Literacy & Livelihoods

learning for life in a changing world

INTERNATIONAL
EXPERTS MEETING

VANCOUVER CANADA | 2004

COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

Literacy and Livelihoods:
Learning for Life
in a
Changing World

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The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies.

LITERACY AND LIVELIHOODS: LEARNING FOR LIFE IN A CHANGING WORLD

Published by
Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver, 2005

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Foreword

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) believes that marrying literacy and livelihoods is an important step in tackling the poverty reduction targets of the Millennium Development Goals. This is the principle behind a new COL programme that will benefit both young people and older people alike.

Literacy is understood in two ways. The first embraces the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic, popularly referred to as the three Rs. The second and more recent concept of literacy stresses the competencies that enable those with minimal or no formal education to improve their chances of gainful employment.

COL believes that literacy should not be divorced from the ability to make a living, and it has achieved some notable successes in improving the status of poor people through technical and vocational skills and agricultural and health initiatives. However, the scale of need is still enormous. Learning related to livelihoods must engage a far larger population of adults and youth than can be reached through formal technical or vocational training.

Enabling people to acquire very basic generic and life skills and giving them some access to information technologies can help reduce hunger and poverty. COL's Literacy and Livelihoods programme will deploy non-formal and informal education techniques to reach illiterate adults, semi-literate youth and neo-literate populations in developing Commonwealth countries.

Thanks to a special grant from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), COL brought together experts in literacy and livelihoods to assist in the development of a programme strategy. The UK's Department for International Development has also provided helpful support. This publication provides a record of this consultative meeting.

Sir John Daniel
President and CEO
Commonwealth of Learning

Introduction

In the past, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has focused extensively on livelihood skills training and acquisition. Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) has produced huge results in the Pacific states, South Asia, the Caribbean islands and some countries in sub-Saharan Africa. COL's only notable record in literacy, which also proved to be a great success, is the COL Literacy (COLLIT) project in India and Tanzania.

Given COL's expertise in the development and use of open and distance learning (ODL), what kind of skills should be receiving COL's attention in the 21st century?

Livelihoods are to a large extent based on literacy skills. Skills in information and communication technology (ICT) have also become a necessary tool in literacy training. In addressing the challenges of literacy and livelihood skills, COL has developed a revised approach by merging literacy and livelihoods in its programme to be called Literacy and Livelihoods (L&L). To carry forward this plan, the International Literacy and Livelihoods Experts Meeting was organised from 15 to 17 November 2004 in Vancouver.

This report gives a fair view of COL's sense of direction which was endorsed by delegates at the meeting. In addition, some regional meetings will be held in the course of the coming year to help COL develop a long-term plan in L&L. Meanwhile, some initiatives are already underway with the view to adding value to existing COL activities associated with poverty reduction and general improvement in the living conditions of the poor and in the environment as they relate to both literacy and livelihoods skills.

I would like to invite you, esteemed reader, to visit the COL Web site for the full proceedings of the November experts meeting. You could also send us your comments or suggestions on how COL may develop its L&L programme as a contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Joshua C. Mallet
Education Specialist
Learning and Livelihoods

Bios

Keynote Speaker

Sir John Daniel

President and Chief Executive Officer
Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Sir John Daniel, a world-renowned authority in open and distance learning, joined COL on 1 June 2004 as president and chief executive officer. He succeeded Dato' Professor Gajaraj (Raj) Dhanarajan who retired at the end of May.

Sir John came to COL from UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) where he was assistant director-general for education and headed the global Education for All programme.

Knighted by Queen Elizabeth for services to higher education in 1994, the honour recognised the leading role that he has played internationally, over three decades, in the development of distance learning in universities.

Sir John began his career in ancient universities, with an undergraduate degree from Oxford and a doctorate from the University of Paris, both in metallurgy. During his first academic appointment at the École Polytechnique of the University of Montreal he began part-time study for a Masters in Educational Technology. The programme required an internship and he spent the summer of 1972 at the brand new UK Open University where he had a conversion experience. Inspired by the idealism, the scale, the technology and the focus on students that he found at the Open University he decided to join the distance learning revolution.

He spent four years helping to establish Québec's Télé-université, moved west to Alberta as vice-president of Athabasca University and then returned to Montreal as vice-rector of Concordia University. In 1984 he became president of Laurentian University in Ontario. He then moved to the UK as vice-chancellor of the Open University in 1990 and added the duties of president of the United States Open University in 1998.

In 1988, Sir John chaired the working group that was appointed to "develop institutional arrangements for Commonwealth co-operation in distance education" and recommended the creation of the Commonwealth of Learning with headquarters in Vancouver. He subsequently served for two years as a founding member of COL's Board of Governors. In 2002, he was named an Honorary Fellow of the Commonwealth of Learning, for his contribution to the development of open and distance education worldwide.

Sir John has been active as a scholar and student throughout his career. The success of his book, *Mega-Universities and Knowledge Media: Technology Strategies for Higher Education* (published by Kogan Page,

1996), established his reputation in international university circles as a leading thinker about the role of technology in academic communities. In 1999 he registered as a student at the Open University in order to explore the world of Web-based learning for himself.

Sir John has been awarded 20 honorary degrees from universities in 12 countries, is a past president of both the International Council for Open and Distance Education and the Canadian Association for Distance Education, and served as vice-president of the International Baccalaureate Organisation. He is a citizen of both Canada and the UK.

His hobbies are walking and boating. As a Reader in the Anglican Church he became the first person to preach in Westminster Abbey from a laptop computer.

Presenters

Mr Arvil V. Adams
Senior Advisor for Social Protection, Africa Region
Human Development Unit, World Bank
Washington, DC, USA

Mr Arvil V. Adams is the Africa Region's senior advisor for social protection. Prior to joining the World Bank in 1989, he was professor of economics and held teaching and administrative positions over a 19-year period in three American universities. During this period, while on leave from 1977 to 1979, he served as executive director of a US Presidential Commission for the Carter Administration on the measurement of employment and unemployment. He is co-author of the 1991 World Bank policy paper on technical and vocational education and training, and the subsequent book, *Skills for Productivity: Vocational Education and Training in Developing Countries* (published by Oxford University Press in 1993).

He recently co-authored the book *Skills Development in Sub-Saharan Africa*, published in March 2004 by the World Bank.

Mr Martin Pacheco
Executive Co-ordinator
Service Volunteered for All (SERVOL) Ltd.
Port of Spain, Trinidad

Mr Martin Pacheco has worked with SERVOL for the past 12 years and now holds the post of executive co-ordinator.

He has held several posts in SERVOL including that of project administrator of the SERVOL Hi Tech and Computer Literacy Programmes and the co-ordinator of the Venture Programme. (This programme was developed for angry and violent youth and was run in conjunction with the Defence Force.)

He also worked with the literacy co-ordinator in establishing Scrabble as in integral part of literacy in all centres and worked with KIND (Kids in Need of Direction—an NGO) in providing literacy training to SERVOL trainees. He helped establish the SERVOL special literacy centre and was instrumental in promoting public speaking competitions, including working with the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago to partner SERVOL in a national public speaking competition on the occasion of the bank's 40th anniversary.

Mr Pacheco has been involved with the Lions Clubs International for the past 28 years. He is a past district governor and has been involved in initiating many youth-oriented projects throughout the Caribbean, particularly in depressed areas. These involved leadership, mentoring and literacy programmes.

Having done an in-depth train-the-trainer programme in Chicago, he has been responsible for training members of both the Lions organisation and SERVOL staff.

Mr Mahendra Singh

Project Manager, Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE)
University of the South Pacific, Samoa

Mr Mahendra Singh is managing the Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE project). This five-year project (2004–2008) is implemented by the Institute of Education at the University of the South Pacific. PRIDE is co-funded by the European Union and NZAID and serves 15 countries in the Pacific Region.

Dr Qian Tang

Director, Executive Office
Education Sector, UNESCO
Paris, France

Dr Qian Tang was born in Beijing, China. He earned his bachelor degree in education from Shanxi University, Shanxi, China in 1976. He then taught at the high school level for two years before moving to Canada for graduate studies. Dr Tang studied from 1979 to 1985 at the University of Windsor, Canada, where he earned a masters degree in exercise physiology and a doctor of philosophy in biology.

Upon completion of his graduate studies, Dr Tang began work at the Chinese Embassy in Ottawa, Canada. There he was first secretary for Academic/Educational Affairs from 1985 to 1989. His major responsibility was to promote bilateral co-operation between Chinese and Canadian universities. After this he returned to China and worked at the Ministry of Education in Beijing from 1989 to 1992. There he was director of the Division of Policy, Planning and Co-ordination in the Department of

Vocational and Technical Education and then assistant director-general of the department. In that capacity, he was responsible for the planning and national policy formulation of the technical and vocational education system in China. In 1992 he became deputy director-general of the Bureau of Science and Technology of the Shaanxi provincial government in Xi'an, China.

Dr Tang joined UNESCO as senior programme specialist, Section for Technical and Vocational Education in 1993. He became chief of the section in 1996. His responsibility in this position includes overall co-ordination of the implementation of UNESCO's International Project of Technical and Vocational Education (UNEVOC) and organisation of the Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education held in Seoul in April 1999. He served as secretary-general of the congress. Dr Tang was promoted to the rank of director in 1998. In 2000, he was appointed as director, Division of Secondary, Technical and Vocational Education. In that position, he was responsible for the implementation of UNESCO's programme in general secondary education and science and technology education, as well as technical and vocational education. Since July 2001, Dr Tang has been director of the Executive Office responsible for overall programme co-ordination of the Education Sector.

Authors of Country Papers and Literacy Perspective Papers

Dr K. Balasubramanian
Programme Director, JRD Tata Ecotechnology Centre
Chennai, India

Dr K Balasubramanian has worked as a consultant for SIDA, DANIDA, CIDA, COL and through a consultancy agency as a consultant for World Bank projects. He is involved in bilateral and multilateral negotiations. His has extensive experience in participatory development, micro-finance and ICT-enabled development. With specialisation in the social sciences, he has worked with governments, NGOs, international agencies and industries in developing policies and actions towards sustainable development in India and other developing countries, particularly in Asia. He has experience in agriculture, forestry and agro-enterprises. He has worked with the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) and corporate sectors on the issues of sustainable development and has developed a project with the Government of India for defining indicators for technology achievements and sustainable development. He was also involved with various policy-making bodies at national and international levels. Using eco-technological approaches, he has evolved models of sustainable agriculture and eco-enterprises.

Dr Balasubramanian is currently involved with consulting on a project for the development of an ICT-based agricultural extension programme in Asia and Africa with COL.

Dr Felicity Binns

Executive Director, International Extension College
Cambridge, UK

Dr Binns is the director of the International Extension College (IEC), an organisation that has specialised in open and distance learning and non-formal education in the developing world for nearly 35 years. IEC has successfully raised funds to implement a number of non-formal education projects in recent years. There are lessons to be learned from these and of particular interest is the emerging model from the literacy programme in Sudan and the radio education programme for women in the fishing industry in Kenya.

Dr Ulrike Hanemann

Consultant, UNESCO Institute for Education
Hamburg, Germany

Dr Ulrike Hanemann, an educationalist, has worked as a consultant at the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) in Hamburg, Germany, since 2001. From 1984 to 1992 she was a lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua in León training secondary school teachers. She was awarded a doctorate at the Technical University of Berlin for her thesis on the educational reform carried out by the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. She has acted as a consultant for the German GTZ, European Union, UNICEF and UNESCO in the fields of literacy, basic education, adult education, teacher training, curriculum development and intercultural bilingual education in multilingual settings. At UIE she is engaged in life-skills-oriented literacy and non-formal and adult education within a perspective of lifelong learning, among others, in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Botswana. In addition, she is engaged in monitoring the educational provisions for target groups with special needs such as indigenous youth and adults in Latin America.

Dr Emma Kruse Vaai

Academic Director/Deputy CEO
Samoa Polytechnic, Samoa

Dr Emma Kruse Vaai is deputy CEO and academic director of Samoa Polytechnic. She has also lectured for 12 years in English literature and linguistics at the National University of Samoa. Her interest in literacy emerges from her work as a Samoan and English writer for children and young adults. Her long-term involvement with the Samoa Ministry of Education curriculum and assessment units and the National Literacy Committee has made her more conscious of the literacy problems of her country. She is also a member of the South Pacific pool of examiners for English at the secondary level, in particular, the final year of secondary school.

Dr Humberto Nelson F.F. Muquingue

Consultant, Distance Education
Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology
Maputo, Mozambique

Dr Humberto Nelson F.F. Muquingue's involvement with education started in 1977 as a high school student. At the time, just two years after Mozambique's independence, the new government initiated a massive campaign to reduce adult illiteracy, then a major obstacle in the efforts to rebuild the country.

As his own education proceeded, he also was increasingly connected to education and training, first mentoring second year students at the medical faculty and then as a lecturer, after a brief time in the army.

Since the mid-1980s he has been deeply involved with projects attempting to bring continuing education to health professionals in Mozambique, who often are deployed to remote and underprivileged areas.

Since the early 1990s he has been involved with capacity building in the major public university in Mozambique, collaborating in teacher training programs run by a Dutch-funded Staff Development Program.

During his professional evolution he has been engaged, among other things, with projects to enhance connectivity in different institutions (including the first large-scale satellite e-mail system in Mozambique) and an endeavour to bring numeracy skills to secondary school students.

A rediscovered interest in information and communications technologies (ICTs) led him to be involved with initiatives aimed at reducing the digital divide, focusing on training of health workers. These efforts are particularly concerned with those working at the periphery of the health system, on matters related to ICTs.

Since 2000 he has been working on distance education, first concentrating on developing a strategy for higher education, and now with a much broader focus on the national education system, under the auspices of the Ministry for Higher Education, Science and Technology.

His Excellency Professor Michael Omolewa

Ambassador/Permanent Delegate
Permanent Delegation of Nigeria to UNESCO, Paris

Professor Michael Omolewa, currently on leave of absence from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, is ambassador and permanent delegate for Nigeria to UNESCO. He studied history at the University of Ibadan and the Institute of Historical Research at the University of London. He was a Commonwealth Academic Staff Fellow at King's College, University of London and a recipient of the IDRC South-North Education Award, spent at the University of British Columbia, Canada. Professor Omolewa is currently a member of the Governing Board of the Commonwealth of Learning, the

International Standing Conference for the History of Education and the Governing Advisory Board of the International Baccalaureate Organisation. He was a foundation professor at the suspended National Open University of Nigeria, co-ordinator of the African Distance Education Association and foundation director of the External Studies Programme of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Ar A.H.M. Rezwan
Executive Director, Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha (SSS)
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Ar A.H.M. Rezwan has been working with Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha (SSS) as the executive director and general secretary. Under the leadership of Mr Rezwan, SSS won second prize in the Stockholm Challenge Award 2003/04 of the City of Stockholm, the Citizen Base Initiative Award 2002 and the Tech Museum Award 2004 for innovative open and distance learning initiatives. Mr Rezwan has played a key role in linking SSS to numerous intergovernmental and international organisations for promoting distance learning opportunities in Bangladesh. He received a nomination as a member of the Governing Body of the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) by the NGO Affairs Bureau of the Prime Minister's Office for his contribution in distance learning and agricultural developments in Bangladesh. SSS is focused on the identification of innovative solutions that link the poorest poor with much-needed information, educational opportunities and financial resources. SSS is playing a major role in the economic development of the river basins.

Mr Reza Salim
Associate Director, Bangladesh Friendship Education Society (BFES)
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Mr Reza Salim's professional experiences include: national and international field experience in basic education and literacy; community development research; planning, co-ordinating, implementing and evaluating development communication programs and ICT integration; technical support, including development of monitoring and evaluation systems of education programs; supervision and training of community development workers and their supervisors; knowledge, practice and coverage (KPC) survey training and execution. Mr Salim is also the initiator of an integrated rural development model project Amader Gram (Our Villages) that is being implemented in Bangladesh. He is the founder of SouthNet Knowledge Network for South Asia. There has been extensive publication of his writings on development issues.

Mr Salim is an Education Fellow of the 21st Century Trust of the United Kingdom and has received an award for Knowledge Networking from Bellanet, Canada. He is the co-founder of the Bangladesh Friendship Education Society (BFES).

Dr Esi Sutherland-Addy
Research Fellow, Institute of African Studies
University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana

Dr Esi Sutherland-Addy (MA African Area Studies, UCLA; Hon FCP; LittD honoris causa) is Senior Research Fellow, head of the Language, Literature, and Drama Section, Institute of African Studies and associate director of the African Humanities Institute Program at the University of Ghana. She has held visiting lectureships at Manchester University, University of Indiana, University of Birmingham and L'Institut des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris. She has published on and continues to work in the areas of African theatre, film and music; mythology; and the role of women in African culture and society.

In addition, Dr Sutherland-Addy has held portfolios as deputy minister for Higher Education and Culture and Tourism of Ghana, has conducted studies for the governments of Ghana, Namibia and Ethiopia, UNESCO, UNICEF and the Commonwealth in various aspects of education. She has acted as rapporteur at several international educational conferences including the World Conference on Education for All in 1990 and the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education in 1997. She has served on several boards and commissions including the Board of Governors of the Commonwealth of Learning for six years. She currently serves on the advisory board of the International Literacy Institute at the University of Pennsylvania, the National Commission on Culture, Afram Publications Ghana Ltd. and the Mmofra Foundation. She is a member of the Forum for African Women Educationalists and the African Literature Association. In 1998, Esi Sutherland-Addy was made an Honorary Fellow of the College of Preceptors (Teachers), UK, and in 2004 received an honorary doctor of letters from the University of Education, Winneba in Ghana.

Ms Madeleine Woolley
Executive Director, Social Inclusion Unit
Department of the Premier and Cabinet
Adelaide, South Australia

Ms Madeleine Woolley is the executive director of the South Australian government's Social Inclusion Unit. The work of this unit is to tackle increasing social inequalities that exist in spite of living in a society that has extraordinary wealth and opportunity. Fundamental to eliminating this divide is education. Literacy is a core requirement of this education if people are to be full participants in a fair and inclusive society. Ms Woolley combines her many years of experience in schools, vocational education and policy with this social inclusion role. Her expertise and knowledge of the world of work and its demands on education and literacy offer insight in determining future policy and planning directions from the perspective of literacy and livelihoods.

List of Abbreviations

ABC	Advanced Basic School (Bangladesh)
ACCU	Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre of UNESCO
ADP	Adolescent Development Programme (Trinidad and Tobago)
ADPP	Development Aid from People to People (Danish NGO)
ALLS	Adult Literacy and Life Skills Study
ALTA	Adult Literacy Tutors Association of Trinidad and Tobago
ASA	Association for Social Advancement
BELOISYA	Basic Education and Livelihood Opportunities for Illiterate and Semi-Illiterate Young Adults
BEOC	Basic education for older children
BESA	Basic Education and Skills Acquisition (Nigeria)
BFES	Bangladesh Friendship Education Society
BLSP	Building Literacy in Sudan with SOLO Press
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CAMPE	Campaign for Popular Education
CBO	Community-based organisations
CDL	Community Development Library
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CLC	Community Learning Centre
CLUSA	Cooperative League of the USA
CLW	Community Liaison Worker
CMES	Centre for Mass Education in Science
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
COLLIT	Commonwealth of Learning Literacy Project
CPE	Compulsory primary education
DAM	Dhaka Ahsania Mission (Bangladesh)
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
DFL	Distance and flexible learning

DNFE	Directorate of Non-Formal Education (Bangladesh)
DVV/IIZ	Institute for International Co-operation of the German Adult Education Association
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education (Trinidad and Tobago)
EFA	Education for All
EIC	International Extension College (UK)
EOTO	Each One Teach One
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FBEAP	Forum Basic Education Action Plan (Pacific Islands Forum)
FIDA	International Federation of Women Lawyers
GILLBT	Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation
GSM	Global system of mobile communication
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (Germany)
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IALS	International Adult Literacy Study
IAP	International Academic Partnership
ICAE	International Council for Adult Education
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IEC	International Extension College
IFB	Instituto Formacao Bancaria (Portuguese Bank Training Institute)
IFESH	International Foundation for Education and Self-Help
IGA	Income-generating activities
IICD	International Institute for Communication and Development
INDE	Institute for Development of Education (Mozambique)
INEA	Institute for Adult Education (Mozambique)
INFEP	Integrated Non-formal Education Programme (Bangladesh)
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative
JJS	Jagrata Juba Shangha (Bangladesh)

JLC	Junior Life Centres (Trinidad and Tobago)
KIND	Kids In Need of Direction (Trinidad and Tobago)
LAMP	Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme
LGM	Locally generated materials
LGPI	Literacy Gender Parity Index
LIFE	Literacy Initiative for the Excluded (UNESCO)
LUA	Land user association
MIEUB	Mobile Internet Educational Units on Boats (Bangladesh)
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre (Uganda)
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NETRIGHT	Network for Women's Rights
NFE-I	Non-Formal Education Project I [one] (Bangladesh)
NFED	Non-Formal Education Division (Ghana)
NFPE	Non-Formal Primary Education
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NICT	New information and communication technology
NLM	National Literacy Mission (India)
NOUN	National Open University of Nigeria
NOVIB	Netherlands Organisation for International Development Co-operation
NPA	National Plan of Action (Bangladesh)
ODL	Open and distance learning
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAPIR	Projecto de Apoio ás Pequenas Industrias (Mozambique)
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PLA	Participatory learning approaches
PMED	Primary and Mass Education Division (Bangladesh)
POP	People Outreach Programme (Trinidad and Tobago)
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal

PROSHIKA	Training, education and action (Bangladesh)
PROTEIN	Poverty Reduction Outcomes Through Education Innovations and Networks
REFLECT	Regenerated Freirean Literacy though Empowering Community Technique
RTC	Rural Technology Centre (Bangladesh)
SALAMA	Asociacao de Suade Comunitaria (Mozambique)
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SOLO	Sudan Open Learning Organisation
SPELL	Samoa Primary Education Literacy Level
SSS	Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha (Bangladesh)
TLM	Total Literacy Movement
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UBE	Universal Basic Education (Nigeria)
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIVA	University Village Association
UPE	Universal primary education
USP	University of the South Pacific
VCT	Voluntary testing and counselling (clinics, usually for HIV/AIDS)
WCEFA	World Conference on Education for All
WIFIP	Women in the Fishing Industry Project (EIC—KENYA)
WUA	Water user association

Literacy and Livelihoods:
Learning for Life in a Changing World

Presented at:
International Experts Meeting
15-17 November 2004

Keynote Address

Sir John Daniel
President and CEO
Commonwealth of Learning

It is my great pleasure, on behalf of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), to welcome you to Vancouver. Thank you for helping us define our new programme in Literacy and Livelihoods and base it on firm conceptual and practical foundations. Together you make up a fine and representative sample of the Commonwealth expertise and I am grateful to the representatives of national governments and international organisations who have joined us too.

I express special thanks to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), which have supported this work with special financial assistance. I am sure you will also allow me to offer particularly warm greetings to my former close colleague from UNESCO, Qian Tang. I hope that you will all feel very much at home during your time in this very multi-ethnic and multi-cultural city of Vancouver.

My task, in these opening remarks, is to do four things. First, I shall situate COL and explain what it is and what it is not. Second, I shall explain how this new work on literacy and livelihoods fits into our wider programme. Third, simply to provide a starting point for the discussions, I shall risk some general comments on literacy, on livelihoods and on the relationship between them. Finally I shall re-emphasise the mission of COL.

What is the Commonwealth of Learning?

What is the Commonwealth of Learning? I start with the Commonwealth, or Commonwealth of Nations, which is a voluntary association of 53 sovereign states. The conditions of membership are to be democratic, to have a historic link with Britain or with part of the former British Empire, and to accept the use of English as the working language in Commonwealth meetings.

These criteria create common links between Commonwealth countries that help them work together. Three "Ls": law, language and learning, are particularly useful in this bonding. Similarities of legal principles,

constitutional arrangements and educational traditions make communication and understanding easy.

The Commonwealth has three intergovernmental bodies: the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, which is our equivalent, on a much smaller scale, of UN headquarters in New York; the Commonwealth Foundation, also in London; and the Commonwealth of Learning, based here in Vancouver. COL is the only Commonwealth organisation, either intergovernmental or NGO, that is not based in the UK. It is also the only intergovernmental organisation of any kind to have been created in Canada. It happened when the Commonwealth Heads of Government met here in Vancouver in 1987 in this very hotel.

COL's mission has a tight focus, which is to help the member states use technology to increase the scope, scale, quality and impact of their education and training systems. We have a special focus on open and distance learning, or ODL, because it is an application of technology that has shown its power and value in many countries and for many applications.

To put that more formally our mission statement says: "Recognising knowledge as key to cultural, social and economic development, The Commonwealth of Learning is committed to assisting Commonwealth member governments to take full advantage of open, distance and technology-mediated learning strategies to provide increased and equitable access to education and training for all their citizens."

Having just come to COL from UNESCO, I naturally make comparisons between the two. COL differs from UNESCO in its sharp focus on technology-mediated learning rather than on the whole of education, culture and science. It serves only 53 member states instead of 192. All 53 are democratic, nearly all are at peace, and most are developing countries. A special feature is that two-thirds of the Commonwealth countries are small states, either islands or landlocked territories. Finally, COL is tiny compared to UNESCO. We have a total of 35 staff in Vancouver, and a handful more in CEMCA, our Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia in New Delhi.

All these features make it possible for COL to act effectively, efficiently and rapidly in response to requests from Member States and in implementing our ongoing programme.

How does a programme on literacy and livelihoods fit in?

That will suffice as a short description of COL as an organisation. How does this work on literacy and livelihoods fit into our wider programme?

Like many international intergovernmental organisations, COL has been moving from a project focus to a programme focus and implementing that programme according to the principles of results-based management. Our present three-year programme, for 2003-2006, is aimed at helping Member States develop policies, systems and applications for the use of technology generally, and ODL in particular, across their education and training systems broadly defined.

However, that is a rather bureaucratic definition. Another way of looking at the programme is to say that we help countries apply technology and ODL to the learning needs that lie behind their development goals. Most of our programme links directly to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). You will have received a brochure that presents our work on each of those goals.

Our motivating principle is that the achievement of any one of the MDGs, whether it addresses, hunger, poverty, schooling, health or the environment, will require a massive increase in human learning. In most cases traditional methods of providing opportunities to learn cannot cope with the scale and scope of the challenge. That is where technology-mediated learning can help and COL can help.

COL has already had some involvement in literacy work. Indeed, your chief facilitator, Glen Farrell, co-ordinated our most recent project in this area, which explored the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for advancing literacy in India and Zambia. We learned some useful lessons in that project that I shall touch on in a moment.

We have also worked in the area of livelihoods, most especially through a focus on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in the Commonwealth's Pacific island states. That programme was very ably run by John Bartram and is being continued by Jenny Williams, who is on full-time secondment to COL from the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand.

Reviewing all this work, as we prepare a new three-year plan, led us to the idea of bringing together literacy and livelihoods in one programme. Let me emphasise right away that we see this new programme as evolving in an organic way from our previous work. We are not kicking over the traces and starting afresh.

COL does feel, however, that its sharp focus could enable it to blend literacy and livelihoods into a programme of action. This would be more difficult for larger organisations, whose missions are more abstract. At UNESCO, for example, literacy has a section all to itself that has the task of organising the UN Literacy Decade. It has another section, located in another division, which focuses on TVET.

COL does not see this initiative as competing with the work of others and we benefit from the specialised work of UNESCO and other organisations. The question that COL asks is much simpler. Can we use technology-mediated learning to increase literacy and, at the same time, to improve livelihoods? If the answer is yes, what are the policies, systems and applications that we can recommend to governments to achieve this?

