

Writing the Wrongs

International Benchmarks on Adult Literacy

BASED ON RESEARCH FUNDED BY
THE EDUCATION FOR ALL GLOBAL MONITORING REPORT 2006 & UNESCO
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David Archer
david.archer@actionaid.org
ActionAid International
Hamlyn House
MacDonald Road
Archway
London
N19 5PG
UK

Lucia Fry
lucia@campaignforeducation.org
PO Box ???
Johannesburg
South Africa

act!onaid
international

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR
EDUCATION
www.campaignforeducation.org

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR
EDUCATION
www.campaignforeducation.org

www.actionaid.org
www.campaignforeducation.org

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The Global Campaign for Education is a coalition of NGOs and trade unions working in over 100 countries for the right to free, good quality education for all. GCE is a member of the UN Girls' Education Initiative, the Global Call to Action Against Poverty and the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS.

This is an independent report and does not necessarily reflect the views of all members.

Regional and international members	National civil society coalitions
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CEAAL	France: Solidarité Laïque
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FAPE	Gambia: GEFA
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Global March Against Child Labour	Indonesia: E-Net for Justice
Ibis	Ireland: Irish GCE Coalition
Inclusion International	Japan: JNNE
NetAid	Kenya: Elimu Yetu Coalition
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	Zam

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHY WE MUST INVEST IN ADULT LITERACY NOW

There are nearly one billion adults who cannot read and write, according to UNESCO statistics. The real figure is probably nearer to two billion¹ and still more if numeracy and the actual use of these skills are taken into account. Most of these are people living in extreme poverty. Almost two-thirds are women, and nearly 1 in 5 is a young person between 15 and 24. Yet these people have been abandoned in recent decades. Although governments worldwide have signed up to a UN goal that promises a 50% reduction in illiteracy by 2015, they are investing scandalously little in programmes to deliver that goal.

Illiteracy is a violation of the fundamental human right to education. But if that is not argument enough, the Global Campaign for Education believes that there are five compelling practical reasons for governments and donors to invest now in adult literacy:

✳ Literacy is vital to reducing gender inequality. Literacy increases women's participation in both private and public spheres, in household decision-making, community affairs and as active citizens in national life. Adult literacy programmes have a dramatic impact on women's self-esteem, empowering them to unlock economic, social, cultural and political resources².

✳ Adult literacy is critical for the healthy development and education of children, especially girls. Each extra year of education for mothers is associated with a significant decline in infant mortality and improved child-health³. More literate parents raise more literate children. Children with parents (especially mothers) who can

¹ Official UNESCO statistics put the figure at 771 million but the figures are notoriously unreliable, depending on self-reporting.

Wherever rigorous measurements are taken the figures are significantly higher.

² See for example, Stromquist 2005, Brown 1990

³ See for example Caldwell 1979, Sandiford 1995, Burchfield 2002, Robinson Pant 2005

BELOW Afghanistan



Jenny Matthews/ ActionAid

read and write stay in school longer and achieve more ⁴.

✦ **Literacy is vital to human and economic development.** Improving literacy levels would deliver significant economic benefits both for individuals and for countries. Multi-country studies show clear connections between literacy levels in a country and both economic output and GDP per capita growth⁵. By the same token, current high rates of illiteracy among women and the poor are limiting the impact of programmes designed to boost livelihoods, improve incomes, protect the environment, deliver clean water, promote civic participation and democracy, and fight killer diseases. Unless the intended target group possesses basic literacy and numeracy skills, many of these programmes will not work properly, and there is even a risk that those who already have power and resources (who tend to be more literate and male) will capture the benefits.

✦ **Literacy is vital for fighting AIDS.** The AIDS pandemic is creating a lost generation of orphans and vulnerable children who are growing up without an education. As the World Bank has warned, if left unchecked this trend could cripple African economies for decades to come. Adult literacy programmes can play a crucial role in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS and enabling communities to respond to a world in which HIV/AIDS affects every dimension of their lives.⁶ Large-scale provision of adult literacy programmes is also essential to provide a safety net of second chance education for AIDS orphans (as well as for the many other young people who are affected every year by war or natural disasters that force them out of school and into harmful forms of child labour).

✦ **Adult literacy programmes work.** Finally, the research contained in this report by the GCE shows that, contrary to conventional wisdom in the donor community, adult literacy programmes can be both affordable and effective.

This is reinforced by recent research, not least the studies commissioned by the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006. This demolishes any remaining excuse for governments and donors to avoid their responsibilities to the world's illiterate youth and adults.

Literacy, in short, is the fertilizer needed for development and democracy to take root and grow. It is the invisible ingredient in any successful strategy for eradicating poverty. Unfortunately, in recent years it has become all too invisible.

The UN Education for All (EFA) goals, as agreed in Jomtien in 1990 and re-affirmed at Dakar in 2000 include a strong commitment to lifelong learning and a promise to reduce illiteracy by 50% by the year 2015. Many practitioners believe, however, that the EFA movement post-Dakar has focused funds and political will almost exclusively on the expansion of formal primary schooling, to the detriment of non-traditional sectors such as adult and early childhood education.

This is not only unacceptable but extremely short-sighted. Education for All will make the greatest contribution to development and poverty reduction if it is genuinely "for all" - targeting all social groups in need of basic skills and knowledge, not just those under the age of 12. Although the task of getting every child into school is both urgent and demanding, the intense effort that is needed to achieve universal primary education need not and should not come at the expense of the other dimensions of EFA. Moreover, as discussed below, adult literacy is intrinsically linked to the success of the other EFA goals. Our research suggests that the EFA literacy goal could be attained with as little as 3% of the Ministry of Education's annual budget.

For some time, governments and donors have taken refuge in the widespread notion that literacy programmes don't work or that you

simply cannot teach adults, at least not in large-scale programmes. This is nonsense. It is contradicted by the successes of many past adult literacy programmes, particularly in post-revolutionary contexts where there was real political will and sustained momentum. But precisely because so few programmes are now ongoing, it has been difficult to find more recent evidence of success, particularly in a simple and practical form that planners and policy-makers can use⁷.

This study is the largest-ever attempt to systematise experience of what works in adult literacy. We analyzed **67 successful literacy programmes in 35 countries** in order to see whether they shared any common features that could be simplified into concrete, hands-on benchmarks or guidelines for policy-makers. Although no one, least of all the GCE, would advocate a 'blueprint' approach to literacy, there was remarkable consensus among the practitioners we surveyed as to the basic ingredients for success. This was reinforced by the positive feedback we received to early drafts of these benchmarks from **142 respondents in 47 countries** (including policy makers and practitioners from governments, NGOs and universities). It turns out that we do know what works in adult literacy programmes and there is no great mystery to it. There are clear steps that can be taken to design and manage good quality, cost-effective programmes – and where this is done they can yield exceptional results.

⁴ See for example Schultz 1991, Carr-Hill 2001, Burchfield 2002, Robinson Pant 2005.

⁵ See for example Bashir and Darrat (1994), Naudé (2004), Cameron 2005

⁶ See for example STAR guidelines, ActionAid 2004

⁷ There are exceptions of course. Some excellent work has been undertaken against the odds by researchers such as HS Bhola, Rosa Maria Torres, Agneta Lind and others referenced in this report.

THE BENCHMARKS

The benchmarks that are set out below are designed to facilitate serious planning to achieve the Dakar 'Education for All' goal of a 50% reduction in adult illiteracy by 2015, which has been endorsed by 185 governments around the world. They have been developed by experts in adult literacy from around the world and are based on responses to a global survey of effective adult literacy programmes. The research process is explained in more detail in Chapter Two.

We hope these benchmarks will provide a starting point for policy dialogue between governments, funding agencies, NGOs, and those adults who have been deprived of their right to education. They might also be used as a checklist against which a government or donor might ask questions about an existing or proposed programme. However, they are not intended as a blueprint or a set of conditions. Our research affirms the widely shared insight of experienced practitioners that the success of any literacy programme depends on flexibility to respond to unique local needs and circumstances.

1. Literacy is about the acquisition and use of reading, writing and numeracy skills, and thereby the development of active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods, and gender equality. The goals of literacy programmes should reflect this understanding.

2. Literacy should be seen as a continuous process that requires sustained learning and application. There are no magic lines to cross from illiteracy into literacy. All policies and programmes should be defined to encourage sustained participation and celebrate progressive achievement rather than focusing on one-off provision with a single end point.

3. Governments have the lead responsibility in meeting the right to adult literacy and in providing leadership, policy frameworks, an

enabling environment and resources. They should:

- ensure cooperation across all relevant ministries and links to all relevant development programmes,
- work in systematic collaboration with experienced civil society organisations,
- ensure links between all these agencies, especially at the local level, and
- ensure relevance to the issues in learners' lives by promoting the decentralisation of budgets and of decision-making over curriculum, methods and materials.

4. It is important to invest in ongoing feedback and evaluation mechanisms, data systematization and strategic research. The focus of evaluations should be on the practical application of what has been learnt and the impact on active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods, and gender equality.

5. To retain facilitators it is important that they should be paid at least the equivalent of the minimum wage of a primary school teacher for all hours worked (including time for training, preparation and follow-up).

6. Facilitators should be local people who receive substantial initial training and regular refresher training, as well as having ongoing opportunities for exchanges with other facilitators. Governments should put in place a framework for the professional development of the adult literacy sector, including for trainers / supervisors - with full opportunities for facilitators across the country to access this (e.g. through distance education).

7. There should be a ratio of at least one facilitator to 30 learners and at least one trainer/ supervisor to 15 learner groups (1 to 10 in remote areas), ensuring a minimum of one support visit per month. Programmes should have timetables that flexibly respond to the daily lives of learners but which provide for regular and

sustained contact (e.g. twice a week for at least two years).

8. In multi-lingual contexts it is important at all stages that learners should be given an active choice about the language in which they learn. Active efforts should be made to encourage and sustain bilingual learning.

9. A wide range of participatory methods should be used in the learning process to ensure active engagement of learners and relevance to their lives. These same participatory methods and processes should be used at all levels of training of trainers and facilitators.

10. Governments should take responsibility for stimulating the market for production and distribution of a wide variety of materials suitable for new readers, for example by working with publishers / newspaper producers. They should balance this with funding for the local production of materials, especially by learners, facilitators and trainers.

11. A good quality literacy programme that respects all these benchmarks is likely to cost between US\$50 and US\$100 per learner per year for at least three years (two years initial learning + ensuring further learning opportunities are available for all)

12. Governments should dedicate at least 3% of their national education sector budgets to adult literacy programmes as conceived in these benchmarks. Where governments deliver on this international donors should fill any remaining resource gaps (e.g. through including adult literacy in the Fast Track Initiative)



TIME FOR ACTION

In the past two decades, as governments have withdrawn from meaningful investment in adult literacy, NGOs – including many of the member organizations of the Global Campaign for Education - have stepped into the gap. NGOs have played an important role and should continue to do so, but only governments can ensure that all citizens, including adults, have access to the quality basic education that is their right. Moreover, improved literacy rates will help governments to achieve their own goals for economic growth, gender equality, and poverty reduction. Governments must therefore re-engage in literacy, with full support from the donor community; and this study shows that for those who are willing, the way forward is clear.

Indeed, these benchmarks have backing from key experts in governments who are still engaged in adult literacy work – from countries as diverse as China, Brazil, Peru, Guatemala, Nigeria, Ghana, Namibia and Ireland. They also have support from a wide range of key people in multilateral and bilateral agencies and from international NGOs, national NGOs, social movements and academics. It has long been known that investing in the education of adults has dramatic economic, social, cultural and political returns for a country. Now that adult literacy programmes have also been shown to be practical, affordable and effective, there is no further excuse to deny adults their chance to learn.



1. THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

There are, officially, 771 million adults in the world, two-thirds of them women, who are classified as “illiterate”. But these figures are notoriously underestimated⁸, and sample studies based on actual tests of reading and writing ability have found illiteracy rates double those reported by governments.⁹ The real number of adults without basic literacy skills may be as high as two billion, or one in three of the world’s people. Many more than that number struggle to read and write well enough to function properly within their society.

There exists a very large overlap between those who cannot read and write and those who live in extreme poverty. Household surveys show that most of the people living on less than \$1 a day are also those who have had little or no access to education and who are unable to read and write.

Research shows that basic literacy makes a powerful difference to people’s chances of escaping from poverty and oppression. Each extra year of education for mothers is also associated with a significant decline in infant mortality and improved child-health¹⁰. Children with parents (especially mothers) who can read and write stay in school longer and achieve more¹¹. Multi-country studies show clear connections between literacy levels in a country and both economic output and GDP per capita growth¹². Adult literacy programmes can play a crucial role in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS and enabling communities to respond to a world in which HIV/AIDS affects every dimension of their lives.¹³

Given the scale of the challenge and the importance attached to ending extreme poverty one would imagine that

addressing adult illiteracy would be one of the global priorities of our time.

It is not.

Women make up two thirds of those who are unable to read and write in the world. This is a symptom of the fact that girls have been disproportionately excluded from education for generations, but it is also a fundamental cause of perpetuating injustice against women. It is difficult for women to challenge traditional gender roles and to be empowered in the modern world when they have no access to the written word. To engage effectively in the marketplace or the public sphere, whether dealing with contracts and title deeds, basic services, government offices, politics or wage slips, one must be able to read and write. Indeed, there is lots of evidence that adult literacy programmes empower women to unlock economic, social and political resources.¹⁴ Similarly, the ability to read for pleasure, write letters or keep a journal can serve as powerful sources of women’s creativity, cultural interaction and self-empowerment. The story of a Burmese refugee below is just one of the many examples of transformation in women’s lives as a result of participating in literacy classes:

“I am the mother of two children. Because I could not read and write, I always had to follow other people. It was like I stayed in the dark. I attended the literacy school, and now I can read and write. And because I can read and write, my eyes are open and bright. I have more knowledge. I can read newspapers and many other kinds of information about refugee issues.”¹⁵

One would imagine that access to basic literacy would therefore be one of the major demands of the women’s movement and a major concern for those committed to gender equality.

It is not.

It has not always been this way. After years of colonialism post-independence governments in Africa, Latin America and South Asia prioritised adult literacy programmes and invested in them. Equally, in post-revolutionary societies from Russia to China, from Cuba to Nicaragua, from Ethiopia to Tanzania, adult literacy campaigns were regarded as highly successful both in helping to transform individuals and to transform societies. In these contexts, adult literacy was seen as playing a key role in improving health and hygiene, in enabling people to participate in community development and public affairs. It was seen to have an impact on infant mortality and maternal health. It helped to build stronger communities and countries.

⁸ UNESCO literacy statistics are largely based on two dubious forms of self-reporting. Firstly there is self-reporting by individuals, for example during censuses when stigma or pride may prevent a truthful answer. Secondly, the statistics depend on self-reporting by governments (often a simple extrapolation from historic school enrolment rates). Those in power are often keen to claim progress even where none has been made. Reducing illiteracy goes down well in the media and at the polling stations.

⁹ See Education Watch reports of CAMPE in Bangladesh and Acao Educativa in Brazil

¹⁰ See for example Caldwell 1979, Sandiford 1995, Burchfield 2002, Robinson Pant 2005

¹¹ See for example Schultz 1991, Carr-Hill 2001, Burchfield 2002, Robinson Pant 2005.

¹² See for example Bashir and Darrat (1994), Naudé (2004), Cameron 2005

¹³ See for example STAR guidelines, ActionAid 2004

¹⁴ See for example, Stromquist 2005

¹⁵ Participant in the literacy programme of the Karen Women’s Organisation quoted in *Fighting Oppression through Literacy: A Case Study of the Karen Women’s Organisation* by Ginger Norwood, ASPBAE: Mumbai, 2003

In itself teaching adults to read and write was seen as a pivotal step in reducing poverty and achieving social justice.¹⁶

However investment in adult literacy programmes has dropped off sharply in the past two decades¹⁷. Governments in the South and North have shifted their focus to educating children. There are 100 million children still out of school and clearly this demands urgent and concerted action. But for every one child out of school there are about ten adults who have never been to school – and they seem to have disappeared off the global radar.

Some development experts see nothing wrong in this. According to them, it is rational and cost-effective to focus on educating the young generation. In this way, they argue, literacy rates will climb upwards

automatically as the older, poorly-educated generations die off and are replaced by successor generations that have benefited from universal primary education. However, this approach relies on a very optimistic account of the prospects for universal primary schooling (UPE). Even in countries where UPE has been highly successful, a significant percentage of children – usually the poorest and most vulnerable children – still drop out of school before they have acquired sustainable literacy skills, a process that usually takes six to nine years of formal schooling according to World Bank estimates. Moreover, waiting for UPE to eliminate illiteracy means waiting perhaps 50, 60 or 70 years before every adult has the minimum tools of reading, writing and numeracy. Even if this was not a gross violation of the rights of hundreds of millions, such a strategy would have unacceptable costs for society:

- **Failure to tackle illiteracy helps to perpetuate gender inequality.** As

long as men have a monopoly on literacy, women will struggle to gain equal access to land, credit, jobs, political office and most other resources¹⁸.

- **Illiteracy among parents undermines the health and education of children,** especially girls. Children with illiterate parents are much more likely to die before they are 5 years old.¹⁹ The home environment is a critical factor in determining the outcomes from schooling. A child who sees no reading or writing going on in her home and receives no help with her homework, will struggle in school.²⁰
- **Lack of literacy skills is holding back development and economic growth in the world's poorest countries.** Countries with lower levels of literacy have lower economic growth and lower GDP per capita.²¹ High rates of illiteracy among women and the poor are limiting the impact of programmes designed to boost livelihoods, protect the environment, deliver clean water, promote

participation and democracy, and fight killer diseases.

- **AIDS will create a growing literacy gap, unless action is taken now.** The AIDS epidemic is creating a lost generation of orphans and vulnerable children who are growing up without an education. As the World Bank has warned, if left unchecked this trend could cripple African economies for decades to come. Large-scale provision of adult literacy programmes is essential to provide a safety net of second chance education for AIDS orphans (as well as for the many other young people who are affected every year by war or natural disasters that force them out of school and into harmful forms of child labour).

Another commonly cited reason for not investing in adult literacy is the claim that adults cannot learn. You can't teach an old dog new tricks.

This is not true. Adults can and do learn. Of course, there are challenges in learning, but as this report shows, when the opportunity to learn is there with proper investment and support, adults do learn.

A related myth is the notion that adult literacy programmes are a waste of scarce resources because they do not deliver sustainable skills. A World Bank researcher claimed in 1994²² that adult literacy programmes only had an effectiveness rate of 12.5% - based on the questionable formula that on average half of the learners drop out, half of those who stay on fail to learn and half of those who do learn lose their skills within a short period for lack of practice. This formula gained currency as an axiomatic truth. However, the research was inherently limited by its failure to consider variables such as the methodologies and approaches used to teach literacy, or the management of the programmes. Some of the programmes from which the data was derived may have failed because they were poorly designed and under-resourced.

By contrast, the research presented in this report shows that as little as \$150 to \$300 per learner, if invested in a well-designed literacy programme, can not only equip an adult with sustainable reading, writing and numeracy skills but can also contribute towards wider empowerment and community development. Moreover, the minimum ingredients for a well-run and successful literacy programme are no mystery; our study shows widespread consensus among practitioners in very diverse contexts around the world. We know what works in adult literacy and it is not difficult to replicate.

This study is based on responses from 67 good quality²³ adult literacy programmes across 35 countries, reinforced by inputs from 142 expert respondents in 47 countries. It turns out that adult literacy programmes can work and there is no great mystery to how. There are clear steps that can be taken to ensure that good quality programmes are supported – and where this is done they can yield remarkable results.

Perhaps the biggest shift that is needed is one of political will. In the past two decades, as governments have withdrawn from meaningful investment in adult literacy, NGOs have stepped into the gap. NGOs have played an important role and can continue to do so but it is ultimately not the responsibility of NGOs to run adult literacy programmes – they have no means of extending services to all adults. Governments have to re-engage and this work shows that for those who are willing, the way forward is clear.

