	96	1.00	4.5	47	98	98	98	1.00	0.76	48

Region Country or territory	Decade	Reference year	Adult (15 years and older)						Youth (15 to 24 years)					
			Literacy rate				Illiterate population		Literacy rate				Illiterate population	
			MF	M	F	GPI	MF (000)	% F	MF	M	F	GPI	MF (000)	% F
			(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Nepal	2005-2009	2009	59**	72**	47**	0.65**	7,604**	67**	82**	87**	77**	0.88**	1,093**	63**
	1995-2004	2001	49	63	35	0.56	7,646	65	70	81	60	0.75	1,462	66
	1985-1994	1991	33	49	17	0.35	7,525	62	50	68	33	0.48	1,865	67
Pakistan	2005-2009	2008	56	69	40	0.58	50,020	64	71	79	61	0.77	11,000	64
	1995-2004	1998	43	55	29	0.53	46,625	60	55	67	43	0.64	12,113	62
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sri Lanka	2005-2009	2008	91	92	89	0.97	1,425	60	98	97	99	1.01	71	34
	1995-2004	2001	91	92	89	0.97	1,301	59	96	95	96	1.01	159	44
	1985-1994	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
REGIONAL AVERAGES														
World	2005-2009	...	84	88	79	0.90	793,091	64	89	92	87	0.94	127,307	61
	1995-2004	...	82	87	77	0.89	792,907	64	87	90	84	0.93	141,707	62
	1985-1994	...	76	82	69	0.84	887,675	63	83	88	79	0.90	170,208	63
Arab States	2005-2009	...	73	81	64	0.78	60,411	65	88	91	84	0.92	8,376	63
	1995-2004	...	67	77	56	0.73	60,183	65	83	88	77	0.87	10,215	66
	1985-1994	...	55	68	42	0.62	59,490	64	74	83	64	0.78	11,981	67
Central and Eastern Europe	2005-2009	...	98	99	97	0.98	6,977	77	99	99	99	1.00	529	62
	1995-2004	...	97	99	96	0.97	8,808	79	99	99	98	0.99	816	67
	1985-1994	...	96	98	94	0.96	12,360	79	98	99	98	0.98	1,033	72
Central Asia	2005-2009	...	99**	100**	99**	1.00**	331**	67**	100**	100**	100**	1.00**	43**	32**
	1995-2004	...	99	99	99	0.99	483	72	100	100	100	1.00	32	39
	1985-1994	...	98	99	97	0.98	934	77	100	100	100	1.00	29	47
East Asia and the Pacific	2005-2009	...	94	97	91	0.95	101,900	71	99	99	99	1.00	4,543	52
	1995-2004	...	92	95	88	0.93	126,745	70	98	98	98	0.99	6,589	56
	1985-1994	...	82	89	75	0.84	229,667	69	95	97	93	0.96	19,712	69
Latin America and the Caribbean	2005-2009	...	91	92	90	0.98	36,647	55	97	97	97	1.00	3,149	46
	1995-2004	...	90	91	89	0.98	38,902	55	96	96	96	1.01	3,956	45
	1985-1994	...	84	86	83	0.96	46,677	56	92	91	92	1.01	7,453	48
North America and Western Europe	2005-2009	...	99	99	99	1.00	6,229	57	100	100	100	1.00	301	44
	1995-2004	...	99	99	99	1.00	7,211	57	100	100	100	1.00	338	48
	1985-1994	...	99	99	98	1.00	7,368	60	100	99	100	1.01	628	24
South and West Asia	2005-2009	...	62	74	51	0.70	410,544	64	80	86	74	0.86	64,868	63
	1995-2004	...	59	70	47	0.67	392,540	63	74	81	66	0.81	77,607	63
	1985-1994	...	47	60	33	0.56	397,595	61	60	72	48	0.68	94,349	63
Sub-Saharan Africa	2005-2009	...	62	71	53	0.76	170,052	62	71	76	66	0.87	45,496	58
	1995-2004	...	57	67	48	0.71	158,037	62	68	75	62	0.82	42,154	61
	1985-1994	...	53	63	43	0.68	133,583	62	65	72	58	0.80	35,023	60