Please note that we are not promoting technology-mediated learning for its own sake. We promote it because experience shows clearly that by using technology generally, and distance learning in particular, two important results can be achieved.

First, it is capable of reaching marginalised and under-represented groups, whether their barriers to learning are social, political or geographical. Second, distance education can be conducted at scale with consistency.

We can widen access to learning and raise its quality at the same time. This explains the powerful potential of distance learning in the achievement of the MDGs.

Linking literacy and livelihoods

In proceeding down this path it is important that COL starts with the right baggage and a good map. In this third part of my opening remarks I shall hazard some comments about the link between literacy and livelihoods. My aim is to contribute to the debate at this experts meeting that will clarify the principles on which we should base our work.

I begin with a caveat. A problem in thinking about literacy is that all those who write about literacy are, by definition, literate themselves. This makes it difficult for them to see life from the perspective of someone who is not literate. It is also true that those who write about livelihoods usually have a decent livelihood themselves. None of this need limit the value of what they have to say, but some humility is in order as we generalise about people who do not enjoy our own advantages.

Being a simple man I shall examine the issues of literacy and livelihoods in terms of two dichotomies. I start with literacy.

Literacy

The dichotomy in promoting literacy can be presented in various ways but they boil down to a simple question: is literacy education or is literacy development? It seems like a silly question. Literacy is clearly education. Indeed, it is the most important product of basic education. Treating literacy as education gives rise to a short and crisp definition of *a literate person as someone who can, with understanding, both read and write a short simple statement on his or her everyday life*.

But literacy is also development. Ten days ago I attended a ceremony in Bangalore where the President of India made one of his wise and insightful speeches. He quoted statistics from the district of Pondicherry, which showed that as rural communities became more literate their birth rate went down and the amount of land under cultivation around the community went up. Fewer people farming more land clearly means improved livelihoods in that community.

I make a distinction between literacy as education and literacy as development because, when we seek to bring literacy to adults, how we go about it will depend on which emphasis we chose.

If literacy is education then schooling for adults is the obvious approach. This makes possible good organisation, a national curriculum and good learning materials. However, since even children see school as somewhat isolated from the rest of life, so adults can easily find literacy as schooling isolated from their daily concerns.

This is less of a problem if we start from literacy as development and root it in the social and economic development of the community. This

leads us to the notion of functional literacy which has a more convoluted official definition: *a person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for the effective functioning of his or her group and community and also for enabling him or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his or her own and the community's development.*

This definition implies that the acquisition of functional literacy will be better integrated into ordinary life. However, simply because such an approach means starting from the bottom up rather than from the top down, it does not lend itself so readily to organisation and economies of scale.

COLLIT

In recent years, quite by chance, COL had a chance to try both approaches in India side by side. This was our COLLIT (COL Literacy) project, which was co-ordinated by Glen Farrell and guided by Dr Balasubramanian, whom I am delighted to welcome to this meeting.

COLLIT worked through the government systems to teach literacy as education in a number of communities. However, bureaucratic delays prevented us expanding the work as fast as we wished. So we worked in some additional communities with the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, which was using ICTs for development in those communities without teaching literacy. The foundation used its ICT base in the communities to create a bottom-up approach to literacy based on the personal experience of individuals.

The interesting and reassuring observation from these two approaches was that they did tend to converge. Some of those who became literate through the methods used by the foundation then sought formal recognition from the state system. Conversely, the more conventional top-down approach to literacy education tends to lead gradually to an emphasis on functional literacy and to discover the usefulness of community-based learning centres. We drew several conclusions from this COLLIT project.

First, to be useful literacy must be used. Second, the impact of literacy was greater for those who could link it to their livelihood. Third, literacy is a great generator of self-esteem and confidence.

Livelihoods

In the matter of livelihoods I have observed a dichotomy that generated palpable tension—not all of it creative—when I was at UNESCO. It arises when you ask people what they mean by life skills. One school of thought takes life skills to mean a generic set of skills for living in society. These are skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, communicating, networking, negotiation, and so on. Because of their importance throughout life they are sometimes treated as a fourth component of literacy after reading, writing and numeracy.

The other school of thought considers that life skills are more directly connected to daily life in the context of a particular individual. These are sometimes called contextual skills and they include livelihood or vocational skills, skills for family life, health skills and skills related to the environment.

Although the respective partisans of generic skills and contextual skills can argue vehemently with each other, in the real world contextual skills do not exist in isolation from generic and literacy skills. A farmer needs the practical skills of growing crops and fixing broken machinery but also requires the generic skill of negotiation to sell her produce at a good price and the literacy skill of numeracy to ensure that she is not being defrauded by the buyer.

This suggests that contextual skills should be acquired in ways that link them with these other skills. We can then talk of composite skills for different purposes. However, these are sometimes wrapped up in terms like health literacy, agricultural literacy, family literacy and so on. I do not find such terms helpful because they tend to undervalue the common denominator of skills involved in reading and writing: skills that are of special importance because their applicability to a wider variety of situations makes them basic tools for life.

I conclude that while it is best to help people acquire generic skills, contextual skills and literacy skills in combination, it is useful to keep the distinctions clear in our own minds.

Here let me enter a caveat. No amount of training in life and livelihood skills will create good livelihoods without some kind of functioning economy. We must support improvements of the infrastructures that underpin economic life and also, as C.K. Prahalad argues persuasively, encourage big business to stop ignoring the poor and bring them into the market economy instead. In COL's programme of Lifelong Learning for Farmers in India, for example, getting the banks more deeply involved in the villages is part of our strategy. Dr Balasubramanian will be pleased, I am sure, to tell you more about it.

My final point on livelihoods is another caveat. Livelihoods are about doing, but let us not forget the importance of being. Amartya Sen argues that freedom is both the measure and the means of development, by which he means that it is people acting as free agents who make development happen.

We must not get so carried away by a utilitarian approach to literacy and livelihoods that we neglect the human spirit, what Sen talks of as "the freedom to talk and act about what one values." The vital freedom to hold values may get lost if we focus too narrowly on the practical applications of literacy.

All this suggests that promoting literacy for livelihoods must be sensitive to context and environment and take an appropriate approach. In our programme of Lifelong Learning for Farmers in India, for example, we know how the individual villagers try to make a livelihood and can target COL's work appropriately. However, in our attempts to combine literacy

and livelihood training for male school dropouts in the Caribbean, it is less clear what livelihoods we are shooting for. We need a shotgun rather than a rifle.

COL's mission: the appropriate use of technology

I hope that these brief remarks on literacy, on livelihoods and on the link between them help to set the scene for our discussions. I end by re-emphasising COL's interest in this area.

The task before you is not to contribute to the ongoing theoretical debate about literacy and livelihoods. Neither it is to review good practice in literacy acquisition except as it illuminates the challenge facing COL, which is to use technology to scale up such good practice and reach many more people.

At COL we interpret technology widely. It covers ways of approaching problems as well as gadgets that plug into the wall. We define technology as the application of scientific and other organized knowledge to practical tasks by organisations consisting of people and machines.

I emphasise two parts of this definition. First, we are not engaged in a futile search for the perfect method of learning. We are applying "scientific and other organised knowledge." That can mean tacit knowledge, crafts and organisational experience, not to mention a good dose of common sense. Second, we are living in a world of people and machines. Good use of technology always involves people and their social systems.

COL's task is to get greater leverage on the challenge of preparing people for life in a changing world by using technology intelligently. We shall do this by bringing together our organised knowledge and by being very sensitive to the social systems in which we are operating.

We are not starting from scratch and we now have an array of technologies at our disposal. The approach that I called literacy as education has benefited in many places from the use of the mass media. In Pakistan, for example, the Allama Iqbal Open University has backed national literacy campaigns with well-produced printed literacy materials that benefited from the investment made possible by economies of scale. Other countries have used the mass medium of television for a similar purpose.

The great thing about the mass media is that they reach the masses. You might say that the great thing about today's new technology, the Internet, is that it is a one-to-one and group-to-group medium. In this respect it seems particularly appropriate for supporting literacy as development. I mentioned the remarkable development work that the Swaminathan Foundation is doing in Indian villages using Internet kiosks and village IT (information technology) centres.

Earlier I suggested that the approaches to literacy as education and literacy as development tend, in the end, to converge. In a similar way I hope that COL's work in literacy and livelihoods can draw on both the mass technologies and the one-to-one technologies. Both are important and both can contribute.

The challenge before you in the next few days is to advise us how we might combine the potential of technologies with what we know about literacy and livelihoods to achieve impact at scale. The fundamental purpose, let us remember, is to reduce poverty and hunger through such interventions.

Conclusion

That sounds like a tall order but you have been highly recommended for the task. In your various ways you have contributed to reducing the scourge of illiteracy and to helping your fellow human beings to enjoy better lives. In your work you have learned many lessons. COL presents you with the opportunity to use technology to apply those lessons at scale so that others can learn.

Achieving the MDGs will require a massive expansion of human learning. Traditional methods of education and training cannot address the scope and scale of the task. Technology has already revolutionised other areas of human life and we must now harness it to the improvement of livelihoods through the acquisition of literacy.

UNESCO's New Literacy Initiative for the Excluded (LIFE)

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Paris, France

It was with great pleasure that I accepted the invitation from Sir John, who is my former boss at UNESCO, to present to you UNESCO's new Literacy Initiative for the Excluded (LIFE). The timing seems particularly remarkable as the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is renewing its commitment to enhance literacy in the developing world by creating a new programme on literacy and livelihoods, while at the same time, UNESCO is refocusing its education programme to strengthen one of its "niches" by launching a new literacy initiative for countries with low literacy rates.

I will present the main objectives of the initiative, the proposed implementation process and required partnerships, but allow me first to explain why UNESCO has decided to make literacy, in particular literacy for women, one of its main priorities for the decade to come.

Illiteracy in brief

In today's world, more than 860 million adults are estimated as illiterate, of which two-thirds are women. This represents almost one-seventh of the world's population. Seen in this context, illiteracy is not just a problem restricted to a few countries but a global phenomenon that needs co-ordinated efforts at the national, regional and international levels.

As you might be aware, at the World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000, the international community made a commitment to address this issue by setting the attainment of 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015 as one of the six goals of the Dakar Framework for Action to achieve Education for All (EFA). However, according to current projections by the EFA Global Monitoring Report published by UNESCO, which tracks the progress made towards the achievement of the EFA goals, this fourth EFA goal will not be reached by almost 80 countries unless there is a major shift in the current trends. UNESCO is convinced that a business-as-usual attitude is no longer acceptable. This shift must come as soon as possible and UNESCO is prepared to lead the international efforts.

Why LIFE?

One of the main reasons for this rather disappointing projection on EFA goal 4 is that literacy still remains a low priority on the education agenda in many countries. It represents perhaps the weakest link in the global

EFA movement which has been mainly focused on the major challenges of expanding access and gender equity in education. Thus far, in comparison to the World Bank's Fast Track Initiative, which concentrates on universal primary education and UNICEF's work to provide education to all girls through the United Nations Girls Education Initiative, little international attention has been paid to literacy for adults.

As the co-ordinating agency for the United Nations Literacy Decade launched in 2003, UNESCO is well placed to pave the way in mobilising the countries most affected by illiteracy and urge the international community to take action. And, it is within the framework of this decade that UNESCO is prepared to launch in 2005 its new Literacy Initiative for the Excluded (LIFE) with special emphasis on women.

As we all know, the returns from educating adults, particularly women, are immense and far reaching as it often has great impact on the education of their children; in other words, education of future generations. We also know that basic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic will provide access to important information regarding health, environment, education and the world of work and will therefore contribute to poverty reduction, sustainable development and freedom of choice.

Goal and time frame

Therefore, the principal goal of LIFE will be to increase the number of literate adults, particularly women, by providing them with sustained learning opportunities. To this end, it will assist UNESCO's Member States in carrying out concrete actions to improve their literacy rates. In doing so, UNESCO will exploit its comparative advantage in literacy through the vast experience it has gained in this field over the past decades.

UNESCO will implement this initiative over a period of 10 years from 2006 to 2015 preceded by a one-year preparatory phase in 2005. A mid-term review is planned for 2010.

Target countries

LIFE will focus on illiterate adults (15 years and above), with special emphasis on women, in those countries that have an illiteracy rate of above 50 per cent or an illiterate population larger than 10 million. Based on these criteria, 33 countries have been identified as candidates for this new initiative as listed below. As you can see from the list of the 33 countries, 17 are in Africa, 6 in the Arabic region, 9 in Asia/Pacific and 1 in Latin America. The total illiterate population living in these 33 countries accounts for 85 per cent of the world's total illiterate population.

- Africa (17): Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone

- Arab States (6): Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Mauritania, Morocco, Yemen

- Asia and the Pacific (9): Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea

- Latin America and Caribbean (1): Brazil

Although UNESCO would like to make an impact in as many of the 33 candidate countries as possible, we are aware that we will not be able to do this on our own. We need the co-operation and commitment of the national authorities and the relevant stakeholders. Depending on the availability of resources, we may have to realistically work with 5 to 7 countries per biennium for a 10-year period with the aim of covering all 33 candidate countries by 2015. The initial country selection will be based on the political commitment of the countries to participate and the availability of resources.

Preparatory phase

Through LIFE, UNESCO will assist selected countries in building their capacities to conduct training activities to reach their target population.

The preparatory phase of the initiative, which will take place in 2005, will be centred on evidence-based mapping and benchmarking target groups in each of the 33 target countries. Since much information already exists on the literacy situation of these countries, the main aim of this preparatory phase will be to identify successful in-country literacy and life-skills programmes and prepare local partnerships based on needs assessments. UNESCO does not intend to re-invent the wheel in implementing this initiative. Instead it would like to draw on existing expertise and programmes and apply a pragmatic and results-oriented approach to reach the target group and provide them with a sustained and relevant literacy learning experience.

In this is regard, UNESCO would be keen to know more about COL's new programme on Literacy and Livelihoods to find possible areas and means for future collaboration and mutual technical support between the two organisations.

Implementation phase

The core activities of LIFE at the country level will be directly linked to and focused on the creation and delivery of literacy training activities. These activities will include material and programme development, training of trainers, social campaigns and actual literacy training. While a wide range of possible actions and areas of intervention have been identified, UNESCO has adopted a policy of national ownership that places the concerned countries in the driver's seat. In concrete terms, this means that activities and modalities of action must emerge from a series of consultations with the concerned countries and should be derived from their actual needs and priorities. This consultation process has already started, and we have received very positive reactions from many of the target countries. China, for example, wishes to give particular attention to literacy in rural areas and has pledged substantial resources for the initiative.

In addition, a series of other supplementary activities may also be required to ensure that the results obtained are sustainable. These activities would entail the promotion of a literacy environment via policy and legislation work, general advocacy, and monitoring and assessment activities. UNESCO has a long tradition of working in areas such as education policy, but in this initiative, it will be important not to lose sight of the basic aim to reach out to and provide relevant literacy training to the target population, and thus obtain direct and measurable results.

Implementation principles

In implementing LIFE, UNESCO will also make sure that the country-led initiative will form an integral part of the national education mechanism and poverty reduction schemes. It will link its core literacy work to life skills, income generation and sustainable development in order to maximise impact and ensure relevant learning. UNESCO will also make a selection of best practices and expertise from regional and international levels that can be transplanted and adapted to enhance the capacities of the target countries.

Implementation modalities

UNESCO has field offices located in some 50 countries. The field offices covering the target countries will play a central role in the implementation of the activities. UNESCO will rely as much as possible on the pertinent national expertise so that locally identified needs are met through appropriate interventions. The expertise of all of UNESCO's programme sectors will be mobilised. The Communication and Information Sector has already been consulted in the elaboration of the LIFE initiative and innovative use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), which cover all media, whether it is radio, television or Internet, and will be integrated into the implementation of activities. Possible uses of ICTs include:

- An online platform providing teacher-training material and support tools, but also information exchange

- Media (including radio, television and print) to play a major role in raising public awareness

- Distance education through radio for both trainers and learners

- Multimedia community centres and library networks to stimulate learner motivation and sustain literacy

We all know that ICTs represent a powerful tool to "reach the unreached." The ability to use information and knowledge in a variety of life processes are vital pillars for human and social development.

Partnerships and funding

Reaching a significant number of learners can be done only through the mobilisation of social actors and the support of national authorities.

The initiative is, therefore, very much dependent on the countries' own political commitment to make literacy a priority. UNESCO plans to build on and support good practices of existing in-country literacy programmes. Efforts will be made to share information and technical resources and aim to establish partnerships with NGOs, universities and research institutes. We will also draw on regional mechanisms, such as NEPAD.

Other UNESCO member states, in fact the whole international community, will be asked to join our efforts in this initiative. Additionally, technical support and human and financial resources from bilateral and private donors, other UN agencies and development banks will be mobilised. The United States, which returned to UNESCO last year, has shown great interest in and supports the initiative, stressing in particular the importance of the mother-and-child literacy component.

Needless to say, we are very pleased to know that COL is launching a new programme on literacy and we would welcome any mutually beneficial co-operation between UNESCO and COL in addressing this crucial global issue.

Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to quote something the director-general of UNESCO, Mr Matsuura, said in his speech on the occasion of the International Literacy Day on 8 September 2004: "A literate world is a possible and desirable one. There are enough resources. What is now needed is the collective will of the international community to ensure that the necessary support is forthcoming."

Literacy and Livelihoods for Youth at Risk—The SERVOL Experience

Martin Pacheco

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Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

Let me on behalf of SERVOL express sincere thanks to the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) for extending an invitation to be part of the Consultative Meeting on Literacy and Livelihoods—Learning for life in a changing world. Your theme for this conference ties in extremely well with our experience over the last 34 years, as well as with our mission statement which reads as follows:

> SERVOL is an organisation of weak, frail, ordinary, imperfect yet hope filled and committed people seeking to help weak, frail, ordinary, imperfect, hope-drained people become ***agents of attitudinal change in a journey which leads to total human development.*** It does so through respectful intervention in ***the lives of others*** and seeks to empower individuals and communities to develop as *role* ***models for the nation.***

What Is SERVOL?

The organisation SERVOL came about as a response to a situation in 1970 in Trinidad and Tobago which saw young people, particularly from the poor and depressed areas surrounding the capital city of Port of Spain, march through the streets of the city demanding more from the government and highlighting the problems of their areas, namely poverty, lack of housing, massive unemployment and lack of facilities of practically every kind. Added to these was the major problem of the lack of a stable family life: no father living in the same house with the mother on a stable basis; males with very many children with no support; parents in the USA, thus transforming the children into what have been described as "barrel children." To make matters worse, the educational system was (and still is to a great extent) an academic one modeled on the grammar-school type and was (and still is) totally irrelevant to the needs of the children who demand a caring environment with training in a broad system of skills.

It is against this background that SERVOL's founder, Father Gerard Pantin, left his teaching job in the most prestigious secondary school in Trinidad and Tobago at the time and went to the people of these areas with one question, "How can we help?" And it is because of listening to the answers of the persons who felt that society had condemned them to a pit of hopelessness, that SERVOL has become what it is today.

SERVOL is all about life and living; hence our centres are not called schools or institutions but rather "Life Centres." SERVOL is primarily

concerned with children and adolescents from the moment of conception to the age of 19. Our approach to education and literacy then is a broad-based approach, a holistic approach. It is an integrated educational programme. Allow me to briefly describe a few aspects of our various programmes and link them to the theme of the consultation—literacy and livelihoods.

Our educational programme is education for life; it is education for needs. SERVOL's educational approach can best be described in the words of former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere:

> The purpose of education is therefore the development of man as a member of society. It is to turn out technicians who can be used as instruments in the expansion of the economy. It is to turn out men and women who have the technical knowledge and ability to expand the economy for the benefit of man in society. What I am trying to do is to make a serious distinction between a system of education which makes liberated men and women who are skillful users of tools, and a system of education which turns men and women into tools.

SERVOL's educational and social programmes

People Outreach Programme (POP)
This programme is the home visitation component. Work is done with parents, enhancing their parental skills, sharing information on childhood development and how to stimulate their child effectively and using the home as a learning environment. This programme was started in 1993 and to date 8949 children and 8467 parents have been reached.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)
The ECCE is geared to lay a solid foundation for persons to become agents of change and to build the capacity of the human spirit to thrive and become caring, industrious citizens. There are 164 centres in Trinidad and Tobago. The programme started in 1971 and to date close to 75,000 children have been touched by the programme. Centres have also been established in St. Kitts, St. Lucia and Grenada. Teachers are trained by SERVOL and advice and guidance is provided by SERVOL.

Junior Life Centres (JLC)
This programme caters for adolescents from 13 to 16 years old who are sent to SERVOL based on results of the Ministry of Education's Secondary Education Assessment Examination. Most score lower than 30 per cent and most come from the lowest rung of the economic ladder. Remedial literacy and numeracy are the main focus of this programme. The Junior Life Centre classroom is nothing like a school. In one corner of the classroom there is a model supermarket, in another a model bank, in another a hardware store. The children who have been totally turned off of school by their past experiences learn to count, read and write by buying and selling goods with monopoly money. For them it is a fun thing, and it helps them to rekindle the desire for education. There are 10 Junior Life Centres in Trinidad.

The Adolescent Development Programme (ADP)

The ADP is as innovative as it is radical. The adolescents who have entered SERVOL with little enthusiasm and less hope discover that they must go through a three-month attitudinal development programme. This is in sync with the saying, "It is not your aptitude but your attitude that will determine your altitude." The programme is designed to help them answer the question "Who am I?" and they are introduced to such topics as self-awareness, public speaking, sexuality, parenting, the part the subconscious plays in their life, the concept of emotional intelligence and spirituality. In the three months, a miraculous change takes place in them, and they emerge from it with burnished self-esteem and a new confidence which allows them to eagerly embark on acquiring a marketable skill from the 16 skills which SERVOL offers.

From one centre in 1971 with 25 trainees, we have moved to 19 Life Centres, 8 Regional Life Centres at which skills are offered, 3 Hi-Tech Centres and 1 Advanced Skills Training Centre. As of July 2004, 65,000 young persons have gone through this programme. Since 1984, SERVOL has trained teachers coming from Grenada, St. Lucia, Dominica, Bahamas, Jamaica, Ireland and South Africa, and institutes have been set up based on the SERVOL model in most of these countries. Teachers have also been trained for the Ministry of Education in Trinidad and Tobago and St. Lucia, with St. Lucia taking the initiative of setting up the programme in every secondary school.

Hi-Tech Programme

Not content to train young people to perform a marketable skill, SERVOL between 1994 and 1996, with assistance from the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), SERVOL set up three Hi-Tech Centres to offer courses in Computer Literacy, Advanced Information Technology, Computer Repairs, Digital Electronics and Programmable Logic Control, all of which are so important in this modern world. The modules to which trainees in Computer Literacy are exposed are:

- Introduction to Computers
- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Access
- Microsoft Excel
- Introduction to Database
- Typing

The modules offered in Advanced Information Technology are:

- Microsoft Publisher (desktop publishing)
- Microsoft PowerPoint (slide presentation)
- Microsoft FrontPage (Web page design and publishing)
- Corel Draw (graphics)

- Internet (understanding the use of the World Wide Web)

- Office Administration (clerical duties)

A reminder must be given that a large number of trainees coming to the Hi-Tech Centres lacked literacy skills since it must be remembered that the majority of SERVOL trainees are mainly dropouts from the education system. How we deal with these trainees will be addressed shortly. Approximately 6500 trainees have pursued courses at the Hi-Tech Centres.

Advanced Skills Training Centre

As a spin-off from the Hi-Tech Programme, an Advanced Skills Training Centre was opened in 2002. This centre is designed to prepare apprentices to access highly paid jobs in the petroleum and natural gas industries. Skills training includes general industrial maintenance, instrumentation, computer repairs, industrial electrical maintenance and compressor mechanics. Partnerships have been set up for certification and with the oil and gas companies for employment of trainees.

Major inroads into literacy

Most dictionaries define literacy as the ability to read and write. If we were to stick *strictly* to this definition, SERVOL would have failed. In our experience working with youth at risk for over 34 years, the definition of literacy has had to be expanded. The word "literacy" must also include the ability to locate, evaluate, use and communicate using a wide range of resources, including text, visual, audio and video sources. Literacy must, by extension, include confidence, self-esteem and the ability to speak clearly and confidently. Literacy must never be taken in isolation—all factors must be taken into consideration. The socio-economic problems, societal and family pressures, psychological influences—especially the negatives—all these must be considered *before* we address the inability to read and write. Hence SERVOL's approach, which after 34 years of success still meets with a high level of pessimism from many policy-makers in the field of education. I now list a few of SERVOL's approaches to literacy:

- The first area that SERVOL addressed was teacher preparedness. Teachers are the most crucial element in the system, and they must be selected not only for their academic qualifications but for possessing a loving, caring attitude capable of giving tough love to their pupils.

- The second area is that of training. Our teachers must go through a three-and-a-half month in-depth training programme which will better prepare them for the students that they will meet. This training covers all areas of the Adolescent Development Programme (ADP).

- The third area is the training provided by the Adult Literacy Tutors Association of Trinidad and Tobago (ALTA). Formed in 1992 ALTA provides the only comprehensive, structured, adult literacy programme in Trinidad and Tobago. All teachers are trained in ALTA, which over the last 10 years has published 54 literacy books that complete a comprehensive literacy series teaching basic

reading and writing skills up to school leaving level through real-life materials and topics of interest to adult learners in Trinidad and Tobago.

The ALTA Adult Workbook A programme and ALTA Adult Workbook B programme are each a series of six books accompanied by a tutor's book and phonics cassettes. The ALTA spelling dictionary is intended for students and teachers in all levels of education from primary school who have to stop and think before writing certain words.

- Scrabble has been introduced as a means of teaching literacy. Over the last seven years, this word game has become an integral part of SERVOL's literacy programme. Scrabble competitions between centres are held—the interest is extremely high and quite amazingly the winners are generally students who are following the ALTA programme.

- The Termly Youth Speak Out Competition, which started three years ago, has really brought out the talent of our students. Students choose their topics, do their research and put the presentation together with very little input from instructors. These are the same students who come into SERVOL with severe literacy problems.

- An ALTA-trained facilitator is assigned to the centres. This facilitator works on a weekly basis with trainees who are pursing their skills, as well as those in the Hi-Tech Centres.

- SERVOL has partnered with another NGO—Kids In Need of Direction (KIND). This arrangement allows 30 trainees per term to follow an ALTA literacy programme exclusively for three months before proceeding to their skill of choice.

- Based on the continued need for attention to literacy, the organisation will be opening a Literacy Centre in January 2005. In addition to the ALTA literacy programme it has been decided to have computers at the centre with specially designed literacy programmes installed. The deep anger which literacy-challenged trainees experience will be addressed by the introduction of Physical Education and Drama. A total of 30 students will be involved in this project.

Despite all the efforts and achievements of SERVOL that have just been outlined, there is no getting away from the fact that literacy remains a serious problem in the Caribbean and in Trinidad and Tobago. Despite our best efforts, we are only touching the surface. For the period from September 2002 to July 2003, we worked with 653 trainees, and for the period from September 2003 to July 2004, we worked with 616 trainees. When we put this against the findings of two national literacy surveys (ALTA 1994 and University of the West Indies 1995), we realised that the literacy problem has reached crisis proportions: one out of four adults in Trinidad and Tobago is unable to perform basic everyday reading and writing tasks. Furthermore, less than half the adult population can read and understand newspapers and simple medicine labels.