Indeed, the benchmarks outlined and explained here have backing from key experts in governments who are still engaged in adult literacy work – from countries as diverse as China, Brazil, Peru, Guatemala, Nigeria, Ghana, Namibia and Ireland. They have support from a wide range of key people in multilateral and bilateral

agencies and from international NGOs, national NGOs, social movements and academics. This is the largest ever global consultation to establish benchmarks of good practice in the field of adult literacy and represents a unique resource.

The Global Campaign for Education believes that there is now no excuse for countries to avoid investment in the full Education For All agenda, agreed first in Jomtien and then reasserted in Dakar. Investing in the education of adults has dramatic economic, social, cultural and political returns for a country. We know what works in adult literacy and it is incumbent on governments now to deliver. Adults who have been denied education throughout their lives have as much right to education as children.

BELOW Uganda



Gideon Mendel/ Corbis/ ActionAid

¹⁶ The EFA GMR 2006 refers to a paper by J. A. Smyth who claims that the representatives of Western countries in UNESCO/World Bank associated mass literacy campaigns with Eastern Bloc countries. This led to a decision to limit the funding of a major international campaign to 'eradicate illiteracy' since they feared that the political content of mass literacy campaigns would help spread Communism.

¹⁷ Despite the best efforts the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006 has struggled to document trends in aid to adult literacy as it is simply not monitored by most donors. Aid to basic education as a whole has increased but it is widely accepted that aid for adult literacy and government investment in the sector have reduced in the past two or three decades.

¹⁸ See for example, Stromquist 2005

¹⁹ See for example Caldwell 1979, Sandiford 1995, Burchfield 2002, Robinson Pant 2005

²⁰ See for example Schultz 1991, Carr-Hill 2001, Burchfield 2002, Robinson Pant 2005.

²¹ See for example Bashir and Darrat (1994), Naudé (2004), Cameron 2005

²² See Abadzi, World Bank 1994

²³ The programmes were nominated as good quality ones by an initial list of 100 informants who are listed in appendix 1.



2. OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS / METHODOLOGY

There were four key moments in this research:

- identifying good quality literacy programmes (from key informants).
- distributing and consolidating results from a detailed survey of these good quality programmes.
- analysing results in a workshop and proposing benchmarks.
- distributing proposed benchmarks for verification / comment.

The table below outlines the process that we followed and the timeline of this work in more detail.

The breadth of responses and the depth of the information provided about high quality literacy programmes by this survey is unprecedented. All this data will be made available on CD-ROM.

LEFT Uganda

TIMELINE OF THE PROCESS

2004

April	The Research Coordination team for this project was put together by ActionAid and the Global Campaign for Education. This was coordinated by David Archer and included Maria Nandago, Gorgui Sow, Julie Adu Gyamfi, Vera Ribeiro, Maria Khan, Menaka Roy, Nitya Rao and Anne Jellema
July	Proposal submitted to EFA GMR with the following core rationale: "The central goal of this proposed research is to produce a simple framework that will help governments, policy makers and donors address and achieve the adult literacy goal set in Dakar. In doing so it aims to revitalise, and make more strategic, investments in adult literacy".
November 8th	Approval by the EFA GMR / Unesco.
November 10th	Lead researcher recruited – Yaikah Jeng.
November 30th	Development of first draft survey format.
December	Consultation with key people on the survey format.
December	Selecting respondents - 100 informants contacted from across adult literacy sector (governments / NGOs / donors / academics).
December 20th	First circulation of survey to all named respondents (about 300 people in 50 countries).

2005

Early January	Survey sent out again including language versions in French (to 70 respondents) and Spanish (to 80 respondents).
January	Chasing responses; preparing consolidation tables.
February	Compilation of responses / consolidation of data. 67 people finally responded (see Table 1A and 1B below - on responses by region / type / size) – approximately 15% response rate.
February 18th-19th	Workshop in London to analyse responses and develop benchmarks.
February 20th-25th	Benchmarks circulated to small group for final comments.
February 28th	Benchmarks sent out in English to the original list of all respondents and also to all original informants (400 people).
March 3rd	Benchmarks sent out in French and Spanish (150 people).
March 4th-11th	Chasing responses and consolidating them. 142 responses received – approx 25% response rate.
March 14th-18th	Writing first draft of report.
March 18th-31st	Feedback on draft / finalisation of data tables.
April 1st-8th	First full draft report written and submitted.
April 9th-15th	Comments received.
April 18th-22nd	Final draft submitted.
May	Submission of supplementary tables to Unesco / EFA GMR.
June / September	Preparation of this GCE version.

The following tables give an overview of responses, first to the survey and then to the benchmarking process:

RIGHT Afghanistan

TABLE 1A: SURVEY RESPONSES BY REGION AND SIZE

No. of learning groups	Africa	Asia	LAC	Other	Totals
>300 (Big)	7	7	10	2	26
30-300 (Medium)	8	2	3	2	15
<30 (small)	17	3	4	2	26
Total	32	12	17	6	67

Note: There is a full list of all the people who responded to the survey in Appendix 1. For a breakdown of the size of programmes see Table 29, which lists the numbers of facilitators and learners in each programme that responded.

TABLE 1B: SURVEY RESPONSES BY TYPE AND SIZE

No. of learning groups	Govt.	NGO	Totals
>300	10	16	26
30-300	2	13	15
<30	3	23	26
Totals	15	50	67

TABLE 2: BENCHMARK RESPONSES BY REGION AND TYPE

	Africa	Asia	Latin America	US/Europe/ Australia/NZ	Global	Total
Govt	3	2	3	0	0	8
NGO*	28	21	27	12	2	90
Multilateral	2	4	0	0	2	8
Networks	6	0	3	0	0	9
Academics	4	2	4	17	0	27
Totals	43	29	37	29	4	142

* Many of the NGO respondents are working in collaboration with government programmes.

Note: a full list of all the people who responded to the benchmarks process is in Appendix 2.



Jenny Matthews/ ActionAid



Kate Holt / Eyevine / ActionAid

3. THE BENCHMARKS: EVIDENCE AND SUPPORT

The benchmarks that emerged from the GCE / AA process fall under 12 areas:

1. Defining literacy
2. Continuity of learning
3. Governing literacy:
4. Evaluating literacy programmes
5. Facilitator pay
6. Facilitator recruitment and development
7. Ratios and timing
8. Multilingual contexts
9. Participatory methods
10. The literate environment
11. Costs per learner
12. Financing literacy

This section takes each of these benchmarks in turn and outlines:

A. Evidence base / rationale: We outline the evidence that arises from the survey (providing the key data / consolidated tables) and the rationale behind our analysis of the results.

B. Level of support: We detail the level of support that this received when we circulated the proposed benchmarks and include some key comments made by respondents.

BENCHMARK 1. DEFINING LITERACY

Literacy is about the acquisition and use of reading, writing and numeracy skills, and thereby the development of active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods, and gender equality. The goals of literacy programmes should reflect this understanding.

A. EVIDENCE BASE / RATIONALE:

Defining literacy is difficult. Getting any group of people working on literacy to agree to a definition is almost impossible. Whole workshops have been dedicated to the task. The academic literature around cultural meanings of literacy and the theoretical work that emphasizes “multiple literacies”, whilst important, has often led to further confusion for policy makers and practitioners. This benchmarking process could not ignore this and yet we were also determined to find a clear and reasonably simple path. We asked several questions in the survey that approached the question from different angles.

First, respondents were asked to give their own definitions of literacy. Of those who offered expanded definitions:

- 60% made a connection to citizenship, though this was expressed in different ways, including references to political literacy, awareness of rights and capacity to engage with external agencies. As noted by Budd Hall from Canada, “Active citizenship, we have learned, accelerates the pace of learning literacy and other skills.”

- 50% made a direct connection with promoting gender equality or changing gender roles and relations. Again this was expressed in different ways with a significant emphasis on enhancing women’s self-confidence and self-

esteem or participation of women in public spaces. Changing household dynamics and personal development were also mentioned.

- 45% mentioned connections to improved livelihoods or income generation, seeing organic links between literacy and economic development.

Of course many references cut across these, talking about the capacity of people to function in society or contribute to community development. There was a significant thread of respondents who chose to define literacy in explicit relationship with critical analysis, community empowerment and social transformation.

In their comments several respondents emphasized the importance of a rights framework – that literacy should be conceived explicitly as a right. Often the focus was on education / lifelong learning as both a right in itself and an enabling right – one which enables people to access or secure other fundamental rights. This connectedness of literacy to other rights in something we have sought to capture. The concept of “active citizenship” within our definition provides a link to civil and political rights, “improved livelihoods” links to economic rights and “gender equality” touches on social rights. We make a specific reference to a right in the benchmark under governance – relating this right to the responsibility of governments to respond.

The following definitions that were offered give a flavour of the responses:

LEFT Democratic Republic of Congo

“Our organization defines literacy as ‘being citizens’”

Ayuda en Acción, Perú

“Literacy is defined by us as the beginning of an empowerment process for the most disadvantaged men and women, which will over time enable them to participate as citizens, actively, creatively and equally.”

Fe y Alegría, Peru

“Literacy is the ability to function in society with the reading, writing and general knowledge skills that empower the individual and help him /her to know his/her rights and responsibilities as a member of society”

SHARE, South Africa

“Literacy is about developing qualitative competencies and knowledge to be able to resolve vital problems, improve the quality of life and ensure a better future for self and society.”

IRFA, Bolivia

“Literacy is about the capacity to communicate with political bodies including local village forums, local and regional government departments and national and international NGOs!”

Ian, UK

“We see literacy as a social practice embedded in social, cultural, economic and political power relations. Literacy, we believe, holds the possibility of enabling transformative / empowering processes.”

Nirantar, India

TABLE 3: THE IMPACT OF LITERACY ON MDGS

MDGs	Totals
HIV/AIDS halted	21
Improve maternal health	16
Boys & girls primary education by 2015	15
Reduce child mortality	14
Eradicate poverty by 2015	12
Gender disparity in education eradicated by 2005	7
Environmental sustainability	5
Rich and poor partnership	3

Implicit in many responses was the idea that adult literacy is key to the achievement of all other development goals.

In the survey we explicitly asked what evidence people had that their adult literacy programmes had impacted on the different MDGs. There was a low response rate to this question (which was at the end of the long survey) but of the 30 programmes that did respond the following had evidence of impact:

This is perhaps not very compelling evidence (and there are some surprises, such as the low response on girl’s education which is often seen as one of the main impacts of women’s education) but at the very least it shows that respondents felt that there was some impact across the full spectrum of the MDG agenda. It is striking that HIV /AIDS is the most significant connection made.

We also sought to understand people’s conception of literacy by seeing how respondents positioned themselves in relation to a set of key statements about literacy. Table 4 shows some of the statements that we put to respondents and the level of support these received from each region. The strongest support was for the statement: “Our programme teaches literacy not just as a set of skills but as the application of these skills in a variety of development contexts.” This was closely followed by support for the statement: “A literacy programme must

help learners deal with the power issues around the use of literacy in their daily lives”. The third strongest consensus was for the statement: “Just teaching people to read and write alone does not empower people”.

To reinforce this, it is interesting to note that even when it comes to numeracy, respondents emphasized the importance of the use of skills rather than their development in the abstract. When asked about numeracy, 59 respondents agreed that “arithmetic is best learnt through real situations” and 54 people agreed that “numeracy helps people in their daily lives”. This is perhaps particularly striking as mathematics is something that is often strongly associated with formal or abstract skills, detached from normal life.

In the survey we also asked what people considered to be the principal aims of their programme (see Table 5). Whilst teaching literacy was the principle aim, this was followed closely by empowering learners (which clearly links to active citizenship in our benchmark definition), especially empowering women (which links to gender equality) and reducing poverty. There was also significant reference to improving livelihoods under “support for income generation”.

All in all there was a strong consensus that we cannot divorce adult literacy from its uses. Literacy should be conceived in an integrated way and

TABLE 4: Q.29. NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS WHO AGREED WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ON LITERACY

Statements	Africa (32)	Asia (12)	LAC (17)	Other (6)	Totals (67)
Our programme teaches literacy not simply as a set of skills, but as the application of these skills in a variety of developmental contexts.	29	11	15	6	61
A literacy programme must help learners deal with the power issues around the use of literacy in their daily lives so they are not intimidated by reading and writing even if they cannot read well.	29	10	14	6	59
Just learning to read and write does not empower people.	27	10	13	6	56
We recognize that working with oral communication is a big part of our Programme.	29	8	13	5	55
A literacy programme must focus on enabling people to deal with the real uses of reading and writing.	24	7	12	6	49
The learning process and the experience of being in a group is more important than actual literacy skills.	21	8	7	3	39

TABLE 5: Q.12: PRINCIPAL GOALS OF PROGRAMMES

Principal Goals of Programmes	Number of mentions out of total of 67
Teach literacy	59
Empower learners	56
Women’s empowerment	52
Poverty reduction	51
Health promotion	45
Support income generation schemes	42
Education for all	40
Social/Political movement	38
Address HIV/AIDS	28

programmes should be designed to reflect this. The benchmark on defining literacy aimed to capture this complex idea in a simple formulation.

The term “thereby” is used in the benchmark to link the basic skills to other key elements. The intention is not to suggest an automatic cause-effect – but rather to argue that any full conception of literacy cannot ignore these other dimensions (the application of the skills). Just the skills themselves, devoid of their application, would not constitute literacy. The formulation used also seeks to avoid suggesting that active citizenship, gender equality and improved livelihoods depend on or require reading, writing and numeracy skill. Clearly these can be achieved (though arguably with some serious limitations) without doing work on such skills – but that work would not constitute literacy. The conception of literacy that we propose is one that focuses precisely on the interface between the skills and their use. This understanding is what comes through forcefully from the survey.

B. LEVEL OF SUPPORT:

When we put this benchmark back out to people 91% of the respondents in the consultation agreed with it. Some emphasized their agreement with additional comments that provided a particular interpretation, for example:

“Agreed. Literacy in the new century does not only mean somebody can read and write a certain number of words. He or she should be efficient to his/her job and essential life skills, with good manner of behaviour and required morale.”

Basic Education Department, Ministry of Education, PR China

“Agree.... It seems fundamental that there should be something about communication and voice. Literacy is about acquiring certain skills in order to communicate. Hence, literacy programs should be set up in ways that remove barriers to communication.”

Bob Prouty, World Bank

“Agreed. It is absolutely necessary for the success of adult literacy programmes. Illiteracy must be understood as one of the many expressions of poverty and exclusion”.

Ministry of Education, Brazil

The most critical comment came from Dan Wagner in the USA who noted: **“As with many such definitions, this conflates several issues and is thus problematic.”**

Others who disagreed tended to want more added to the definition rather than questioning what was already in it. For example:

“The understanding of the literacy might also include aspects of empowerment, understood as collective organization for development and social transformation”.

Denzil Saldhana, India

Literacy should further include acquisition of values, techniques, attitudes and competencies / skills about management of our environment (social, political and economic).

Andiwo, Ancefa, Kenya

“I would like to see the aspect of basic education that refers to non-vocational life-skills, values and attitudes better reflected in this definition”.

Lindy van Vliet, Novib/Oxfam

“I agree but I don't really think skills is the right word - I think practices is a more accurate term to use”

Cathy Kell, New Zealand

“Literacy also strongly embodies verbal communication skills. This should be reflected in the understanding of all programs. Verbal storytelling, songs, etc. are extremely important in emerging literacy skills. Participants should be encouraged to create/develop their own stories either verbally or through pictures or written language. Our research proves this to be a critical part of the learning process and equally valuable to more structured curriculum.”

Cheyenne Steffen, CIWA, Canada

“It should further focus on life skills development especially in the era of HIV&AIDS: for people to make informed choices and decisions around sex and sexuality, marriage, positive living and the general changes in ideas, beliefs and practices. Literacy shouldn't be just an acquisition of skills, but a life long process of learning and unlearning if one is to become an active citizen.”

Patrick Nganzi, Oxfam, South Africa

BENCHMARK 2: CONTINUITY OF LEARNING

Literacy should be seen as a continuous process that requires sustained learning and practice. There are no magic lines to cross from illiteracy into literacy. All policies and programmes should be designed to encourage sustained participation and celebrate progressive achievement rather than focusing on one-off provision with a single end point.

A. EVIDENCE BASE / RATIONALE:

Adult literacy campaigns have grabbed international headlines, whether in post-revolutionary societies (from Russia to Cuba to Nicaragua), or post-independence as part of nation-building efforts (from Ethiopia to Namibia). But there is a growing recognition that in the absence of dramatic social and political change, one-off campaigns do not work. Even with dramatic changes in wider society, literacy gains are often not secure over time unless there are sustained opportunities.

The most recent mega-campaign was in India in the early 1990s where over 100 million people were mobilized – but short-term success was not sustained and continuity proved a major challenge. Once the initial political and media excitement had worn off the volunteer spirit could not be maintained and an entirely new mechanism was needed to deliver an ongoing education programme.

The adult literacy sector often finds itself between a rock and a hard place. Literacy is so low on the agenda of most politicians that it is tempting to grab their interest with the prospect of quick gains, with results that can generate big headlines and potential votes. The conception of “magic lines” to cross helps this. Yet learning to read and write as an adult takes time and needs to be closely linked with changes in the daily lives of learners (so they are actively using their skills and developing literate

TABLE 6 (Q.16): LENGTH OF LITERACY PROGRAMMES

Literacy Programme	Africa	Asia	LAC	Other	Totals
0 to 3 months	3	1	0	0	4
3 to 9 months	4	2	6	0	10
9 to 12 months	6	3	7	0	16
12 to 18 months	4	1	1	1	7
18 to 24 months	6	1	2	1	10
24 to 30 months	4	1	0	0	10
30 to 36 months	2	0	1	0	3
More than 36m	3	2	0	3	8
TOTAL	32	11	17	5	65

habits). Continuity of learning is now widely seen as the most important ingredient of success.

And it is common sense that there is no magic line ... no single moment when someone converts from illiteracy to literacy. This is now almost universally accepted and yet programme design remains in tension with this basic good sense.

In the survey we asked whether people were using a campaign mode or not. Only one respondent said yes. Almost all the effective literacy work now going on around the world is designed as a programme, not as a campaign. Yet there remains pressure on some governments, especially from donors, to run short-term, quick-return programmes (e.g. the PAEBA programmes in Latin America, funded by the Spanish government) where for a fixed sum you can get a fixed and (apparently) clear return.

We also asked respondents how long their programmes lasted. The average was for over two years. Often this was divided between literacy and post-literacy phases and it was not easy to consolidate the data across these two phases. Whilst we asked about contact hours in the initial phase we did not ask the same about post-literacy phases so we have incomplete

TABLE 7: Q.52. NUMBER OF TIMES LEARNERS MEET PER WEEK IN AN INITIAL PROGRAMME

Number of times learners meet per week	Totals
Once	11
Twice	14
3x	21
4x	12
5x	2
6x	0
Totals	60

data about the overall length of good quality programmes. Table 6 shows the diversity of practice around length of learning processes within initial literacy phases - with many focused on 9-12 months (16 programmes) but even more running from 18-30 months (20 programmes). We were surprised that so many programmes were designed to run for such a length for what was considered to be an initial phase (though definitions of “initial” were not standardized).

The other critical factor here is about regularity of classes. The most common pattern was between two and three meetings a week (see Table 7) – with three being most common.

BELOW Uganda



The average number of contact hours for *initial* literacy was around 300 to 400 hours:

TABLE 8: INITIAL LITERACY, NUMBER OF ACTUAL CONTACT HOURS

Number of contact hours	Totals
0 to 50	6
50 to 100	5
100 to 150	5
150 to 200	7
200 to 300	12
300 to 400	14
400 to 500	9
500 to 600	6
More than 600	2

We concluded that most of the good quality adult literacy programmes that responded involved contact around two or three times a week for about two hours each time for about two years or more. This is often split into different phases or levels (or literacy and post-literacy). Our estimate from the survey is that on average the whole process involves a contact time of about 600 hours over nearly three years.