Notes: Data extracted from the UIS database on October 2011. Countries included in regional averages are based on UIS categorization of regions. Central Asia includes the following countries or territories: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Symbols:

... No data available

** For country data: UIS estimation

For regional averages: Partial imputation due to incomplete country coverage (between 25% to 75% of the population)

* National estimation

- Magnitude nil

. Not applicable

x⁺ⁿ Data refer to the school or financial year n years after the reference year

x⁻ⁿ Data refer to the school or financial year n years prior the reference year

Annex 3: Data collected by the UIS-AIMS Unit

Region Country or territory	Decade	Reference year	Adult (15 years and older)						Youth (15 to 24 years)					
			Literacy rate				Illiterate population		Literacy rate				Illiterate population	
			MF	M	F	GPI	MF (000)	%F	MF	M	F	GPI	MF (000)	%F
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Afghanistan	2005-2009	2008	26	39	13	0.32	9,455	58	39	53	24	0.45	2,827	60
	1995-2004	1979	18	30	5	0.17	6,216	56	30	46	11	0.24	1,832	61
Bhutan	2005-2009	2009	42	51	34	0.68	392	57	...	...	...	...	54	61
	1995-2004	2003	36	49	23	0.47	259	62	60	70	50	0.72	49	66
Marshall Islands	2005-2009	2007	95	94	95	1.01	3	60	95	94	96	1.03	1	50
	1995-2004	1999	97	97	97	1	39	66	...	...	...	...	...	...
Solomon Islands	2005-2009	2007	83	88	79	0.89	...	...	86	87	85	0.98	13	53
	1995-2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Timor-Leste	2005-2009	2007	58	64	51	0.79	206	57	83	85	81	0.96	35	54
	1995-2004	2001	49	56	42	0.74	238	57	74	76	72	0.94	36	53

Symbol:

... No data available

Country	Year	Source of data
Afghanistan	2008	European Union, 2009.
Bhutan	2003	National Statistics Bureau, 2003.
	2009	Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, 2009.
Marshall Islands	1999	Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office, Marshall Islands, 1999.
	2007	Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office, Marshall Islands, 2007.
Solomon Islands	2007	National Statistics Office, Solomon Islands, 2009.
Timor-Leste	2001	National Statistics Directorate, Timor-Leste, 2001
	2007	National Statistics Directorate, Timor-Leste, 2007

Annex 4: Calculating the unit cost, in rupees, for a literacy campaign in Nepal (based on 2010/2011 fiscal year norms)

SN	Items	Unit	Unit cost	Duration	Total budget
1	Remuneration for literacy volunteers	Person	2,000	3 months	6,000
2	Remuneration for local supervisor	Person	2,500	3 months	7,500
3	Stationery (25 participants in a group on average) (the unit cost per person in mountain areas – 100 rupees, hills – 90 rupees, Terai and Kathmandu Valley – 75 rupees). In a group, mountain – 20 rupees; other areas – 30 rupees	Person	88	1 time	2,200
4	Textbooks (25 participants in a group on average) (the unit cost in mountain areas – 60 rupees, hills – 54 rupees and Terai and Kathmandu Valley – 54 rupees)	Person	58	1 time	1,875
5	Training cost for local literacy volunteer	Person	1,631	5 days	1,631
6	Training cost for local supervisor	Person	1,710	5 days	1,710
7	Management costs (10 days additional costs for literacy volunteers in addition to the three months' salary)				300
8	Total budget for a group of 25 participants				21,216
9	Unit cost for a centre in rupees				849 (US\$12)

Source: Draft research study on financing literacy in Nepal, study commissioned by APPEAL, UNESCO Bangkok, 2010.



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