Our efforts at literacy go beyond the ALTA programme. Trainees at the Hi-Tech Centre, despite literacy challenges, do exceptionally well, many of them doing the Cambridge examinations. While the Internet has not yet been introduced (hopefully in January 2005) our trainees are introduced to this at the nearby Internet cafes. No effort is spared to provide every opportunity to our trainees. Our trainees are now encouraged to log onto the only Web site that promotes, encourages and facilitates reading—*www.Readorama.com*. This Web site features short stories, poems, book reviews, journals and Weblogs and reading-related competitions, games and activities. The creators have successfully married the basics of reading literature with advancement and technology.

Our efforts in the literacy area have shown that there is a need to create a supportive environment for both teachers and students. This results in improvement in attitude and an openness and willingness to read.

The impact of SERVOL's programmes on livelihoods

One of SERVOL's best kept secrets is our Adolescent Development Programme (ADP) which is done prior to students choosing a skill of choice. The programme, as was mentioned earlier, deals with attitude, and it is for this reason that employers are constantly requesting our trainees for employment. In fact employers are willing to accept our trainees and train them further rather than employ persons from other agencies. Trainees are given the opportunity to do on-the-job training while developing their skill, and their performance is closely monitored by the Job Training Officer. Most of our trainees who do on-the-job training end up being permanently employed even though the company may require more qualifications and experience for the job. Our Job Training Officers have developed a close relationship with the business community and are in tune with demands of the labour market. Business seminars are conducted where businessmen are invited to meet and share with our trainees. These seminars are also used to market the valuable product that we have—a trainee or graduate with a positive attitude and willingness to learn.

With the advent of the Hi-Tech Programme, many of our students have opted to further their studies. In fact the latest figures show that 60 per cent of the Hi-Tech trainees pursue further education. Many are now employed in high-end jobs, and they give credit to the great emphasis that is placed on preparation for the world of work. Many of our trainees are self-employed, and very many of our past trainees are now instructors.

> SERVOL's programme has been designed to make trainees work ready in terms of developing productive attitudes, social, financial and communication skills, occupational literacy and numeracy and self employment and business skills. SERVOL's programme as an intervention strategy has resulted in individuals who are better citizens, willing and better enable to contribute to the development of their communities and to the wider society (SERVOL 2003).

The SERVOL programme has been successful in turning around disadvantaged and dejected youth so they become positive contributors to society. This then is the impact on livelihood. To quote a report done on the SERVOL Hi-Tech programme, "Given the dynamics of youth delinquency in these perilous times, the SERVOL Hi-Tech Programme is not only a 'Rescue Mission' but a 'Business Vision'" (SERVOL 2003). In fact this can also be applied to all our youth programmes which impact on the livelihoods not only of the SERVOL trainee, but also his family who most times will look to him as a beacon of hope moving them from abject poverty to respectable livelihood.

Conclusion

You will realise from this talk that SERVOL is different; it is unique; it is one of a kind. It is truly "Service Volunteered for All." Our view has been and continues to be that literacy cannot be dealt with in isolation. In the 34 years of the organisation's existence, and based on our experience as I have just outlined, we are convinced that there is need for a radical change in our educational system. Our efforts must never lose the human touch—our efforts must be based on care, love, concern and respect. We must be as our mission statement states and which I quoted at the beginning—"Agents of attitudinal change in a journey to total human development." It is my hope that we have given you a somewhat different perspective on literacy and livelihoods.

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Culture, Literacy and Livelihoods: Reconceptualising the Reform of Education in Oceania

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Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of
Basic Education (PRIDE)

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This paper seeks to reconceptualise the strategic planning and implementation of education in Oceania and to develop principles to guide curriculum reform. It pays particular attention to programmes in the field of literacy and livelihoods in the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector and to the delivery of such programmes using information and communication technologies (ICTs) and/or distance and flexible learning (DFL).

In this paper we use the term "literacy and livelihoods" (L&L) to refer to educational programmes that prepare youth for life and work in Oceania, with an emphasis on the development of literacy. Work is defined not only in terms of paid employment but of self-sufficiency, self-reliance and/or self-employment. It is assumed that L&L programmes are offered by TVET providers in both the formal and non-formal sectors.

Introduction

In referring to our region we use the name Oceania quite deliberately. Those who occupy continents on the rim have tended to view the Pacific Ocean as a vast expanse of water dotted with tiny, isolated islands, their inhabitants disadvantaged by smallness and remoteness. Pacific islanders are now rejecting this colonial assumption, arguing that they do not occupy "islands in a far sea" but "a sea of islands" (Hau'ofa 1993, 7). Their ancestors clearly did not view the sea as a barrier, but as their livelihood. They were seafarers who were equally at home on sea and on land. They lived and played and worked upon it. They developed great skills for navigating its waters, traversing it in their sailing canoes, and forming "a large exchange community in which wealth and people with their skills and arts circulated endlessly" (Hau'ofa 1993, 9). In this way the sea bound them together rather than separating them.

The name Oceania captures this holistic sense of people sharing a common environment and living together for their mutual benefit. Many of the inhabitants of Oceania are reactivating this ethos, seeking ways to help and support each other, rather than constantly turning to the nations on their rim for aid and advice. It is a slow and uneven process, however, much hindered by regional politics, by the insistent pressures of globalisation and by the continuing impact of colonialism. The latter has divided Oceania linguistically, creating a significant gulf between groups of anglophone and francophone islands, and politically, with France and the USA still ruling their colonial empires in Oceania in ways that isolate their people from many regional fora and networks.

This paper focuses only on those countries in Oceania that are politically independent and therefore able to participate in the dominant political and economic policy organisation, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS): Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. To this list should be added Tokelau, which is in the process of achieving self-government in free association with New Zealand, a status similar to that enjoyed by Cook Islands and Niue. Australia and New Zealand are also full members.

At its meeting in 1999 the Pacific Islands Forum directed its secretariat to bring together the ministers for education of the region. They have since met three times, deliberating initially on what they referred to as "basic education," which they defined as all educational provisions for children and youth, both formal and non-formal, except for higher education. The definition thus includes TVET, and thereby the delivery of L&L programmes. The major outcome of their first meeting was the development of the "Forum Basic Education Action Plan" (FBEAP), a short (nine-page) but significant document setting out visions, goals and strategies for the future of basic education in Oceania. Its vision is clearly specified:

> Basic education as the fundamental building block for society should engender the broader life skills that lead to social cohesion and provide the foundations for vocational callings, higher education and lifelong learning. These when combined with enhanced employment opportunities create a higher level of personal and societal security and development.

> Forum members recognised that development of basic education takes place in the context of commitments to the world community and meeting the new demands of the global economy, which should be balanced with the enhancement of their own distinctive Pacific values, morals, social, political, economic and cultural heritages, and reflect the Pacific's unique geographical context (PIFS 2001, 1–2).

Subsequently the ministers developed a proposal that was accepted by the EU for funding of EUR8 million over a five-year period for a new project to be called Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education, abbreviated to the PRIDE project. The University of the South Pacific (USP) agreed to manage the project on behalf of PIFS, and the New

Zealand government, through NZAID, agreed to join as a funding partner with an initial grant of NZD5 million over three years.

The PRIDE project

Essentially the project is designed to implement the Pacific vision for education encapsulated in FBEAP in the 14 Pacific member states of PIFS, together with Tokelau. Its overall objective is:

> To expand opportunities for children and youth to acquire the values, knowledge and skills that will enable them to actively participate in the social, spiritual, economic and cultural development of their communities and to contribute positively to creating sustainable futures (USP 2004).

To achieve this objective the project seeks to strengthen the capacity of each of the 15 countries to deliver quality education through formal and non-formal means. The key outcome will be the development of strategic plans for education in each country. Ideally these plans will be developed following wide consultation with all stakeholders and beneficiaries, including parents, teachers, students, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private providers, employers and other civil society groups. The project will also assist countries to implement their plans and monitor and evaluate the outcomes. Capacity-building activities will be provided for educators at national, subregional and regional levels. To further support these activities, the project will develop an online resource centre to encourage the sharing of best practice and experience among countries.

In discussions of the PRIDE project with educators throughout the Pacific and beyond, a frequently asked question is: "How is it different? We have seen many donor-driven education projects and initiatives come and go. Why is this one unique?" Their cynicism is justified. The history of educational aid in the Pacific, as elsewhere, is an ambiguous one with at least as many negatives as positives (see, for example, Luteru and Teasdale 1993). The present project, however, does have a number of unique features, and there is considerable optimism that it can achieve its goals in ways that others have not. These features include:

i)   The fact that the project was designed and approved by the ministers of education: the process started with them, not with the donors. It was very clear at their third PIFS-sponsored meeting in Apia in January 2004 that ministers saw this as their project and were determined to guide and direct it according to their priorities. Subsequent meetings with individual ministers have reinforced this view. The donors, in turn, have shown quite remarkable preparedness to allow this to happen.

ii) The significance of the acronym: its choice clearly was deliberate. Each country is being encouraged to build its education plans on a stronger foundation of local cultures, languages and epistemologies, thus enabling students to develop deep pride in their own values, traditions and wisdoms, and a clear sense of their own local cultural identity.

iii) The strong emphasis on mutual collaboration and support: the aim of the project is to help countries help each other. Earlier projects brought consultants from outside the region, and therefore became donor-driven as they responded to donors' priorities and preferences. The PRIDE project will source most of its consultants from within the region, and already has built up an impressive database of qualified people from Oceania. Furthermore, it will fund local educators to go on study and training visits to each other's countries, not to those on the rim and beyond.

iv) The encouragement of consultative and participatory approaches to educational planning within each country: there is a clear wish to avoid top-down models of planning and policy-making, and a strong commitment to bottom-up processes involving parents, teachers, students, private providers, NGOs, employers and other civil society groups.

v) The fact that ministers want the project to promote a more holistic and lifelong approach to education, with effective articulation between sectors, and between school, TVET and the world of work.

vi) The commitment of the PRIDE team to building a strong conceptual foundation for the project. Earlier projects brought outsiders to Oceania with western "recipes" for the reform of education. The PRIDE team is committed to helping countries develop their own theoretical foundations, doing so via the creative syncretism of their own epistemologies, values and wisdoms with the most useful educational ideas and approaches of the global world beyond their shores.

Conceptualising the reform of education in Oceania

In seeking to develop a conceptual foundation for the PRIDE project, the PRIDE team turned to the report to UNESCO of its International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (Delors 1996). From our own experiences in countries as diverse as Thailand, Japan and Indonesia, as well as the 15 Pacific countries that are the focus of our work in the PRIDE project, it remains the most useful blueprint for reform, regardless of the economic, demographic and social indicators of each nation. In the eight years since it was published the Delors report has stood the tests of time, critical analysis and practical application. It has been widely debated in both educational and political circles and its ideas used as a springboard for education reform in a wide variety of settings. It continues to offer the most coherent, inspiring and relevant conceptual foundation for education of any international document published in recent years.

From teaching to learning
Ever since the invention of mass compulsory schooling in the early years of the industrial revolution in Europe, the focus of education has been on the delivery of knowledge to children and youth by adults with the necessary training and/or community recognition. The architecture and

routines of the school and the content and processes of the curriculum were primarily designed to prepare the young to be compliant and productive workers in the burgeoning factories of Europe.

This new form of mass schooling was almost entirely teacher-centred: the podium and blackboard at the front of each classroom facilitated control of students and the delivery of knowledge. A system of examinations and reporting regulated progression through the school, providing incentives to acquire knowledge and the formal credentials for having done so. These credentials also were linked to subsequent employment. The higher the credentials the more prestigious and better paid the job at the end. It was this system of education that was exported to Oceania and elsewhere in the world during the colonial era, often by well-intentioned Christian missionaries, and has proven so deeply resistant to change in many countries.

While the above is an oversimplified account of a much more complex reality, it does highlight the view that the 19th and 20th centuries, educationally speaking, can be described as the "centuries of the teacher." The teacher was central to educational discourse and process. This has been especially the case in Oceania, and still is in many if not most settings.

The current change in focus from teacher to learner, as exemplified in the Delors report, is highly significant. Even though many might argue that teaching and learning are simply opposite sides of the same coin and essentially one and the same, the reality is that education is undergoing a profound transformation. The shift in power from teacher to learner is just one element of this. Another significant shift is from education as the acquisition of knowledge to education as learning how to learn. A third is from a view of education as preparation for the world of work to education as a holistic process of lifelong learning. From these perspectives, the 21st century might well be described as the "century of the learner" The implications for L&L programmes are significant:

i) The ICT revolution has ensured that teachers and lecturers are no longer dispensers of knowledge. Their students now have access to an exponentially expanding array of information that they can access quite independently. Teachers have responsibility to help students make effective and appropriate use of this knowledge, which requires a capacity to critically appraise all of the material available to them and to make value judgments of it, often from moral and ethical perspectives. L&L programmes therefore should focus on developing the critical capacities of students, enabling them to know themselves, think for themselves, and thus become active and confident learners.

(ii) Knowledge is power. As teachers lose their authority as holders and dispensers of knowledge, their relationships with students are transformed. They need to become facilitators of learning, providing students with the skills and motivation to become lifelong learners. The delivery of L&L programmes therefore requires a much stronger focus on curriculum process. *How* to teach becomes equally important as *what* to teach. And for these new relationships

to be effective teachers need a new kind of moral and even spiritual authority. They must become respected as exemplars of right living within their colleges and communities. This requires a profound shift in the mindset of teachers and lecturers, and even more importantly of their trainers, as they reconceptualise their roles and functions.

iii) Most TVET curricula in Oceania have been driven by the demands of the workplace and the need for specific, job-related credentials. Many TVET teaching staff have been recruited from the workplace, with limited if any teacher training, and have an instrumental view of their responsibilities (i.e., they view their role as the development of specific technical capacities in their students). Once again a profound shift in the mindset of teachers and lecturers is necessary if they are to contribute effectively to a holistic process of lifelong learning. Every TVET teacher needs to be confident in helping students learn how to learn. And every TVET teacher needs to promote L&L as an integral part of each student's preparation for life and work.

iv) With the adoption of a more holistic approach to learning, the old boundaries between the various sectors of education (pre-school, elementary, secondary, TVET) need to be reviewed, and the question of effective articulation between them addressed. There is a particular need to explore how secondary and TVET curricula might be planned together in a more holistic and interconnected way. In Oceania, TVET programmes, including L&L, need to be brought down into the secondary school and even to upper primary settings. In some countries the seventh and eighth years of schooling are the last for many students, and it is vital that relevant and meaningful TVET and L&L programmes be available to them, and that such programmes articulate with subsequent learning opportunities, especially in the non-formal sector.

Tensions and change

Jacques Delors, in his preface to *Learning: The Treasure Within* (1996), identifies and discusses seven tensions that he believes characterise most education policy, planning and learning environments in a rapidly changing world. He revisits these and adds further insights in a later paper (Delors 2002). Among the tensions he identifies are several that have deep resonance with communities in Oceania, including the tensions between tradition and modernity, co-operation and competition, the spiritual and the temporal, the universal and the individual, and the local and the global.

In neither of the above documents does Delors elaborate on the idea of tension itself. One assumes he is not using the concept of tension in the sense of conflict between opposing factions or ideologies, the kind of tension that can lead to rivalry and war, but is referring instead to a functional or positive tension. We like to explain this kind of tension using the analogy of guitar strings that need to be kept in a constant state of tightness if they are to produce pleasing music. One of the tasks of the guitarist is to maintain a functional tension by regularly adjusting and

readjusting the strings to ensure harmony. Likewise educators have the constant challenge of achieving a functional or creative balance between the tensions confronting them as they plan and deliver education.

The concepts of tension and balance are highly relevant to curriculum development and reform. As we travel within Oceania almost every educator we speak with believes that the balance is wrong in school and TVET curricula: that the global, competitive and temporal have a disproportionate influence in most learning environments. Once again, we find analogy a useful explanatory device. In the realm of visual arts, music, drama and dance, there are currently some remarkably creative initiatives in the region. Individuals and groups within local communities are creating new forms of expression from the fusion of the traditional and the modern.

The group that comes most readily to mind is Yothu Yindi, an internationally renowned Indigenous Australian band based in Yirrkala, in northeast Arnhem Land. Its leader, Mandawuy Yunupingu, established the group during his tenure as principal of the local school. The group's music is vibrant and contemporary, yet is deeply grounded in traditional Aboriginal culture. As one listens to the rhythms and lyrics one senses a dynamic syncretism between the local and the global. At a Yothu Yindi concert in northern Australia, the music was enjoyed equally by older Indigenous people and young non-Indigenous people in the audience. The former found a deep resonance with traditional Aboriginal music; the latter appreciated the modern western rock rhythms.

In the realm of TVET education, whether in curriculum reform, values education or in the classroom itself, we should strive for the same dynamic syncretism between tradition and modernity, the spiritual and the temporal, and the local and the global. Young people need to grow up with the skills and confidence to live successfully in a globalising world. They need to survive economically in a global marketplace and take their place in the modern, global workforce. Yet it is becoming increasingly recognised in Oceania that they also need to grow up with a clear sense of their own local cultural identity, built on a strong foundation of their own cultures, languages and spiritualities, and with a deep pride in their own values, traditions and wisdoms. This can best be achieved if the content and the processes of the TVET curricula reflect this same creative fusion of the local and global.

As mentioned earlier, one of the core principles of our own project is the need to build the planning and implementation of education on a strong foundation of local cultures, languages and epistemologies, thus enabling students to develop deep pride in their own values, traditions and wisdoms. Many educators in Oceania share this view, suggesting that the primary goal of education "is to ensure that all Pacific students are successful and that they all become fully participating members of their groups, societies and the global community" (Pene, Taufe'ulungaki and Benson 2002, 3). L&L programmes likewise need to be firmly grounded in the local while at the same time achieving an effective syncretism with the global world beyond. How might this be done? Let us suggest a few principles:

i)   In many settings it may be appropriate to adopt a bilingual approach, with English and the local language(s) used equally but separately in the learning environment. This implies that English literacy and vernacular literacy are equally promoted. A significant challenge here is the development of vernacular literacy materials of a suitable standard and interest level for youth and young adults.

(ii) A culture of literacy has not yet developed in most settings in Oceania. People do not read for pleasure and relaxation. Nor is written material a primary source of information gathering: most local knowledge is not stored and transmitted in writing, but continues to rely on oral traditions, with storytelling playing a significant role. L&L programmes need to recognise, value and build on these oral traditions, yet blend them with modern ways of communicating. For example, L&L students could undertake research in their villages on oral traditions and local ways of knowing and document their findings in written form. They could then learn to share their research findings and stories and carry on conversations with each other using ICT, with chat rooms and one-to-one e-mails supplementing face-to-face communications, especially when distance hinders the latter.

iii) Networks of human relationships are profoundly significant in Oceania, especially within the extended family and local language groups. Mutuality, not competition, is all important. This needs to be recognised in L&L learning environments, most particularly in the context of DFL programmes where students are often working in isolation. The challenge here is for teachers to promote strong linkages between students using ICT, developing learning networks where students can support and learn from each other. Group activity and group assignments often can replace individual learning programmes.

"Learning to be" and "Learning to live together"

One of the most widely recognised and discussed features of the Delors report is its notion of four pillars of learning: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together. While it has been criticised by some in Oceania (Konai Helu Thaman, for example, arguing that it leads to the very conceptual fragmentation that the report itself so strongly criticises) the idea that all learning is built on these four foundations seems readily accepted in most cultures. For example, the design and construction of many traditional homes and meeting places in Oceania are based on four large timber uprights, usually tree or palm trunks, one in each corner, supporting the whole structure. The idea that each upright needs to be of similar size or scale in order to ensure structural strength and stability is readily transferred to education, and to the view that all pillars should receive equal emphasis in an individual's learning. In reality, however, the representation of each pillar in most education systems in Oceania, as elsewhere, is far from balanced, with "learning to know" and "learning to do" occupying disproportionately large parts of the curriculum, especially at secondary-school and TVET levels. As Delors (2002) himself acknowledges, these two pillars have long been self-evident and are the dominant focus of most education systems.

The "learning to be" pillar has posed particular challenges for educators. It is the least understood, and the least represented in most curricula. Even though the idea achieved considerable recognition following publication of the 1972 UNESCO report of the same name (*Learning to be* or the Faure report), it had not become prominent in education discourse prior to release of the Delors report. Basically, it has to do with the formation of identity, both individual and collective, and with the achievement of self-knowledge, self-understanding and self-fulfilment, and ultimately with the development of wisdom. Delors (2002, 151) stated that the full recognition and implementation of "learning to be" will require "nothing less than a revolution in education that will be expensive in terms of time." Nevertheless, he makes clear that we cannot afford to overlook this aspect of learning, for through it people are empowered to learn about themselves and to become more fully human.

Likewise the "learning to live together" pillar challenges those engaged in secondary school and TVET curriculum reform. The tendency is to relegate it to the social sciences and the teaching of international relations. Yet one of our primary goals surely is to learn to live together within a nation state. Again Delors (2002, 151) expresses this aptly:

> This newer pillar has a special resonance in the twenty-first century as countries grapple with the difficulties of co-existence among different religious communities, different ethnic groups and others. Education bears a tremendous responsibility to bring to blossom all the seeds within every individual, and to make communication between people easier. Communication does not simply mean repeating what we have learned: it means also articulating what is in us and has been combined into a rounded whole through education, and understanding others.

In a deeper way these two pillars also have to do with the nurture and development of spirituality, not just in a religious sense, but also through the broader quest for meaning in life and for explanations of reality, both individual and communal. It is interesting that secular education discourse—that of UNESCO and other international agencies, for example—is starting to emphasise the spiritual and advocate a role for education in the spiritual development of children and youth (see, for example, Zhou and Teasdale 2004). But how do we introduce the development of the spiritual into the secondary-school and TVET curricula, especially in the context of L&L programmes? Certainly not by creating an extra "box" somewhere, and slotting it in alongside other content areas.

It is our own view, that the teaching of spirituality, and more broadly the teaching of "learning to be" and "learning to live together," cannot be superimposed on existing curricula and taught purely as content. We therefore suggest the following principles:

i) The teaching of these elements is the responsibility of each and every teacher and lecturer. They should be woven into the very fabric of the curriculum in <u>all</u> subject areas in a fully integrated way.

ii) They cannot be taught just from a content perspective. Curriculum process is equally important (see, for example, Teasdale and Teasdale 2004).

iii) Teachers themselves should be exemplars of good living in these areas. Their own behaviour and relationships should inspire and guide students.

iv) School and college administrators also have significant responsibilities here, in particular for ensuring that the organisation of the institution, and all relationships within it, are exemplary of "learning to be" and "learning to live together."

v) Teacher training institutions will need to rethink their curricula, pedagogies, structures and organisational culture to bring about the expected transformation at the learner level. The aim here is to ensure that the pre- and in-service training of TVET teachers effectively incorporates these elements.

From a traditional perspective, until the colonial era, these two pillars were a fundamental part of a holistic process of lifelong learning throughout Oceania. If we could return by time capsule to the villages of our ancestors, say 300 years ago, most of us would find that "learning to be" and "learning to live together" indeed accounted for at least 50 per cent of the learning experiences of the children and youth as they prepared to take their place in the adult life of the community.

Hopefully global thinking about education may be coming full circle, returning to the subjective and the spiritual and to a more holistic and lifelong approach. Certainly if we are to capture the essence of the Delors report in the development of curricula, and especially L&L programmes, ensuring that "learning to be" and "learning to live together" occupy at least half of the energies of teachers and students, then we need to radically transform the way we conceptualise curriculum content and process and the roles and responsibilities of teachers.

Conclusion

In this paper we have sought to reconceptualise the strategic planning and implementation of education in Oceania and develop principles to guide curriculum reform, paying particular attention to L&L programmes in the TVET sector, and to the delivery of such programmes using ICT and/or DFL. The latter is a particular challenge in Oceania, as many ICT and DFL approaches tend to isolate students from each other in cultural contexts where mutuality and shared learning are valued. Another challenge in this context is that the ICT revolution has only been of benefit to those in Oceania who are privileged enough to have access to electric power, a computer and an Internet connection. Even now, only a small proportion of TVET students has this access, especially in rural areas. Many DFL programmes therefore need to continue using print media as the primary means of instruction.

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Remarks for the International Literacy and Livelihoods Experts Meeting: Learning for Life in a Changing World

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Literacy spans far beyond the basic ability to read and write. In today's society, literacy is defined as a set of fundamental communication skills that allow one to use written information to function in society, achieve one's goals and develop one's knowledge and potential.

Adult literacy and non-formal education programmes provide adult learners with opportunities to acquire fundamental literacy and communication skills. With these skills, adults are better able to function in and take advantage of today's knowledge economy, communicate with others, express needs and understand information in daily life.

I spoke a week ago to an audience of technical and vocational education and training officials in Bonn, Germany, on the subject of globalisation and skills development. My message focused on the policies countries must adopt to ensure that the poor benefit from the integration of economies and societies through the flow of information, ideas, activities, technologies, goods, services, capital and people.

The last decade of the 20th century saw a remarkable acceleration in the pace of globalisation brought on by the information technology revolution, declines in transportation costs and open policies toward trade and capital flows.

Even though countries and individuals may wish to escape or reverse globalisation, this cannot be done except at very high costs to individual freedoms. I mention this today because the rapid integration of economies is making literacy ever more important as an entry point to participation in the global economy, especially for the poor.

With the arrival of new information technologies, literacy and communication skills have become increasingly imperative. Across countries, higher levels of literacy are associated with larger shares of knowledge jobs in the economy. As I travel across the continent of Africa, I regularly find clients asking how the bank can help them develop a knowledge economy. This is now a norm when countries come to talk about their vision of the future for their economy.

Globalisation and the concept of a knowledge economy are driving demand for education and literacy. The year 2000 OECD report on literacy in the information age documents the economic importance of literacy.

Literacy skills influence positively the chances of being in a white-collar high-skilled position and negatively the probability of being unemployed or in a blue-collar position. Low skills, linked to low literacy, increase the chances of long-term unemployment.

Literacy proficiency also has a substantial effect on earnings in many countries. The impact of literacy on earnings depends in part on differences in levels of education, but in many countries literacy also has an independent, net effect on wages. Poverty and literacy are related with the percentage of those living on USD1 a day rising with the illiteracy rate.

Globally, literacy increases with income level (Figure 1). Ninety per cent of women in upper-middle-income countries are literate, a rate slightly less than that of men at 95 per cent. In low-income countries, 53 per cent of women are literate compared with 72 per cent of men.

Figure 1
Adult Literacy Rates by Income for Men and Women: 2002
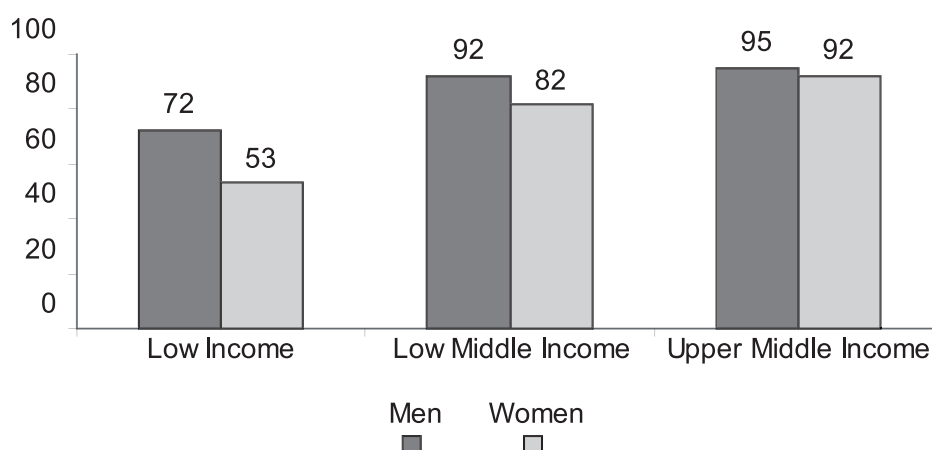
Gains in literacy in the 1990s are evident for men and women at all income levels, but with the largest absolute gains found in low-income countries (Figure 2). Education for All (EFA) for youths is raising average literacy rates (Figure 3).