There was a clear problem here in the survey design because by our very use of the terms “literacy” and “post-literacy” we reinforced the idea of a “magic line”. This is another example of how deeply embedded some assumptions are in the adult literacy field. Several respondents commented that their programmes had multiple levels and could not fit comfortably into these rather archaic definitions.

It is also clear from the comments that although these programmes were broadly considered “good quality” ones (recommended by peers), they themselves were not always doing what they would like to do. Notably, several respondents found that the nature of their project funding limited their continuity and this was amongst their biggest challenges. This is

unsurprising as funding for literacy has depended mostly on external donors and as such has often been tied to specific time-bound projects seeking quick results. There is a contradiction between the funding sources / mechanisms for adult literacy (which require quick proven results) and the need of learners for continuity. The donor pressures for short-termism in adult literacy have perhaps been more dominant in recent years than the political pressures for short-termism – but the effects are the same.

There was a recognition by the research coordination team that challenging short-termism should not mean that we ignore the progressive achievements of learners. It is important for learners to be able to reflect on and celebrate their progress – and even for this to be acknowledged with certificates. But too often, when learners see a single magic line to cross they will give up once they have passed the line. Instead, we should encourage learners to see multiple levels of literacy – always to conceive their learning as ongoing and cumulative.

The benchmark sought to capture all this evidence and analysis as concisely and clearly as possible.

B: LEVEL OF SUPPORT

94% of the respondents agreed with this benchmark. Some of the comments received were:

“Our national literacy programme works on the basis of progressive and sustained acquisition of basic education through a four stage process.”

Ministry of Education and Culture, Paraguay

“There are too many “flash in the pan” efforts to “break the back of illiteracy” that are unsustainable due to inadequate long term planning. This still persists.”

Farrell Hunter, Adult Learning Network, South Africa

“Agreed. It is time to wean the international community off its reliance on literacy/illiteracy dichotomies”

Bob Prouty, World Bank

“Agreed. Literacy learning is only one a part or a facet in the continuum of learning. There can't be a single exit point. There is no exit or end to learning.”

IIZ-DVV, South Africa

“Totally in agreement. Only if we generate long-term actions will we improve on the results obtained up until now.”

National Institute of Adult Education, Mexico

RIGHT Afghanistan



Jenny Matthews/ ActionAid

BENCHMARK 3: GOVERNING LITERACY

Governments have the lead responsibility in meeting the right to adult literacy and in providing leadership, policy frameworks, an enabling environment and resources.

They should:

- ensure cooperation across all relevant ministries and links to all relevant development programmes,
- work in systematic collaboration with experienced civil society organisations,
- ensure links between all these agencies, especially at the local level, and
- ensure relevance to the issues in learners' lives by promoting the decentralisation of budgets and of decision-making over curriculum, methods and materials.

A. EVIDENCE BASE / RATIONALE

This benchmark seeks to address a number of key points in a compact way. The rationale and evidence is thus presented under three sub-sections concerning:

- government responsibility
- civil society roles
- ensuring links and decentralization

GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY

Literacy is a basic right and so the lead responsibility to meet that right has to be with the government. It cannot be the responsibility of NGOs to deliver on a right – nor is it feasible for them to do so. Though NGOs clearly have a significant role to play, the leadership and resources need to be guaranteed by the government.

In practice it is clear that many governments are failing to fulfil their responsibility. In the past 20 years, when public spending on social sectors has been under pressure, governments have shifted scarce resources away from adult literacy and towards primary education. Many NGOs have attempted to assume a

role in delivering adult literacy but most recognize that this is not sustainable or indeed ultimately appropriate. NGOs cannot provide resources on a sustained basis. Dependency on NGOs has contributed to the short-termism and the lack of investment in sustained programmes that presently blights the adult literacy sector and that is addressed elsewhere in these benchmarks. NGOs may of course be very important partners in everything from design to implementation and evaluation but they should not and do not have the lead responsibility for adult literacy. Adult literacy provision cannot, and should not, depend on charity.

Although there is strong support for the idea that governments should take responsibility the question remains: who within government should assume the lead role? Traditionally, Ministries of Education take the lead. However, the pressure on education budgets has meant that often Ministries of Education do not prioritise adult literacy. Other Ministries then step in, recognizing the value of literacy for their own work – whether for community development, women's empowerment or health improvement. Sometimes adult literacy is actively re-located in recognition of its broader impact and potential to integrate different programmes. But continuity becomes a real problem. New governments come in and relocate literacy based on their own agenda or priority – to put their stamp on something or perhaps undermine something that may be

associated with the previous government. Sometimes this is a deliberate attack on an opposition party – whose grassroots cadres may have found easy employment in an adult literacy programme.

The ease with which adult literacy can be moved around is testament again to its “connectedness” across the development spectrum – but it does become a curse. Programmes are often disrupted, contributing to the lack of continuity both of local provision and schemes for capacity building or professional development within the sector.

In the survey of effective literacy programmes we asked about the level of support received from different ministries. Although the Ministry of Education was most often the key government agency mentioned (30 responses), it was common for other ministries to also be involved (even in NGO programmes), notably the Ministry of Gender / Women, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Community or Rural Development (see Table 9).

Where a single Ministry has organized literacy programmes they often have a narrow agenda. For example, programmes run by the Ministry of Education are likely to be framed by a narrower definition of literacy than that which underpins these benchmarks. The only “return” they are looking for is literacy and so standard tests tend to dominate the evaluation process and this distorts any wider agenda.

TABLE 9: Q.4. LEVEL OF SUPPORT FROM VARIOUS OTHER MINISTRIES/ORGANISATIONS

Ministries/Organizations	TOTALS (of 67 respondents)
Ministry of Education	30
Ministry of Gender/Women	24
Ministry of Health	20
Ministry of Community/rural Development	18



Kate Holt / Eyevine / ActionAid

Programmes that operate through single Ministries other than Education may fail to make connections to others and may downplay literacy so much that it disappears off the agenda. However, there were some positive examples given, for example from Peru where the Women's Ministry ran a large scale literacy and empowerment programme with a very integrated conception focused around women's empowerment and social change. This however, took place immediately after the fall of the disgraced former president Fujimori and so took advantage of unique political circumstances under a transitional government (which were not sustained in the longer term).

Our conclusion from analyzing these trends is that, if programmes are to deliver on the wider agenda of active citizenship, improved livelihoods and gender equality then cross-ministerial collaboration is essential. All the different impacts of literacy need to have champions within the

management of the programme – so that all connections can be drawn out. This model is one that was taken on board in the huge literacy programme in India in the 1990s and was considered one of the key ingredients of success in those areas where the programme was most effective.

CIVIL SOCIETY ROLES

When we asked key informants in governments, multilaterals, bilaterals and NGOs to recommend high quality literacy programmes the majority came back with contacts in the NGO sector. There is no doubt that NGOs have assumed a significant responsibility in this sector and have accumulated valuable experience. Even if, as argued above, it is not the responsibility of NGOs, the sector can clearly play a valuable role in helping to design, implement and evaluate programmes.

One of the advantages of NGOs in the adult literacy sector is precisely the same as one of their disadvantages.

ABOVE Democratic Republic of Congo

Most are locally based. They are rarely able to build a truly national coverage and so cannot be depended upon as lead providers. However, in the areas where they are present, NGOs are often firmly rooted and connected in a multi-sectoral way. They often have programmes that link together different development interventions – from income generation to health and education, from gender to governance. They may not have much breadth of coverage but they do have depth and connectedness – and adult literacy is all about connectedness. NGOs can therefore be hugely important partners in adult literacy. They can help connect with local issues and ensure relevance. They can work across the silos that government ministries sometimes get locked into.

There are dangers in recommending links to NGOs. In many countries there is an over-abundance of them, a proliferation of small agencies with

little credibility. There are also some contexts where governments have a remarkable capacity to find like-minded NGOs and ignore all others – with new “GONGOs” (government-organised NGOs) springing up when funds are available for NGOs. For this reason we emphasise the importance of working with experienced civil society organizations, not fly-by-night agencies. Working with credible national alliances or coalitions can be an important way to access experienced and credible agencies.

A second key factor here is to ensure that civil society organizations are not just used to deliver a fixed government programme. The research team discussed various models and examples of collaboration and found that all-too-often NGOs are exploited rather than respected. They are given a delivery function, which does not build on their strengths. NGOs may have a comparative advantage in helping to creatively adapt programmes to local contexts but cannot do so if they are just seen as people to deliver a pre-determined package. NGOs can contribute to strategic planning, methodological innovation, material development, training, implementation, monitoring and evaluation - and should be brought in from the start at both national and local levels.

In the survey we asked about the nature of the partnerships formed between governments and NGOs. We found that about 25% of programmes were fully conceived as collaborations from the start but that almost all programmes effectively involved collaboration. Respondents highlighted collaborations in the following areas:

- development of overall strategy
- decision on methods to be used
- running training workshops
- developing materials
- monitoring and evaluation
- mobilization of learners
- linking literacy and other development programmes.

ENSURING LINKS AND DECENTRALISATION

The collaboration between governments and NGOs was a strong thread through most of the adult literacy programmes surveyed. The precise nature of the collaboration varied a lot but there was strong support for deepening of the collaboration.

Ensuring strong and empowered coordination at the local level was particularly emphasized. In responses to an open-ended question about the key ingredients for success of their programmes, respondents highlighted, above all else, the relevance of their programmes to local issues in the daily lives of learners (see Table 10). The involvement of local facilitators and the use of participatory methods to promote dialogue also featured prominently. The capacity of a programme to achieve this is connected to the level of local control. Typically a centrally-controlled programme might involve producing text books in the capital city or regional town – and this limits the capacity to adapt programmes to the diverse lives of learners. To achieve local relevance, local control of key areas of decision-making is clearly preferable.

The table below also shows three other key ingredients of success that reinforce this point:

- the involvement of diverse government / NGO agencies at a local level,
- community support / active involvement of the wider community, and
- links to local development projects.

It is useful to refer again to the largest adult literacy campaign of recent times, the National Literacy Mission in India. A key ingredient of this campaign was District Level Committees chaired by political leaders and involving people from diverse government agencies, NGOs,

community based organisations, the local media and local business. The campaign was uneven but Denzil Saldhana who followed the campaign closely, suggests that success can be closely mapped to those districts where these committees were empowered and effective.

It is clear that if “relevance to local issues” is to be achieved, then key aspects of adult literacy programmes will need to be decentralised. Notably it will be important to decentralise the development of the curricula, the defining of methods and the production of learning materials. These of course cannot happen without significant control over budgets and decision-making at local level.

Table 10 reinforces this point by highlighting “participatory methods / dialogue” as the third most crucial ingredient of success. Whilst participatory methods can be promoted to some extent centrally, through training, there will be serious limits unless such methods are locally owned and can be adapted to diverse local contexts.

Two further tables from the survey provide interesting insights into this. Table 11 looks at who is involved in the development of learner materials in good quality literacy programmes. There is a very strong emphasis on the local production of materials – by trainers, facilitators, local experts and learners themselves.

Another survey question asked what sources of information were used for the development of learning materials (see Table 12 below). Participatory assessment with learners and research into local needs are highlighted – once again reinforcing the importance of decentralization:

TABLE 10: KEY INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS OF PROGRAMME

Rank	Key ingredients for success of programme	No. of responses
1	Relevance of issues addressed to daily life	34
2	Local facilitators – commitment and connection to learners	28
3	Participatory methods / dialogue	22
4	Quality of initial and ongoing training / support to facilitator	21
5	Learner control of the process	18
5	Community support / active involvement of wider community	18
7	Link to local development projects	13
7	Involvement of diverse local agencies / govt and NGO	13
9	Government recognition / support / political will	10
9	Close monitoring and evaluation	10
9	Continuity of provision / follow up learning opportunities	10
12	Respect of facilitators towards learners / non-condescension	6
13	Locally developed materials	5
14	Flexibility of the programme to adapt to changing conditions	4
14	Conception of process as liberating / transforming	4
15	Continuity of funding	3
15	Paying facilitators	3
15	Strong reputation of implementing organisation	3
18	Efficient / timely distribution of materials	2
18	Regular supervision and support of facilitators	2
18	Quality of learning materials	2

NB: Many others received one mention

TABLE 11: Q.83. DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNER MATERIALS: WHO CONTRIBUTES

Who contributes to the development of learner materials	Totals
Trainers	24
Facilitators in workshops	18
Local experts in literacy	18
Learners	10
Other project staff	8
Facilitators, individually	6
Agency experts in literacy in the capital city	5
State/national resource centres	4
Experts in other development needs	2
Local experts in other development areas in capital city	3

TABLE 12: Q.84: SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR LEARNING MATERIALS

Source of information for learning materials	Totals
Participatory needs assessment with learners	53
Research into local development needs	50
Evaluation of previous interventions	43
Research into social practices	40
Academic literature	28
Other (existing materials, local culture & traditions)	7

B: LEVEL OF SUPPORT

92% of respondents gave strong endorsement of this benchmark. There was a range of useful insights and comments.

In respect of **government responsibility**, there were some useful reminders that literacy is a constitutional right in many countries, for example:

“Our constitution establishes the right to free basic education and therefore the government is obliged to guarantee it.”

CIAZO, El Salvador

“The South African constitution places the responsibility to deliver adult basic education at the door of government, yet adult basic education remains the most marginalised sector in South Africa”

Farrell Hunter, ALN, South Africa

“The government have under performed in promotion of adult education in the country and its high time for the government to take leadership in promotion of adult and continuing education”

Elimu Yetu Coalition, Kenya

There were some voices that stressed the importance of spreading responsibility, for example:

“While I have no difficulties with the above, the responsibility lies with the entire actors including the illiterates themselves. While the government should go beyond lip-service, both political and administrative will is important, In addition I consider that both professional will and popular will have to be enhanced.”

Akihiro Chiba, Unesco Japan

There was particularly strong support for **cross-ministerial collaboration**:

“For this to be accomplished, a National Policy Framework for Integrated Literacy is required”.

Emily Vargas Baron, former USAID, RISE, USA and Colombia

“The Government of Namibia supports cross-ministerial collaboration on adult learning and other related areas, hence the creation of a National Policy on Adult Learning (2003)”.

Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC), Namibia

“This calls for more efforts in educating and conscientising governments to understand the need for linking budgets etc. Literacy should be seen as a cross cutting issue in all ministries whether agriculture, health or trade if economic development is to be achieved. The starting point is to contextualise literacy in terms of controlling the spread of HIV and in terms of accelerating public health, conservation, natural resources management etc.”

Patrick Nganzi, Oxfam, South Africa

“This should not be left to goodwill of politicians and ministry leaders but must be structured, and institutionalised to allow for genuine, constructive and predictable collaboration between different departments of government.”

ANCEFA

There was equally strong support for a **civil society role**, though Budd Hall from Canada was one of several who highlighted challenges faced in achieving this:

“There still exists, unfortunately, places where the relationships between the state and civil society are uncomfortable. Government-led coordination in such cases would not be effective or appropriate”.

Budd Hall, Canada

“Unfortunately most governments engage external consultants who have no experiences with local context and the academia who are completely out of touch with local needs”.

James Kanyesigye, Pamoja, Uganda

“There has been collaboration with civil society in the past but which was not systematic. We have launched a new approach on improving this partnership.”

Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, Namibia

“Some NGOs, in order to survive financially will submit to deliver anything the State offers without any concern about the effectiveness of methodologies used.”

Maritza, CIAZO El Salvador

“Yes the links should be maintained, however, let the civil society and NGOs also be organised in networks to make the governments work easy and coordination possible.”

Patrick Nganzi Oxfam S Africa

“This can be difficult to put in practice in countries where government and civil society relations are weak”

Halima Begum, DFID UK

“The collaboration should be in spirit also and not merely a routine exercise”.

Niraj ActionAid India

“I do agree from the bottom of my heart. Unfortunately, incapacity, ignorance and other failures on the side of functionaries of state often make them unfriendly towards the expertise of civil society”

IIZ-DVV South Africa

Despite these concerns there was significant support for civil society involvement from government respondents, perhaps most notably from China:

“Agreed. The efforts of various agencies need to be well coordinated.”

Basic Education Department, Ministry of Education, PR China

There was also strong support for the idea of **decentralization** although there was a recognition of challenges this poses in practice:

“This is very important as it helps in many ways such as developing ownership and accountability as well as sustainability of the programs”

Maarifa, Tanzania

“Yes, but does need some thinking about what kinds of partnerships can be achieved and what they mean not only in terms of their ideal but their reality in ways of working and reflecting power, resources and status imbalances,”

Sheila Aikman, Oxfam

“Far too little collaboration exists between CSO's and government. Adult Basic Education Boards exist in some provinces but meet too infrequently and the engagement doesn't deal with fundamental matters relating to planning, implementation and evaluation”.

Farrell Hunter, ALN, South Africa

“Agree somewhat. Decentralisation of budgets is a worthy goal, but there remains a central responsibility in terms of ensuring equity of access.”

Bob Prouty, World Bank

“We can say that are on the right path so far. The MBESC is fully decentralized, but we have been a bit slow on adoption of the curricula, methods and materials mainly due to lack of some capacities at Regional level, but this too, is being addressed”

Ministry of Education, Namibia

BENCHMARK 4: EVALUATING LITERACY PROGRAMMES

It is important to invest in ongoing feedback and evaluation mechanisms, data systematization and strategic research. The focus of all evaluations should be on the practical application of what has been learnt and the impact on active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods and gender equality.

A. EVIDENCE BASE / RATIONALE

The survey showed that monitoring and evaluation is an area where many good programmes feel challenged. Resources are scarce and those that are available go into implementation. Governments and donors rarely adequately earmark funds to properly document their programmes. This perpetuates the gaps in our knowledge about the effectiveness of adult literacy and lays the sector open to continual challenge.

We asked respondents to identify what types of evaluation had been made of their programmes. Table 13 below consolidates the results from all 67 respondents. It shows that on average most programmes have been externally evaluated just once (and sometimes twice). There have been peer evaluations of programmes on average twice (usually involving someone from the same organisation in another country, or from a like-minded programme). Most programmes have had about three internal evaluations or have promoted self-evaluations by learners about three times.

It is worth remembering that these are the programmes regarded as high quality or effective adult literacy programmes by our initial set of informants. It is likely that they have been evaluated more than other programmes ... partly because evaluations may have been a factor in attracting the attention of the key informants, but also because good evaluation is widely regarded as a

factor in determining the quality of a programme. Despite the fact that these programmes have invested something in evaluation, most are not satisfied about the extent of their work in this area. After all, having an average of just one external evaluation of a programme (when that programme may have been running for several years) is not the sign of a systematic investment in evaluation.

When we asked respondents to identify those areas that they considered to be most in need of additional investment (see Table 14 below), research and evaluation figured as a significant priority (ranked 5th below), with supervision and management also highlighted (ranked 6th below). [Other insights from this

table are addressed under other sections.]

We were also keen to know more about the focus of evaluations and how this related to the conception or definitions of literacy programmes. There are many examples of adult literacy programmes that have ambitious objectives but which, when evaluated, look only at success in narrow or traditional terms. The effect of this over time is often to undermine the wider objectives of programmes as learners, facilitators, coordinators and administrators come to recognize that they will be judged only by performance in tests. If a more expansive conception of literacy is used then evaluations must reflect this.