Figure 2
**Change in Adult Literacy Rates for Men and
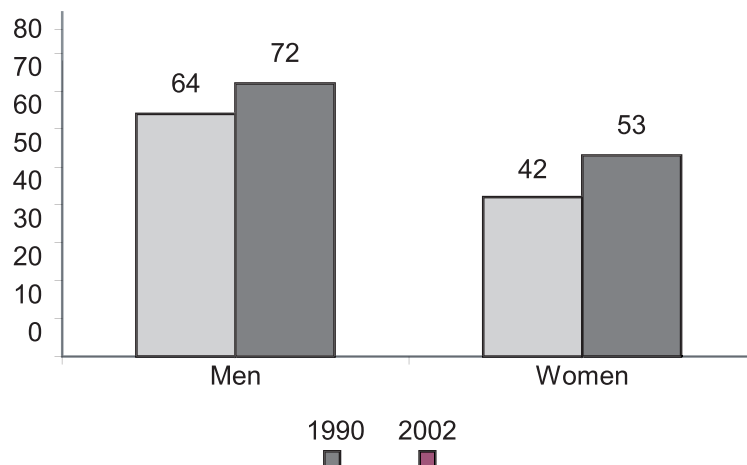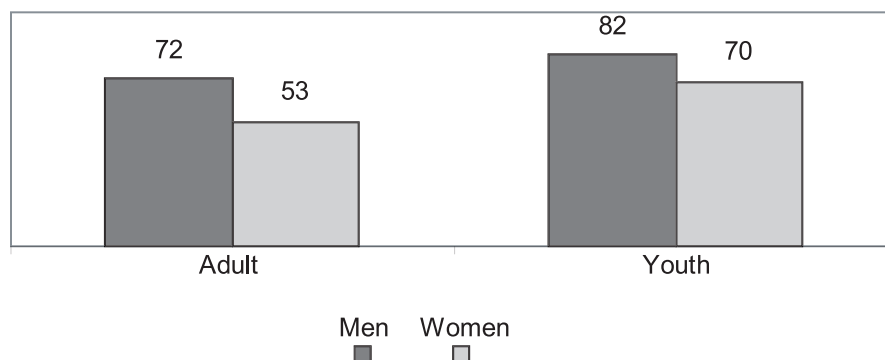Women in Low Income Countries: 1990-2002**

Figure 3
**Adult and Youth Literacy Rates for Men and Women
in Low Income Countries: 2002**


My remarks today focus on literacy in sub-Saharan Africa. I am reporting on a recent study of different models of providing literacy and training for livelihood skills in four countries. The countries studied are: Guinea, Kenya, Senegal and Uganda. The findings point to the value to poverty reduction of building literacy training into programmes that train for livelihood skills.

Literacy trends in sub-Saharan Africa

The World Bank 2004 world development indicators provide literacy rates for youth (15 to 24 years of age) and adults (15 years and over) separately for males and females. Data are offered for 31 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Major trends and patterns are highlighted in bullets below:

- Literacy increased for men and women in the 1990s with significant changes in countries such as Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia and Tanzania.

- Literacy is higher for youth than adults, reflecting the high access of youth today to education.

- Literacy remains lower for women than men with exceptions in Botswana and Lesotho (Figure 4).

Figure 4
Adult Literacy Rates in Sub-Saharan Africa for Men and Women by Country: 2002
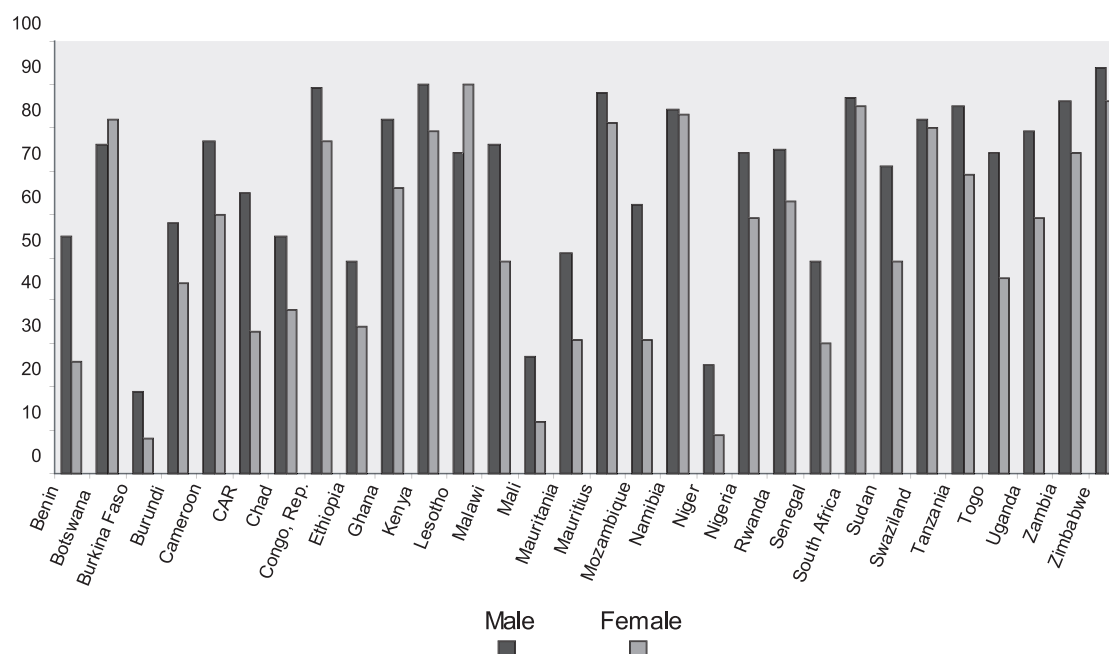
- Literacy rates vary widely in sub-Saharan Africa.

  - º Countries with 50 per cent or more of the female adults being literate include Botswana, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

  - º Countries with less than 20 per cent or more of the female adults being literate include: Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.

- High levels of literacy can be achieved even in low income countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Policies can make a difference (Figure 5).

Figure 5
Adult Literacy Rates in Sub-Saharan Africa for Men and Women by Country: 2002
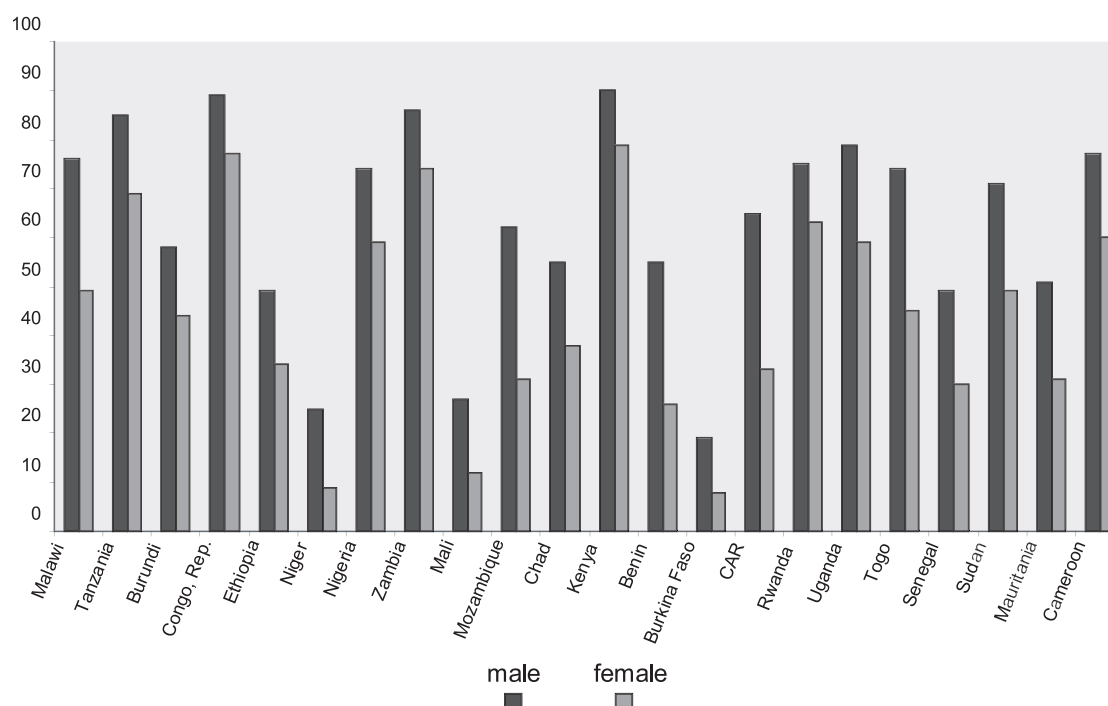
Skills and literacy training for better livelihoods

I was asked today to share with you my perspectives on the literacy and livelihood challenges confronting countries in Africa and outline the approaches that are appropriate for addressing this issue.

Evidence from a recent study of skills development in sub-Saharan Africa shows that those with higher levels of education and literacy are more likely to acquire skills training in the workplace and improve future earnings (Johanson and Adams 2004, 116–117). Building literacy alongside education is therefore an important instrument for reducing poverty and raising well-being.

Combining literacy and livelihoods training, however, can be done in different sequences with questions raised as to which approach is most effective. A recent World Bank review of literacy and livelihoods training in Guinea, Kenya, Senegal and Uganda provided a means to evaluate different delivery models (Oxenham et al. 2002). Five models were studied:

i)   Literacy as a prerequisite or in preparation for training in livelihood or income-generation activities

ii) Literacy followed by separate livelihood or income-generation activities, but with no systematic connections

iii) Livelihood training or income-generation activities leading to literacy training

iv) Livelihood and income-generation activities and literacy integrated in one programme

v) Literacy and livelihood and income-generation activities taking place in parallel, but separately

The programmes studied dealt with very poor people, mostly rural and mostly women. Effective programmes could be found in each of the five programme sub-categories. Programmes that started from livelihood skills, however, seemed to stand a stronger chance of success by offering the learner an immediate reason for learning. The following findings emerge from the World Bank study:

- Organisations that are more concerned with livelihoods and other aspects of development do a better job of organising combinations of livelihoods and literacy than organisations that are focused on education and literacy.

- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) seem to be more flexible than governmental agencies in responding to local and changing needs.

- Deriving literacy/numeracy content from livelihood skills and integrating it with the livelihood training from the very start seems more promising than either running the two components parallel with each other or using standard literacy materials to prepare people to train for livelihoods.

- While differing levels of proficiency in different livelihoods require different periods of learning, the minimum period needed by a really illiterate person with normal learning abilities to attain a degree of literacy and numeracy sufficient to support advancement in a livelihood seemed to be some 360 hours of instruction and practice.

- The broad experience of income-generating projects suggests that arranging for both livelihood specialists and literacy instructors is more prudent than relying on literacy instructors to undertake livelihood instruction or income-generating activities in addition to teaching literacy and numeracy. The broad trend appears to treat literacy instructors on a similar basis as livelihood specialists and pay them for their efforts.

Missing from the review were data on costs to compare against programme effectiveness measures. The observation is that the cost of programmes that combine livelihood, business and literacy skills are likely to be higher than those of simple literacy programmes.

Overall, the evidence suggests that it would be worthwhile for vocational or livelihood-education policy-makers to develop livelihood training with literacy/numeracy instruction for very poor, non-literate people, who tend to be mostly women and, in sub-Saharan Africa, mostly rural.

The World Bank and literacy

The World Bank is a partner with other global multilateral and bilateral agencies in helping countries achieve Education for All as part of the Millennium Development Goals. This is responsive to the literacy needs of the young. For the unschooled, however, including adults, the bank also supports non-formal education and adult literacy. Over the period from 1990 to 2004, World Bank lending for non-formal education and adult literacy totaled USD260 million of the USD24.9 billion loaned for education, or just under one per cent of the total.

Six literacy projects are currently active worldwide with two located in sub-Saharan Africa in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana. Literacy is more frequently supported through components in larger education projects. Currently, literacy components are found in 20 projects globally with half located in sub-Saharan Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa is the second largest consumer of World Bank support for non-formal education and adult literacy, following closely Europe and Central Asia. South Asia is third on this list.

Lessons drawn from this lending by the World Bank's Department for Operations Evaluation indicate that if literacy is not the main objective of a project or at least a significant component, it typically receives little attention and expertise in implementation, and it yields limited outcomes. Also, while literacy instruction is considered to have low costs per participant, the costs per graduate made *permanently* literate are much higher, and management costs are sizeable.

Concluding remarks

I began my remarks by referring to globalisation and the pursuit of knowledge economies as factors placing new emphasis on literacy and education for all. The point to be emphasised is that literacy is essential for the poor to participate in increasingly integrated economies.

For sub-Saharan Africa, progress is observed in literacy gains over the 1990s with rates rising for most countries. Gender differences persist, however. The gender gap is narrowing as young girls find more access to education.

What I think is important is the chart comparing literacy rates by level of income in sub-Saharan Africa (Figure 5). Taken literally, high literacy rates can be achieved in low-income countries just as they are achieved in high-income countries. Low-income countries need not be condemned to low levels of literacy. Policies for promoting literacy can make a difference.

I have shared experience from four countries with you. Rather than approach literacy training as a free-standing activity or adding a bit of trade or skills training to it, the effectiveness of literacy training can be enhanced by putting trade or skills training in place and then introducing literacy training. Livelihood skills provide a strong rationale and motivation for acquiring literacy. This combination shows promise as a means to motivate literacy more than simply pursuing literacy programmes alone.

The experience, however, does not tell us about affordability or sustainability of these hybrid programmes, which should be the next step in evaluation. The focus is mainly on programme effectiveness and not on the cost of these programmes. I close by emphasising the importance of good analysis and evaluation of literacy programmes for policy development.

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Country Paper—India

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In a period of 100 years, India's crude literacy rate has progressed from 5.35 per cent to 65.0 per cent. Whether it is a sign of progress or an indicator of slow development, one cannot deny the fact that it has taken place in a sociopolitical environment dominated by colonialism, economic backwardness, caste, class and gender contradictions. Many parts of India were under princely administration before independence, and there were no uniform educational initiatives covering the entire Indian subcontinent.

However this "progress" is still characterised by class, caste and gender discrimination. As Table 1 indicates, the literacy rate has been consistently improving in the case of males, whereas among females, the progress has been comparatively slow. Many studies have shown that the marginalised sections of the society such as Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST) and agricultural labourers have lower literacy rates.

Table 1: Literacy Rate in India 1901 to 2001 in Per Cent

Decade	Total	Male	Female
1901	5.35	9.83	0.60
1911	5.92	10.56	1.05
1921	7.16	12.21	1.81
1931	9.50	15.59	2.93
1941	16.10	24.90	7.30
1951	16.67	24.95	7.93
1961	24.02	34.44	12.95
1971	29.45	39.45	18.69
1981	36.23	46.89	24.82
1991*	52.21	64.13	39.29
2001*	64.8	75.3	53.7

Source: Department of Education, Government of India
　　　　* Census of India

In absolute numbers, the magnitude of the problem is stupendous. Nearly 350 million people cannot read or write. Although the performance of India is better than that of countries such as Bangladesh and Pakistan, it has not shown the vigour which other Asian countries such as Sri Lanka and Southeast Asian countries have shown.

Government of India and literacy

Many programmes were launched immediately after India's independence to address the problems of illiteracy. During the first Five Year Plan in the early 1950s, the programme of social education, inclusive of literacy, was launched as a part of the Community Development Programme.

The Kothari Commission (1964–66) stressed the importance of spreading literacy in a massive scale. It suggested the following measures to the Government of India:

- Expansion of universal schooling of five-year duration for the age group 6–11

- Provision of part-time, education for those children of the age group 11–14 who had either missed schooling or dropped out of school prematurely

- Provision of part-time general and vocational education to the younger adults of age group 15–30

- Use of mass media as a powerful tool of environment building for literacy

- Setting up of libraries

- Need for follow-up programmes

- Active roles for universities and voluntary organisations at the state and district levels

It was hoped that with the help of these measures, the national percentage of literacy could be raised to 60 by 1971 and 80 by 1976. The Central Advisory Board of Education encouraged literacy programmes with emphasis on functionality. The scheme of Functional Literacy for Adult Women was started in 1975–76 focusing on enabling illiterate adult women to acquire functional skills, along with literacy to promote better awareness of health, hygiene and child care. During the late 1970s the National Adult Education Programme tried to extend functional literacy to all sections of the population.

These various programmes aimed at increasing the percentage of literacy to 60 by 1971 and 80 by 1976. But none could reach even half of the intended target. Lack of a national-level policy was seen as one of the major reasons for the slow progress. A cohesive national-level policy evolved only during 1986 with the formation of the National Policy on Education. The policy aimed at eradicating illiteracy, particularly in the 15–35 age group.

Such polices facilitated the evolution of the National Literacy Mission (NLM) in 1988, which used a campaign mode to address the problems of illiteracy. NLM was defined in terms of four core values: national integration, conservation of the environment, women's equality and observance of small family norms. Mass movements in the southern state of Kerala through organisations such as Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad and governments encouraged confidence in NLM, which facilitated similar mass movements such as Arivoli Iyakkam in Tamil Nadu. NLM strengthened literacy programmes through the concept of post-literacy continuing education, focus on the neo-literate, etc. In the 1990s, it launched the Total Literacy Campaign, particularly in the districts with low literacy rates. A substantial portion of these districts are in the northern part of the country. To facilitate a decentralisation process, NLM has launched a State Literacy Mission Authority in every state in India. A scheme called *Jan Sikshan Sansthan* blends literacy education with vocational training. Voluntary organisations and government departments are actively involved in these programmes.

From 38 per cent in 1981 to 65 per cent in 2001, there has definitely been a big jump in literacy rate, and NLM has played a crucial role in this process. The creditable performance of NLM was given international recognition when it was awarded UNESCO's Noma Literacy Prize for 1999. The international jury, in selecting NLM for the prize, appreciated its initiation of the total literacy campaigns which are now "accepted as the dominant strategy" for eradication of illiteracy in the country. At present NLM is focusing on achieving a literacy rate of 75 per cent by the year 2005 (Government of India).

In spite of the accolades, a critical review reveals that the full potential of NLM has not been harnessed due to the following factors:

1) For a long time literacy programmes were treated as a part of welfare programmes and were not considered an integral part of the development perspective. As Gupta (2000) argues:

> Broadly speaking, this perspective in the Indian context has been that literacy is essentially a welfare programme and, until the time when economic development has reached a sufficiently high state enabling the people to arrange and pay for their own literacy needs, the government has to shoulder this responsibility because of its social and welfare implications. The contribution of literacy to the process of development as such was thought to be marginal, because literacy and education were not considered as a force which could propel economic growth; it could at most sustain the development process once it has already been initiated through other dimensions of the planning strategy. Obviously, within this narrow perspective, literacy received a much lower priority than was necessary to transform the sector whose earlier development was dictated by colonial policies.

While NLM had better theoretical perspectives in perceiving literacy and education as components of development, it had only a limited framework for putting the perspectives into practice.

2) Although NLM talked about decentralisation, many agencies including the Planning Commission have pointed out the excessive bureaucratisation and centralisation in spite of participation from civil societies.

Literacy, livelihood and development

Rogers (2004) talks about a "fault line" appearing in the world of adult literacy in developing societies: some see adult literacy "in terms of adult schooling within the educational sector" while others perceive adult literacy as "rooted firmly in social and economic development." The ideological differences in the *literacy as education* and *literacy as development* approaches have influenced the pedagogy to a great extent. Most of the government programmes see literacy as education, whereas many initiatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are based on the premise that literacy is development. The UN system, which takes a human development approach, has, with the influence of intellectuals like Amarthya Sen, opted for the *literacy as development* approach.

There are many studies which have pointed out the impact of literacy on livelihood. One of the research reports of the International Water Management Institute argues that "improvement in irrigation and rural literacy rate are the two most important critical factors for the recent growth as well as the over all development of the agricultural sector in India. The large impact of the rural literacy rate clearly illustrates the important role of human capital development in the growth of agricultural productivity" (Bhattarai and Narayanamoorthy 2003, 5).

On the other hand many scholars have warned about exaggeration of the benefits of literacy and the disadvantages of being non-literate. Rogers (2004, xiii) writes:

> Studies of family, intergenerational and cross-generational literacies suggest that what is needed is access to rather than the acquisition of literacy skills by every individual, and that families with high levels of access to literacy skills may be better placed to exploit livelihood opportunities than those with low levels of access. Once again, it is the use of literacy skills rather than the learning of literacy which brings benefits.

While there is definitely a clear distinction between acquisition and access, they become two sides of the same coin when they are perceived as components of an empowerment process. Such an empowerment process requires literacy to be placed in a holistic framework of development.

At present literacy programmes in government sectors are still conceived in an isolated manner. The focus is more on acquisition of skills and there are very few initiatives which emphasise access. Rogers (quoted in World Bank 2002) divided literacy programmes into five types:

1. Literacy-led approach: Literacy as a prerequisite for livelihood

2. Literacy-led approach: Literacy followed by separate livelihood training

3. Livelihood-led approach: Livelihood training leading to literacy

4. Livelihood-led approach: Livelihood and literacy integrated

5. Livelihood-led approach: Literacy and livelihood training in parallel but separately

The World Bank's evaluation in many African countries (2002) shows that blending of vocational and technical education programmes with literacy has good effects and that those who had completed literacy courses tended to be more willing to take initiatives in developing their livelihoods. Although attempts are being made to develop livelihood-led approaches in literacy in India through progammes like *Jan Sikshan Sansthan*, there is a lot of scope for livelihood-led approaches in literacy in India with a rapid expansion in the self-help group movement and rural credit.

Social framework for literacy

Whatever the ideological stand may be—*literacy as education* or *literacy as development*—literacy should be perceived as a component of a social framework. In their study of the literacy campaign at Pudukottai district in Tamil Nadu, Athreya and Chunkath (1996) have listed the following as essential elements of a successful literacy campaign leading to empowerment:

1. Committed activists and responsive government facilitate the success of a mass literacy campaign.

2. Active support of the local administration is crucial in the success of the campaign.

3. Involvement of women learners, volunteers and leaders is a critical significance.

4. A close co-ordination between government and non-governmental agencies is essential.

5. A flexible structure and enabling leadership are key elements.

6. The process of campaigning is as important as the product.

7. The literacy campaign has to be a people's movement.

The Pudukottai model facilitated the acquisition of and access to the use of literacy skills. The literacy campaign was integrated with the Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas programme. The common denominator for the successful models of Kerala and Tamil Nadu is the process of social mobilisation and participatory framework. The learners, their families and the rural communities were mobilised and the literacy programmes were defined in terms of their needs and responses. The managers of the programmes acted as facilitators and not merely as implementers.

Roling (1988) has defined a process for a community-based agricultural extension in terms of five crucial elements: mobilisation, organisation,

training, technical support and system management. Similarly, a community-based literacy programme could also be conceived in terms of these five crucial elements:

PHASE	ACTIVITIES
1. Mobilisation	Socio-cultural activation, conscientisation, understanding among the stakeholders, identifying the needs for literacy from various stakeholders' viewpoints
2. Organisation	Identification of organisation types, helping the communities to build organisations, planning the programme by the community through their organisations
3. Training	Various forms of pedagogy including interactive learning, learning by doing, ICT-enabled learning
4. Technical Support	Support in troubleshooting, linking the community with experts and other programmes, facilitation and supporting conflict-resolution mechanisms
5. System Management	Enabling the community to run its own literacy programmes with its resources, post-literacy programmes, ability to co-ordinate with other agencies, internalising literacy and educational programmes as a component of community's knowledge management

A project of the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation has used this framework with positive results (Farrell 2004). If such a framework were to be adopted, a massive capacity-building programme would be required in various literacy campaigns. This would involve training programme managers to become facilitators.

Overview

The present debates in the theory of literacy are oriented more towards the product—whether literacy should be seen as education or as development. Such debates influence policies and programmes. However, the experiences in India show that the *process* of literacy campaigns and programmes is as important as the *product*. The involvement of the community through social mobilisation programmes has become a critical component in literacy campaigns.

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Country Paper—Mozambique

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The country and its people

Mozambique is an East African country with an area of nearly 800,000 square kilometres and a population of 18.9 million. A Portuguese-speaking country, it is surrounded by six English-speaking countries and is a member of the Commonwealth. This geographical location contrasts with Mozambique's official language, Portuguese.

In its historically determined geography, the country cannot benefit from the vast diversity of literacy programmes and training materials being used by surrounding countries, given the language barrier. Everything needs to be translated before moving into the contextual adaptation, etc. At the micro-level, though, ethnicity and customs are shared with the peoples of these neighbouring countries.

Besides Portuguese (spoken as a first language by only 6.5 per cent of Mozambicans), 13 other main languages exist, creating a challenge when it comes to producing materials for indigenous learners.

Although showing marked declines, illiteracy rates in Mozambique have always been above 50 per cent (60.5 per cent in 1997 and 53.6 per cent in 2003) and strongly biased against women.

The young population (46 per cent is 15 years of age or less) and the fact that Mozambique is in demographic transition (i.e., with particular epidemiologic patterns characterised by the predominance of infectious diseases) challenges the ability of the state to ensure both employment and health to its young constituents. In addition, there is pressure for quick action in order to help develop a population that can contribute to the economic and social development of the country, ensuring that most youngsters will reach economically active ages and climb the ladder to escape the staggering absolute poverty index of 70 per cent.

Only about 37 per cent of the population is economically active. The average gross national product per capita is just below USD220 and the minimum wage is USD25 per month.

Besides the economic plight, often worsened by recurrent floods and droughts, the country faces chronic shortages of human resources, particularly for health and education.

As with most developing countries, there are extreme dissimilarities between rural and urban areas. This has led to massive exodus to the cities, a phenomenon hastened by intermittent civil wars.

The state budget for the education sector was 12.3 per cent of the government expenditure in 1999 (double 1985 values) and continues to increase slowly, partially as a result of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative.

Who provides literacy and livelihoods education

Non-formal and adult education and training is provided by a number of organisations, focusing on a vertiginous range of areas and skills, probably and legitimately, catering for a variety of identified learning needs.

The majority of the organisations provide in-service training for staff development, which is run either through in-house departments or by dedicated, standalone entities.

Two target audiences have been popular in recent years, namely young females (who for social and ethical reasons are not given the opportunity to complete basic education) and school dropouts. The latter are expelled from the national education system as a result of paradoxes and inefficiencies in the system; for example, younger students are usually given priority in the schools when places are insufficient to meet the demand.

The use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) by organisations involved in non-formal and adult education is extremely limited. This may perhaps be justified by the embryonic nature of these technologies, even in large cities, and by the lack of support infrastructures and utilities in the rural, often remote and underprivileged, areas.

Face-to-face formats are preferred to deliver educational content. Distance education is used on a very restricted scale, mostly for in-service training of lectures (e.g., Teachers Upgrade Institute, International Academic Partnership (IAP)) and continuing education of bank employees (IFB).