TABLE 13: Q.13. NUMBER OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF EVALUATION CONDUCTED

Type of evaluation	Africa	Asia	LAC	Other	Total
External/independent evaluation	27	19	31	8	85
Peer evaluation	42	56	25	7	130
Internal evaluation	51	74	54	22	201
Self-evaluation by learners	127	20	55	14	216

TABLE 14: Q.105 & 108. MAJOR PRIORITIES FOR INVESTMENT IF MORE FUNDS WERE AVAILABLE

Rank	No. of responses	
1	Training / professional development of facilitators	28
2	Pay / salary for facilitators	22
2	More / better reading materials	22
4	Linking literacy to development projects / Income generation (start up funds for projects etc)	15
5	Better research / evaluation	12
6	Improved management / supervision	10
7	Funds for continuing provision / continuity	7
8	Eye tests	4
9	Basic furniture / equipment	3
9	Publicity / advertising	3
11	IT facilities	2
12	Government recognition	2

In the survey we asked people what they considered to be the most important and evident outcomes of their literacy programmes. Table 15 consolidates the results from this question (which was completed by 50 respondents), showing the number of times that programmes mentioned something as being an important evident outcome. In the light of the breadth of these responses it would seem unwise for evaluations to have a narrow focus as they will inevitably miss out areas of impact that existing literacy programmes consider to be important. The impact on gender equality (including girls education) and people's access to information, their awareness and capacity to assert their rights are notable.

Table 16 builds on this and provides a breakdown of all the areas of impact that people feel they have evidence about (not just the most important or common). We asked respondents to break this down by the type of evidence (from published research to personal observation or self-evaluations of learners). In terms of personal observation, most respondents felt that there was an impact across a very wide area but generally they had evidence

(from external reviews or research) of less than half of these.

It is clear that owing to the shortage of investment in this area, many practitioners and policy makers lack the evidence to back up their own personal observations. In their narrative

comments some expressed a lack of confidence in how to undertake effective monitoring and evaluation in ways that respect a wider conception of literacy. This should be a priority area for training and learning – popularising simple but effective approaches.

TABLE 15: Q.96. MOST EVIDENT OUTCOMES OF LITERACY PROGRAMMES

Learning Outcomes	Total (out of 50)
Greater equality between sexes	34
Attendance of schools by girls	28
Improved health practices	25
Better uptake of immunisations	23
Increased knowledge of agriculture	23
Increased knowledge of health	19
Ability to help with homework	19
Increased knowledge of income-generation	17
HIV/AIDS infection decreased	16
Greater awareness of rights	14
Greater social/community cohesion	15
Confidence in public speaking	14
More effective use of local development funds	12
Confidence in defending one's own rights	10
Building/strengthening local Organizations	11
Increased accountability of local governments	10
Learners taking leadership roles in local orgs.	9

TABLE 16: Q.97. EVIDENCE OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

	Published research	Peer review	External evaluation	Personal observation	Self -evaluation by learners
Greater equality between sexes	19	19	15	37	23
Girls attend school	14	17	14	41	14
Imp. Health practices	20	15	16	44	24
Immunisations inc.	18	13	16	45	17
Increased knowledge: agriculture	16	18	23	34	23
Increased knowledge: health .	18	18	15	43	24
Help with homework	15	11	20	41	16
Increased knowledge: income-gen.	16	16	19	38	22
HIV/AIDS infections decreased	16	12	12	31	15
Greater awareness of rights	22	16	13	38	24
Greater social cohesion	13	15	18	40	22
Public speaking	15	15	15	43	23
Local development funds affected	11	15	16	36	14
Defending one's rights	13	13	15	43	22
Building/strengthening local orgs	13	16	16	37	21
Increased accountability of local govt	10		11	32	16
Learners taking leadership positions	19	22	16	42	20

B. LEVEL OF SUPPORT

Some 94% of respondents agreed with this benchmark. The importance of investing in evaluation and research was emphasised by three respondents:

“This is an excellent idea, but seldom put into practice. It would be good to put this item as part of the requirements for literacy programs”.

Dan Wagner, US

“This needs to be a strong part of the budget. Without the budget for accomplishing this kind of research and reporting, the work becomes difficult and stressful for the service providers and management team”.

CIWA, Canada

“Data should be originated at the group level in a participatory manner and linked to goals of literacy set by the learners. Learners should be allowed to analyze the data. External evaluation should, by and large, rely on such analysis for data and information”.

Roshan, World Education, Nepal

There were a couple of dissenting voices regarding the proposed focus of evaluations:

“This makes little sense to me. There are very few evaluations of utility. To put 'all' in a particular domain makes the field look silly”.

Dan Wagner, USA

“The impact on individuals may not be in the areas outlined above, but in other ways not foreseen by planners”.

Kimberly Safford Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, London, UK

However, most respondents were strongly in favour that the focus of evaluations should be linked to the expanded definition of literacy:

“Agreed. Literacy programmes must be based on competencies and skills as outcomes of set objectives but not on learning objectives alone; what people are to do or accomplish as a result of their participation in literacy programmes should be the benchmark of any evaluation”.

Andiwo Obondoh, ANCEFA Kenya

“Evaluation should look beyond acquisition of literacy skills, narrowly defined, to broader impact evaluation (including such things as changed behaviour on the part of program participants, whether they become 'literate' or not). For instance, some evidence seems to suggest that mere participation in literacy programs is linked with changes in health-seeking behaviour. This sort of impact would be useful to track, and may mean that there are important outcomes of these programs that traditional evaluation don't capture”.

Bob Prouty, World Bank

Several respondents also made suggestions about how evaluations in practice should have an even more comprehensive approach, particularly around the analysis of gender roles:

“Agreed, but also evaluation needs to be based on strong gender analysis in order to provide good quality understandings of learners and programme providers' understandings of concepts and practices surrounding 'citizenship', livelihoods etc”.

Sheila Aikman, Oxfam, GB

“Agreed, but go even beyond that by trying to evaluate the impact on, for example, changed positions of women in a community, region, country; the degree of community involvement/ organization; the rise/fall in participation of children of new-literates in education etc”.

Lindy van Vliet, NOVIB

“It needs to go further than that and seek to evaluate more complex invisible learning, such as identity and roles and practices etc”

Institute of Education, London, UK

“In evaluations we need to see the practical application of the skills in dealing with HIV&AIDS on top of gender equality, civil participation etc.”

Patrick Nganzi, Oxfam, South Africa

BELOW Bangladesh



Mahmud/ActionAid



Liba Taylor/ ActionAid

BENCHMARK 5: FACILITATOR PAY

To retain facilitators it is important that they should be paid at least the equivalent of the minimum wage of a primary school teacher for all hours worked (including time for training, preparation and follow-up).

A. EVIDENCE BASE / RATIONALE

The quality of the teacher is probably the most critical factor in determining the quality of any learning process. Other resources may be present – lovely rooms, stimulating materials, good quality equipment – but the person who guides the learning process is crucial in determining whether good use is made of these. In adult literacy the term “facilitator”, “animator” or “tutor” is often used instead of teacher. This is partly to emphasise that a different pedagogy is required with adults, who come to the learning process with much experience and knowledge and who should command respect (the same, of course, may be said of children but that is another story). What seems evident is that any adult literacy programme will only be as good as the facilitators it can attract, train and retain.

The pay for facilitators is one of the most sensitive issues in the whole adult literacy sector. Many famous campaigns have celebrated the volunteer spirit and many programmes try (often with less success) to replicate or sustain this. Often volunteerism becomes an economic necessity for under-funded literacy programmes. Inevitably this brings with it issues of continuity. Sometimes the attempts to justify this become problematic. Pressure is put on poor people to volunteer as facilitators “out of community spirit”, whilst middle class professionals and administrators running programmes are taking comfortable salaries.

We asked respondents about their present practice (see Table 19) and found that half were paying an honorarium or stipend, a quarter were paying the minimum wage and about a fifth depended on volunteers.

We then asked about levels of the pay (whether honorarium, stipend or wage) in relation to primary school teacher salaries (rather than the generic “minimum wage”) and found that most programmes were paying between a quarter and a half of a basic primary school teacher salary (for hours worked)- with almost all other programmes paying less than a quarter (Table 20).

Given this low rate of pay it is perhaps unsurprising that many programmes suffered from a significant turnover of facilitators (See Table 21).

However, the above table also shows that there are many facilitators who do stay on for over three years. This is perhaps proof that there are many other incentives that drive facilitators beyond the pay they receive. Table 22 shows the main forms of additional incentives that programmes mentioned. Non-material benefits were most notable: the appreciation of learners and increased status in the community.

Facilitator pay was an issue of major concern for respondents. Asked what their priority would be for investment should more resources be available, increasing the pay of facilitators was the second most common response (see Table 14). This, together with a basic sense of justice, led us to make the recommendation in this benchmark that facilitators should be paid at a rate equivalent to the minimum wage for primary school teachers for hours worked. This recommendation is clearly linked to the call (in benchmark 6) for improved training and professional development of the sector.

TABLE 19: Q.58. AVERAGE PAY FOR FACILITATORS

Average pay	Total
None	13
Honorarium / stipend	32
Equivalent to minimum wage	17
> Minimum wage	5

TABLE 20: COMPARISON WITH PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS PAY

Pay comparison	Totals
< _	24
_ - _	36
_ - _	2
_double	2
>double	1
Same	1

TABLE 21: Q.61. LENGTH OF TIME A FACILITATOR STAYS WITH A PROGRAMME

Length of time	Totals
0-3 months	0
3 to 6	0
6 to 9	5
9 to 12	10
1 to 2 years	8
2 to 3 years	11
> 3 years	28

TABLE 22: Q.60. INCENTIVES FOR FACILITATORS (ONLY THOSE RANKED AS NUMBER 1)

Additional pay for results	8
Access to credit	7
Access to FE	8
Certificate of training	8
Increased status in the community	11
Show of appreciation by learners	20
Provision of food parcels	5

LEFT Gambia



ABOVE Afghanistan

B. LEVEL OF SUPPORT

92% of respondents agreed with this benchmark with many people underlining this agreement very strongly.

“Adult literacy instructors should get a better deal and not just be treated as part timers who have no job security”.

C E Onukaogu, Nigeria

“I strongly agree. They should receive ample training and good working conditions. They should preferably be government accredited teachers or given the possibility to become accredited government teachers”.

Federique Boni, Education International

“In South Africa more than 90% of educators work on short-term contracts and minimal hours of work with no basic work benefits enjoyed by mainstream educators”.

Farrell Hunter, ALN, South Africa

“To become sustainable, facilitators must be paid. For too long many have depended entirely upon volunteer labour. The difficult challenge is to secure government and international agreement to provide expanded budgets for integrated literacy programmes”.

Emily Vargas Baron (RISE, former USAID)

Some respondents stressed important issues about connecting this with increased training and professional development (as addressed in the next benchmark):

“If we're going to try to get facilitators paid like primary school teachers, don't they need to be trained at least as much?”

Bob Prouty, World Bank

Finally there were a few comments, which recalled the importance of volunteerism, the first of which directly questions the capacity of developing countries to pay:

“Developing countries cannot sustain wages. Voluntarism should be encouraged. Incentives must be given to them.”

National Functional Literacy Programme, Ghana

“This would help facilitators feel recognised and have a greater sense of self-worth but it is no substitute in the end for commitment of people to their work”.

Maritza, El Salvador

“I agree. However, where there is a will for voluntarism and a capacity to foster it, this should be encouraged, as in the literacy campaigns in India”.

Denzil Saldhana, India

“Agreed in part. But it does depend on their level of qualification and the training they undertake ... otherwise one runs the risk of disqualifying primary school teachers. What is needed is to recognise that literacy work requires professional training and cannot be undertaken by people as an act of charity or goodwill.”

Ministry of Education, Brazil

BENCHMARK 6: FACILITATOR RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Facilitators should be local people who receive substantial initial training and regular refresher training, as well as having ongoing opportunities for exchanges with other facilitators. Governments should put in place a framework for the professional development of the adult literacy sector, especially for trainers / supervisors - with full opportunities for facilitators to access this (e.g. through distance education).

A. EVIDENCE BASE

Beyond the issue of pay, there are many factors to consider in the recruitment and development of facilitators. For example, who should be the target for recruitment? Some high profile campaigns in the past have depended on linking urban middle classes with the rural poor (e.g. Nicaragua), making much of the fact that this became a two-way learning process. But in many other contexts programmes have emphasized the proximity between learners and facilitators.

We asked existing good quality adult literacy programmes whether their facilitators were the same, similar or different from learners in three respects: their location of residence, their socio-economic status and their cultural group (see Table 17). We found the following:

It is clear that a significant majority of programmes use facilitators from the same community or neighbouring community. In part of course this is sheer logistics. It is difficult to recruit anyone to do part-time work (as adult literacy teaching tends to be) if they have to commute a long distance. Facilitators also tend to come from the same or similar cultural group as learners. There is slightly more divergence with regards to socio-economic status. In part this may be because facilitators inevitably have

TABLE 17: Q.39. SIMILARITY OF BACKGROUND OF FACILITATORS AND LEARNERS

Socio-economic status	Totals
Same	11
Similar	23
Different	10
Cultural group	Totals
Same	25
Similar	27
Different	7
Location of residence	Totals
Same	28
Neighbours	11
Same district	10
Other	6

NB: some respondents answered one or two parts of this and not all, so total numbers vary.

some level of basic education – and education is widely perceived as a key determinant of social status. So, it is unlikely that someone who is able to be a facilitator will be perceived as having the same socio-economic status as learners.

These responses made it logical to include a benchmark emphasizing proximity. This was reinforced by the responses to the open-ended question about “key ingredients of success” (see Table 10). The second most popular ingredient was seen as having “local facilitators who have commitment and are connected to learners”

Another key factor to consider is the educational level of facilitators. Do facilitators need to have a high level of formal education in order to be good teachers? We asked programmes about the average level of schooling of

the facilitators they use and we found a diversity of responses (see Table 18). Most have completed only primary education or lower secondary education but some have very little formal education themselves and some are graduates. This led us to conclude that whilst facilitators clearly should have a basic level of literacy, they do not need to have achieved a specific educational level. We therefore avoided including this within a benchmark – though it is worth noting that by default we adopt a position that facilitators should not be excluded based on their prior academic level.

TABLE 18: Q.65. LEVEL OF SCHOOLING OF FACILITATORS

Level of Schooling of Facilitators	Totals
1-3 yrs primary	11
Completed primary	26
Lower secondary	18
Upper secondary	7
University	5

Rather than focus on the prior schooling levels of facilitators, we chose to emphasise training and professional development. Unfortunately, the lack of sustained government investment in adult literacy in recent decades means that there are now very few countries with functioning systems for the professional development of people in the sector. Rather there are ad hoc systems to train and recognize staff involved in NGO programmes. There is little sense of career progression and no systematic certification or professionalisation of the sector. When governments do show interest in adult literacy the desire for quick returns and the culture of short-termism means that they rarely invest in longer-term capacity.

There is of course a link here to the question of pay. Even in a country like Namibia, which has made a sustained commitment to adult literacy since independence, there are systemic problems. Facilitators “are normally contracted for 8 months in any given year, according to our new Literacy Cycle, and remunerated for their services” (Ministry of Education, Namibia). Clearly it is hard for anyone to make a long-term commitment to being a facilitator if they only have a job for 8 months of each year.

This benchmark also emerged from the fact that, when consulted over the priorities programmes had for further investment (if funding was to become available) the most commonly given priority was for more training and professional development of facilitators (see Table 14).

In the absence of professional development in the adult literacy sector, most programmes depend on short-term training. We were keen to understand existing practices amongst good quality adult literacy programmes to see if we could define some minimums – until professional development of the sector really takes off (See Table 23). It was interesting to note the strong correlation between the amount of training given locally to facilitators and the training given nationally to trainers. The model

TABLE 23: Q.67. LENGTH OF INITIAL TRAINING FOR FACILITATORS

Length of training	Totals
0 to 5 hours	0
5 to 10	1
10 to 20	1
20 to 40	10
40 to 60	9
60 to 80	19
80 to 100	4
100 to 150	21
>150	2

seems to be set by the practices followed in national workshops for training of trainers and then copied at local level for facilitators even though the challenges and context may be very different.

We found that, for all but two programmes, the minimum training time was 20-40 hours (three to five days) with 60-80 hours (about two weeks full time) being common and 100-150 hours (nearer to a month) being the most common reported time for initial training. Given the diversity, we grappled with whether to establish any benchmark. It was considered an important area to establish some minimum reference and at first we were tempted to propose “at least 14 days”. However, there were some strong reactions:

“The initial training should be more than 14 days - make it at least three months”

ANCEFA

“This is a formula that does not work for everywhere . . . a year’s training may work better in some jurisdiction for example”

Budd Hall, Canada

“I think there is no way adults can have a quality learning experience with a facilitator who has had 14 days training. An absolute minimum of one year of training is needed. Poor quality adult education/literacy work is criminal.”

Gwyneth Tuchten, South Africa

This led us eventually to put in the more general statement referring to “substantial” initial training.

After this initial training, facilitators usually receive follow up or refresher training at varying intervals. Once every three months was most common (See Table 24).

Many people emphasized that formal follow up training was less important than informal support structures

TABLE 24: Q.70. REGULARITY OF FOLLOW-UP TRAINING AFTER INITIAL TRAINING

Training	Totals
1x/week	5
1x/2weeks	2
1x/month	7
1x/2month	9
1x/3month	21
Other	16

between facilitators – the creation of local forums for exchange of experience and mutual support. These might meet very regularly at first (even weekly) and less regularly as the programmes settles down. Table 25 shows that monthly meetings were the most common practice with many programmes bringing facilitators together even more regularly. In part these forums provide a space to share problems with peers. But also they give facilitators a sense of being part of something larger ... it breaks their isolation and builds their sense of belonging.

TABLE 25: Q.71. FORUM FOR EXCHANGE OF IDEAS AMONGST FACILITATORS

Forum meeting	Totals
Every week	11
Every 2 weeks	13
Every 4 weeks	23
Every 6 weeks	6
Every 8 weeks	4
Every 12 weeks	4
Every 6 months	3
Every year	2

Finally, it is worth looking back at Table 10 on the “key ingredients of success” where respondents placed “quality of initial and ongoing training and support for facilitators” high up their agenda (as the 4th most common response).



Mahmud/ActionAid

B. LEVEL OF SUPPORT

89% of respondents agreed with this the focus on using local people as facilitators, though this also attracted many comments:

“This should not discount the possibility of having external facilitators who have lived in the community and know the community well. Of course, this should be in agreement with the community”.

**Carolyn Medel-Anonuevo
UIE Germany / Philippines**

“Agreed but there may be cases where a facilitator with a wider background and set of insights can complement the local”.

Sheila Aikman, Oxfam GB

“My experience is that strong commitment and good training can be more important than the mere fact of being local and from a similar socio-economic background.”

Ministry of Education, Brazil

“Agreed ... but we must take into account gender aspects – with a focus on female facilitators considering the enormous empowering and gender stereotype-challenging effect this has on women and their communities”.

Lindy van Vliet, Novib

“I am doing my own research into this at the moment. Sometimes people learn better from difference. The local community should be involved in choosing, but may well choose someone from outside.”

Juliet Millican, UK

In respect of the importance of training and support for facilitators, 92% of respondents were in agreement, with particular attention focused on ongoing training and support rather than the initial training:

“It is fundamental for facilitators to meet regularly to share both their successes and the ways they have overcome so called failures”

Fundacion Gamma, Colombia

“Refresher training is very important. The design of this refresher training is even more important. It should be flexible enough to answer the problems facilitators encounter in their daily work”.

Niraj, ActionAid India

“There should be local, regional and national forums of literacy workers for professional exchange and advocacy”.

Roshan, World Education Nepal

In respect of the importance of longer-term professional development, 93% of respondents were in agreement. Comments included:

ABOVE Bangladesh
“Designing a progressive career path may also help in retaining the facilitators”
Hasan al faroquee, Bangladesh

“Certification and a career progression route are crucial if programmes are to attract the kinds of facilitators that can work flexibly and creatively. Without the ability to learn and build on experience facilitators are likely to be people who can only follow pre-designed primer based programmes”.

Juliet Millican, UK

“Tertiary Institutions need to develop close collaboration with governments, civil society etc for the development of undergraduate courses”.

Sereima Lumelume, Fiji

“For adult literacy facilitators to access professional development programmes and qualifications is just as crucial as for trainers and supervisors, as they are the ones who need the expertise to work effectively with adult literacy learners. In situations where distance education is the only realistic way for this to happen, then it is important to emphasise the need for interactive approaches, with opportunities for peer collaboration and support”.