The organisations associated with adult literacy programmes fall into one of two categories:

- Organisations run with state funds: examples are ministries and subordinate institutions, such as the Ministry of Education and its Institute for Development of Education (INDE) and Institute for Adult Education (INEA);

- Organisations run with private, or mixed private and state funds. This category encompasses:

  º Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), such as OXFAM, UNESCO, UNICEF (education of women), GTZ (German: community empowerment and women education), ADPP (Danish: training of lecturers of secondary schools, vocational schools), CLUSA (American: training on trade of crops)

- Employer-run institutions such as IFB (Portuguese Bank Training Institute)

- For-profit organisations such as Monitor School

- Religious organisations (ESAM)

- Community-based organisations such as SALAMA (Asociacao de Suade Comunitaria: health promotion—water, sanitation, etc.—linked to adult education) and PAPIR (Projecto de Apoio ás Pequenas Industrias—funded by the Danish NGO Ibis; promotes micro-enterprises, targeting the small producer with courses on production skills, basic business training, trade, credit, etc.)

Among the state-run entities, INDE has reached considerable prominence. It has developed alternative curricula for the national system of education, including experimental programmes in native languages.

INEA has been involved with training lecturers on techniques for training community trainers. Its role is much wider. Indeed INEA is the forefront of the Ministry of Education in all matters related to adult education. Given the insufficient financial and human capacity of the ministry, which does not allow extensive involvement, INEA functions have been restricted to development of curricula and learning materials which are shared with interested parties. This institute also developed standards for non-formal education programmes and has been active in the provision of incentives for participation to other agencies.

Some auto-inflicted injuries in literacy development

I see a few major obstacles to the success of the initiatives aimed at promoting adult literacy and skill-building for livelihoods in Mozambique. Although the aftermath of most literacy initiatives is not extensively known, those obstacles may point to enthusiastic but uncontrolled involvement of the various implementing organisations:

- Lack of accountability of the implementers, particularly with regard to the public. Although fanfare is a common sighting in the media when a new project is started, I feel that most times the results after a few years do not justify the investment made, let alone all the noise. I do not want to enter the discussion about accountability within the political system in Mozambique, but I deeply feel that until public managers are made accountable for their accomplishments, we will continue to see initiatives mushrooming everywhere.

- Lack of co-ordination between the various initiatives. A less attentive observer would guess that a war of protagonism and pseudo-pioneerism is going on in the education sector, leading to parallel, partial, inadequate and irrelevant systems brought about by the different projects, initiatives and entities. Different agendas seem to dictate the rate and number of initiatives, which often are not related at all. A few examples: telecentres, digital resource centres, distance education centres, science incubators.

- Lack of complete and/or updated information on the different initiatives, particularly at the local level. It is phenomenally difficult to access information on what is being/was done by whom and what are/were the outcomes. I would blame this situation on the lack of co-ordination and accountability, as mentioned above.

Where and how COL can assist literacy development in Mozambique

Education by itself will not translate into better living conditions. A set of approaches where I envisage COL contributions within the specific context of Mozambique should address:

a) The need to formally acknowledge the existential experience of the individual; that is, most of us know how to do something albeit that is rarely certified. It is not difficult to implement systems that would certify those skills and increase both self-esteem and the possibilities of an illiterate adult to generate income.

b) The need to ensure that policy-makers create real employment opportunities (in contrast with the expectation of training people and letting the market laws decide who gets a job), moving from empty political discourse to tangible and accountable actions that make a difference.

c) The need to co-ordinate the universe of initiatives into a single coherent one or at least the need to acknowledge the existence and relevance of each other. This need can be backed by an efficient information system which could help keep track of the investments made, the instructional approaches, the successes achieved and the benefits conceded. This kind of information is critical to build a best practices model and corresponding prototypes, capable of capturing the rich ethnic, geographic, social and religious diversity of Mozambique.

A strong and committed governance of the multiple ongoing initiatives on literacy and livelihoods is demanded from civil society, with a critical enabler role for the political system of Mozambique.

Country Paper—Samoa

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There are no specific literacy programmes delivered in Samoa. The assumption is that with adequate access to education at primary and secondary levels, anyone who has achieved at least primary level (Years/Grades 1–8) should be literate, so literacy rates are high. However, there are significant numbers of youth and adults who are not literate. They are better known as such by their local villages and families and perhaps not as fully represented in overall national statistics. Although such individuals can have a second chance to attend "school" again through vocational schools, church or non-governmental organisation (NGO) programmes; tailor-made programmes which target illiteracy have not been developed.

To ascertain levels of literacy in Samoa at the primary school level, achievement tests are conducted. SPELL (Samoa Primary Education Literacy Level) results show that the percentage of children at risk in English at Year 4 continued to increase from 1997 to 2003. They declined slightly from 14 per cent to 16 per cent while the numeracy results were a worrying 55 per cent in 2001 and 73 per cent in 2003. A closer analysis however looks towards reviewing the SPELL test instrument itself.

Education is well facilitated by the government, the missions and private schools. The total number of schools is 203. Of these 166 are government funded and operated; 33 are missions; and 4 are private. The Ministry of Education liaises with church and private schools to which the government provides an annual per capita grant. It also provides curriculum support and in-servicing of teachers when funds and other opportunities enable the inclusion of non-government education providers.

Samoa has two universities: the National University of Samoa and the University of the South Pacific (USP) School of Agriculture Campus. As well as agricultural programmes, USP also has an Extension Centre, which offers a variety of courses through distance mode. The National University of Samoa offers degree-level courses in the arts, sciences and commerce. Samoa Polytechnic, the other tertiary institution, focuses on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and flexible pathways that prepare the students for further studies at university if they so wish.

There are other small TVET institutions who actually act as a safety net for out-of-school youth and other people who need further training. These TVET institutions are run mainly by the missions and provide training mainly in the trades areas so their students can get employment with the minimal skills they acquire. Although many have identified literacy

as a problem for many of their students, none have actually developed specific literacy programmes. They have provided support in trying to encourage or teach reading but there are no set adult literacy strategies and programmes mainly through lack of resources and expertise.

NGOs also contribute through non-formal education programmes. These are usually awareness programs for such issues as marine conservation, preserving water catchment areas, ozone depletion, waste management, suicide and domestic violence. They also offer community-based courses such as fabric dyeing, weaving and craft making. Within corporations, businesses and government departments there are also opportunities for further education through staff training and development.

The linkage between literacy development and livelihoods cannot be overstated. Isolated case studies show young people who have missed out "somehow" from becoming literate in the course of their schooling. Inconsistent attendance, parental pressure to stay home and help, and constant migratory movements from rural to urban and back have caused many children to move through their years of primary and secondary schooling without any mechanisms to actually support, monitor and ascertain their levels of literacy or academic progress over their young years. Eventually they drop out as youths of 12–18 years old or earlier without being fully literate. Some may be able to write and recognise their names but unable to fill in forms or read literature at the level of their age and experience. Expressions of regret and inability to progress in terms of employment and carry out basic activities such as opening a savings bank account come through as examples of illiteracy affecting their everyday lives. Increasingly obvious in everyday existence is the fact that in this age of information, the ability to read is vital.

At present the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has mainly been through radio educational programmes. These are the normal support for curriculum already developed for schools. Radio programmes therefore do not target illiteracy as such but support literacy through the already established curriculum in different subject areas. Television has not yet focused on tailor-made programmes to address illiteracy but has made reference to its importance in passing through other livelihood awareness programmes. A proposed pilot programme for schoolnets in Samoa hopefully will also open up opportunities for addressing literacy and other education issues.

Examples of best practice for Samoa basically point, perhaps mundanely but realistically, at early childhood programmes which gear children towards reading and then in primary schools have both excellent teachers and resources which enable literacy to occur at this early stage and be consistently supported throughout the schooling years 1 to 13. This best practice looks at investing in adequate literacy support at an early age and throughout the schooling years and minimising the need for remedying a national literacy problem at the adult level. For Samoa the national language policy points at literacy in both Samoan and English, so while best practice is easy to comprehend, the funding and production of material and resources and the training and retention of good teachers are continuing problems. For example, there are not enough Samoan-

language reading materials which cater for the early years of reading nor is there a wealth of literature in Samoan for children and young adults. Inter-agency collaboration does exist now more than before, with donor agencies being made aware of what each has covered in the various projects, thereby avoiding unnecessary duplication and waste of funds and resources. Donor agencies for Samoa particularly in the education sector include Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan, as well as organisations such as COL, UNESCO and UNDP.

The major issue that faces literacy development initiatives in Samoa is the lack of funding and resources to:

1. Identify actual numbers who are illiterate (social stigma is a major consideration in ascertaining and identifying such factors)

2. Define the extent of the problem especially at the adult level

3. Train specialists in literacy in both English and Samoan

4. Identify programmes which work in Samoa and can be sustained by Samoa

Literacy & Livelihoods
Learning for Life in a Changing World

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Context

- Australia currently enjoys a strong economy. The advantages that this brings, however, are unequally shared. In 1998 the top 10 per cent of wealth holders owned 45 per cent of household wealth. The bottom 50 per cent owned only 7 per cent. This trend is increasing.

- Effects of this widening socio-economic gap in Australian society include: limited schooling, poverty, homelessness, poor health, early death, anti-social behaviour and declining social capacity within some communities.

- Too many children and young people are not given the opportunity to grow and engage confidently in society. Some do not enjoy the basic right of a happy and safe childhood. In later life these children are often the ones who struggle to secure sustainable livelihoods as adults.

- There is a crisis in indigenous health, education and employment.

The South Australian government has declared its intent to tackle inequity through the establishment of its Social Inclusion Reform Agenda. Its vision for the future is to lead Australia in developing and delivering social policy outcomes that result in increased social and economic benefits for citizens.

The intended outcome is a society where all people feel valued, their differences are respected and their basic needs—both physical and emotional—are met so that as members of society they are empowered in their participation and contribution.

Guiding this work is the understanding that tackling the pressing problems in our community requires new ways of doing business, new partnerships and new alliances. A collaborative approach is being taken which:

- Recognises and values the contribution and needs of all stakeholders

- Respects the voice and identity of all individuals and communities

- Builds partnerships and creates joined-up working arrangements and solutions

- Ensures joint planning, decision-making, delivery and evaluation

- Commits to innovation and challenge

- Provides opportunities to increase connections with, and within, the community

Within this context, it is recognised that the capacity of individuals and communities to survive both locally and globally is dependent on their ability to communicate. The fundamental place of literacy in education, training and employment is an undisputed core element for this communication to be effective. It is also a necessary base from which people are able to exercise independence in shaping their own livelihoods.

Following are two examples of literacy delivery modes. The first is a brief look at an early intervention model being used with children who are at risk of growing up with limited literacy skills. The second example provides an overview of literacy development in the workplace. It shows the direct link between literacy, lifelong education and work for adults.

Example One: Language and literacy at Indigenous schools

Between 1999 and 2003, Brian Gray and Wendy Cowey, located within the University of Canberra, developed the Scaffolding Literacy in Indigenous Schools programme. This is a programme designed to accelerate the literacy skills of students. It is a specialised teaching method that assists low-achieving students to become independent readers and writers. Its aim is to quickly develop reading and comprehension skills using texts that are age-appropriate in content and language.

A 12-month pilot programme delivered in South and Western Australia showed a movement from only 4 per cent of the students aged between six and eight years being able to read independently at or above Year 1 level, to 60 per cent being able to read independently. These results are unprecedented.

National Award

The Australian National Literacy and Numeracy Week Awards 2004 was won by a small school in Raukkan. This is a small Aboriginal community located 160 kilometres from South Australia's largest city, Adelaide. Approximately 20 students attend the Raukkan school. A rich programme is provided with a strong information technology and science focus. Students are proud of their Ngarrindjeri heritage which is a major driver of the school curriculum.

As is the case with most Aboriginal children in Australia, literacy assessments show that the children's progress is much lower than that

for non-Aboriginal children. The scaffolding literacy programme began at Raukkan in 2000. All students and classes are involved in the programme. The students are grouped according to their reading levels and have dedicated, daily scaffolding time. Texts are chosen because of their high interest and high literate level.

While the initial books chosen are sometimes criticised because they are not culturally "appropriate" for a group of Aboriginal students, the outcomes are strongly inclusive. Through scaffolding, students have access to "flash talk" and are able to express their own worlds in rich ways. Students examine each text in depth (10 weeks). They focus on different levels of understanding: examining a particular character; an exciting event; particular phrases; how and why the author has put the story together in a particular way; what the author's understanding of the story might be.
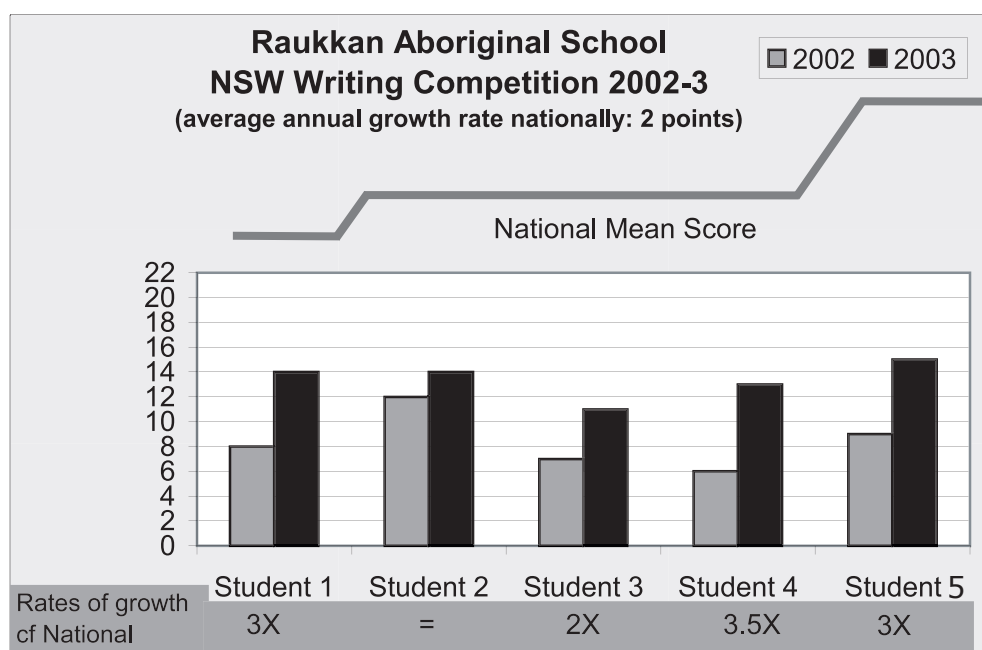
Students consider how the author thinks as a writer. They examine use of the author's grammar in the story. They consider complex sentences and work out how they themselves might write the sentence. Following are examples of Year 5 (9 year olds) work:

> A great big plague of squirming bats came from the ceiling and knocked me flat to the ground like a rock.

> One evening the people of Raukkan Rulz discovered that a flood was coming towards their town. It was coming over the mountain really fast. By the sixth day there was no power in the town because the water went through the electricity lines. By the seventh day in the evening, the sad kids and the parents were crying.

At Raukken, the growth in scores of both students between the 2001 Year 3 Basic Skills Test, and the 2003 LaN Assessment Test is remarkable: the state mean rate of growth between Year 3 and 5 is 6.2 points. The Aboriginal mean rate of growth is 5.4 points. One of the Raukkan students showed 8.9 points of growth, while the other showed 12.7 points. Student 1's score had grown at 1.5 times the state mean, while Student 2's score had grown at double the state rate.

The following graph demonstrates the performance of the five participants in 2003. The white line at the top of the graph shows the national mean. It is evident that the Raukkan students have not yet caught up to their peers. However the pale blue line at the bottom of the graph shows the rates of improvement of the Raukkan students when compared to the national rate of growth. One student has matched the national rate of growth, while four students have improved at twice or more times the national rate of growth. Raukkan is greatly encouraged by these results, as writing is such a difficult area in which to achieve any significant change.

Raukkan Aboriginal School
NSW Writing Competition 2002-3
(average annual growth rate nationally: 2 points)

Rates of growth cf National	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5
	3X	=	2X	3.5X	3X

Other important elements of Raukken's success include the training of community members—parents and former students. This training is also providing employment opportunities for these people. Raukken is "lending" a staff member to another rural school for two weeks each term. The Raukkan teacher also provides support through weekly phone links.

Further information on the scaffolding literacy programme is available at: *www.ce.canberra.edu.au/scaffolding_literacy/index.htm.*

Example Two: Language and literacy in the workplace

It is important to note that ongoing development of vocational skills in the workplace requires strong literacy and numeracy capacity. Ready access by adults to ongoing education is essential for personal, economic and community success.

North Bound Train

A new concept of workplace English language and literacy training was developed for Orrcon Pty Ltd. It bridges the gaps between the organisation and its employees by bringing everyone on board, through language and literacy training, to define the purpose, set the directions and shape the destiny of the organisation.

The Adelaide Institute of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) in South Australia has been working in partnership with Orrcon, the third largest manufacturer and distributor of steel tubing in Australia. The programme has developed an innovative training model known as "North Bound Training." It is a workplace English language and literacy (WELL) programme.

When evaluating and reporting WELL training programmes, the core questions inevitably focus on whether this investment in training has captured the financial and personal development benefits the organisation had hoped for. To validate the outcomes of the programme at Orrcon, the operations manager of the precision tubing plant was asked to share his view of its success of the programme. Following are the benefits he has identified from a series of WELL training programmes. His focus was on benefits to both the employees and to his organisation.

The following examples are his summary of the two outcomes:

Example 1
Sam, an employee, has worked at Orrcon for over 15 years. Orrcon management have seen rapid improvement in his performance. He has actively taken part in a series of "Business Communication" (WELL) courses and learned the skills of a workplace assessor. Since the initial training, the employee has gone from a forklift driver to "Continuous Improvement Team" member to "Process Innovation Team" member to Area Co-ordinator of Cutting to Production Co-ordinator. The fast tracking of this person through these various roles would not have been possible without the last two years of the WELL training by Workplace Education of the Adelaide Institute of TAFE. We would not have recognised the employee's potential without his additional WELL learning.

Example 2
As employees increase their levels of language and literacy, communication skills improve. It is then Management's responsibility to maintain productive 2-way communication and feedback to all employees on the performance of the various production departments.

Several years ago Orrcon upgraded the "slitting" machine to ensure that we were providing quality slit steel to the tube mills. Basically steel arrives on our site in 1200 mm widths and weighing anywhere from 7 to 11 tonnes. The slitters slit the steel down to a width to manufacture tube. For a period of 4 months we were unable to produce this slit steel at much more than 750 metres per shift hour after the upgrade. However with the use of two personnel trained in the language and literacy course that supported the Certificate IV Assessment and Workplace Training, we were able to use this resource to train the personnel to carry out a series of brainstorming sessions to increase productivity to over 1100 metres per shift hour. Staff became conducive to the skills of communication and the processes required to carry out brainstorming sessions. That is why they were able to understand what was required even though people from this department were from different cultural backgrounds.

Orrcon has undergone major changes: merging and amalgamation, investment from a foreign company and consolidation of its market position in its traditional products, while expanding to new products and services and overseas markets.

This changing environment has influenced the nature of the employees' work. The most difficult challenge was developing the communication skills of the operators. When the company consolidated middle-management positions, greater demands were placed on the roles of the operators (e.g., giving and receiving instructions to implement, monitor and report on manufacturing procedures and compliance in policies and legislative requirements). It has been a challenge to the company as its employees are predominately male and 30 per cent are from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Most are aged between 25 and 45 years, are early school leavers and have long-term literacy and numeracy needs.

When the Adelaide Institute of TAFE was invited to work out training solutions for the company, the main challenge was to link the workforce training to the mission of the company. The company's corporate objectives are:

- "Teamwork—everyone works as a team": How could this happen when the majority of the operators work in isolation with earmuffs on the production line?

- "Commitment—everyone pulls their weight": How could this happen when the majority of the operators are early school leavers, with language, literacy and numeracy needs and lack the confidence and skills to communicate?

- "Value employees as everyone is the company's internal customer": How can the company motivate the operators with low confidence and self-esteem to move forward to be future company leaders even if they have demonstrated the required skills?

The Adelaide Institute of TAFE put forward a training proposal, using the concept of "North Bound Train," a symbol that the whole organisation could relate to. Its analogy and rationale are that trains are made of steel; north bound is heading for the market direction that the company is aiming at; and everyone within the organisation needs to be on board the train for the training. Most importantly, training is a journey, during which everyone can share his or her experience and expectation of the destination—where will we be at the end of the training?

By integrating communication skills with a range of metal engineering competency standards, we have shown the value of a holistic training approach. We translated a national training program into something meaningful to the disengaged groups of learners and thereby engaged them in the learning process. We have proved that learning can provide employees with career opportunities that previously they did not consider possible. We have demonstrated that machinery is of secondary importance while its people, the key asset of any organisation, could turn the machinery into a meaningful and productive tool. Investment in people was critical in bringing the employees and employers together for organisational long-term growth.

Orrcon has gone through a long journey in its training and development. At this stage, the training model developed in South Australia is heading

north to the organisation's head office in Brisbane and the oil and gas pipe plant at Wollongong. Moreover, we are confident in claiming that everyone within the organisation is able to communicate and contribute to "finding the purpose, setting the directions and shaping the destiny of the organisation."

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Issues Facing Literacy Development Initiatives

- Specialised teacher training. High-order skills are required for teachers to be successful in tackling illiteracy, particularly where there is limited aspiration and capacity of individuals and within the communities. The best teachers are needed for this work. In order to attract them, incentives need to be identified.

- Distance/remoteness. Providing literacy support services is difficult and expensive. Technology is not always reliable. Employment options are limited and hence some people do not appreciate the relevancy of their learning to future livelihoods—in a national or global context.

- Unequal opportunities and expectations. Greater understanding is needed by educators, employers and communities. Differing cultural perspectives need to be known. Contextualising literacy learning according to personal life experience is essential. How can cycles of disadvantage and low levels of literacy be broken?

- Limited employer and industry commitment. For employees, workplace learning is often limited due to both personal and financial resource availability. Australia has significant small- and medium-size businesses. Their relative ability to conduct in-house training is problematic.

- Local "neighbourhood" capacity-building. Building community capacity requires outstanding leadership, extraordinary commitment and education. Collaborative and partnership approaches can be successful but are more difficult in locations where difficulties are entrenched. What incentives will encourage more "joined-up" approaches to providing education?

- Commitments to enduring sound social policy that enables individuals, teachers, employers, education authorities and communities to share a common understanding of the power of all people being literate and able to reach their full potential. The dominant role in establishing relevant social policy is often seen as government business only, whereas business and industry limit their role to contributing solely to economic.

- Harnessing the potential liberating capacity of the Internet in ways that serve the needs of the disadvantaged to extend literacy and livelihoods. Vast distances and limited capacity of individuals to pay continue to pose major issues.

Literacy for Sustainable Livelihoods: Perspective from Bangladesh

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With a literacy rate of 41.7 per cent, the majority of the population in Bangladesh still remains illiterate. A country of 129.2 million, it has a per capita national income of only USD386. Due to limited access to resources, Bangladesh is not in a position to bring every citizen within its formal education system; therefore, to date, unfortunately the majority of its people cannot communicate through writing. As well, the existing formal education system has failed to adequately respond to the needs of the poorest, most disadvantaged sections of society. Although Bangladesh is predominantly an agrarian country and three-fourths of its population lives in rural areas with land and water resources for their existence, one major indicator of poverty in Bangladesh is basic food consumption. Out of 460 sub-districts in the country, 37 per cent are rated to be most vulnerable in terms of food security, and 46 per cent are rated vulnerable, with a high level of distress in different seasons.

Most of the vulnerable poor are illiterate women, engaged in farming activity with low skills that do not meet the needs of the local market. As a result they remain unemployed or underpaid. With the view of improving the literacy and livelihoods conditions, both non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government have initiated non-formal education (NFE) programmes. These have now evolved in various forms into a strategic intervention for poverty alleviation, mainly by NGOs. The NFE programmes strengthen the livelihood-led programmes by linking them with the components of calculating, writing and reading and enhance literacy-led programmes with training in one or more livelihoods.

Successful Delivery Models

Government: NFE programmes
After the successful completion of the Integrated Non-formal Education Programme (INFEP), a pilot project implemented between 1991 and 1995, the Non-Formal Education Project I (NFE-I) was initiated with the overall government strategic objectives of poverty reduction, improvement of the status of women and attaining the national Education for All (EFA) targets. In this regard, the following programmes were initiated:

   a) Initiation of a campaign of mobilisation called the Total Literacy Movement (TLM)

b) Establishment of literacy centres operated in partnership with NGOs

c) Distribution of primers through voluntary organisations

Under the NFE programmes there were 2.95 million learners in the age group from 15 to 24 years. These young adults were offered a nine-month NFE programme, and a three-month post-literacy programme. Intervention was done through NGOs and the local district administration. NFE-I operated in 32 of the 64 districts of Bangladesh with the selection criterion of a literacy rate below 45 per cent. The project arranged large-scale mobilisation of women through selecting convenient central locations, arranging suitable timing of classes and providing flexible selection of course contents according to the interest of the target groups.

The success of the project is the establishment of the Directorate of Non-Formal Education, a non-formal education agency in Bangladesh, to promote the development of skilled manpower, primers, relevant learning-teaching materials, an effective training system and so on for the future phases of the project. A finding of the project is that basic literacy alone cannot reduce poverty, and this type of project is not sustainable. It was recommended that literacy should be combined with livelihood skills that have market demand and can reduce poverty.

NGOs: CMES System
The Centre for Mass Education in Science (CMES), an NGO, implements non-formal education for disadvantaged youths. The Basic School System (BSS) of CMES offers skill training, health and environment credits, culture, social action, curriculum development and public awareness. The first stage of the education is to transform out-of-school youths into productive human resources. This system is now serving 20,000 students at a time, but still the focus is on increasing their chances for both wage employment and self-employment leading to poverty alleviation. The BSS curriculum is compatible with mainstream primary and early high school education (up to the 8th grade), along with training and practice in appropriate technology and home-to-home interventions in health and environmental concerns. The school day is divided into inner campus (classroom) and outer campus (practicum) situations with many options. The outer campus takes place at the market level, in response to local demands for products and services that can be marketed by the BSS. The marketing arrangements of BSS offer learners opportunities for earning income, which facilitate further experience in production, as well as the enhancement of skills. After completing their education in the BSS, students are eligible to attend the Rural Technology Centre (RTC) and the Advanced Basic School (ABS) and move through different levels of continuing education.

Roles of the state, NGOs and the private sector
There are a number of NFE programmes in Bangladesh, at first initiated by NGOs and followed up by the government with larger-scale NFE programs and significant investments from multilateral and bilateral agencies. Later the government established a quasi-ministry, the Primary

and Mass Education Division (PMED), in order to achieve the national and international targets (universal primary education (UPE) and Education for All (EFA)). Within PMED is the Directorate of Non-Formal Education (DNFE), which runs a multi-phase, multi-donor supported programme aimed at attaining the literacy targets. In this regard DNFE sub-contracts NGOs to run its programmes using a standardised approach.

NGOs also play an important role in providing NFE to poor people, especially women's groups, in order to involve them in income-generating activities. Adolescents are the main group targeted by NGOs as they are left out of the formal education system and are in need of basic and primary education. Most of the NGOs have developed curriculum for younger children focusing on life-oriented issues such as gender equity and democratic practices. Only a few NGOs include livelihood and technical skill development issues in their curriculum. These NGOs are successful in addressing the problems of adolescents from low-income families. In the fields of adult literacy the contributions of NGOs namely Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Swanirvar Bangladesh, Village Education Research Centre and others are praiseworthy.

Examples of linkages between literacy development and livelihoods

The Ganokendra (Community Learning Centres) Programme of Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) is a literacy-based poverty-alleviation programme with the objective of improving the status of women. The essence of the programme is lifelong learning, skill training and income generation supported by micro-credit. In the Ganokendras, neo-literate women and their neighbours gather, read books, newspapers and journals, discuss their family problems, identify issues for community attention and raise them to appropriate authorities. Participants are usually girls and women, and the DAM helps them to get exposure outside family situations, which widens their mental horizon and brings forth a positive attitudinal change towards improvement of their status. The Ganokendras are organised and managed by the groups of neo-literate women with necessary technical support from DAM. One facilitator (a woman) is recruited by the community for initiating activities, and the overall management responsibility lies with the management committee democratically formed by the community people. These centres have become the focal point for community development and creation of awareness on various social and economic issues.

Uses of information and communication technologies (ICTs)

Government of Bangladesh: continuing education
For lack of practice, neo-literates are likely to relapse into illiterates after NFE provided by the government's Directorate of Non-Formal Education. To help neo-literates retain their skills, the government initiated the continuing education programme by establishing continuing education centres in the project areas with one librarian appointed for each centre.

There were provisions for newspapers, magazines, follow-up reading materials and other books and a radio in each centre. One supervisor was appointed for every 10 libraries to ensure proper functioning of the post-literacy centres. With the objective of making sub-districts free of illiteracy, the post-literacy programme was conducted in 10 model sub-districts.

NGOs: Distance education units on boats—the Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha approach

Using the extensive network of rivers and streams in Bangladesh, Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha (SSS), a national voluntary NGO, brings distance education units by boat to its target groups in the remotest areas, which are accessible only by water. Anchoring at the riverside the units offer:

- Solar-powered Mobile Boat Schools having classrooms, a library and computer labs for primary education for girls and micro-enterprise development opportunities for parents and young women's groups

- Digital Schools providing technology-mediated open learning on NFE and human rights in evening-night classes for all age groups

- Mobile Internet Educational Units with multimedia displays, mobile phones, e-mail and Internet features for distance education on agriculture and the environment, along with information on commodity and farm-input prices

Mobile Boat Schools

The Mobile Boat Schools of SSS reach the target groups via waterways. Each boat collects students from different riverside areas and finally anchors at the last courtyard where classes are held. There is a library facility on each boat, which is used by the students, along with other girls and young women who have dropped out of the formal educational system. The boats use solar energy for the power supply of their classrooms and computer equipment. In order to ensure proper schooling, children, parents and their neighbours, especially young women, are registered as groups and receive necessary instructions on micro-enterprise development. Afterwards necessary credit supports are provided to them for undertaking different kinds of small-scale income-generating activities. In this way more small businesses have been started; parents are now able to pay for the necessary expenses of their children's education; and the boat schools have become self-sustainable with revolving funds.

Digital Schools

Digital Schools on boats move across the rivers, anchoring at the riverside. The units arrange evening-night educational programmes that use large screens. Usually the boats are equipped with multimedia equipment. Digital Schools provide two types of distance education: (i) basic NFE and (ii) human rights education. For basic NFE, the curriculum covers pre-primary education for children and their parents who have

never enrolled in any school or have not had a chance to enter the mainstream of education because of age. The duration of each class is eight months and is arranged according to the age groups. Usually 250 to 300 people attend each educational show of the Digital Schools.

Mobile Internet Educational Units
With the support of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), SSS has been successful in reaching the landless people living at the river basins and educating them on local agrarian and environmental issues using its Mobile Internet Educational Units on Boats (MIEUB). MIEUBs are boats equipped with computer equipment, display screens, sound systems, power supplies, wireless mobile systems, etc. Anchoring at any riverside courtyard, the MIEUB arranges evening-night educational programmes on large screens at the time when women do not have any work and can spend two to three hours on distance education. People from all walks of life and age groups also watch the programmes sitting at the river banks.

MIEUBs provide distance education on land and water rights, sustainable agriculture, agricultural non-point source pollution, water quality of rivers, soil and stream-bank erosion, sanitary latrine usages, volunteer water quality monitoring, health of the aquatic system and bio-diversity. The mobile data and text-messaging feature of the boat allows rural farmers to get information on commodity and farm input prices. With these features, rural people are able to send and receive e-mails, get necessary information from the Internet and contact other farming groups. Since the arrival of education through the MIEUBs, landless farmers (mostly women) have organised into groups such as land and water user associations (LUAs and WUAs). Credit and savings schemes were launched simultaneously to mobilise groups in developing capital resources to ensure their access to khas [government-owned] land and water bodies and sustainable farming practices. WUAs are also encouraged to be active in the prevention of streambank erosion and take non-violent action on the illegal practices of jotdars on rivers, such as suti.

The project has ensured more enrolment of girls in primary education, improved literacy rate, ensured landless people's rights to khas land and water bodies, enhanced the overall health of the aquatic system, maximised agricultural productivity and improved the quality of life of thousands of landless female farmers.

The MIEUB programme was developed by SSS under the Poverty Reduction Outcomes Through Education Innovations and Networks (PROTEIN) programme of COL.

Examples of best practice and inter-agency collaboration

One of the major successes of the educational sector in Bangladesh is the establishment of the Directorate of Non-Formal Education (DNFE) within the Primary and Mass Education Division of the government, which runs with a multi-phase, multi-donor-supported programme aimed at attaining literacy targets. The major success of the DNFE is the establishment of the GO-NGO (government-NGO) collaboration, which was

subsequently followed up by other government ministries that replicated similar partnerships. DNFE, in consultation with NGOs, donors and social thinkers, has been successful in developing an agreed set of criteria for selection of NGOs to work as partners in NFE programmes. The DNFE also shares the experiences of these NGOs in developing curriculum, writing primers, developing monitoring indicators and monitoring systems, developing evaluation tools and evaluation methodologies, and so on. This broad-based inter-agency collaboration has enriched the NFE sector in Bangladesh.

Conclusion

Although government and NGOs are engaged in NFE, not all of their programmes are designed to address the crucial issue of income generation to improve the quality of life of the targeted population. Only a few NGOs include livelihood and technical-skill development in their curricula. The programmes that target the very poor (mostly rural women) have been effective in promoting livelihood skill trainings as a better vehicle for teaching literacy. The people who have completed these courses gain confidence to take initiatives in developing their livelihoods and an active interest in co-operative endeavours. Successful learners from these programmes claim to be following more productive agricultural or livestock practices; thus they can no longer be easily cheated when buying or selling. Also the successful literacy-livelihood projects are usually the programmes that include training in savings, credit, agrarian issues and business management, along with actual access to credit. The education and training curricula offering participatory and interactive education have been effective in addressing the needs of the poor because the literacy/numeracy content comes from livelihood skills. But still there is lack of networking among the organisations in Bangladesh in order to promote wider dissemination of their good practices, outcomes and the impact of the literacy-livelihoods education.

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Empowering Bangladesh: New Challenges for Literacy and Livelihoods Projects

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The aim of this paper is to discuss the status of literacy and livelihoods in Bangladesh and recognise the innovation in approach and challenges afforded by the possible inclusion of information and communication technology (ICT) tools in the mainstream literacy education of the Bangladesh community. This paper also examines literacy projects where different education approaches have been used and considers whether the ICT-capability approach can overcome shortcomings and offer an alternative improved understanding of Bangladesh's literacy in the context of empowerment.

The argument of empowerment emerged from the literacy field in the 1970s when Brazilian educator Paulo Freire introduced the empowerment approach to literacy. The strong impact of his ideas on literacy studies can be best described as follows: "We can stay with Freire or against Freire, but not without Freire" (McLaren and Leonard 1993, 1). Thus there are two types of empowerment approach from the activists and literacy fields. To avoid confusion, I have studied four literacy education models used in Bangladesh, which focus mainly on people's empowerment (the empowerment of people approach) and the one developed by Freire (the empowerment through literacy approach), combined as empowerment approache*s*.

Bangladesh education: policies and management

Bangladesh inherited, on Liberation in 1971, a literacy rate of 17.61 per cent of the total population. (Literacy at that time was very liberally defined to mean the ability to read in any language (for instance, to read a religious book) and not the ability to write or to make calculations. Such a definition of literacy is, therefore, very different from the current definition.) Education of the masses was considered essential to the modernisation and development of the nation.

The constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh obligates the government to adopt effective measures for:

- Establishing a uniform, mass-oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children to such a level as may be determined by law

- Relating education to the needs of the society and producing properly trained and motivated citizens to serve these needs

- Removing illiteracy within such time as may be determined by law

Therefore, the government of Bangladesh has taken a number of measures, including taking over the management of private primary schools under the Primary Education (Taking Over) Act 1974. Subsequently, the Program of Universal Primary Education was initiated and a separate Directorate of Primary Education was created in 1981, with an administrative structure down to the sub-district level. This action was followed by the promulgation of the Primary Education (Compulsory) Act 1990 and the creation of the Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED) in 1992, which provides administrative support to policies and programmes for universal primary education and the removal of illiteracy. In addition, a Compulsory Primary Education Implementation Monitoring Unit was created in November 1990, firstly, as an integral part of the Ministry of Education (MOE) and later of PMED, to help monitor the implementation of compulsory primary education (CPE) and also to carry out the Child Education and Literacy Survey biennially. CPE committees have been established at ward, union, sub-district and district levels for social mobilisation in support of primary education at the grass roots level. For the implementation and management of non-formal education (NFE), a separate Directorate of Non-Formal Education (DNFE) was established in 1995.

In order to achieve education for all, Bangladesh has taken up programmes designed to:

- Increase the enrolment rate

- Reduce the dropout rate

- Decrease the illiteracy rate

- Improve basic learning competencies

Basic education in Bangladesh is delivered through two systems:

a) The formal system (mostly run by governments)

b) The non-formal system (innovative models by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and later facilitated by governments)

The existing Strategic Framework of Basic Education in Bangladesh has adequately fulfilled government policies for attaining maximum benefit out of public and private endeavours, both in the formal and non-formal systems. The key agencies in this respect are the Directorate of Primary Education and the Directorate of Non-Formal Education under the PMED, and the Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board under the MOE. In addition, there are community and private organisations, as well as NGOs that offer basic education to the disadvantaged and dropouts in their non-formal education centres. The formal system is the predominant one, whereas the non-formal system is complementary and supplementary to it. Some NGOs also run adult education centres with financial support from the government of Bangladesh and development partners.

International commitments of Bangladesh

The World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) held in Jomtien, Thailand, in March 1990, unanimously adopted the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) by the year 2000 and agreed on the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs. Bangladesh is a signatory to the World Declaration on Education for All and the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the World Declaration on Survival, Protection and Development of Children, from the World Summit for Children held in September 1990 in New York. As a follow-up of the WCEFA, a National Plan of Action (NPA) for EFA was prepared under the guidance of a national committee chaired by the prime minister. Bangladesh also participated in all EFA review meetings such as the EFA Summit of Nine High Population Countries, held in Delhi in December 1993, and ministerial meetings held in Indonesia in 1995 and Pakistan in 1997. Bangladesh has reiterated its commitment to EFA in other various international forums and has incorporated all of these commitments into the NPA. The NPA enjoys political and public support from every stakeholder.

Literacy and livelihoods

Normally "livelihood" refers to means of living, especially income-generating activities, but in the context of development the meaning of this term is broader. "Livelihood" covers poverty reduction in a wider sense that includes such things as access of individuals or communities to resources which can help them to improve their quality of life, increase autonomy and decision-making power, gender relations and access to other resources. The livelihood approach emphasises sustainable and holistic activities that are flexible and compatible with local contexts.

Livelihood assets include human capital, natural capital, financial capital, social capital and physical capital. These assets, if developed in a sustainable way, can help raise the income level of society or the country, improve well being, utilise natural literacy resources properly and reduce violence. To run activities in an effective and sustainable way, these activities should be holistic, flexible and compatible with local needs and wants.

The purpose of considering livelihoods in education projects is to enhance literacy practices, communication and access to information among men and women in local communities.

Literacy status in Bangladesh

This section comprises an overview of literacy in Bangladesh, showing recent trends in the country.

The decade of the 1990s symbolised a collective effort in attaining universal literacy all over the world. The government of Bangladesh responded positively to the declaration of the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All by making primary education compulsory. At the same time, the NGOs involved in literacy also came forward to supplement and complement the state effort with a commitment to eradicate illiteracy from the country by the year 2005.

According to the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre of UNESCO (ACCU) (2003) adult literacy rates have been increasing in Bangladesh since 1980, as the graph shows. It also shows that there is a distinct gender gap. ACCU suggests that South Asia is the region where literacy rates are lowest, and Bangladesh has the lowest rates of all.

Estimated Adult Literacy Rates in Bangladesh 1980–2015
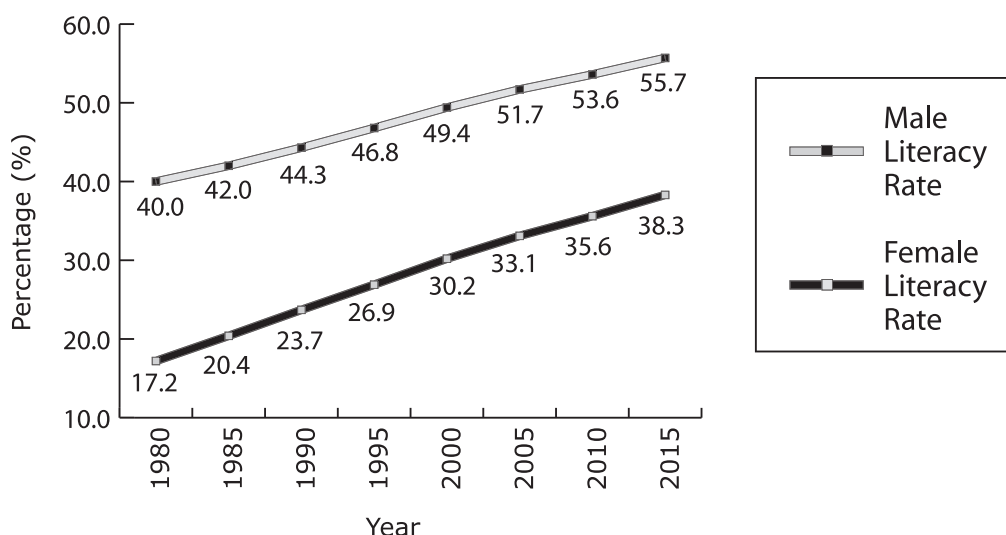
Source: ACCU (2003)

Approximately 400 NGOs are working in the literacy field (ACCU 2003) and the government's Directorate of Non-formal Education implemented the Total Literacy Movement (TLM), a massive governmental literacy programme beginning in 1994, with the aim of removing illiteracy from Bangladesh within a decade. This programme is financed by the government and 17 million people participated in it between 1994 and 2000. In 2002, the government claimed that two-thirds of adults in the country had become literate and by that six districts were free of illiteracy (Ahmad and Nath 2003, 3).

However a recent study by Ahmad and Nath (2003) on literacy in Bangladesh shows a different view of the government's comment. They conducted literacy tests on a nationwide scale, covering 13,145 individuals (age 11 and older), in co-operation with the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), an educational-networking organisation of 400 NGOs. The study is unique, dividing literacy rates into four levels:

- Non-literate (lack of ability to recognise words and count objects)

- Semi-literate (able to recognise and write some words, and count at a very basic level)

- Literacy at the initial level (able to read and write simple sentences in a familiar context, possessing skills of the four basic rules of arithmetic)

- Literacy at the advanced level (ability to read and write fluently) (Ahmad and Nath 2003, xxii-xxiii)

They also divided literacy rates by gender, region, contrast with the parent's educational level, etc. Their study produced the literacy rates shown in the table.

Literacy Rates in Per Cent (11 years of age and older)

	Female (6842)	Male (6303)	Both (13,145)
Non-literate	53.2	45.1	49.3
Semi-literate	11.2	7.3	9.3
Initial Level	22.3	19.5	21.0
Advanced Level	13.3	28.1	20.4

Source: Ahmad and Nath (2003, 41)

Looking at these figures, Ahmad and Nath (20003, xxvi) commented:

It is clear that the goal set regarding literacy within the framework of Education for All to eradicate illiteracy by 2004 or 2005 is not realizable and that the rapid progress reported to have been made toward this is not real.

Thus contrary to the government's comment, it has become clear that in Bangladesh there are still many people, including women, who need literacy. From this study several other factors were discovered:

- Gender disparities in literacy rates exist among all age ranges.

- Literacy rates were highest in the 15–19 age group (63.8 per cent).

- Even though there is a link between higher literacy attainment and attendance at primary education, of those who had completed a full five-year cycle of primary education, 35.6 per cent were not literate even at the initial level.

- Among those who said they attended only TLM courses as a means of acquiring literacy, only 1.3 per cent were found to be literate (Ahmad and Nath 2003, 75–76, 89).

From the study by Ahmad and Nath, it is clear that in Bangladesh there are still many people who need literacy; neither the TLM campaign nor primary schools are responding to these people's literacy needs enough; and even though it has improved, gender disparities in literacy can still be observed.

Different literacy programs of NGOs

In this section, the main characteristics of different literacy programmes of four NGOs—PROSHIKA, Jagrata Juba Shangha (JJS), Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) and the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)—will be described, based on the information gathered through my sample study.

PROSHIKA

PROSHIKA, which covered 232 sub-districts and had 8174 staff in 2002, was founded in 1976 by a group of social workers who decided to concentrate on human development training, and it became one of the largest NGOs in Bangladesh (Ahmad 1999, 32). The name PROSHIKA stands for "training, education and action" in Bengali. The organisation's core activities are different types of education and training which are intended to lead to income generation, skill development, health education, housing and environmental protection. Different international donors (UK Department for International Development (DFID), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Netherlands Organisation for International Development Co-operation (NOVIB), European Commission) support PROSHIKA.

PROSHIKA has a strong commitment to empowerment and human development, and its ultimate goal is "to conduct an extensive, inclusive, and participatory process of sustainable development through empowerment of the poor" (PROSHIKA 2002b, 5). Empowerment is defined as follows:

> Empowerment means that the poor are unified and organized, are aware of the real cause of their improvement, develop leadership among themselves, mobilize their natural resources, increase income and employment, develop capabilities to cope with natural disaster, become functionally literate, take better care of their health, are engaged in environmental protection and regeneration, get elected in local government bodies and community institutions, and have better access to public and common property resources (PROSHIKA 2002b, 5).

PROSHIKA's Universal Education Programme is composed of the following four main components:

- Adult literacy

- Post-literacy

- Non-formal primary education

- Enrolment of children in formal schools

Adult literacy is part of PROSHIKA's main focus, and it believes in a link between literacy and empowerment:

> Literacy is an essential element in empowering the poor through generating critical awareness and analytical skills in the functional aspects of their life…Through the process of acquiring literacy skills the poor also become aware of human rights, democratic values, environmental concerns and gain better understanding of their poverty (PROSHIKA 2003, 9).

In 2000, according to PROSHIKA (2002a, 11–12), 11,586 literacy centres were introduced and 254,970 members enrolled. Literacy classes normally have 20 to 25 learners and basic literacy programmes continue for nine months (meeting six days a week for two to three hours per day). Facilitators are normally chosen from the same group and receive two weeks training. To sustain participants' literacy skills, PROSHIKA has post-literacy centres, which are "basically small libraries with papers, periodicals, books containing health and hygiene, tree plantation, social forestry, etc." (PROSHIKA 2003, 4) where study classes are held once a month.

It is possible to see how PROSHIKA links literacy and empowerment by examining their primer and teaching methods. PROSHIKA developed its own primers (of two different levels) in 1999. CAMPE (2000, 6) has said that "PROSHIKA literacy materials are a recent bright addition to literacy history in Bangladesh." PROSHIKA's primers contain direct messages of empowerment such as the right to vote, human rights, gender equality (dowry, early marriage), poverty alleviation, environmentally friendly agriculture, responsibilities toward the disabled and empowerment in the classroom. The primer is used in combination with other materials such as charts, flash cards and exercise books.

Jagrata Juba Shangha (JJS)

JJS, a local NGO, which had 219 staff and covered seven districts in the Sundarbans intensive coastal region in Bangladesh in 2003, was founded by a small youth group in 1985 (JJS 2003, 1). Starting its activities with a service-delivery approach, JJS realised that this just made the poor dependent, and what was necessary was empowering the poor to raise their voices to ensure the provision of public services (JJS 2002, 1). Thus JJS moved toward the rights-based approach, providing technical and policy support to other rights-based programmes and campaigns as the following quote shows:

> JJS aims to strengthen the constituency and voice of poor people to claim their right from a responsive and accountable local government (JJS 2003, 1).

Their focus is wide-ranging, including HIV/AIDS prevention, work with sex workers, non-formal primary education and adult literacy programmes, environmental protection, disaster mitigation and different types of awareness campaigns, such as childrens' rights. Since 1995, JJS has had a strong connection with ActionAid Bangladesh, from which they receive 87

per cent of their funding (JJS 2003, 24). Their understanding of education is as follows:

> Basic education assembles the moral foundation of a human being in which s/he builds up an entire perspective toward the external world. Education is a right, which promotes other rights and responsibilities (JJS 2003, 9).

For adult literacy, JJS implements the Regenerated Freirean Literacy though Empowering Community Technique (REFLECT) in two different areas, and it also supports another six small NGOs which use REFLECT. REFLECT is a unique literacy approach developed by ActionAid in 1995 focusing on literacy, empowerment and participation. It does not use primers but instead tries to create learner-generated materials, as well as bringing empowerment through Participatory Rural Appraisal. JJS began implementing REFLECT in 1999 due to its strong connection to ActionAid Bangladesh through HIV/AIDS programmes. In 2002, JJS had 534 participants in 30 different REFLECT circles (JJS 2003, 11).

In the literacy programmes the basic stage continues for 9 months, and after 12 months a post-literacy programme continues the education. Participants meet for two hours, four days per week. Normally each circle has 20 to 25 women, and the facilitators are chosen from local women who have a secondary school qualification and have received 15 days of training. For post-literacy classes, JJS offers some books and magazines published by other NGOs.

Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM)

DAM, which had 718 full-time staff and 4446 part-time staff in 2002, was established in 1958 by Hazrat Khan Bahadur Ahasnullah with the motto "Divine and Humanitarian Service." DAM started with community-based education, and then expanded its activities to many other fields, such as women's empowerment and poverty reduction and water and sanitation, concerning themselves with quality of non-formal education, environmental problems, income-generation activities and skill training, children's rights and drug problems (DAM 2003a, 3). Education here is regarded as the central activity: "DAM believes that education is the basic input in human resource development towards empowerment of the rural area" (DAM 2003b, 1). DAM receives funding from several organisations such as UNESCO, UNHCR, DANIDA, DFID and European Commission.

DAM's goal is the eradication of illiteracy and poverty (2003a, 3). It uses two styles of centre-based basic literacy programmes: one for adolescents (aged 11 to 15) and the other for adults (15 years and older). Both programmes run for nine months (six days per week for two or three hours) and after participants pass the test, there is a three-month follow-up class. Facilitators are local women who have a secondary school certificate and have received 10 days of training. In the classroom, participants use three primers (two for reading and writing, one for numeracy) and start learning the alphabet, associating it with everyday fruits or vegetables, which helps to make it familiar to participants. They then move on to small sentences containing direct empowerment

messages including gender matters such as dowry, the problem of early marriages, health issues, voting rights and poverty alleviation.

By conducting tests, DAM divides participants into different grades (A, B, C, D and E) depending on their literacy skills (Grade E is the lowest; A the highest). Every book produced by DAM has a different grade, so participants can choose materials suitable for themselves (e.g., Primer One is for E; Primer Two for D). This grade system creates an interesting class environment: in one literacy centre, there may be three different grade classes, such as grades B, D and E, with one facilitator. Each group sits separately, but the grade B people can help those in grades D and E, and the facilitator monitors each group. This system can attend to the different needs of participants, including first timers and slow learners.

DAM also has another adult literacy programme called Each One Teach One (EOTO), which is a home-based, self-guided learning activity facilitated by volunteers. DAM conducted this programme for women members of the NGO Association for Social Advancement (ASA) beginning in 2000 (DAM 2003a, 12). In this programme, the learner can choose a volunteer who should be equivalent to class VIII (usually a member of the learner's own family or a neighbour) and volunteers receive one day of training. The learners are given three primers and can study any time at home for at least 225 hours in six months. This approach is unique because it has no literacy centre, unlike other literacy programmes.

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)

BRAC is one of the largest NGOs in Bangladesh, working since 1972, immediately after independence. BRAC's education program is known as a non-formal approach. There are two models in the BRAC education program:

- Non-formal primary education (NFPE)

- Basic education for older children (BEOC)

In 1985, the NFPE model was initiated as a three-year programme for children between the ages of 8 and 10 years. These children were those who had never enrolled in any school or who had dropped out from the formal schools. In 1998, this model was expanded to a four-year programme which covers the primary curriculum for grades 1 to 5. This was in response to the large number of BRAC graduates interested in continuing their education to the secondary level.

The BEOC schools known as *Kishor-Kishori* (adolescent) schools were opened in 1987. These schools run for three years, catering to the basic educational needs of 11 to 14 year old children.

Both the NFPE and BEOC schools are provided with books and other materials free of charge. Most BRAC schools are bamboo or mud-walled, one-room village structures with a thatch or tin roof, and a minimum floor space of about 33 square metres. The schoolhouse is usually rented by BRAC for a nominal sum and is close to the homes of the students. The limited class size of 30 to 33 students helps to forge a special bond

between the teachers and students. The students of BRAC schools are mostly the children of the poor and landless.

The BRAC education program considers it necessary to specifically target girls for enrolment, as opposed to leaving that option to parents who might continue to favour boys. As a result of the programme's special emphasis on the enrolment of girls, about 70 per cent of the children in NFPE and BEOC schools are female.

Around 97 per cent of the teachers in BRAC schools are women and they are married, local residents of the village. The teacher must have at least nine years of schooling. All teachers are provided with a 15-day initial intensive training. This is followed annually by training to prepare for each year. Regular one-day monthly refreshers are also provided. For grades 4 and 5, they receive more extensive training, 16 days and 18 days of special refreshers in English and mathematics respectively. In all schools, the same teacher conducts a full cycle.

In BRAC schools, the teacher-student relationship tends to be very close. In the school, 30 to 33 children sit on mats arranged in a large U-shape. That helps to create an informal, interactive, participatory atmosphere, conducive to the involvement of all children.

The BRAC curriculum has been tailored to suit the needs of rural children. Most recently, it has been adjusted to cater to the needs of urban children too. The curriculum covers the five-year primary curriculum. As more than 90 per cent of the BRAC graduates continue in the formal system, the curriculum incorporates competencies set out by the government for formal primary schools. The curriculum design encourages a learner-centred participatory approach. The teacher encourages group learning and participation. The schools maintain an environment which makes the lessons interesting and helps the children gain a greater understanding of their subjects. The NFPE curriculum consists of lessons in Bangla, mathematics and social studies. In grades 4 and 5, the programme follows the government textbooks in all subjects. English is taught from grade 2. The BEOC model includes health education and science during the fourth and fifth phases of the school. All the educational materials are provided by BRAC, and for material support, children contribute a sum of BDT5 a month.

BRAC's Education Support Program was first initiated in September 1991 to reach out to a larger population by partnering with local NGOs. This partnership increases BRAC's effort towards the eradication of illiteracy and also develops the technical, conceptual and human skills of smaller NGOs. At present the Education Support Programme is providing its support to 303 NGOs for 2505 schools.

Critical analysis of Bangladesh literacy approaches

It is important to analyse the different understanding of each NGO in Bangladesh of the role of literacy in relation to improved livelihoods and empowerment and consider to what extent they share the same understanding of the empowerment approach to literacy.