Institute of Education, London



Stuart Freedman/ ActionAid

BENCHMARK 7: RATIOS AND TIMING

There should be a ratio of at least one facilitator to 30 learners and one trainer / supervisor to 15 learner groups (1 to 10 in remote areas), ensuring a minimum of one support visit per month. Programmes should have timetables that flexibly respond to the daily lives of learners but which provide for regular and sustained contact (e.g. twice a week for at least two years)

A. EVIDENCE BASE

FACILITATOR / LEARNER RATIOS

From the survey we drew out the following data (Table 29), which looks at the overall number of facilitators employed in programmes compared to the overall number of learners. From this we have defined a ratio. This may be a little misleading at times because in some programmes facilitators work with more than one group of learners, but in human resource planning terms it is certainly a useful indication of patterns within existing good quality programmes.

In total only six programmes (less than 10% of respondents) end up with a ratio of more than 1-30. It feels safe to assume that programmes like PAF in Zambia and DAM in Bangladesh do not involve class sizes of 93 ... and that these programmes routinely have one facilitator teaching more than one group. The average ratios above are inflated by this (especially in Asia where GGA Pakistan and NDF Philippines also have high figures). However, even allowing for these we see a pattern with class sizes being only just over 30 in Asia (1 to 31) and lower in Africa and Latin America (1 to 23). In Western countries ratios are very small (1-7). It therefore seems reasonable to propose that programmes should work with a maximum ratio of 1 to 30. We have included this in the final benchmarks

LEFT Somaliland

TABLE 29: Q.14. RATIO OF FACILITATORS TO LEARNERS

AFRICA (32)		Facilitators	Learners	Ratio
1.	ActionAid International, Ghana	529	7,362	1 to 14
2.	ActionAid International, Senegal	12	300	1 to 25
3.	ActionAid International, Tanzania	89	1,602	1 to 18
4.	ADAC, Mali	36	353	1 to 10
5.	ADRA, Sudan	24	559	1 to 23
6.	Adult Education Centre, Uganda	12	166	1 to 14
7.	ADYD, Senegal	20	600	1 to 30
8.	AEA, Angola	97	1,791	1 to 18
9.	Africa Education Trust, Somalia	500	36,000	1 to 72
10.	AJAM, Mali	12	180	1 to 15
11.	ASG, Mali	26	390	1 to 15
12.	Association TINTUA, Burkina Faso	1,294	39,082	1 to 30
13.	Community Skills Improvement Project, The Gambia	X	11,000	X
14.	EPID, Kenya	17	359	1 to 21
15.	EVEIL, Mali	150	1,140	1 to 8
16.	Family Literacy Project South Africa	5	109	1 to 22
17.	ICEIDA, Malawi	30	676	1 to 23
18.	IIZ-DVV, South Africa	X	X	X
19.	Jeunesse et Developpement, Mali	53	836	1 to 16
20.	LABE, Uganda	1,520	25,000	1 to 16
21.	Ministry of Basic Education, Namibia	1,800	18,600	1 to 10
22.	National Commission for Adult and Non Formal Education, Nigeria	229	2,825	1 to 12
23.	NFED, Government of Ghana	X	X	X
24.	PAF, Zambia	43	4,000	1 to 93
25.	PANUKA trust, Zambia	36	800	1 to 22
26.	Save the children, Uganda	73	1,800	1 to 25
27.	SHARE South Africa	9	125	1 to 14
28.	TOSTAN, Senegal	324	13,600	1 to 42
29.	University of Witwatersrand, Lesotho	20	320	1 to 16
30.	VIE, Niger	X	X	X
31.	Wellington CLC, South Africa	10	202	1 to 20
32.	Work for Rural Health, Malawi	30	480	1 to 16
AVERAGE (AFRICA)		241	5,478	1 TO 23
ASIA (13)		Facilitators	Learners	Ratio
1.	ActionAid International, Bangladesh	1,395	33,576	1 to 24
2.	ActionAid International, Vietnam	168	2,144	1 to 13
3.	Bunyard Literacy Council, Pakistan	X	X	X
4.	Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Bangladesh	758	70,854	1 to 93
5.	International Nepal Fellowship, Nepal	9	167	1 to 19
6.	Literacy Movement Organization, Iran	44,272	1,370,000	1 to 31
7.	NIRANTAR, India	11	200	1 to 18
8.	Notre Dame Foundation, Philippines	103	8,520	1 to 83
9.	National Resource Centre NFE, Nepal	26	673	1 to 26
10.	Pakistan GGA, Pakistan	17	1,138	1 to 67
11.	State Resource Centre, India	17,000	500,000	1 to 29
12.	UNESCO, Vietnam	X	X	X
13.	World Education, Nepal	460	9,200	1 to 20
AVERAGE (ASIA)		5838	181,497	1 to 31

TABLE 29: Q.14. RATIO OF FACILITATORS TO LEARNERS Continued

LATIN AMERICA (16)			
	Facilitators	Learners	Ratio
1. Alfabetizacao Solidaria, Brazil	31,707	794,000	1 to 25
2. Ayuda en Accion, Bolivia	X	428	X
3. Ayuda en Accion, Peru	192	3,298	1 to 17
4. Centro Cultural Batahola, Nicaragua	4	60	1 to 15
5. Centro Josue de Castro, Recife, Brazil	26	500	1 to 19
6. Centro de Alfabetizacion, Ecuador	54	350	1 to 6
7. Comit� Nacional de Alfabetizacion, Government of Guatemala	X	171,185	X
8. ESCAES, Peru	8	X	X
9. Fondo de Poblacion de Naciones Unidas, Peru	3974	113,029	1 to 28
10. Fundacion IRFA, Bolivia	620	4,726	1 to 8
11. Fe Y Alegria, Peru	84	1,188	1 to 14
12. IIZ-DVV, Madagascar	14	152	1 to 11
13. National Women's Programme, PROMUDEH, Government of Peru	12,000	180,000	1 to 15
14. Projeto Escola Ze Peao, Brazil	20	400	1 to 20
15. Secretariat of Continuing Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, Brazil	X	X	X
16. SESI, Brazil	13,107	299,981	1 to 23
AVERAGE (LATIN AMERICA)	5150	116,474	1 to 23
OTHER (WESTERN AND PACIFIC (6))			
	Facilitators	Learners	Ratio
1. East End Literacy, Canada	3	58	1 to 19
2. Ian Macpherson (PhD student, Oxford Univ.)	19	X	x
3. Lire Et Ecrire, Belgium	851	14,025	1 to 16
4. Literacy Association, Solomon Islands	X	X	x
5. National Adult Literacy Agency, Ireland	5,719	31,500	1 to 6
6. Primary Literacy Education Project, University of South Pacific	64	200	1 to 3
AVERAGE (OTHER)	1,659	11,446	1 to 7

as we felt that it would be of practical help in planning the human resource needs of a programme.

TRAINER / SUPERVISOR RATIOS

In a sector where there has been such a lack of sustained investment and where there are few opportunities for professional development, multi-skilling becomes a survival strategy. Recognising the lack of resources for support staff to adult literacy programmes there is a strong case for integrating the roles of trainers and supervisors. We saw this

emerge in the survey. When asked about the reasons for visits by supervisors, most respondents emphasized the importance of visits for support and advice to facilitators (see Table 26). We have therefore included trainer/supervisors as a single category, assuming they play integrated roles. Of course in different programmes they will have different titles (coordinators, managers, programme officers or support workers, etc.)

TABLE 26: Q.78. REASONS FOR SUPERVISORS' VISITS

Reasons for supervisors visit	Totals
Support/advice	38
Monitoring (formal assessment of teaching)	21
Identify facilitators' concerns	14
Monitoring (formal assessment of learners)	12
Training	3

TABLE 27: Q.74. RATIO OF TRAINERS TO FACILITATORS

Ratio	Totals
1 to 5	11
1 to 10	15
1 to 20	8
1 to 25	14
1 to 30	9
1 to 40	1
1 to 50	3
1 to 60	5

TABLE 28: Q.76. RATIO OF LEARNER GROUPS PER SUPERVISOR

Ratio	Totals
1 to 10	9
10 to 20	8
20 to 40	8
40 to 60	15
60 to 80	11
80 to 100	12
More than 100	3

To establish an appropriate ratio of these "trainer-supervisors" to facilitators we analysed results from two tables. The first shows the ratio of trainers to facilitators in existing programmes (Table 27) and the second shows the ratio of supervisors to learner groups (Table 28)

This first table shows that a ratio of 1 to 15 is most common and that over 1-30 is very rare.

This second table shows that the ratio of supervisors to learner groups has a wider range with 1-40 or 60 most common and some depending on up to 1-100, which seems unlikely to be manageable. Narrative comments suggest that this is an area where programmes feel they should invest more and that they would do so if additional resources were available (see Table 14). When resources are scarce it seems supervision is not given priority.

Our conclusion was that if the roles of trainer and supervisor are fused then a ratio of 1-15 should be achievable and would certainly be desirable to ensure adequate follow up and support. Almost all programmes prioritized more support and training for facilitators – and this cannot be done without investing in people to do it!

TIMING

Some of the evidence about frequency of meetings has already been touched on under Benchmark 2, where we noted that responses from the survey showed an average pattern was two or three two-hour meetings a week, for about two years, with perhaps 600 contact hours. This is what we recommend in this Benchmark but only as a guideline as there are many different models for organising programmes. The key point that comes through is that contact needs to be both regular and sustained and at a time that suits the learners.

There is undoubtedly something unique about the convening power of "literacy". Adults will dedicate a significant amount of personal time over a sustained period to this in a way that they would rarely do so for any other activity. In almost any analysis, "development" depends on changes to people's attitudes and behaviour (e.g. to impact on HIV /

gender relations). This cannot be achieved simply or quickly. Literacy programmes offer a unique opportunity for both an intense process (several hours a week) and a sustained process (over not just months but years). The value of this has not been sufficiently recognized by other development actors.

B. LEVEL OF SUPPORT

93% of respondents agreed to the ratio of facilitators to learners and trainer-supervisors to facilitators, though Denzil Sadhana from India stressed, "There cannot be a hard and fast rule regarding this. It would depend on the context".

A number of respondents proposed that more regular support visits should be emphasised. This is clearly desirable although it is perhaps appropriate to set a minimum benchmark:

"More support visits per month by the supervisor required - may be one visit per week".

Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Bangladesh

"Where the quality of facilitators is low, and especially for new literacy classes, it should be possible to ensure a more frequent support visit than the one per month".

Zakaria Sulemana, Ghana

There was also one explicit concern raised about the idea of linking the roles of trainers and supervisors:

"I do not think that it needs to be a rule that the roles of training and supervision should be integrated into one person. Trainers and supervisors should clearly maintain very close contact."

Ministry of Education, Brazil

Some 92% of respondents agreed with the proposal that groups should meet twice a week for at least two hours, though there were certainly some strong appeals for greater flexibility in

this area:

"The design of the programme should have to be flexible enough to address the needs of the learners who might need more time than specified in the programme design".

Hasan al Farooque, Bangladesh

"It does not make sense to narrow the provision of learning to such a restrictive formula. Rather acknowledge that programmes may vary in both methods, timing and approaches. Of course timing needs to respect local phenomena, but a formulaic approach is not useful".

Budd Hall, Canada

"This is true, but the flexibility must also be in the area of time as well. Twice a week for at least two years may only be relevant to particular learners while others may need totally different time lines. Some may need daily contact hours for say one month, six weeks, three months or one year or sometimes even more. This will depend on diverse needs and occupations of different groups".

Andiwo Obondoh, ANCEFA, Kenya

"At least twice a week – three to five times if possible. Although basic literacy can be achieved quite rapidly, it is the follow-through and progressive reinforcement and practice of skills that leads to life-long literacy. At least two years are needed for this, but this is minimal. Sustainable programmes should be planned to last for a five to ten year period!"

Emily Vargas Baron, RISE USA, Colombia



Jenny Matthews/ ActionAid

BENCHMARK 8: MULTILINGUAL CONTEXTS

In multi-lingual contexts it is important at all stages that learners should be given an active choice about the language in which they learn. Active efforts should be made to encourage and sustain bilingual learning.

A. EVIDENCE BASE / RATIONALE

The language used in adult literacy programmes is another hot issue. There is much evidence that people learning to read in their mother tongue learn more quickly. But there are many contexts where learners see little use in that and want to acquire the dominant language. There are countries where imposing the dominant language has been seen as cultural genocide (e.g. Guatemala in the 1980s) and other countries where attempts to impose the mother tongue have been seen as a policy of perpetuating marginalisation (e.g. Bolivia in the 1980s). There are contexts where governments distrust any teaching in minority languages (Nicaragua 1980s, Vietnam 1990s). Perhaps bilingualism is the answer – but that is sometimes seen as just another way of undermining mother tongues. And too often, supposedly bilingual programmes have teachers who do not speak both languages.

First we wanted to establish how important this is as an area for programmes. We asked whether learning another language was a key part of the literacy process (see Table 30). Over half replied yes (two thirds in Africa). This suggests that much more is going on in most literacy classes than we think. Learners are not just learning to read and write but learning to speak another (usually dominant / official) language. Yet none of them are called language classes. It is the concept of a “literacy” class that remains hegemonic.

LEFT Afghanistan

TABLE 30

Numbers who agreed with the Statement	Africa (out of 32)	Asia (out of 12)	LAC (of 17)	Other (of 6)	Totals (of 67)
Learning another language is a key part of the learning process	21	4	5	4	34

TABLE 31: Q.88. LANGUAGE FOR INITIAL LITERACY PROGRAMME

Language	Totals (of 67 responses)
Mother tongue	34
Dominant local language	19
Official national language	13

TABLE 32: Q.89. LANGUAGE FOR POST-LITERACY PROGRAMMES

	Totals (of 57 responses)
Mother tongue	16
Dominant local language	14
Official national language	27

We then asked respondents which language they used for initial literacy (Table 31) and which for post-literacy (Table 32).

We found the mother tongue to be the most popular (over 50%) in initial literacy, followed by a dominant local language and then an official national language. In post literacy the official national language was the most common (almost 50%). This suggests a transition model is widespread – where mother tongue is used initially to draw learners into the process and develop some basic skills – but that the official national language rapidly takes over.

TABLE 33: Q. 90 & 91. IMPACT OF CHOICE OF LANGUAGE ON MOTIVATION OF LEARNERS

Motivation of learners	Totals
A lot	24
A little	13
Not much	8

TABLE 34: IMPACT OF LANGUAGE CHOICE ON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF A PROGRAMME

	Totals
A lot	19
A little	17
Not much	5

We then asked about the impact of language choice on the motivation of learners – which understandably was high (see Table 33) – though we might have expected it to be even higher! We then slightly varied the question to ask whether language choice influenced successful completion of a programme (Table 34) - where responses were not so strong but still notable.

These helped to confirm the importance of drawing up a benchmark in this area, but framing it was not easy. We wanted to be able to give some guidance on this sensitive issue without being too prescriptive. The only way forward seems to be to

emphasise learner choice and to promote sustained bilingual programmes that keep the choice open to learners on an ongoing basis. This is not easy to achieve, as it is expensive, but it does seem to be highly significant. The continuing motivation of learners should be a central priority and choice on this crucial question seems to be particularly important.

B. LEVEL OF SUPPORT

95% of respondents felt that we had got the balance right and agreed with this benchmark. There were some who articulated their positions for mother tongue or official languages with particular passion:

“No matter the value of the mother tongue, the wishes of the learners must be respected. I have known cases where learners felt humiliated because literacy was being conducted in their own tongue. They felt that the official language English had the magic wand to success and prosperity and were eager to learn to be literate in it”.

C E Onukaogu, Nigeria

“The use of mother tongue is critical for the learners’ active participation and meaningful involvement - even in multilingual contexts”.

Sereima Lumelume, Fiji

“Learners want to learn what is useful to them in their daily life ... that is the National Language. Most want to learn English! To improve their status in the eyes of their communities”

Bunyard, Pakistan

“To be effective, integrated literacy programmes must include strong participation by communities to ensure programmes are culturally derived, use local languages, are relevant to local needs and linked with local/district level programmes. It is critically important to use the mother tongue FIRST. Then, once people acquire initial competencies, similar concepts can be introduced in the national language of choice. Of course, literacy in the mother tongue must be sustained throughout the program”.

Emily Vargas Baron, RISE USA, Colombia

There was also an important reminder that language is only part of a much wider equation:

“Bilingual learning is just part of the challenge. The main difficulty is to address the cultural issues that underlie language”.

IRFA Bolivia

BELOW Bangladesh



Mahmud/ActionAid

BENCHMARK 9: PARTICIPATORY METHODS

A wide range of participatory methods should be used in the learning process to ensure active engagement of learners and relevance to their lives. These same participatory methods and processes should be used at all levels of training of trainers and facilitators.

A. EVIDENCE BASE / RATIONALE

This benchmark arises clearly from the key reasons respondents gave for the success of their programmes (Table 10).

Firstly people emphasized relevance to the lives of learners – to the issues that were critical in their lives. Then came the use of participatory methods / dialogue (3rd place) and also learner control over the process (5th). These are all connected. If learning is relevant, learners will participate actively. If participatory methods are used then issues can be actively related to people’s lives.

This is not to say anything dramatically new. Almost all adult literacy programmes claim to involve learners in “dialogue”. Even the most traditional of learning structures around a primer of textbook has now taken on board threads of Freirean thinking - with images designed to stimulate discussion. But facilitating discussion and active participation is not easy. It may be in the rhetoric of almost every adult literacy programme in the world but it is much less common in practice. One of the reasons for the failure in practice is the contradiction between how

facilitators are trained and how they are expected to teach. The Research Coordination team shared numerous examples of situations where training workshops involved long lectures about participation and theoretical meditations about participatory methodologies. This is why we stressed the importance of the same methods being used at all levels of training.

In the survey we asked about the range of participatory tools and techniques that people used (see Table 35). Most common is the use of pictures / posters or photos (which some with a Freirean emphasis refer to as “codifications”). Participatory visuals (maps, calendars, diagrams and matrices) are now widely used in literacy processes (suggesting that the Reflect approach which introduced and promoted these in the adult literacy sector has influenced many programmes that may not see themselves as using Reflect). A surprisingly large number use videos. Use of the media – television, radio and newspapers – to stimulate dialogue is also very common. Another cluster draws on immediate local resources – gossip and local news, proverbs or song. Role-play and theatre were less emphasized than might have been expected. Nevertheless there is clearly considerable diversity in the methods used to achieve the same end results ... stimulating a relevant discussion about issues affecting the lives of learners.

TABLE 35: Q. 93: PARTICIPATORY TOOLS/METHODS FOR STIMULATING DISCUSSIONS

Tools	Totals
Posters/pictures/photo	26
Participatory visuals	24
Videos/DVDs	21
Newspapers	19
Radio/television	16
Gossip/local news	15
Proverbs	14
Song	14
Role play	13
Codification	13
Theatre	11
Music	11
Participatory videos	11
Dance	9
Story-telling	9
Puppets	7
Case studies	6

B. LEVEL OF SUPPORT

94% of respondents agreed with this benchmark and few made comments. It seems to be one of the least contested areas even if it is one of the most difficult things to translate into practice.

“The diversity of methods used is the main key to the success of all learning processes”

ADEF Afrique

“Participatory methods are essential and must emphasise links to both existing cultural practices and the cultural practices associated with writing”.

National Institute of Adult Education, Mexico

TABLE 10 (EXCERPT): KEY INGREDIENTS OF SUCCESS

1	Relevance of issues addressed to daily life	34
2	Local facilitators – commitment and connection to learners	28
3	Participatory methods / dialogue	22
4	Quality of initial and ongoing training / support to facilitator	21
5	Learner control of the process	18
5	Community support / active involvement of wider community	18



Liba Taylor / ActionAid

BENCHMARK 10 : THE LITERATE ENVIRONMENT

Governments should take responsibility for stimulating the production and distribution of a wide variety of materials suitable for new readers, for example working with publishers / newspaper producers. They should balance this with funding for local production of materials, especially by learners, facilitators and trainer-supervisors.