PROSHIKA believes in a strong link between literacy and empowerment, as did Freire (1972, 1999), which can be observed through several documents mentioned earlier in the description of PROSHIKA's activities. It also became clear from this study that PROSHIKA developed their literacy programme based on Freire's ideas. However there are also several different points. PROSHIKA focuses on the empowerment of *poor women* rather than the poor in general and also uses primers to promote empowerment. Despite these differences, it can be said that among the four NGOs, PROSHIKA follows Freire's ideas most closely due to its belief in a strong link between literacy and empowerment.

BRAC's education approach is as service delivery to the people, which is a development agenda. The curriculum is well organised and the teaching-learning process is of high quality. BRAC expects that the quality approach to education will improve livelihoods more than the predetermined objectives of empowerment would.

JJS focuses on empowerment and literacy by using the REFLECT approach, which was based on the ideas of Freire. This study found some similarities between REFLECT and Freire's idea, such as having no teachers who give lectures but facilitators who facilitate dialogue among participants.

DAM also focuses on empowerment and literacy. Even though DAM believes education is important for empowerment, and its primer includes some empowerment messages for learners to improve their livelihoods, it has also been observed that DAM understands the limitations of literacy to achieve empowerment, similar to the ideas of Freire. DAM has introduced different activities though Ganokendra, such as those for income generation or skill training programmes. In that sense, even though DAM's idea and methodologies are influenced by the ideas of Freire, they also differ from them.

JJS, using the rights-based approach, tries to make the poor aware of their situation and help them to make their voices heard by existing institutions, such as the government, using REFLECT. Thus it is possible to say that JJS's approach is based on political empowerment, with a focus on strategic gender needs. It has been observed that participants of REFLECT circles begun by JJS started to work collectively to achieve action plans either by making demands of the government or helping each other. However, an action plan to introduce a poultry farm was not achieved because of lack of funding. Despite that, JJS did not offer women financial support or introduce any income-generation activities because of its policy of not giving money to participants, in order to avoid learners becoming financially and emotionally dependent on JJS. Therefore they only concentrate on facilitating learners' using their own voices to address existing institutions.

All four approaches are based on social development issues which support people's empowerment, but they were mainly confined to a two-way learning process; not many were participatory. There is ample scope to include ICT-based multi-dimensional approaches and technology-enabled learning procedures in the courses. This study found no models familiar with ICT-based services.

Conclusion—New challenges for literacy and livelihoods projects

Bangladesh is a country of innovation in the field of non-formal literacy programmes. The approaches initiated are widely accepted and appreciated for their uniqueness of delivery and impact on the improvement of livelihoods for the people of Bangladesh.

This paper examined and shared the innovative approaches related to empowerment used by current projects that are working to increase education coverage in the country. These projects are mostly based on content related to social development issues.

Unfortunately, Bangladesh literacy approaches are still far behind in adopting ICT facilities/tools in the innovative development and delivery of literacy programmes. The study found no NGO or government with any plan for such initiatives (the only exception being for distance learning in the formal education sector). This study recommends taking on ICT tools through approaches at the community level to make literacy projects more effective, time efficient and achievable and to increase understanding of the benefit of people's empowerment using technology in mainstream literacy education.

The potential impact of ICTs on development has recently become a much contested issue within the development discourse. Proponents of ICTs, such as the World Bank and UNDP, take an optimistic view and highlight the positive effects of the Internet and other forms of ICTs to create new economic, social and political opportunities for developing countries and the poor. The contextualised approach to ICTs underscores the importance of the socio-economic and cultural context, which is considered crucial for the better understanding of the potential effects of ICTs on development and the empowerment of poor communities.

The need to increase literacy levels remains as one of the most pressing educational challenges facing developing countries in the Commonwealth, including Bangladesh. The promises from the 1990 Education for All Conference are far from fulfilled. Illiteracy rates remain unacceptably high, particularly among women and young adults.

Against this backdrop, the use of learning technologies that enable the development and delivery of learning materials tailored to the needs and circumstances of particular groups is increasing dramatically. The appropriate application of these technologies to the teaching of literacy offers potential benefits in terms of enhancing access, increasing the quality and relevance of materials, and improving the cost effectiveness of programme delivery.

The results of this study suggest that, in spite of considerable achievements, such as increased primary education enrolment, a number of inadequacies remain. Much more should be done to improve the quality of education, and in particular, reducing the dropout rate continues to be a challenge. Similarly, expanding and sustaining the EFA gains will require extra effort in terms of community mobilisation and mobilisation of external resources, and improvements will be required in the introduction

and utilisation of ICT infrastructure.

Furthermore, particular attention will have to be paid to the quality training of teachers, improving the supervision and monitoring of activities, developing a data collection and maintenance system, minimising bottlenecks in the implementation of projects and programmes, and ensuring that programme activities are followed up.

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Addressing Challenges to Literacy and Livelihoods

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Literacy is a foundational building block of lifelong and lifewide learning. The key question is what policies and practices need to be put in place to link literacy to sustainable development and pave the way to achieving Education for All (EFA). The interrelationship and synergies between literacy and livelihoods and the potential contributions of these to poverty reduction and development have been evaluated in several studies, and valuable lessons have been learned (for example, in the context of the BELOISYA (Basic Education and Livelihood Opportunities for Illiterate and Semi-Illiterate Young Adults) programme 1999 and the World Bank Study in African countries 2002). But still a number of challenges remain for policy-makers and providers of programmes trying to follow an integrated approach to literacy and livelihoods.

Conceptual challenges related to literacy, life skills and livelihoods

There is an increasingly shared view that literacy consists of more than acquiring reading, writing and numeracy skills in a decontextualised way. Instead, literacy is seen as a social practice which is situated in particular cultural and socio-economic contexts. The traditional UNESCO definition of literacy, still referred to in many countries when it comes to collecting statistical data, is somewhat outdated today: A person is literate who can, with understanding, both read and write a short simple statement on his or her everyday life (UNESCO Institute for Statistics Web site). It is not broad enough to capture the complexity and diversity of literacy across the spectrum of acquisition and employment. International initiatives such as the International Adult Literacy Study (IALS, data collection 1994–98), the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Study (ALLS, data collection in progress) and the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP, piloting started in a small number of countries) show that more and more countries are interested in collecting more nuanced data on literacy and life skills according to their own national cultural, linguistic and educational contexts. It is now recognised that the concept of literacy embraces a continuum of skills, in a variety of dimensions, at various levels of mastery and for diverse purposes.

The notion of literacy is differentiating increasingly into a plurality of meanings and dimensions. This is why UNESCO in a recent position paper refers to the "plurality of literacy" (UNESCO Education 2004). People acquire and apply literacy for a wide range of purposes in ever-changing situations, all of which are shaped by culture, history, language, religion and socio-economic conditions. In a multilingual society, the plural notion of literacy implies the need for designing multilingual policies and programmes, as well as recognising the complementary relationship between literacy and orality. In these contexts the promotion of literacy must foster the capacity to express or communicate cultural identity. The plurality of literacy implies also that there is no single method or approach that is uniquely valid and that fits all circumstances. Diversified strategies and flexible approaches must be sought which are responsive to the individual circumstances and needs of the learner and the learning environment. They also should build on local knowledge and experiences. The development of rich and dynamic literate environments and societies represents a key to both advancing literacy and providing tools for the betterment of life conditions. It is fundamentally necessary to redirect the attitudes not only of individuals but of entire societies towards the desirability of a lifelong learning culture. This includes fostering social and economic conditions which generate a massive demand for literacy and establishing environments conducive to using literacy-based skills and continuing to learn.

The term "life skills" has become an important element in the discourse of learning and development and is often used in connection with literacy programmes. But there is little agreement on what "life skills" means. The term appears to be used for other dimensions of literacy than reading, writing and numeracy, such as problem-solving skills, working in teams, networking, communicating, negotiating and critical thinking. Their generic nature is held in common with literacy skills. It also refers to skills needed in daily life that are strongly connected to a certain context or domain (e.g., livelihood skills, health skills, environmental skills). These can be called "contextual skills." In the praxis of skills acquisition, literacy skills, generic skills and contextual skills are interconnected. The skills involved in reading, writing and numeracy are considered "basic" due to the fact that their applicability to a wider variety of situations affords them special status and significance.

Building on the human-rights approach to achieving EFA, which has much in common with human development and poverty reduction paradigms, the development of life skills can be perceived as a means of gaining access to resources that enhance the choices and freedoms that lead to a better life. This perspective implies that life skills are the skills that people need to build a sustainable livelihood and fully participate in society (UNESCO 2003, 56–57).

The concept of livelihood reflected in different programmes and policies shows that a continuum of meanings seems to exist, beginning with a very narrow economic definition and extending to the much broader view of livelihoods as including individual and social well-being, health and the environment (for example, the definition adapted from Chambers and Conway (1992): "A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including

both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living."). Most programmes seem to adhere to a rather more restricted economic view of livelihoods by relating to income-generating activities or to "simply making a living" (Oxenham et al. 2002, 7). Within development strategies, the "Sustainable Livelihoods Approach" is seen as a way of increasing the effectiveness of development assistance by "putting people at the centre of development" (DFID 1999). Rather than searching for a universally acceptable definition, it is preferable to ask, in the context of each intervention or policy, who defines what livelihood means? And who defines what counts as development? Does livelihood refer to income in the narrow economic sense, or does it include, for example, social and cultural capital? This raises the question whether the participants in literacy and livelihood programmes are actively involved in the decisions about which activities they want to embark on in order to change their lives.

Some current challenges

1. Country studies have verified that programmes that start from livelihood skills and integrate literacy with them seem to stand a stronger chance of success because they can appeal to an immediate reason for learning. However, it is necessary to find a good balance between training for livelihoods and the learning of other basic and generic skills. Implementing the concept of lifelong learning within a frame of EFA requires creating literate environments and thereby new demands for adult learning in a broader sense than just providing skills for survival and material well-being.

2. The diversity of possibilities for combining literacy learning with livelihood activities is so wide that it requires great flexibility, creativity, sensitivity and resourcefulness to find the best way of doing so in each instance. It also requires following the continuous dynamics of changes and making the necessary adjustments. Many providers who depend themselves on external funding tend to opt for generally recognised mainstream models. In addition, potential funding institutions or organisations prefer to chose and organise the participants or "beneficiaries" of their programmes by themselves, instead of working with already existing groups.

3. The diversity of target groups and specific settings at the local level is another challenge to those providers who need to apply their strategies on a larger scale.

4. The effectiveness of literacy and training programmes is often a major problem. Apart from the difficulty of monitoring the impact that a programme has on the life of participants, it is a challenge to change attitudes and achieve practical consequences through literacy and training courses.

5. The capacities of small institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and local providers to develop their own curricula, learning materials and expertise for running a local

programme that is negotiated with participants and provides high-quality training are limited. In addition, it is not infrequently difficult to find qualified teaching personnel at the local level.

6. The financial sustainability of small-scale programmes is often a problem, since literacy and livelihood training generally require long-term strategies. In regions with high poverty rates, the possibilities for raising local funding—whether public or private in origin—are quite reduced. External donors frequently have their own agendas.

7. One of the challenges is to avoid the risk of instrumentalising literacy "for" livelihoods. All too often politicians are tempted to succumb to the logic of funding agencies asking for demonstrable, quantified outcomes in poverty reduction.

8. The imposition of foreign languages for training on occasion creates barriers to the participation of a large segment of potential participants. The conflicts which arise around the choice of languages for literacy and livelihood training and the implications of complex linguistic ecologies for learning are all too often minimised, neglected or hidden.

9. To promote the ownership of the programme by its participants is another challenge. The continuity of activities greatly depends on whether participants are ready to accept the responsibility for sustaining the programme.

10. A major challenge is how to make literacy- and livelihood-related activities a part of social dynamics when the local community becomes more autonomous, takes over political and administrative responsibilities and, at the same time, develops more and increasingly diversified economic operations. How can the overall process be embedded in local culture and create a dynamic in which literate practices become essential?

Some approaches to addressing these challenges

- If participants are involved in planning from the beginning and make sure that a programme is well adapted to their interests, conditions and goals, the programme is likely to be successful. It is also important to provide for good quality in teaching and management. Motivation of the participants may change over time. This has to be carefully monitored, and programmes should respond to changing priorities and conditions.

- NGOs and local authorities seem to have more flexibility than national governments in responding to local and changing needs and conditions.

- Case studies show that decentralised approaches allow local organisations to decide on the pace and manner at which expansion of their programmes can be soundly undertaken.

Careful and gradual procedures are most successful in tailor-made combined approaches (livelihood and literacy).

- Casting learning activities in a perspective of lifelong and lifewide learning implies a holistic approach to awareness raising and providing participants with the tools necessary for managing the diverse challenges in life. This also includes building on their strengths, knowledge and experiences.

- The REFLECT (Regenerated Freirean Literacy though Empowering Community Technique) approach is one particularly interesting way of producing instructional material for particular languages, topics and localities. The REFLECT methodology is meant to help participants tackle practical development problems, among which literacy may not always be a priority. The local model may also focus on literacy as a tool of empowerment, community action or other topics. Although literacy is a key element, emphasis differs from context to context.

- Literacy practices are closely tied up with linguistic, social and cultural codes. If literacy should transcend local languages, it should at the same time start with—and in—local languages, while recognising multilingual realities. Even at local level, these are conducive to the use of a specific language for different social, cultural and occupational purposes. UNESCO recommends the use of local languages for initial literacy learning and for providing a route to official languages for those who have acquired basic literacy.

- Learning within a lifelong and lifewide perspective requires a supportive cultural environment and, especially for adults, a perception of the value and utility of learning. As long as governments and policy-makers undervalue literacy and learning and under-fund enabling institutions and initiatives, neither EFA nor social change towards poverty elimination can be achieved. Although an investment in literacy and livelihood training is an investment in the development of human resources, we should also see literacy from the perspective of the user—how it enables persons and groups to achieve their own rights and goals.

- Literacy should be treated as a cross-cutting issue in national development strategies, which can enhance the attainment of other development goals. Long-term commitments are required, which means a more embedded, locally owned view of programmes. Social practices and movements leading to more participation, communication and the creation of networks and exchange of information are to be encouraged.

- Development strategies should be based on an approach that is interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral, integrated and decentralised, seeking to support local economies, politics, administration and culture. Literacy as an instrument of growing social complexity is a necessary component of development. Livelihoods and life skills in their broad sense constitute another component supporting this

process. Sustainable livelihoods should be the wider goal of our work and this understanding should help contextualise literacy within the livelihood assets, strategies and context of the poor. Literacy work should be squarely grounded in the perceptions and practices of the poor—their varied needs, motivations and existing capabilities.

- There is no single approach most conducive to success, but a number of general recommendations should be taken into account when it comes to designing policies and programmes for literacy and livelihoods (e.g., learner participation, responsiveness to their interests and needs, decentralisation, collaboration with civil society, flexible concepts, contextualised curricula and materials). Literacy only succeeds if it is adapted to people's actual needs and requirements. Only then can it improve living conditions and contribute to genuine autonomy.

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Who Would Have Thought So?
The Politics of Literacy in Ghana

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In the following pages, we seek to make observations about the general thrust of strategies aimed at eradicating illiteracy in Ghana and posit the view that government policy at particular moments in history, as well as in contemporary times, has produced decided shifts in the approach towards this task. We then suggest a possible trajectory for literacy in Ghana given emerging demands for it.

Ghana is already a space in which the definition of literacy demands a consciousness of plurality. This is all the more clear when literacy is coupled with the notion of livelihoods. Literacy in Ghana is already a more nuanced activity that revolves more explicitly around livelihoods than around only the need to master reading and writing as techniques for self-expression.

Earlier literacy campaigns

Literacy campaigns have been attractive for the purposes of breaking the back of a massive social problem or for accelerating the achievement of the objective of national development. This was the stated impetus from the Mass Education Program, a vigorous national drive initiated at the inception of Ghana's independence and lasting through the First Republic. Literacy in Ghana was embarked upon in the late 1950s by the government with a clear ideological commitment on two fronts. Firstly its purpose was to provide education by a socialist government to the "mass of the people" in fulfillment of their right to education. Mass education, as it was thus called, was therefore a priority alongside a scheme to set up a massive new education infrastructure at all levels involving free compulsory education for all school-going children. The second rationale for the adult literacy drive was to prepare the manpower base for an accelerated development plan to be achieved by leapfrogging several steps in the development process.

As far as policy is concerned, a clear statement of vision of non-formal education comes up once again in a 1990 Ministry of Education (MOE) paper which involves strategies to eradicate illiteracy and achieve functional literacy among the estimated 5.6 million non-literate individuals using Ghanaian languages. Areas deemed to produce a "positive multiplier effect on public health and productivity in all aspects of personal and

national life (MOE Forum Technical Committee 1999, 29)" include health education, nutrition and vocational training.

The next major thrust in literacy was funded by the World Bank and the Norweigian government and executed from July 1992 to December 1997. Approximately 1.2 million learners were provided with literacy and numeracy skills in 15 languages.

Organising literacy in a new phase

The turn towards the market economy and the promotion of private and community participation in education in many ways implies a shift from the provision of free mass education.

The Non-Formal Education Division (NFED) of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports now sees itself as an apex body co-ordinating with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) in the national effort to reduce illiteracy for holistic development of communities and the nation. This thrust is based on lessons from earlier campaigns. The lessons revolve around:

- Needing to increase efficiency in the management of the non-formal education thrust of government policy

- Linking literacy more closely and intensively with occupations and skills

- Pursuing a more targeted approach, keeping in view women and the three northern regions of Ghana in particular

- Creating community awareness and ownership of interventions

- Improving learning materials to adapt them further to the local environment

According to the NFED, government has increased its allocation to the literacy programme from 0.6 per cent of the annual budgetary allocation to education to 1.4 per cent. As government has also increased its annual budget from 28 per cent of the national budget to 48 per cent, this reallocation should represent a palpable increase in resources. This increase may again be seen within the campaign model where the funds have increased as a result of a number of Presidential initiatives in the area of non-formal education. ("Presidential initiative" means special programmes initiated directly by the President of the republic to stimulate growth in a particular sector.)

The national literacy programme realised the effectiveness of some key NGOs in Ghana and is collaborating with them for a variety of purposes. Below are a few such initiatives:

1. The provision of legal literacy through organisations such as the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) and the Network for Women's Rights (NETRIGHT) (the coalition of NGOs dealing with women's rights) has been at the forefront of providing the literacy of empowerment for particular sections of society.

The Intestate Succession Law and the Domestic Violence Bill are two examples of legislation that has been translated into several Ghanaian languages. Their implications are clearly set out in advocacy campaigns to empower women to take advantage of their tenets. This seems to be a likely trend and an area of growth pursued by particular interest groups.

2. In another vein, the Ghana chapter of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) has taken on the idea of functional literature in the form of the sponsorship of vocational training for girls and young women who have dropped out of school or who have left the school system but are functionally illiterate. The distinctive feature of the training in FAWE-sponsored/affiliated programmes is that it foregrounds functional literacy in the form of rights-based training for girls in the areas of literacy in relevant legal frameworks, assertive behaviour, AIDS prevention, etc.

3. The Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) is perhaps the most organised of such non-governmental programmes. Its primary goal of promoting Christianity has been carefully blended with a number of developmental concerns with emphasis on functional literacy. The commitment to livelihoods is demonstrated in a number of ways.

   - The organisation works in languages which have so far not been committed to writing, particularly in the northern part of Ghana.

   - Publications go beyond primers and provide post-literacy materials. The annual report for the year 2002 reveals an impressive list of 168 publications of which 96,100 books were printed in 28 languages (GILLBT 2003). Out of these publications, 145 are designated functional and cover a wide range of topics. Some of these are *The 1992 Constitution of Ghana Abridged*, *Healthy Motherhood*, *Pay Your Taxes and Help Build Ghana*, *Living with AIDS in the Community*, *Fishing Activities*, *Man and His Environment*, *Methodology of Crop Farming* and many more.

   - Workshops organised by the organisation include rights-based management to help raise awareness of peoples' rights and responsibilities.

   - Based on a strategy of working with partners, GILLBT is also involved in the provision of loans for pilot income-generation schemes for learners with an emphasis on women.

Challenges and recommendations

   - The post-literacy environment needs to be addressed. One key incentive for going through the trouble of becoming literate is surely that it will be patently enabling for the newly literate to negotiate their way through regular activities which require literacy such as accessing a variety of services in the formal sector (e.g.,

banking, postal, medical, agricultural extension services). There seems to be a lack of response to this need. Thus the newly literate find themselves with a skill which is very limited in its applicability. This could be regarded as a serious drawback in the policy environment, limiting the effectiveness of the skills acquired.

- Neo-literates should be provided with reading materials which are stimulating and enjoyable and not either doggedly utilitarian and parochial or even childish. As the government is by policy targeting women, for example, this should be seen as a challenge for the creation of texts which explicitly have women's interests and point of view in mind.

- In respect of the above, sectors such as the media have yet to respond to this large clientele. On the other hand, the efforts of NGOs which have developed successful models should be encouraged and, where appropriate, supported to bring successful models to more and more people.

Politics and the policy of literacy

The policy on literacy in Ghana has had a subtext which in my opinion has been very much responsible for confusion in the minds of implementers and indeed policy-makers on how to take literacy interventions particularly in the areas of basic adult literacy. Perhaps the "expenditure on Non-Formal Education has been criticised on the grounds that inadequate funding for formal education does not justify it" (MOE Forum Technical Committee 1999).

Firstly, the fact that the first phase of the national functional literacy programme had been set in contradistinction to formal basic education seems to have posed a false problem which has the tendency to ignore the out-of-school population which forms over a third of the age group.

Secondly, as with the initial mass education campaign in the 1950s, the 1991 effort was conceived of as a campaign. A political imputation was placed on the use of volunteers and the messages conveyed as part of this educational process. The result of this political imputation was to treat the literacy component of the national education programme with extreme caution at best and disbanding it at the earliest opportunity. In the former case the campaign was abandoned after a coup d'etat in 1966, and in the latter it was relegated to a period of minimal activity and appraisal. The programme has now been overhauled, including a drastic redeployment of personnel and an orientation towards a more narrowly focused programme. Among other things, this approach, if successfully implemented, will bring literacy into the ambit of a regular programme rather than its remaining on a more ad hoc campaign footing. On the one hand, it will hopefully break the cycle of inconsistency and suspicion that has hung over literacy programmes in Ghana for so long.

There is no question, however, that if the accumulated number of non-literates is to be substantially reduced, ways must be found to reformulate

and raise a literacy campaign which will not elicit unproductive political responses but will meet an urgent national need.

The issue of literacy in the 21st century

The definition of literacy in the context of the Education for All initiative allowed for a continuum of basic education which would enable various societies at various levels of technological and industrial advancement to find their place along the continuum. In an education sector paper prepared by the MOE in 1994, Ghana's human resource development strategy is discussed, the basis of which remains the same. It says in part:

> But a programme of accelerated growth must ensure that the poor participate in and benefit from the process of growth, recognising that it is people, not machines or money that drive the development of the economy. Within this strategy, the widespread acquisition by the population of functional literacy and numeracy becomes a critical requirement for economic development, social welfare, and the reduction of poverty (MOE 1994, 1).

The paper compared primary enrolments and literacy rates of Ghana to that of Asian countries, demonstrating the correlation between accelerated growth and acquisition of literacy and thus justifying a high level of public expenditure on literacy.

Thus Ghana will be obliged to search for literacies which will match the aspiration of becoming a middle-income country by 2015. These will include the technologically based literacies which will provide the appropriately trained and trainable human resources for accelerated economic growth and development.

Computer literacy is a major example of the new type of literacy required in contemporary times and in the future. It is seen as a necessary aspect of livelihood in the technology-dominated world of work. Currently it is a private-sector-led unregulated area of activity occurring mostly in the workplace. Doubtless several other skill prerequisites will demand a pro-active policy environment in the country.

To conclude, our paper has attempted to demonstrate the state of the national effort in Ghana to relate literacy to livelihoods. Our observation is that from the initial mass education campaign the idea has always been to link literacy to self, communal and, more ambitiously, national development.

There have, however, been moments in the evolution of the process when political inferences have caused a relegation of literacy to the backwaters of the educational effort. The current national policy aspiration focuses on women and on a strong link between the development of individual entrepreneurship and literacy. In the meantime, there is evidence that the slack in basic literacy, as well as the link between literacy and livelihoods, is being taken up by a variety of NGOs and private enterprise.

Given the current number of non-literates and functionally illiterate members of the society, as well as the demand for post-basic literacy in a changing world of work, there is doubtless the need for a vigorous, sustained, diversified and accelerated literacy programme integrated fully into the national development strategy.

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Major Issues Facing Literacy Development Initiatives in the African Region: The Experience of Nigeria

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This presentation seeks to identify some basic issues relevant to the literacy road map for sub-Saharan Africa. Although the focus is on Nigeria, most of the concerns are also valid for the region. We must remember that access to literacy is a fundamental human right, which should never be denied anyone.

The challenges for eradication of illiteracy are indeed daunting in Africa. According to estimates, the illiteracy rate went down from 49.2 per cent to 38.7 per cent between 1990 and 2000: for men, from 38.1 per cent to 29.3 per cent, and women from 60.1 per cent to 48 per cent. But during the same period, the number of absolute illiteracy continued to increase, moving from 173 million to 183 million, with the proportion of women remaining the same at about 60 per cent. The objective to be attained would be an illiteracy rate of 19.3 per cent in 2015.

There are some major challenges for Africa where, perhaps apart from Ethiopia, there are no ancient scripts such as we have with Hebrew, Greek, Persian, Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Russian and so on. This means that Africans have not been able to translate the depth of their mind and reason to writing, and therefore have not been able to transmit their own experiences and discoveries in medicine, technology, art and so on to younger generations who would have improved upon them. The late arrival of written script must therefore also explain, in part, the late development of Africa.

The nature of the arrival of the written script through the Portuguese and other European countries and through the Arab traders and teachers also sought to alienate the traditional African practices and cultures. Writing was seen as a magic wand for communication and administration, as letter writers practised their art with an unusual confidence and pride since there was no rival on the ground. Gradually letter writers began to acquire a special status and serve as interpreters and informants. The skills in the traditional arts of dancing, hunting, storytelling and so on began to acquire a secondary importance and dwindle in recognition.

Yet there were few teachers, perhaps fewer classrooms for literacy to be promoted. This problem is compounded by the increase in the experiments on how to make the African literate. Globalisation and the introduction of the Internet has added another dimension to the problem, especially as access is limited and the environment is not conducive to the latest means of literacy outreach. Alan Rogers (1994) has consistently drawn attention to the several literacies including the real literacies and the levels of literacies which would further make us reflect on the status of literacy in Africa.

Background to the literacy initiatives in Nigeria

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is Africa's most populous country, with an estimated population of about 122 million and more than 250 ethnic groups, spread over a huge area. It has a governmental structure of 36 states, one federal capital territory and 778 local governments, each broken down into at least 10 wards.

The oil industry provides about 30 per cent of Nigeria's GDP, 95 per cent of foreign exchange earnings and about 80 per cent of budgetary revenues. Nigeria is classified as a low-income country with GNP per capita in 1999 put at USD225.

Key economic resources of the country

- Human resources   122 million
- Vast land area   924,000 km^2 (70% arable)
- Large oil deposits   32 billion barrels
- Large gas deposits   172 trillion cubic feet
- Substantial educational facilities: 60 public and private universities
  65 research institutes
  44 federal polytechnics

Key economic indicators (2002)

Nominal GDP: USD47 billion

- Agriculture   41%
- Manufacturing   6%
- Oil and gas   9%
- Others   44%

The education sector

Nigeria operates a 6–3–3–4 education system made up of six years of primary education, three years of junior secondary education, three years of senior secondary education and four years of higher education. The system also includes adult and non-formal education programmes, as well as teacher training and special education, notably for children with disabilities.