A. EVIDENCE BASE / RATIONALE

We cannot separate out the development of literacy skills from the opportunity to use those skills in daily life. In largely non-literate environments, especially in rural areas, literacy is not in itself a daily requirement for people. However, the lack of literacy skills can still have a devastating social, economic and political impact on people at critical moments. Creating literate habits requires engagement with this environment – to create demand and generate daily uses for literacy. This often means ensuring that materials are produced in mother tongues. It means promoting the use of simple language (like the Plain English Campaign or attempts to simplify the Bengali alphabet) and large print suitable for new readers. It means consulting with people about what they want to read.

In the survey we asked programmes what they considered to be the most important reading materials they used (see Table 36). They highlighted the importance of materials written by learners themselves (or by other learners) but also gave importance to newspapers and a wide range of other materials – some for diversion (stories / poetry) and some for practical use (government publications, information on health or income generation). Diversity seems to be the key factor here.

We also asked respondents whether they provided reading materials free of charge

TABLE 36: Q.81. MOST IMPORTANT READING MATERIALS

Reading materials	Totals (of 67)
Learner-generated, own	32
Newspapers	27
Learner-generated, other	26
NGO-produced	25
Primers/textbooks	24
Visual materials	23
Govt. Publications	21
Stories	19
Info. Income generation	18
Facilitator generated	17
Children's books	16
Religious materials	15
Health-related stuff	12
Newsletters	11
Political materials	10
Poetry	9
Info on basic rights	7

or whether learners had to pay for them. We found that most reading materials were provided free but that in respect of newspapers, two-thirds of programmes expected learners to buy them. This may be more “sustainable” but it probably significantly reduces the number of learners who have access to newspapers (which in the table above are seen to be important). This reinforces the case for governments to intervene in this area and promote subsidized distribution of newspapers for new readers.

B. LEVEL OF SUPPORT

94% of respondents support this benchmark. Many made supplementary remarks about the role of government and others in making this happen, and also about the link to language issues highlighted in Benchmark 8.

“The market also has an important role to play in this...experience in many parts of Africa and Latin America are that commercial market literature has often been the main source of literacy follow-up material”.
Budd Hall Canada

“It is important to compile the immense breadth of materials and experiences that already exist instead of re-inventing the wheel.”

Fundación Gamma, Colombia

“Governments should provide the funds for this work, but unless government employees are unusually skilled, they rarely have the ability to prepare relevant materials. Funds should be given preferably to institutions of civil society that have strong track records of achievement in these areas (see the experiences of Cambodia and Guatemala)”.

Emily Vargas Baron, RISE, US

“The content should be informed by the learners. It is critical that the materials should represent local realities”

Patrick Nganzi, Oxfam, South Africa

“Funding of local materials should be an integral part of any literacy strategy, whoever the implementing agency, and such funding should be available through/from government. In fact, local writing should come first, with an emphasis on such need in minority and indigenous groups and signalling the special need for writing/publishing in non-mainstream languages”.

Clinton Robinson

“Adapting centrally-produced materials to local contexts is a must.

Learning materials tailored to local needs enhance motivation and usefulness”.

Roshan, World Education, Nepal

“The lack of literacy in Mali is closely linked to the lack of reading materials. Only 1% of the documents in the national library are in national languages. Whilst this fact persists, and there is no adequate strategy to produce materials in national languages, literacy will not improve.”

ASG, Mali

BENCHMARK 11: COSTS

A good quality literacy programme that respects all these benchmarks is likely to cost between US\$50 and US\$100 per learner per year for at least three years (two years initial learning + ensuring further learning opportunities are available for all)

A. EVIDENCE BASE / RATIONALE

Below is the feedback that we received on the question of average costs per enrolled and successful learner. We asked for detailed breakdown of these costs but most people provided only a total figure. Some people struggled to give us this information at first and needed to be chased to provide the figures. Below in Table 37 is the full list of people who responded to this (many felt unable to). The results show a significant diversity across regions but perhaps not as large as one might expect. We find that **the average cost per learner in Africa is \$47, in Asia is \$30 and in LA is \$61**. The costs are higher for “successful” learners (\$68, \$32 and \$83 respectfully). Understandably costs in countries like Canada, Belgium and the UK are much higher per capita.

The figures given are not entirely reliable as few people completed the detailed breakdown so we do not know if we are comparing like with like. We do not know what indirect costs have been included in each calculation. Some respondents gave the same figures for costs per learner and costs per successful learner. This suggests a 100% success rate, which may seem implausible - but it may be that practitioners refuse to accept that any adult learner “fails” if they are participating in the process (who are we to question the value of it if learners themselves see the value)? To get a fully accurate calculation of costs of literacy would clearly require much more work and intensive communication with respondents. The timeframe did not allow us to enable to complete this. We strongly recommend that more work be done in this area.

TABLE 37: QS.103D. & 103E. COSTS OF LITERACY

Organisation	Country	Enrolled learner	Successful learner
Asia / Pacific			
Average (N=3)		\$30	\$32
International Nepal Fellowship	Nepal	16	18
Bunyard Literacy Community Council	Pakistan	30	30
ActionAid Vietnam	Vietnam	35	38
Literacy Assoc. of Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands	40	40
Latin America / Caribbean			
Average (N=12)		\$61	\$83
National Literacy Program	Peru	61	125
Ministry of Education	Brazil	38	38
SESI	Brazil	57	73
Fundacion IRFA	Bolivia	20	29
Fondacion de Poblacion	Bolivia	22	27
Comite nacional de alfabetizacion	Guatemala	19	53
Fundacion Ayuda en Accion	Peru	90	110
ESCAES	Peru	67	72
Projeto Escola Ze Peao	Brazil	125	167
Ayuda en Accion	Bolivia	167	199
Centro de Alfabetizacion	Ecuador	31	40
Centro Josue de Castro			
Estudos e Pesquisas	Brazil	56	58
Africa			
Average (N=14)		\$47	\$68
ActionAid International	Tanzania	50	51
AAEA	Angola	30	36
Community Skills Dev. Project	The Gambia	60	80
People's Action Forum	Zambia	22	31
ActionAid	Ghana	20	31
Africa Educational Trust	Somalia	28	X
TOSTAN	Senegal	32	38
TINTUA	Burkina Faso	20	X
EPID	Kenya	43	80
Jeunesse et Developpement	Mali	55	89
Work for Rural Health	Malawi	63	100
VIE	Niger	39	118
ADRA	Sudan	75	115
Univ. Witwatersrand	Lesotho	118	178
Other			
East End Literacy	Canada	2,646	2,646
Lire et Ecrire	Belgium	1,423.00	X
NALA	Ireland	742	742

Nevertheless the above figures gave us enough confidence to develop this benchmark. In general we increased the costs that people reported, given that so many respondents listed a range of extra things they would do if resources permitted. We also anticipate that fulfilling all the commitments in these benchmarks would add costs to most existing programmes (e.g. engagement in providing further learning opportunities / generating reading materials and a literate environment / paying facilitators properly and giving them professional development options).

B. LEVEL OF SUPPORT

85% of respondents agreed with this benchmark.

Most people who commented reinforced the benchmark, agreeing that their programmes or ones they knew of were within this range of costs or not far outside it.

“A good quality literacy program is possible with a unit cost between \$25-\$40”.

Roshan, World Education, Nepal

“Depending on cost of living in each country and literacy programmes. Our average cost is between 30 and 60 US\$ per learner per year.”

IRFA Bolivia

“The estimated costs are correct”

National Commission for Adult and Non Formal Education, Nigeria

“Depending on the cost of living in each country and the type of literacy programmes. Our average cost is between 30 and 60US\$ per learner per year in our radio literacy programmes (distance education).”

Fe Y Alegria, Latin America (programmes across 15 countries)

“A good quality literacy programme would mean at least \$100 per learner”

Carolyn Medel-Anonuevo, UIE

Whilst there is broad agreement, clearly this benchmark might be set too high or too low for some countries and for some contexts where the cost of living is very different:

“It is unaffordable for countries like China to provide this amount (50-100USD per year) for a learner. It is estimated that nearly 30-50 USD would be spent for each learner within 3 years in China.”

Basic Education Department, the Ministry of Education of China

“Based on our experience the cost varies between 10 USD and 150 USD depending on the country of work in the Arab World.”

EPEP, Arab Countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan & Morocco)

“In certain locations, for example in the North (Tombouctou, Gao et Kidal), literacy work has to be connected to economic activities especially when targeting women or young men – and this means the cost is usually between \$100-\$200 per participant”.

ASG Mali

“If facilitators are paid more and trained more, and if much more effort is made to supply good reading materials including newspapers, the costs may well be higher”.

Bob Prouty, World Bank

BELOW Mozambique



Gideon Mendel/ Corbis/ ActionAid

BENCHMARK 12: FINANCING LITERACY

Governments should dedicate at least 3% of their national education sector budgets to adult literacy programmes as conceived in these benchmarks - with additional contributions being made from other relevant ministries (e.g. gender / women, community or rural development, agriculture, health etc). Where governments deliver on this level of commitment international donors (e.g. through the Fast Track Initiative) should fill any remaining resource gaps in line with the pledge made at the World Education Forum in Dakar.

A. EVIDENCE BASE / RATIONALE

The CONFINTEA conference (Hamburg 1997 / Bangkok 2003) argued for a minimum of 3% of government education budgets to go to adult learning. Although this seems modest, most countries fall short of it.

BELOW Afghanistan

There are problems in establishing a figure for all contexts when literacy rates vary enormously from one country to another. Surely a country with low adult literacy levels should be investing substantially more? There are also of course problems in using a percentage of the education budget as a reference point as much then depends on the adequacy of education budget in first place (for example, if countries are not dedicating 6% of their GDP to education then resources are unlikely to be sufficient). Our feeling was that the education budget should still act as the central base of funding for literacy – as this makes clearest sense to most policy makers. It may be that governments can find creative ways to secure a balance of resource inputs from all ministries and this should certainly be encouraged.

We were keen to draw on the Dakar Framework to remind donors of the

commitment that they made that any country with a viable plan to achieve EFA by 2015 will not be allowed to fail for lack of resources. Unfortunately since Dakar that pledge has not been kept. Many countries have come up with education sector plans but donor support has been largely through the Fast Track Initiative that was founded with a narrow focus on universal primary schooling. Following advocacy work by the Global Campaign for Education the FTI has promised that it will open up to the full EFA agenda (in the November 2004 High Level Group meeting in Brazil). Recent developments suggest that FTI may well be reformed to become a genuine “Global Compact” mobilising funds for EFA, as envisaged in Dakar. If this happens FTI will need to develop benchmarks or “assessment guidelines” on adult literacy. We believe that this research and consultation process provides a solid foundation for establishing these.



Jenny Matthews / ActionAid

Unfortunately there is a second fundamental problem with the FTI, which is not about the scope but about the funding. Donors have not provided adequate funding even for the initial batch of approved FTI countries. Major new momentum is needed on this urgently. The promises of new aid made at the G8 meeting in July 2005 and repeated in the UN Summit in New York in September 2005, suggest that this resource gap may well be filled. However, sustained pressure will be needed to ensure substantial amounts of new aid are earmarked for education and channelled through a reformed FTI.

Drawing significantly on the data from our survey, Jan Ravens and Carlos Aggio did some further analysis of costs for the EFA GMR in June 2005. They concluded that the total cost of achieving the Dakar goal on adult literacy (to halve illiteracy by 2015) in Sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia would be about \$10 billion - \$1 billion per year which would need to be mobilized through international aid. As present aid to all education is about \$1.5 billion annually this certainly requires a significant increase.

B. LEVEL OF SUPPORT

83% of respondents agreed with this benchmark though some people felt unqualified to answer.

“Donors should stop supporting short-term programmes associated with ‘magic lines’ that only contribute to reinforcing restricted visions of literacy.”

National Institute of Adult Education, Mexico

“Agree; our adult education spending is almost 3% of the national education budget. We are convinced that the pledge made at the World Education Forum is not honoured by all the Donors”.

Ministry of Education, Namibia

“Our government spends less than 1% of the national education budget on adult basic education.”

Farrell Hunter, ALN, South Africa

“International communities and such powerful agencies as the World Bank, major bilaterals and regional banks should take a more active role in literacy development.”

Akihiro Chibo, Unesco, Japan

“The government should be able to coordinate a common basket approach at country level to ensure that all local donor contribution are coordinated and channelled to priority areas”.

Andiwo, Kenya

“The percentage of the national education budget that is spent on adult literacy must be defined based on the level of literacy. The lower literacy rates are the higher the budget should be”.

Avodec, Nicaragua

“This seems too small relative to its importance”.

Dan Wagner, US

“Agree as an ideal but in practice 3% for adult literacy is a distant dream for a country like ours”.

Maarifa, Tanzania

“Actually in Mali adult literacy gets less than 1% of the total education budget.”

ASG, Mali

“With only 2 % given to education, we shall be lucky even if we get 0001% from here for adult education!”

Bunyard, Pakistan

“This would be quite an achievement. At this stage adult literacy programs are not even recognised by the government nor funded in any shape and therefore falls on the shoulder of NGOs to do so”

EPEP, Arab Countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan & Morocco)

“In the present economic crisis the State has not been able to finance this sector. For example, the budget for the national plan of action on adult literacy for 1999-2003 was less than US\$500,000”

IIZ-DVV Guinea Conakry

“I disagree. This is context-dependent. Some countries will need to dedicate far more. Some may need less. I would use the development of a national strategy as the starting point, not some arbitrary dollar figure. Also, not sure why the benchmark should be education sector budgets when all sectors have a role. But the broad principle is right—there should be a dependable source of financing based on nationally determined needs and existence of a sound program to address those needs.”

Bob Prouty, World Bank

“I disagree: it is a matter of need and not of a lump figure or percentage used to go with all national variations. In a country like South Africa where there is a huge backlog due to the history of the country one may estimate roughly 9 million people being in need of solid basic education. The rest of education system in South Africa i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary (including fet and vocational) accounts for roughly 10 million people. Why should I spend only 3% on roughly a figure of 40% of the overall adult population?”

IIZ-DVV South Africa

“3% of national education sector budget to adult literacy is a desirable one. Actual contribution by most developing countries is far less than that.”

Basic Education Department, the Ministry of Education of China



Liba Taylor / ActionAid

4. SOME STORIES / EXAMPLES

The following six case studies give practical examples of how real programmes have grappled with the issues raised in this benchmarking process. None of the programmes is based on implementing all the benchmarks, but all of them have served as examples from which significant learning has been drawn. There are of course many more programmes that have fed into this work but sadly there is not space to recognise them all.

INDIA: THE NATIONAL LITERACY MISSION

The National Literacy Mission (NLM) formed in 1988, launched a major initiative on adult literacy in India in 1990. This was based predominantly on a campaign model, inspired by an experience in Ernakulam, Kerala in 1989. NLM had initial successes, particularly in the South and West of India, but struggled in the North and East where lower literacy rates and different cultural contexts made the mass mobilisation model less effective. Of the 90 million people (60% women) who enrolled, NLM claims to have made 64 million people literate - though well-informed observers estimate a success rate of between 15% and 30% (ie between 13.5 and 27 million – still an incredible achievement). Most of those who learnt were in the States and Districts that already had an average or above average literacy rate (where there was a wider literate environment)

NLM depended on the collaborative inputs of:

- the official machinery of government
- full time personnel at a district level (approx 150 in each district)
- millions of volunteers mobilised from village up to district level.

LEFT Bangladesh

A critical factor where the programme was successful is considered to have been the decentralised structure, especially the Zilla Saksharata Samitis (ZLL - District Literacy Societies). These ZLLs were led by the District Collector and designed as autonomous bodies which would include extensive participation by NGOs and other activists. Where the District Collectors were open to collaboration, these ZLLs worked well, galvanising broad-based multi-disciplinary support and generating effective mobilisation for literacy. Huge numbers of volunteers were mobilised initially. However, this could not be sustained. Over the years bureaucratisation and disillusionment set in and this people-oriented participation collapsed. The ZLLs came to be dominated by government officials who depended on coercing teachers and students.

Unfortunately there was little effective critical evaluation or documentation. Most evaluation focused exclusively on the 3Rs - and the consultancy terms on which these evaluations were undertaken contributed to a tendency to validate rather than critique (consultants did not want to bite the hand that fed them). There were some powerful stories about empowerment though these tended to get repeated again and again (eg the anti-Arac movement in Nellore, stone-cutters in Tamil Nadu) and there are some films and glossy books which highlight these. Closer study, even of these experiences, has suggested that the empowerment outcomes were more related to the mobilisation process than to literacy as such. Only a handful of more rigorous impact studies were undertaken (eg Dumka in Bihar, Birbhum in West Bengal, Badwahan in West Bengal) which concur with this view.

The standardisation of literacy methodology used by NLM appears to

have been one of the factors which has made it difficult to sustain mobilisation. Whilst theoretically there was considerable space for District level adaptation and production of materials and the core primers were made available in the major State languages, in practice most were just copied, with only a limited attempt made to relate the images or themes to diverse local realities. This standardisation occurred in part because people lacked the capacity and confidence to innovate and in part because of the gradual bureaucratisation process which reduced the space for innovation. In “Deconstructing Adult Literacy Primers”, a study by the National Institute of Adult Education, 6 of these primers were reviewed in detail, leading to some very worrying conclusions, for example, that “a very top-down, urban, middle-class male view of development prevails”. In both their images and texts, the primers “systematically blame the victims” (as ignorant or backward) and very selective unreal images of women’s lives are portrayed, reinforcing traditional roles.

PAKISTAN BUNYAD LITERACY COMMUNITY COUNCIL (BLCC)

BLCC is an independent NGO but has been working since 1994 in close coordination with the government of Pakistan and with community-based organizations across the country. Funds come from the Ministries of Education, Rural Development and Gender. There is a strong focus on empowering women. Strong links are made between the literacy work and other development interventions such as HIV/AIDS groups, micro-credit groups, and rural development groups. There is a desire to increase learners’ awareness of their rights, enhance community cohesion and enable people to use allocated funds for local development more effectively.

Presently there are 6,000 learning groups. Most groups meet for about one year for initial literacy and then continue for a further three years in post-literacy work. Facilitators are usually young women (15-25), who have at least completed primary education themselves and who are paid a nominal stipend. Learners meet very regularly – often five times a week initially

Materials are developed mostly by a national resource centre, which conducts participatory research into social practices and local development needs. Evaluations of previous programmes also lead to revisions of the materials. The learning takes place in the official national language.

The main challenge highlighted by BLCC was the recurrent one of insufficient and erratic funding to sustain the programme.

PERU: THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

In 2001 the dictatorial presidency of Fujimori fell and a transitional government took power in Peru to pave the way for a return to democracy. In

the transitional government the Ministry of Women's Rights developed an ambitious literacy and empowerment programme based on the Reflect-Action approach. The transitional government was open to collaboration with civil society and so in partnership with 53 NGOs PROMUDEH ran a nation-wide programme reaching 180,000 people. Sadly, when a new government came to power they handed the responsibility for literacy to the Ministry of Education and this innovative programme was cut short.

The programme included the following key elements:

- It was a real partnership with civil society organisations (not just implemented through them), with methods that were flexible enough to connect with and build on the existing work of NGOs.
- The programme was based on local literacy committees that were given control over resources and supported to develop their own local plans.
- The literacy facilitators were chosen locally and spoke the mother tongue of learners. Learners were free to choose the language/s to learn in.

- The learning process was not based on pre-determined texts but on texts developed by participants.
- The process focused on the practical use of oral and written skills in everyday life, especially for personal and collective development and active citizenship.
- Learning was linked to action. The objective was empowerment not literacy in itself.
- Monitoring and evaluation was under the control of the local groups.