The basic education segment of the system extends from early childcare through junior secondary education. It incorporates adult and non-formal education, as well as the education of disadvantaged groups.

A major step was taken in September 1999 when President Olusegun Obasanjo launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme for the country. The goals of the UBE scheme are to universalise access to basic education, engender a conducive learning environment and eradicate illiteracy in Nigeria within the shortest possible time. The programme has three components. These are:

- Formal basic education encompassing the first nine years of schooling for all children (primary and junior secondary education)

- Nomadic education for school-age children of pastoral nomads and migrant fishermen

- Literacy and non-formal education for out-of-school children, youth and illiterate adults

The programme is UNIVERSAL, FREE and COMPULSORY. This implies that opportunities will be provided for the basic education of every Nigerian child of school-going age, that parents have an obligation to ensure that children in their care avail themselves of such opportunities and that sanctions will be imposed on persons, societies or institutions that prevent children, adolescents and youth from benefiting from UBE.

The goals of the UBE scheme are to universalise access to basic education, engender a conducive learning environment and eradicate illiteracy in Nigeria. The UBE aims to ensure the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative and life skills (as well as ethical, moral and civic values) needed for laying the foundation for lifelong learning.

In the pursuit of UBE goals, attention has been given, post-Dakar, to the following:

- Public enlightenment and social mobilisation, for full community involvement

- Teacher recruitment, education, training retraining and motivation

- Provision of infrastructural facilities

- Review of curricula to improve relevance

- Improved funding for the programme

- Improved management of the entire process

On 29 July 2001, Professor Babalola Borishade, then Honourable Minister of Education, launched a national enrolment drive for primary school-age children. This national mobilisation for school is expected to yield significant dividends in terms of enhanced enrolment for the 2001/2002 academic year. Children who are marginalised and difficult to reach, such as nomads and the disabled, are deliberate targets. Access, retention and participation of girls were also expected to be significantly enhanced.

Literacy programmes

In the area of adult literacy, no positive growth was recorded since the rate declined from 56 per cent in 1996 to 49 per cent in 2001. The Literacy Gender Parity Index (LGPI), which measures gender equity in literacy, remained about 0.8. Thus, while literacy rates declined, there was little progress towards eliminating the wide gap in male and female literacy. A closer examination of the literacy data reveals that the highest illiteracy is found among older women. Less than a quarter of women who are 45 years and above are literate, and this declines to a mere 15 per cent for women aged 56 to 65 and 17 per cent for women above 65. Nigeria was humbled and challenged by this undesirable trend.

Under the framework of a blueprint and national action plan for the eradication of mass illiteracy, innovative approaches are being adopted. In order to extend access to education, the Federal Government of Nigeria recognises the need to make the hours of formal education more flexible to suit particular needs, for example, of farmers, traders, fishermen, nomads and women. As well, community involvement is crucial, and so is active involvement of civil society organisations. The University Village Association (UNIVA), seeking to build bridges between the university and the community and between theory and practice in adult education, provides an example for rural education and development.

Nigeria embarked on a Basic Education and Skills Acquisition (BESA) programme which targets Dakar goal number 5: "Expansion of provision of basic education and training in other essential skills required by youth and adults for improved health, employment and productivity." This scheme connects with poverty alleviation programmes, entrepreneurial education and science, technical and vocational education programmes. The consortium of BESA and its associated initiatives will hopefully keep us on course for improving the productivity and health profiles of our youth.

ICT and literacy

It is now generally recognised that information and communication technologies (ICTs) are powerful tools that can effectively give voice to marginalised groups both in rural and urban areas, and that access to ICTs tool by the versed African population can transform the illiterate into productive literate citizens within a limited period of time. It is true of course that ICTs must be carefully monitored and used appropriately. ICTs offer wide opportunities for societal transformation and could be explored for their contributions to rural development, poverty elimination, job creation and agricultural education.

There is a great deal of awareness in Nigeria of the importance of using new ICTs (NICTs) in education generally and for distance education specifically. Beyond this level of awareness, little would appear to be on the ground in terms of practice. Nigeria has been one of the many countries on the wrong side of the digital divide. The good news for us, however, is that the present government is poised to ensure a rapid turnaround of the situation.

A national policy on information and communications has been launched. Also, a massive rehabilitation in the national and state TV networks has been underway to support basic education, especially to reach the unreached.

The global system of mobile communication (GSM) was launched nationwide. Internet services in "cafes" and community resource centres are growing. Teacher education programmes are beginning to tilt in favour of the use of NICTs. A Digital Library Project is also underway. Together, these recent developments are suggestive of a massive transformation in favour of using NICTs in the delivery of distance education.

The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) is poised to be at the vanguard of efforts on the use of NICTs for distance education. Training of teachers, students and other users, and installation and maintenance of the NICTs are our priority areas in the months ahead. I count on the support of members of the E-9 Group in our efforts to achieve these goals.

UNESCO and other partners

The problem of the promotion of literacy is real and urgent in Africa, as it is in Asia. This is why UNESCO has launched the Education for All (EFA) and the new Literacy Initiative for the Excluded (LIFE), and why many countries of Africa have collaborated with the World Bank on the BELOYSIA (Basic Education and Livelihood Opportunities for Illiterate and Semi-Illiterate Young Adults) project, which relates literacy to basic livelihood skills.

UNESCO has supported, since 1946, the promotion of mass education, fundamental education and functional literacy. It has co-ordinated the International Literacy Year and the ongoing United Nations Decade for Literacy within the context of the Education for All agenda. It has also conducted studies to prove that illiteracy prevents the full participation of people in policy formulation, economic and social development, etc.

At the sessions of the General Conference of UNESCO, policy-makers have spoken out. At the first session of the General Conference in 1946, the Minister of Education for Czechoslovakia, Professor Jaroslav Stransky, said, "A literate people may certainly be transformed quickly but also in the most various ways."

UNESCO has also been a forum to share the continuing doubt about the capability of literacy to solve human problems such as hunger, violence, etc. Thus Professor Stransky (1946) observed that:

The behaviour of illiterate Russian Moujik towards war prisoners in the First World War was certainly more civilised than the behaviour of the Germans in the concentration camps, and the latter were not illiterate. Literacy itself does not save anybody from barbarism; literacy may be a weapon against barbarism, but it may also be a weapon that serves barbarism. We have to distinguish between the material foundations and conditions of human happiness and its spiritual conditions.

UNESCO has also addressed the problem of teaching literacy and the adult learner within the context of andragogy, globalisation and skills development.

At the African regional level, civil society has been actively working with partner organisations, among the best known being the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), organisations such as the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH), Laubach Literacy International, DVV/IIZ (Institute for International Co-operation of the German Adult Education Association), USAID, NORAND, Canadian CIDA and Swedish SIDA.

The future and the partnership of COL

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL), which has shown considerable interest in the broad subject of literacy in Africa since its foundation, has now resolved to renew "its commitment to enhance literacy in the developing countries of the Commonwealth by establishing the programme area focussed on literacy and livelihoods" (COL 2004). In the process it will seek to consider how "ICTs and distance education methodologies can be used to address the challenges in literacy and livelihoods."

In the face of these challenges, the issue now is how Africa can move toward and develop new strategies for literacy promotion, encourage the retention of literacy skills, handle the multiplicity of local languages, sustain political will, make adult learning more relevant and use literacy for sustainable development.

It is commendable that COL joins in the fight against illiteracy which UNESCO started almost 60 years ago. The building of the partnership between COL and UNESCO must be most cheering for all those who have immense faith in their attainment of the EFA goals with respect to the promotion of literacy. As Dr D.R. Hardman, the head of the United Kingdom delegation, pledged at his intervention during the first session of the General Conference of UNESCO in 1946, illiteracy had to be fought on behalf of the young as well as the old and jointly by all governments of the world and at every front:

During the work of the Commissions, into which this Conference will shortly be resolved, the British delegation will hope to produce a considered list of projects which we think will satisfy those conditions. They cover a wide field and I will not detain you by attempting to list them now. They will, however, range from total war against illiteracy down to finding pencils and chalk for the

schools improvised among the rubble of so many cities, towns and villages ruined by the war. Mr President, we cannot hear unmoved of the pitiful plight of so many children in the world today. The children will be the United Nations of tomorrow. Let us all do what we can to restore the shattered fabric of the world of the spirit. It is, I venture to say, the only world that really matters now.

Towards a conclusion

There is considerable truth in the assertion that the literacy question in Africa has been intractable. It is also true that the literacy provided for Africa weakened the people and stalled the development and initiatives of the otherwise enterprising African because it halted the process of the authentic growth of the people faced with external pressures and practices of writing, reading and counting. Furthermore there was an inadequate provision for the promotion of indigenous languages, the language in which the people dreamed and expressed their inner feelings and convictions. Even when the orthography was eventually provided, it was either in the Roman or Arabic script, a process which itself was unable to build on the latent talent of the indigenous and "uncontaminated" African with a pride in himself and his potentials.

The new method of teaching literacy also limited the traditional participatory role of the African learner, who was used to learning by observation and practice through the apprenticeship system. Furthermore the arrival of the teacher standing in front of the learner and providing information weakened the community spirit and traditional local ownership of the teaching and learning process and imposed a new value of a provider of information and "knowledge" to the learner, and thus a veneration of the teacher.

For the new initiative in literacy promotion to succeed in Africa, it must be based on the lessons learned from the frequently aborted past literacy efforts. There should be the political will of all the countries and the willingness of the people to own the programme and thus occupy the driving seat of the literacy transportation machine.

It is imperative, of course, for the entire world to continue to be reminded of the perennial importance of this promise of 1946, and to join hands to eliminate illiteracy and make literacy a relevant and appropriate tool for the authentic development of the people.

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Approaches to the Challenges of Literacy and Livelihoods in Africa

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The International Extension College (IEC) was established in 1971 in response to international interest in extension education. We have always placed a particular emphasis on adult and non-formal education (NFE). The growing importance of NFE was also recognised by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) early in its history and that together with its commitment to Education for All (EFA) led it to include NFE as one of its sectoral areas of focus. In 1995, to gain a better understanding of the extent of and practices related to the use of distance education methodologies in the area of NFE, COL commissioned Tony Dodds, then executive director of IEC, "to undertake an environmental scan of active non-formal education projects/activities which are employing distance education methodologies" (Dodds 1995).

The report identified 73 projects in 56 developing countries and 17 industrialised countries (Dodds 1995). As well as print, radio and audiocassettes were being used widely; TV and video only rarely and then usually in industrialised countries. Over 60 per cent of projects used study groups or circles. Twenty-two projects had a focus on literacy, numeracy and post-literacy.

Nine years on, the debates about NFE and literacy continue. The notion of literacy for livelihoods has grown into a concept that includes economic outcomes and the integration of literacy into other programmes. Oxenham et al (2002) document their findings in a study that examines two broad approaches to combining livelihood training with literacy instruction: "One approach is to enrich a livelihood-led program with components in calculating, writing and reading. The other is to enrich a literacy-led programme with training for one or more livelihoods."

In recent years IEC has focused on two NFE programmes that may have useful insights to contribute to the debate on literacy and livelihoods. One, in Sudan, Building Literacy in Sudan with SOLO Press (BLSP) starts from the literacy angle. The other, in Kenya, the Women in the Fishing Industry Project (WIFIP), starts from livelihoods.

Sudan

Refugees from Eritrea first started arriving in the east of Sudan as long ago as 1965. Still today many live in established camps in the northeast of the country. Generations of children have been born in these camps and though some repatriation has occurred and is ongoing, some return to

Sudan and other new arrivals come. Also years of civil war have impacted severely on Sudan. Thousands of people have been displaced from the south of the country into settlements scattered through the desert around Khartoum, Omdurman and Gezira state in the north. Our partner organisation, the Sudan Open Learning Organisation (SOLO), works with both these groups.

Overall there has been little education provision and basic resources in any of these settlements. But the displaced people fare worse as their camps are often not officially recognised. Members of these communities are mostly excluded from formal education provision and employment opportunities due to language and gender barriers and prejudice.

SOLO began working with refugees on a literacy programme many years ago and reached at least 6000 women and men in camps. Study revolved around a primer. Sadly there was no follow up to the literacy classes, no "next step" (Abuzeid et al. 2003, 40–41). The almost total lack of reading and writing materials for the newly literate and their social exclusion made it virtually impossible for them to apply their new skills. They frequently lapsed back into illiteracy.

In response IEC and SOLO have pioneered the BLSP project.

Building literacy in Sudan: project methodology and outcomes

BLSP began five years ago, as a response to the need among the neo-literate population in Sudan—especially those in refugee and internally displaced people's camps—for reading materials pitched at an appropriate level, of interest to them and useful to them in their daily lives. The project covers Khartoum and much of eastern Sudan. The Sudanese non-governmental organisation (NGO) SOLO and IEC run the project in partnership.

Core project staff with skills and experience in literacy, adult education, community development and publishing are employed. In addition, there are 26 part-time facilitators, known as Community Liaison Workers (CLWs), who receive continuous training in a range of skills, from group facilitation to participatory learning approaches (PLA) to community mobilisation. CLWs have responsibility for reading and writing circles in their region, assisted by group leaders who take responsibility for individual groups. It is within these circles that topics important to participants are raised, discussed, negotiated and finally written down.

A parallel strand of the project strategy was to develop the SOLO printing and publishing capacity, in order to take the materials generated in the circles one step further. The stories, texts and magazine articles are collected and turned into printed copy. These publications are returned to the circles as reading material and for the process of editing and some market research. Enabled by a comprehensive commissioning process, some are selected to be published as "national titles." The national titles are distributed more widely, and recently permissions have been granted that enable SOLO to sell them on the open market. Libraries in a box are

being established and a variety of small business approaches to lending are being tested.

In the early days of the project CLWs were encouraged to gather together participants in circles to focus on reading and writing activities at particular times and places. Participants expected and at times demanded a more formal, classroom-like approach than was being offered. Indeed in the urban areas certificates of completion were considered the ultimate goal. Thus it was in the first few months a slow process of working with CLWs and participants to generate outputs from the reading, writing and discussion activities. However, at the point when ideas generated by the circles were transformed into published stories or into the development of community-based sensitisation campaigns and initiatives, the interest and motivation of participants, and potential participants, began to grow dramatically. The desire for formality and certification died a natural death, overtaken by the obvious benefits of activities that led to enhanced individual and community self-esteem.

Hundreds and hundreds of stories and articles have been written. From these 35 national titles have been published, 8 of them magazines. The magazines have proved to be the most popular. From the start the circle participants selected their own topics for discussion and writing, and these have varied widely in nature from peace issues to sanitation, from local legend to personal history. Within months of the start previously unmentionable topics, such as female circumcision, were being discussed openly between men and women. Frequently the groups act out small dramas on the issues at hand.

The project has generated a momentum of its own. Rather like a flower seeding, the number of circles has rapidly expanded as enthusiastic members establish their own groups. There are now several generations of circles and groups working voluntarily. The group leader volunteers are characteristically energetic, motivated and visionary, with strong community consciousness, and are quite inspirational at the local level. As well as being group leaders, they remain members of the original circles, which are continually evolving as conduits through which writings and ideas pass for refinement, feedback and further development. Circles also remain important focal points for integration with other community-initiated and -based ideas. Each is unique, shaped by its environment, its members and their vision. They are the foundation on which development initiatives are built.

The BLSP model has proved to be so effective that a number of state governments and NGOs have adopted it for their own post-literacy programmes, or plan to do so in the near future. To facilitate this expansion, some of the CLWs have been trained as trainers of community liaison workers and around 250 state CLWs have been trained and are now working with groups of their own. In addition, a training manual is currently in production and will be published in both Arabic and English at the beginning of next year.

It has been estimated that BLSP has reached 30,000 learners. Research indicates that, as well as the circles and groups, the reading and writing work continues in the home, and that parents are sharing their learning

and enthusiasm with their children. The current phase of expansion, with 250 new CLWs, has the potential to reach 10 times as many.

In its narrowest sense, the five-year project's overall aim was to have several thousand more people reading and writing on a daily basis. While the project has achieved this aim, it has also gone far beyond its remit and is a living, practical example of the synergy between literacy and livelihoods. Psychosocial benefits of literacy, such as increased confidence, ability to take initiatives and the feeling of empowerment experienced by participants, are particularly apparent in the project.

The circles appear to have become important forums for individuals, groups and communities to express themselves. Through the process of coming together in the circles, they are able not only to articulate their thoughts and challenges, but also to design solutions to common problems. It seems that participants are finding that they are enabled, in the words of Paulo Freire, to "transform their reality" (1995).

Examples of this type of transforming capacity range from income-generating activities (IGAs) set up by groups to directly improve their families' incomes, to lobbying camp authorities for improvements in conditions such as sanitation and anti-social behaviour. In some cases, we have seen ideas for IGAs leading to group applications to local NGOs for small lump sums to finance their ideas. The profile of BLSP groups in the community and the confidence they have gained from their participation, are such that ventures like this are often possible. Notably, relationships between NGOs working in the area and BLSP circles are not just one way. Other NGOs have been able to tap into BLSP/SOLO's outreach mechanisms and the structures built by the circles and spearheaded by their facilitators, using these for wider community awareness, development and networking.

At the same time as these activities are catalysed and continued, participants' "written, or in some cases 'scribed' experiences and ideas" (McCaffery 2004) are quietly improving neo-literate participants' technical reading and writing skills, and creating a bank of appropriate materials for others to use for the same purpose. However, the model does not focus on traditional technical literacy. Instead it legitimises other literacies, based on the realities of life for those within the camps, as in Street's concept of multiple literacies which are community and culture-specific (1984). This is reflected in the range of participants' levels of technical literacy within any one group. Research carried out in Year 4 of the project revealed that approximately 20 per cent of group members were not in fact in the neo-literate target group, but were illiterate. These members, known as friends of the circles, are a vital part of the process, and proof that "one does not have to be literate in the technical sense to be a consumer and producer of knowledge" (Hashim Abuzeid Elsafi, personal communication). These members are enabled to contribute to society and given a voice through their attendance at the circle.

More research needs to be done to investigate by exactly how much the technical literacy skills of such "illiterate" group members are improving. In many cases, the titles printed are collaborative writings, and the pride participants feel in seeing their name in print can be such that they are

encouraged to learn more. Unlike REFLECT (Regenerated Freirean Literacy though Empowering Community Technique), which retains the primer, albeit using a non-traditional model, illiterates in BLSP groups seem to be progressing without any primer—they are observing, doing and putting into action, without the need for the technical building blocks.

Kenya

Around the shores of Lake Victoria there are many fishing communities that are isolated with poor infrastructure. Though fish from the lake are exported far and wide, those communities closest to it see little benefit. Water-borne and sexually transmitted diseases are rife, and many people struggle to eke out a living. Most rely on fish from the lake in one way or another. On the whole the men own the boats and catch the fish. Women do not go out onto the lake, but buy the fish to sell on.

Women and men within the fishing communities suffer similar disadvantages in relation to their geographical location and their livelihoods. As fish traders, women have the further burden of preparing, transporting and selling their produce to an external market, as well as being the main carer within the family. Not only are women disadvantaged by living in an isolated community which is dependent on the fishing industry, but they face the additional disadvantage of being female in a male-dominated industry and culture.

The women in these communities are particularly vulnerable. Many are single heads of household and are operating their businesses with very little capital. Without capital, the women are unable to buy fish and often trade on credit, making them vulnerable to the fishermen's sexual demands. As a consequence, HIV is increasingly prevalent within these fishing communities.

The impetus for developing a project to assist these communities came from Jennipher Kere, one of IEC's MA students, whose research work highlighted the women's plight.

Women in the Fishing Industry: project methodology and outcomes

WIFIP is a non-formal radio education project based along the shores of Lake Victoria, with its headquarters in Kisimu, Kenya. At the start this project was designed to work exclusively with women and, in its first two years, it developed a series of radio programmes specifically designed for and targeted at women. The aim of the project is to help women fish-traders develop a voice in their community and initiate socio-economic changes to improve community health.

In response to the women's needs, radio programmes have been developed that encourage debate on the health and business issues faced by the women and aim to enable both women and the wider fishing community to have greater control over their health and livelihoods.

To achieve this the project has developed a series of non-formal

education programmes transmitted by radio. The radio programmes deliver health and business education in a drama format and follow the lives of characters who work in the fishing industry. The programmes are particularly effective because the storylines are based on the lives and experiences of those who live in fishing communities. They are broadcast twice weekly by the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation in the early evening, when families are listening to the radio together. Transmission of the programmes can reach a wide audience of up to three million listeners within Kenya and across its borders into Uganda and Sudan.

The project also supports more in-depth learning from these programmes via learning groups on fishing beaches. The same programmes are distributed to fishing beaches on audio cassettes, accompanied by illustrated booklets/flipcharts. The project works with learning groups of fisherwomen on participating beaches. These have evolved from already established welfare and social groups, each containing approximately 20 individuals. The groups listen to the programmes twice a week and discuss issues that arise. The illustrated booklets act as prompts for debate throughout the programme and help to reiterate particular issues in the drama. These aids have been developed with mixed levels of literacy in mind.

Many participants have low levels of literacy and numeracy. This was recognised from the outset and the audio/group support materials were developed sympathetically. Within the groups, the more literate assist the less literate, and it seems that skill levels have improved, driven by the need to improve business and the desire to improve understanding of preventive health care.

On completion of the series of business programmes, participants in the learning groups have the opportunity to put their knowledge and skills into practice by means of the project's micro-credit scheme. This scheme is an extension of the business learning and prepares women to improve or expand their businesses. Following the initial learning from the programmes, the groups also receive training to gain new skills in alternative IGAs to engage in during fishing bans or to complement their fishing businesses.

To ensure support to the learning groups and enable the wider fishing community to benefit from the groups' learning, the project engages the wider community in the programme content and encourages them to work with the learning groups to organise annual Beach Days. These events provide an opportunity for learning group members to share the knowledge and skills that they have gained and enable the wider community to become involved. At these events, health clinics and staff are organised to attend the beaches so that community members can access health advice and care. The learning groups and wider community also have the opportunity to voice their views and share their stories in the project's newsletter *Samaki News.*

Within the first two years of programming, the communities in which these women work have highlighted a number of positive changes following the radio programmes and group learning. Women are now working towards improving their businesses so that they do not become vulnerable to the

fishermen's demands, and on average women's savings have increased from 50 pence to £5 per week. Health has improved through better hygiene practices on the fishing beaches, and families are experiencing fewer occurrences of bilharzia and amoebiosis now that drinking water from the lake is being boiled. However, most strikingly, the women appear far more confident in their views and their interactions with others in the community, particularly the fishermen. For example women have developed the confidence to request that the fishermen no longer pursue sexual favours from the women fish-traders and as a consequence, on many beaches, the practice of trading fish for sex has stopped or reduced dramatically. There is also a great deal more open discussion within the community about sensitive issues. On one beach the women participants have organised for a voluntary testing and counselling (VCT) clinic (testing for HIV/AIDS) to visit their beach in response to a request from their community.

At the end of the first year of programming, the women asked for men's learning groups in their communities to be included, to boost the benefits within the community further. In the third year of the project, activities have expanded to encourage the participation of men living and working on the fishing beaches. This has further improved home, community and working relationships in the fishing industry. Fishermen and women fish-traders are now co-operating more to improve everyone's household income.

The learning groups have demonstrated far greater impact than just increased knowledge and skills of participants. The women and men have greatly increased in confidence and feel able to express their rights within their community and within the fishing industry. Both the Beach Days and the newsletter are important elements in bringing the community together and developing the confidence of the community as a whole. The demand to be part of the groups is growing as is the wish to seek changes in their community—on one beach a woman group member has been appointed the first female community elder—and to seek positive changes in the fishing industry. Community members are working together to fight for a fair deal from the fishing factory middlemen and to reduce their exploitation by them.

Conclusions

Both these projects have had very favourable mid-term evaluations, and both will be externally evaluated later this month. We have also been able to undertake some research, though more would be very useful. Without prejudging the outcomes of the evaluations, it is possible to identify some of the factors that have made these programmes such positive interventions.

Not least, of course, are the project staff members themselves, without whom none of it could have taken place. These people have not just done their jobs. They have frequently become intimately involved in the community they serve, caring deeply for the beneficiaries and striving to give them the best opportunities available. This is typical of IEC's "culture of care" approach.

> The "culture of care" is a learner support strategy first adopted and articulated for the Northern Integrated Teacher Education Project that provided training for teachers through distance education. An informal process running alongside the formal student support structure typifies the culture of care. Student support officers may attend participant weddings and funerals, may journey out of their way when passing in order to maintain contact, may pass on messages and greetings and so on. In other words they become part of the fabric of the participants' lives (Wrightson 1998).

Setting up good outreach has been crucial. The projects identify CLWs and group leaders in the communities we are working in, and this facilitates the growth of trust between participants and the project staff. Indeed in WIFIP the leaders were selected by the groups themselves, and these groups were based on those already established in some form on the beaches. The provision of ongoing training in PLA for the CLWs and group leaders has also played an influential role.

Each project provides a legitimate group activity in which the participants are encouraged to take the lead, dictating the direction taken, the makeup of the group and the activities. The project plays an ever-changing role in response to the demands of the groups, enabling contact between the groups and other providers, be they other NGOs, local administrative people (government or business) or specialists such as health experts. In other words the projects have been very flexible and recognise that they must look beyond the core of the programme to facilitate development, by enabling the participants to forge ahead according to their own needs and vision.

Most of the project activities are devolved to the local level; the participants enjoy ownership and have created their own momentum. For example in BLSP the original circles have evolved to undertake more of the commissioning and marketing role as well as the writing and reading, and in WIFIP the women themselves organise the beach and health days.

In both cases there is an element of locally generated materials (LGM), although this is much more developed in BLSP. By LGM here we mean that the learners have been encouraged to write their own texts. In BLSP these have taken the form of stories, magazine articles, posters, letters and booklets. In WIFIP it has been through drawing up simple business plans, writing texts for a magazine and recording music for the radio programmes.

In BLSP it is true that print runs have often been quite small, from tens to hundreds, and circulation of these has been largely within the circles and their immediate environs. However the 35 national titles have been piloted in runs of 3000 and a variety of mechanisms for marketing these more widely is being tested. The motivation to continue with reading and writing circles came initially from participants seeing their work in print. This motivation remains, but the confidence and improved skills developed in the process have led to many other initiatives and these now provide momentum to the more evolved circles.

We believe a level of sustainability has been reached. Demand for the programme continues because others in the community can see at close quarters how successful the participants are being. Thus new circles and groups are being created all the time; they repeat the processes but develop uniquely. The process is being transplanted into new environments in Sudan; for example, it is used for peace building in the Nuba mountains.

In WIFIP it is perhaps too soon to talk about sustainability, but the evidence is mounting as it has done in Sudan, that the participants to a great extent hold the future in their own hands. The model is being extended to new beaches, but there is a need for more research into the literacy and numeracy activity that is an unobtrusive but critical element of the programme.

What we have seen in both these projects are processes that change and evolve in response to the needs and vision of the participants. They are about finding a way to make things happen, rather than being restricted by a design that dictates how the programme should be. It can be scary at times, especially when there are funders to please, but so very rewarding.

Rogers et al (1999) note that "it is not easy to build a national programme on many different local literacies—but the creation of a bottom-up diversified development programme meeting agreed goals in different ways in the light of different local circumstances are being developed in other developmental areas such as poverty, and these can be adapted to adult literacy." BLSP and WIFIP are such bottom-up programmes. The evidence is mounting that they can be effectively scaled up and there is certainly potential in Sudan to think nationally.

Acknowledgements

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