Initially 560 resource people were trained and they then directly trained 13,000 facilitators from 18 different departments across the whole country. The model was a radical departure from traditional cascade models of training. The emphasis was on people building the process for themselves so that when it reached the local level the same approach was used. Ownership was seen as key. Facilitators, who were mostly 15-25 year olds, were paid the minimum wage. Learners met on average 3 times a week and the programme involved about 500 contact hours. In many places the learning groups grew in size as the

BELOW Guatemala



ActionAid

programme developed – completely the opposite of the usual pattern where there is a progressive drop-out.

Some of the widely reported main outcomes included

- an increase in people's self-esteem – especially women's;
- an improved position of women within families;
- an impressive capacity for social analysis amongst participants and promoters;
- an internalisation of a learning approach ... learning how to learn;
- participation in local actions as active citizens and specifically increased participation of women in public affairs;
- literacy skills including signing names, writing letters and notes, reading newspapers and signs.

BRAZIL: MODELS OF PARTNERSHIP

Partnership between government and civil society organisations is almost universally seen as the way forward for adult literacy in Brazil. The three most significant programmes of recent times have all focused on this. Firstly, the **Literacy Movement (MOVA)**, launched by Paulo Freire in Sao Paulo in the 1990s worked closely with 73 community based organizations. These organizations were responsible for mobilizing learners and their monitors. The city government would provide a stipend for the facilitators and supervise the development of the groups that met for two hours daily, four times a week. In 1992 the program had 18,000 participants rising to 32,000 in 2004. This Freirean model was replicated in a further 20 cities.

Meanwhile, in 1996 the federal government launched the **Alfabetização Solidária Program**, building partnerships with municipal governments, companies and Higher Education Institutions. This is premised on 6 monthly modules (240 hours each). From 1998, Alfabetização Solidária, became legally registered as

an NGO - but it continued receiving the greater part of its resources from the federal government. It also began to sign agreements with State governments and organize campaigns to convoke individual donors, appealing to publicity through the media, with the support of artists and celebrities. From 1997 to 2004, 4.9 million students were involved in 2,050 municipalities, with the partnership of 144 companies and 209 higher education institutions. The cost per student was US\$ 61,70

In 2003 the new management that took office in the federal government decided, at the very beginning of their mandate to recover the leadership of literacy initiatives and launched the **Literate Brazil Program (PBA)** with the goal of eliminating illiteracy in four years. The PBA gives financial support to governmental and non-governmental agencies that already have experience in adult literacy so that they can expand their coverage. In 2003, with a investment of US\$ 59.9 million the federal government transferred funds on the basis of about \$5 per month per learner plus another \$27 to train each facilitator. This year 1.96 million learners were attended. Although there is a focus on working with NGOs, 3 very large NGOs receive 55% of the support which is seen as problematic. There now plans to decentralize the programme and involve more NGOs.

Vera Ribeiro from Acao Educativa, a leading NGO observes: "since illiteracy reaches to a greater degree the less favoured social sectors and the poorer regions, it is fundamental that public authority and its central administration invest so as to be able to correct the lack of resources in the poorer regions. Sub national or local public authority must, in their turn, have more capacity to implement actions that are considered peculiar to each context. In many cases local governments need technical assistance, but it is important that they participate in the management of the literacy program and structure themselves to offer the

continuation of studies. The participation of civil society is undoubtedly welcome, both because it complements state efforts and because it is an incentive to participation and to civil society control over public policies".

NIGERIA: THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Although this is a government programme, the National Commission in Nigeria has a strong partnership with NGOs. The funding comes from the Ministry of Education with some from the Ministries of Rural Development, Health and Planning, as well as contributions from participating NGOs and faith-based organizations. The programme, in its present form, was launched in 2001, with their main goals being to empower learners, and women in particular. Awareness for the programme is raised/maintained via radio, word of mouth and through community-based organizations. Television adverts and billboards also tend to be used.

The initial programme lasts about 6 months (and works in the mother tongue) with a post-literacy programme for an additional 9-12 months (usually in the locally dominant language). The Organization's working definition of "literacy" is the ability to read and write and compute in any language as well as understand and address development issues. Numeracy as a part of literacy is also considered important. Learners meet about three times per week. Most learners are 35-50 years old and are refugees/ displaced people or people of low social status. There is a strong emphasis on learner centred methods and allowing learners significant levels of decision making around the programme. Materials are mostly developed locally by learners, facilitators and trainers and as such are usually very relevant.

The biggest obstacle identified was insufficient funding to run programmes



Kate Hoyt / Eyevine / ActionAid

effectively and on the scale needed. The erratic nature of funding is particularly problematic.

SUDAN - GOAL

Winner of an International Literacy Prize in 2005 GOAL Sudan works with 2,500 internally displaced women in and around Khartoum. Although GOAL play the lead role, the Ministry of Education has been involved in implementation from the start, including the National Council for Literacy and Adult Education, the Khartoum State Adult Education Department (KSAED), as well as local councils and community leaders. In the areas where the programme operates female illiteracy rates were about 80%. This correlates closely with the percentage of people with an income well below the poverty line (69%).

The programme is committed to learner centred, participatory approaches with participants fully involved in the design and implementation of the programme, selecting components and units for discussion according to their interests and needs. Critical issues have been around family planning, HIV/AIDS and the peace agreement. The use of the Reflect approach has been the core of the programme and has proved a

versatile and creative way of providing women with opportunities for empowerment, economic improvement and increased family welfare.

The programme had no textbooks. Instead a locally devised manual for the literacy facilitators is used as a teaching guide and basis for discussions. The manual comprises units relevant to the needs and interests of the women and is based on outcomes from a socio-economic and socio-cultural survey carried out in the local areas. Each unit deals with a specific subject related to community life and starts with the construction of a pictorial representation such as a map, matrix, calendar or diagram, reflecting for example, income levels or household distribution. The graphics are used to stimulate discussion, participant-generated writing, related numeracy work and actions to address local problems. This is an empowering process that creates a democratic space where negative cultural norms and power relations can be challenged to give women a louder voice.

The programme is now in its fifth year and has shown positive results both for participants at a personal level, and for their wider communities. The female literacy rate has increased

ABOVE Democratic Republic of Congo

from 20% to 36% in the age range 18-45 and many learners have moved on to formal education classes. The groups have played a lead role in raising awareness of issues in the wider community, using theatre and song for their own locally devised HIV/AIDS campaign and Polio campaign as well as to stimulate discussion about the peace agreement and to celebrate international women's day. The groups have taken action ranging from basic maintenance of roads to creation of local markets and small shops, from establishing new kindergartens to lobbying the local council for better public transportation. There have been many successful income generating programmes which have increased women's control over household income and led to shifts in spending patterns.

5. CONCLUSIONS:

5.1 MAKING THE CASE FOR NEW INVESTMENTS IN ADULT LITERACY

In most countries youth and adult literacy have suffered from years of under-investment and poor quality provision. Yet there is growing recognition that the realization of a wide range of poverty reduction and development goals depends on countries making significant progress towards adult literacy of all. For very modest investments countries can see dramatic benefits in reducing vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, increasing gender equality, improving the health and livelihoods of the poorest sectors of society and creating active citizens capable of contributing to a better future for all.

Based on the work done in this survey we feel that the case for new investments in adult literacy is compelling. These benchmarks arise from the collective wisdom of practitioners running good quality adult literacy programmes around the world. The results show that where programmes are run well they have a clear impact across the full MDG agenda (Table 3). In many respects, adult literacy, though not an MDG itself, provides an invisible glue for achieving all the MDGs.

Good programmes do not conceive literacy narrowly but see the goals of their programme as cutting right across the development agenda (see Table 5), from empowering women to reducing poverty, from health promotion to addressing HIV/AIDS. Adult literacy programmes offer a uniquely powerful opportunity for an intensive (regular, often twice or thrice weekly) and extensive (over 2,3 or more years) change process, focused on a self-selected group of the poorest

and most excluded people (see Tables 6-8). Those people who are unable to read and write, who have had no access to schooling, correlate very closely with those who are poorest in any society.

Effective literacy programmes are those that really link to the critical issues in the lives of these learners. This is seen as the most important ingredient of success identified by successful programmes (Table 10). If this is achieved, learners clearly gain much more than just literacy – they gain help to address the most crucial issues in their lives (which may vary hugely from one community to another). What other process can succeed in being so adaptable as to help people address such a diversity of issues?

One flavour of that diversity can be seen in the remarkable range of outcomes that were reported from these successful programmes (Table 15). The impact on gender roles and relations is striking, as is the impact on health and on HIV infections. Literacy is clearly seen to have a major impact on people's awareness of their rights and their confidence to defend those rights and hold government accountable. Literacy is even seen as playing an important role in building community cohesion. The evidence for this comes from external evaluations and published research (Table 16) – though the personal observations of practitioners suggest that such literature still underestimates the real impact.

All of this comes at a remarkably low cost – for just \$50-\$100 a year per learner per year (Table 37).

In this context the logical question to ask is why have investments in adult literacy been so low in recent years? If the outcomes can be so significant surely everyone would invest in this!

We contend that one major reason for a lack of investment is that adult literacy is seen as “messy”, as “difficult”, as “unpredictable”. There is a lack of basic information about what works and how much it costs. Adult education processes need to be adapted to the local environment of learners and many people would argue that the resulting diversity of provision is a necessity and a strength. However, this does make it hard to measure outcomes in traditional ways and it can frighten policy makers who want clear details of what inputs should be made in order to gain what outputs. In this benchmarking process we have sought to be as clear as possible – not losing the importance of diversity and flexibility but providing simple means for policy makers to deliver a programme that can achieve this.

Additional problems are generated in making the case for adult literacy by the fundamental questions increasingly asked about what “literacy” is. Academics and policy makers will argue endlessly about definitions and cultural meanings – indeed whether there is such a thing as “literacy” or whether we can only talk about “literacies”. This is infuriating for people looking for simple measures – how can you measure something when you are not clear what it is? There are important insights from ethnographic research around the existence of multiple literacies and the complex cultural meanings of literacy. However research outputs from this work have often confused governments and donors. There is a need to simplify these debates and to focus on the practical implications of this theoretical work. The definition we use seeks to focus on something that is simple and based on common sense. There have also been many problems in the way in which adult literacy

programmes have been evaluated. Where evaluators have been open-minded there is dramatic evidence (as we have seen testimony of in this survey) of outcomes across the development spectrum (though these may be attributable to the learning process rather than to literacy in itself). The problem is that when an adult literacy programme is evaluated these other outcomes are often disregarded or downgraded and the link with the learning process is largely ignored. It is assumed that the central goal MUST be learning to read and write - as an abstract skill / competency that can be measured without any reference to the practical use or application of the skills. Most adult literacy processes are highly complex - so to evaluate them through one simplistic lens easily misrepresents or distorts them. And how programmes are evaluated rapidly has a distorting effect on the programmes themselves – shifting incentives for coordinators and teachers. Programmes conceived in a holistic way can rapidly end up narrow and ineffective if the evaluation framework is narrow. For this reason we have highlighted the importance of evaluations reflecting a fuller understanding of literacy – looking at the application of literacy rather than literacy in itself.

Behind the simple word “literacy” is a complex learning process, which on the evidence of this survey, can be justified in all sorts of different ways. People working on governance or democracy should be centrally concerned with literacy. So should those working on HIV or health. Educators concerned with getting girls into school could identify few more effective interventions than educating young mothers. The case for literacy is often very clear to women’s rights activists. The problem is that in each case you have to make the case to different people – to different ministries or NGOs, each working in their own silo, in each case making only a partial case for literacy. This is

why we highlight cooperation across sectors – joined-up government for a joined-up programme.

Whilst literacy should not be seen as a magic bullet, engaging adults in a sustained basic learning process, which strengthens literacy and other skills, can be an essential ingredient in achieving so many goals. In reality adult learning can be a powerful glue – holding together so many different elements. It is time to make this glue visible! These benchmarks aim to make some small contribution in this process.

5.2 HOW TO USE THESE BENCHMARKS

These benchmarks are designed to help governments who are committed to developing adult literacy programmes. They do not themselves aim to convert or convince sceptics – although we hope that the case for investing in adult literacy does come through. Rather, they aim to provide a framework for policy debate. They touch concisely on critical issues that need to be considered in designing an adult literacy programme. The benchmarks might also be used as a checklist against which a government or donor might ask questions about an existing or new programme.

However, we do not expect these benchmarks to be used as a set of conditions to be imposed on programmes. They should not be used to constrain or limit programmes. There may be contextual factors that justify deviation from these benchmarks. Our intention would be to ensure that such contextual factors are manifested clearly in a dialogue that uses these benchmarks as the starting point. The benchmarks are not an end-point in themselves. This is particularly important in the context of a sector like adult literacy where flexibility is often key and standardisation can be a problem. It is

this very fear that has perhaps prevented this sort of exercise from being conducted before.

These benchmarks have emerged from a global dialogue between literacy practitioners and policy makers in over 50 countries. Our intention is that this dialogue should continue at a local or national level whenever these benchmarks are used. We are also keen to continue the debate internationally – so do send your comments / reflections and examples of how you have used these benchmarks in practice. What is helpful and what is not? What evidence do you have to reinforce or challenge these benchmarks? We look forward to hearing from you! (Please send all comments to: david.archer@actionaid.org)

5.3 SOME FINAL WORDS

Below are a selection of overall comments made by respondents at the end of the benchmark consultation process:

“Adult literacy is part of a continuum of adult education and lifelong learning. In the wealthy countries lifelong learning provision has the highest national political support and strong funding availability. It is no longer morally or politically acceptable for the world to have broad-based lifelong and lifewide opportunities for the wealthy and some kind of minimum reading and writing skills for the poor! The continued emphasis on minimal adult literacy programmes for the poor in the absence of broader based advocacy for access to learning throughout life undermines democratic citizenship and further exacerbates the gap between the rich and the poor”.

Budd Hall

“I must say that the benchmarks are very convincing and well articulated”.

Rafiq Jaffer, Pakistan

“This is an ideal benchmarks which we hope will be put to action and there is need to be advocated at the government level and also to be translated into different languages such as Arabic”.

Regina Mahmoud, ADRA, Sudan

“An adult literacy programme has to be complemented with a sound school education programme, otherwise it would be like pouring water in sand. I had been involved with the adult education programme quite actively. Most adults we taught had attended school but had not gained even the basic literacy skills”.

Niraj, ActionAid, India

“There is need for non-project approach to addressing Adult Literacy issues within the local and national policy framework, increasing the budgetary allocation, increased political will and support to declare – Literacy for Life for All in Uganda and elsewhere.”

CEF, Uganda

“I am fed up with people talking adult literacy despite worldwide failure. Unless we emphasize on adult education that may or may not involve adult literacy, it will continue to fail people further in their lives. Literacy is not the pre-condition for adult learning. Our emphasis should be in getting children literate and providing adult education. Most literate people are scared of illiterates and they can’t think to work in other ways other than making them literate to begin with. Literate people are giving people in difficult circumstances trouble for the sake of themselves. I have hard time to accept how a critically aware person not think that ‘adult illiteracy’ is the outcome of the failed primary education and work on preventing that rather than making all kinds of fun and fantasy about adult literacy.”

Teeka Bhatara, Nepal

“Adult Education has been sacrificed on the altar of Formal Primary. World Bank, UNICEF and the other ‘heavies’ are simply not interested, and National Governments eagerly follow suit. Concentrating on adolescents is vital (age 15-19) specially girls.”

Bunad, Pakistan

“It is a pleasure answering these questions. Good luck”.

Basic Education Department, the Ministry of Education of China

“We are appreciative of this information and believe that this forms a clear ‘Global Benchmarks on Adult Literacy’.”

Ministry of Education, Namibia



Jenny Matthews/ActionAid

APPENDICES

1. List of respondents to survey
2. List of respondents to benchmarking
3. List of original informants
4. Original survey format
5. References

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

AFRICA (32)

1. ActionAid International, Ghana
2. ActionAid International, Senegal
3. ActionAid International, Tanzania
4. ADAC, Mali
5. ADRA, Sudan
6. Adult Education Centre, Uganda
7. ADYD, Senegal
8. AEA, Angola
9. Africa Education Trust, Somalia
10. AJAM, Mali
11. ASG, Mali
12. Association TINTUA, Burkina Faso
13. Community Skills Improvement Project, The Gambia
14. EPID, Kenya
15. EVEIL, Mali
16. Family Literacy Project South Africa
17. ICEIDA, Malawi
18. IIZ-DVV, South Africa
19. Jeunesse et Developpement, Mali
20. LABE, Uganda
21. Ministry of Basic Education, Namibia
22. National Commission for Adult and Non Formal Education, Nigeria
23. NFED, Government of Ghana
24. PAF, Zambia
25. PANUKA trust, Zambia
26. Save the children, Uganda
27. SHARE South Africa
28. TOSTAN, Senegal
29. University of Witwatersrand, Lesotho
30. VIE, Niger
31. Wellington CLC, South Africa
32. Work for Rural Health, Malawi

ASIA (13)

1. ActionAid International, Bangladesh
2. ActionAid International, Vietnam
3. Bunyad Literacy Council, Pakistan
4. Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Bangladesh
5. International Nepal Fellowship, Nepal
6. Literacy Movement Organization, Iran
7. NIRANTAR, India
8. Notre Dame Foundation, Philippines
9. National Resource Centre NFE, Nepal
10. Pakistan Girls Guide Association, Pakistan
11. State Resource Centre, India
12. UNESCO, Vietnam
13. World Education, Nepal

LATIN AMERICA (16)

1. Alfabetizacao Solidaria, Brazil
2. Ayuda en Accion, Bolivia
3. Ayuda en Accion, Peru
4. Centro Cultural Batahola, Nicaragua
5. Centro Josue de Castro, Recife, Brazil
6. Centro de Alfabetizacion, Ecuador
7. Comite Nacional de Alfabetizacion, Government of Guatemala
8. ESCAES, Peru
9. Fondo de Poblacion de Naciones Unidas, Peru
10. Fundacion IRFA, Bolivia
11. Fe Y Alegria, Peru
12. IIZ-DVV, Madagascar
13. National Women's Programme, PROMUDEH, Government of Peru
14. Projeto Escola Ze Peao, Brazil
15. Secretariat of Continuing Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, Brazil
16. SESI, Brazil

OTHER (WESTERN AND PACIFIC)=6

1. East End Literacy, Canada
2. Ian Macpherson (PhD student, Oxford Univ.)
3. Lire Et Ecrire, Belgium
4. Literacy Association, Solomon Islands
5. National Adult Literacy Agency, Ireland
6. Primary Literacy Education Project, University of South Pacific

APPENDIX 2: RESPONDENTS TO BENCHMARKING PROCESS

Respondents =142

Name of Organization/Respondent	Country	Type of Organization
AFRICA (43)		
Centre for Excel for Lit. and Lit. Educ	Nigeria	Academic
Assoc. SUBAAHI GUMO (ASG)	Mali	NGO
USAID	Senegal	Multilateral
DABE MBESC (Min. Educ)	Namibia	Govt.
Gwyneth Tuchten (Ad.Bas.Ed.Advisor)	South Africa	NGO
IIZ-DVV	South Africa	NGO
IIZ-DVV	Guinea Conakry	NGO
Family Literacy Project	South Africa	NGO
The Aids Support Org (TASO)	Uganda	NGO
PAMOJA	Uganda	Network
National Functional Lit. Program	Ghana	Govt.
Phaphamang	South Africa	NGO
ANCEFA	Senegal	Network
Nat.commission for adult & NFE	Nigeria	Govt.
PAMOJA REFLECT Network	Uganda	Network
Universitaire Populaire (UP)	Tchad	Academic
AAEA	Angola	Network
Adult Learning Network (ALN\O	South Africa	Network
Maarifa ni Ufunguo	Tanzania	NGO
Save the Children (Hadijah Nandyose)	Uganda	NGO
OXFAM GB	Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, South Africa, Zambia	NGO
ActionAid (1)	Senegal	NGO
ActionAid (2)	Senegal	NGO
Grace Maiso	Uganda	Academic
African Evangelistic Enterprise	Uganda	NGO
PANUKA Trust	Zambia	NGO
University of Witwatersrand/Gillian Attwood	South Africa	Academic
Wellington Community Learning Centre	South Africa	NGO
Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF)	Uganda	Network
ActionAid International Ethiopia	Ethiopia	NGO
Girl Child Network	Kenya	NGO
SHARE Adult Education Centre	South Africa	NGO
United Nations World Food Programme	Uganda	Multilateral
Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)	Sudan	NGO
Save The Children Uganda/Charles Wabwire	Uganda	NGO
FAWEZA	Zambia	NGO
Literacy and Adult Basic Education (LABE)	Uganda	NGO
Aide et Action	Tanzania	NGO
IIZ/DVV, East Afica Regional Office	Ethiopia	NGO
Elimu Yetu Coalition Nyanza	Kenya	NGO
Association pour le Developpement de l'Education et de la Formation en Afrique (ADEF)	Senegal	NGO
Centre d'Etudes , de Recherche et de Formation en Langues Africaines (CERFLA)	Senegal	NGO
ActionAid International Ghana	Ghana	NGO

Name of Organization/Respondent	Country	Type of Organization
LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN (37)		
Fundacion Andina de Desarrollo Y estudios sociales funades	Ecuador	NGO
IRFEYAL	Ecuador	NGO
Universidade de Sao Paolo	Brazil	Academic
SUMANDO	Paraguay	NGO
Red Lima REFLECT Accion	Peru	network
Nat. Inst. For Educ. Of Adults	Mexico	Govt.
CREFAL	Uruguay/Mexico	network
Fundacion "VISION INTEGRAL DE DESARROLLO Y AYUDA SOLIDARIA" VIDAS	Bolivia	NGO
RISE	USA/Colombia	NGO
UAEM	Mexico	academic
Centre for Educ. Of Women	Colombia	NGO
Independent Investigator	Colombia	NGO
Program Nacional de Alfabetizacion	Peru	Govt.
Grupo Academico de Educacion Popular de la Universidad de valle	Colombia	academic
Projeto Escola Ze Peao	Brazil	NGO
Instituto Radiofonico Fe Y Alegria	Peru	NGO
Ibis-Dinamarca	Bolivia	NGO
Universidade Federal de Goias/Forum Goiano de EJA	Brazil	Academic
SIL International	Brazil/Germany	NGO
CEDEE(Miriam Camilo Recio)	Dominican Republic	NGO
Fe y Alegria	Spain+15 LAC	NGO
Fundacion Ramiro Castillo Love	Guatemala	NGO
Fundacion Ayuda en Accion	Peru	NGO
Asociacion Alemana De Educacion De Adultos (AAEA)	Bolivia	NGO
Fundacion IRFA	Bolivia	NGO
Ayuda en Accion	Spain	NGO
Ministry of Education	Brazil	Govt.
ActionAid International Guatemala	Guatemala	NGO
CIAZO	El Salvador	network
Asociacion de Voluntarios para el Desarrollo Comunitario	Nicaragua	NGO
Fundacion GAMMA IDEAR	Colombia	NGO
Acao Educativa	Brazil	NGO
Ayuda en Accion	Bolivia	NGO
TIEMPO NUEVO	Paraguay	NGO
CADEP "Jose Marcia Arguedas"	Peru	NGO
Solidarity in Literacy (Alfabetizacao Solidaria)	Brazil	NGO
Peace Corps	Paraguay	NGO
ASIA(29)		
Aide et Action Cambodia	Cambodia	NGO
UNESCO Institute for Education	Philippines	multilateral
World Education Nepal	Nepal	NGO
Infocom	Nepal	NGO
ActionAid India	India	NGO
Shanti Volunteer Association	Japan	NGO
Bunyad Literacy Community Council (Noor UI Zaman)	Pakistan	NGO
Japan International Cooperation Agency	Pakistan	multilateral
Bunyad Literacy Community Council (Noor UI Zaman)	Pakistan	NGO
Myanmar Education Research Dept.	Union of Myanmar	Govt.

Name of Organization/Respondent	Country	Type of Organization
Innovative Forum for Comm. Dev(IFCD)	Nepal	NGO
Village Educ. Resource Centre (VERC)	Bangladesh	NGO
Institute of Social Sciences	Lahore, Pakistan	NGO
Pratham Mumbai Education Initiative	India	NGO
Denzil Saldanha/Tata Inst. Soc. Sciences	India	Academic
UNNATI-Organization for Dev. Educ.	India	NGO
Basic Education Dept./MOE	People's Republic of China	Govt.
Seva Mandir	India	NGO
NOCEAD/ACCU LRC	Vietnam	multilateral
ActionAid	Bangladesh	NGO
Dhaka Ahsania Mission	Bangladesh	NGO
EMPOWER Foundation	Thailand	NGO
SANGJOG/Connection	Bangladesh	NGO
ActionAid International	Vietnam	NGO
Aasaman-Nepal	Nepal	NGO
ActionAid Nepal(Khemraj Upadhyaya)	Nepal	NGO
UNESCO Islamabad office	Pakistan	multilateral
International Institute for Adult and Lifelong Education	India	Academic
Pratham Raigad Education Initiative Trust(PREIT)	India	NGO
OTHER (29)		
Lire et Ecrire	Belgium	NGO
Novib/Oxfam Netherlands	Netherlands	NGO
Institute of Education, London	UK	Academic
Bluesky Learning Ltd	UK	NGO
University of Southampton	UK	academic
British Association for Literacy in Development/CDWRobinson	UK	NGO
Calgary Immigrant Women's Assoc.	Canada	NGO
Collectif Alphabetisation	Belgium	NGO
National Centre on Adult Literacy/International Literacy Institute	University of Pennsylvania, USA	Academic
Independent/Juliet Millican	UK	NGO
PhD Student, Oxford Univ.	UK	Academic
National Research and Development centre for Adult literacy and Numeracy	Institute of Education, UK	academic
ActionAid International/Kate Newman	UK	NGO
University of Victoria (Budd Hall)	Canada	Academic
ActionAid International	Belgium	NGO
School of Dev. Studies, UEA(Nitya Rao)	UK	Academic
University of London & Hackney Comm. College	UK	Academic
NIACE	UK	NGO
University of New England	Australia	Academic
Ian Mcpherson (PhD Student, Oxford University)	UK	Academic
International Literacy Institute , UPENN (Dan Wagner)	USA	Academic
National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)	Ireland	NGO
Institute of Education2	UK	Academic
Institute of Education, University of the South Pacific	Fiji(Laucala Campus)	academic
University of Auckland	New Zealand	Academic
University of Waikato	New Zealand/Aotearoa	Academic
Network Waitangi Otautahi	Aotearoa(New Zealand)	NGO
Griffith University	Australia	Academic
Institute of Education, University of the South Pacific(2)	Fiji	Academic
GLOBAL(4)		
Education International (F. Boni)		Union Federation
Oxfam GB		NGO
World Bank (Robert Prouty)		multilateral
Dfid (Halima Begum)		bilateral

APPENDIX 3: LIST OF ORIGINAL INFORMANTS

(those asked to recommend programmes)

Abdou Mainassara	Juliana adu Gyamfi
Abimbola Akinyemi	Juliet MacCaffery
Agneta Lind	Karen Mundy
Ahlin-Byll Catarina	Dr Kate I. Oreh
Aicha Bah Diallo	Katy Webley
Alan Rogers	'Kell and Davidson'
Alexander Kambiri, Ministry of gender, Malawi	Kenneth King
Alfredo Munguambe	Lamine Kane
Amina J. Ibrahim	
Andiwo	Mac- REPEM
Angela Little	Mamadou Diarra,
Angelica P	Maman Sidikou
Anna Robinson Pant	Marden Nochez
Anne Jellema	Maria Khan
Anne sisask	Martin Mwondah
Berger Frederiksen	Maria Nandago
Bimal Phnuyal,	Menaka Roy
Bob Prouty	Michel Carton
Brian Maddox	Namtip Aksornkool
Brian Street	Nelly Stromquist
Budd Hall	Nicola Foroni
Carlos Zarco	Nitya Rao
Celita Echer	Paul Belanger
Charles Abani	Peter Easton
Chinwuba Egbe	Peter Williams
Chris Colclough	Phyllis Thompson
Clinton Robinson	Rachel Hinton
David Theobold	Rosa Maria Torres
Dan Wagner	Rosemary Preston
David Archer	Sara Cottingham
David Barton	Sathyalaban,
David Clarke	Sergio Haddad
Denzil Saldanha	Shafiqul Ismal
Desmond Birmingham	Sheila Aikman
Fiona Leach	Shigeru Aoya
Florence Gyeyir, nfed govt of ghana	Snoeks Desmond
Gorgui Sow	Steve Heyneman
Halima L Zinga	Teeka Bhattarai
Henner	Ursula Thomi
Henry Kaluba	Vera Ribeiro
heribert Hinzen	Wim Hoppers
Irungu Houghton	Wolfgang Leumer
Jacirema Bernardo	Yusuf Sayed
Jennifer Chilewa	
John Oxenham	
Joshua Muskin	

APPENDIX 4: ORIGINAL SURVEY

(The original was sent in Excel format. This Word version has all the original questions but is presented in a more concise than the one that was circulated)

GLOBAL SURVEY ON ADULT LITERACY

This survey is being undertaken by the Global Campaign for Education and ActionAid International, funded by the EFA Global Monitoring Report and UNESCO. It is designed to help determine benchmarks of good practice and costs in adult literacy programmes. The survey is being completed only by a carefully selected group of programmes/respondents who have a reputation for high quality and effective work. The survey has 8 sections and should take about one hour to complete. Responses should be sent by January 25th 2005 to: yaikah.jeng@actionaid.org. The survey is available in English, Spanish and French and is being used for very diverse programmes, and answers to most questions are closed/multiple choice-to help with synthesis of results. We hope you can capture something of the uniqueness of your programme through the combination of your answers, through using the "Other" category for some key questions through appending further documentation (especially evaluation/research material). You must fill in this form electronically (i.e. not by printing out the form and filling by hand) as this is the only way we will be able to consolidate results. If you have difficulties, contact Yaikah Jeng.

Key concepts:

"Literacy"= please provide your own definition in section 1.1
Learner (= participant = student) - adults in a learning group.

Facilitator (= teacher = animator = tutor) – the person involved directly with learners.

Trainers (= lead tutors) - core resource people who train facilitators / teachers but who do not directly teach learners.

Supervisor /manager/coordinator - support staff involved in management / oversight / monitoring / evaluation / administration etc.

Learner group (= class = circle = community) - the basic unit of organisation of your programme.

Thank you
Yaikah M. Jeng
ActionAid
Hamlyn House, MacDonald Road
Archway,
London, N19 5PG
UK

Yaikah.jeng@actionaid.org
44 20 7561 7561

Background Information

A. Your Organization

1. What is the name of your Organization?
2. Please state the Country of your Literacy programme.
3. What type of Organization are you? If "Other", please specify in the space provided below.
 - a) Government Agency/Ministry of Education
 - b) NGO Programme, with close affiliation with Government
 - c) Government programme, implemented by an NGO
 - d) Independent NGO programme
 - e) Community-based Organization
 - f) Faith-based Organization
 - g) Social movement/People's Organization
 - h) Other (please specify):

4. Please fill in the table below (with X), indicating the level of support to your Programme from the various sources listed, depending on the type of Organization/Ministry you work with.

Ministry/Organizations	Lead	Significant support	Some support	None
Ministry of Education				
Ministry of Community/ Rural Development				
Ministry of Gender/ Women				
Ministry of Health				
Ministry of Planning				
NGO Programme				
Community-based Organization				
Faith-based Organization				

5. At what level does your Organization work?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) National level
- b) Regional level
- c) Provincial level
- d) District level
- e) Sub-District level
- f) Community level

6. Does your Programme involve a partnership between Government and NGOs?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Yes
- b) No

7. How many NGOs are involved?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) 1 to 3
- b) 4 to 6
- c) 7 to 10
- d) 10 to 20
- e) 20 to 50
- f) 50 to 100
- g) More than 100

8. Please fill in the Table below. In the spaces, fill in with either "1=Lead", "2=Support", or leave blank if "No role" or "Not applicable".

	Your Organization	Central Government	District/ Local Government	NGO	Local community	Adult learners	Other
Development of overall strategy							
Management of funds							
Fixing unit costs per learner							
Decision on methods to be used by Programme							
Developing materials							
Running training workshops							
Developing Monitoring framework							
Monitoring progress							
Evaluation of Programme							
Recruiting of Supervisors							
Recruiting of Facilitators/Teachers							
Mobilisation of learners							
Linking literacy to other development programmes							
Fixing timescale of Programme (overall length/calendar)							
Fixing daily timetable/hours for learner groups							

B. Your Adult Literacy Programme

9. When was your Programme, in its present form, launched?

10. How is your Adult Literacy Programme set up?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Adult literacy groups are formed
- b) An Adult literacy component is added to an existing income-generating/development programme
- c) Residential camps are set up
- d) Other (please specify):

11. Would you consider your Adult Literacy Programme as a "campaign"? A "campaign" is a one-off, time-limited and high profile programme.

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Yes. It is a "Campaign"
- b) Yes. It is linked to a "Campaign"
- c) No

12. What are the principal goals of your Adult Literacy Programme? Please rank all that apply starting with 1=most important goal, etc. Note that you can have up to two goals ranked the same.

Goals	Rank
Teach literacy	
Address HIV/AIDS	
Empower learners	
Women's empowerment	
Social/Political change	
Health promotion	
Support income generation	
Poverty reduction	
Education for All	
Other (please specify here):	
Other (please specify here):	

13. How many times has your Programme been evaluated in the following ways? Please mark all that apply.

Number of times evaluated
External/Independent evaluation
Internal evaluation
Peer evaluation
Self-evaluation by Learners

14. Please provide the following information regarding your Adult Literacy programme.

Details	Male	Female
Number of Trainers		
Number of Facilitators/Teachers		
Number of Learners		
Number of Supervisors		

15. How many learning groups are there in your Programme?

16. How long is your Adult Literacy Programme? Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) 0-3 months
- b) 3-9 months
- c) 9-12 months
- d) 12-18 months
- e) 18-24 months
- f) 24-30 months
- g) 30-36 months
- h) More than 36 months

17. Is there an on-going Post-literacy Programme in your area or other area, once basic skills have been achieved? Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Yes
- b) No

18. If Yes how long is the Programme? Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) 0-3 months
- b) 3-9 months
- c) 9-12 months
- d) 12-18 months
- e) 18-24 months
- f) 24-30 months
- g) 30-36 months
- h) More than 36 months

C. The Literacy Context

19. What is the national literacy rate and estimated rate? Please fill in the table below.

	Official rate		Your estimate	
Male	Female	Male	Female	

20. What is the source of your evidence for your estimate? Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Published research/Survey
- b) Unpublished documents
- c) Personal observations
- d) Other (please specify):

21. What is the official literacy rate, and estimated rate for those target areas that your Programme works in?

	Official rate		Your estimate	
Male	Female	Male	Female	

22. What is the source of your estimate? Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Published research/Survey
- b) Unpublished documents
- c) Personal observations
- d) Other (please specify):

23. What is the total public expenditure on Education as % of GNP? Please express your answer in %.

24. What is the total expenditure on Adult Literacy as % of the Education expenditure? Please express your answer in %.

25. Who else contributes to the Adult Literacy budget in your Country? Please rank from 1 to 10, with 1=Lead contributor, etc.

Ministry/Organization	Rank
Ministry of Education	
Ministry of Education	
Ministry of Community/Rural Development	
Ministry of Gender/Women	
Ministry of Health	
Ministry of Planning	
NGO Programme	
Community-based Organization	
National NGO	
Bilateral Donors	
Multi-lateral Donors	
Other (please specify):	
Other (please specify):	

26. Does your Organization collect and archive Adult Literacy data?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Yes
- b) No

27. Which Organizations/Institutions have access to this data? Please mark all that apply with an X.

Organizations/Institutions	
International organizations	X
Universities/Research institutes	
Government Agencies/Ministries of Education	
NGOs	
Community-based Organizations	
Faith-based Organizations	
Other (please specify):	
Other (please specify):	
Other (please specify):	

1. Conceptual Issues

28. Does your Organization or Programme have a working definition of "literacy"? Please select from the choices below and complete the answer.

- a) Yes. The Organization's definition is
- b) Yes. The Programme's definition is
- c) No. My personal definition is

29. Please examine the statements below and mark appropriately (with an X) in the spaces provided.

Statements	Degrees of Agreement					Question is unclear
	Agree strongly	Agree	No view	Disagree	Disagree strongly	
• Our Literacy programme is focused primarily on teaching people to read, write and use written numbers.						
• We recognize that working with oral communication is a big part of our Programme						
• Learning another language is a key part of the training process						
• Facilitating critical thinking and awareness about the world is central to our Programme						
• Our Literacy programme does adopt a standardized understanding of literacy, but takes a context-specific approach, which draws on "multiple literacies".						
• The training process is structured based on a reflection-action model, whereby participants are encouraged to act on issues of importance to them and address avenues for real change						
• Our Programme regards numeracy as the teaching of basic numbers/counting to people who do not know how to count/calculate						
• Our Programme addresses numeracy by teaching about budgets/statistics/use of money						
• Our Programme teaches literacy not simply as a set skills, but as the application of these skills in a variety of developmental contexts						
• Just learning to read and write does not empower people						
• A literacy programme must focus on enabling people to deal with the real uses of reading and writing in their daily lives						
• A literacy programme must help learners deal with the power issues around the use of literacy in their daily lives so they are not intimidated by reading and writing even if they cannot read well						
• Most learners join literacy programmes to enhance their social status						
• The learning process and the experience of being in a group is more important than actual literacy skills						
• Adult learners need one-to-one attention						

30. Does your Literacy programme include a numeracy aspect?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Yes
- b) No

31. What percentage of time is spent on numeracy?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) 0 to 10
- b) 10-20
- c) 20-40
- d) 40-60
- e) 60-80
- f) 80-100

32. How important do you consider numeracy (in relation to literacy) to be?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Very important
- b) A little important
- c) Important
- d) Not important

33. Please examine the statements below and mark with X in the spaces provided.

Statements	Degrees of Agreement				
	Agree strongly	Agree	No view	Disagree	Disagree strongly
• People develop numeracy skills best through repeating lots of arithmetical sums					
• Numeracy operations need to be learnt in sequence (I.e. first addition, then subtraction, etc.					
• Using money within numeracy classes can help people strengthen their numeracy skills					
• People already have a lot of numeracy knowledge before joining our literacy programme					
• There is only one way to do calculations, and these must be written down					
• Numeracy helps people in their everyday lives					
• Numeracy is a neutral process - it is not political					
• How to do basic arithmetic is best learnt through real situations					
• Numeracy classes should show people how to use the numeracy skills they have already in a new context					

2. Learner Groups

A. Background characteristics of Learner groups.

34. Please fill in the table below with the percentages of the different groups among your learner groups. Note that the percentages do not have to add up to 100% across and downwards.

35. Please fill in the table below.

Sex	Percent
Male	
Female	
Mixed	
Total	100%

Groups	Males (%)	Females (%)
Low caste/Low social status		
Landless People		
Linguistic minorities		
Extremely poor (bottom 20 % of income)		
Refugees/Displaced peoples		
Adolescent/Youth (13-18yrs)		
Children <13yrs		
Tribal/Indigenous groups		
Religious minorities		
Urban		
Peri-urban		
Rural		
Disabled		
Pastoralists		
Migrant workers		
Other		
Other		
Other		
Other		

36. Do learners have a choice in determining the sex mix of their learner group?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Yes
- b) No

37. What is the targeted age group for males and females in your Adult Literacy programme? Please mark Most targeted age group=1; Second most targeted age group=2, etc.

Age group	Males	Females
Under 15		
15-25		
25-35		
35-50		
Above 50		

38. What is the typical age among those who actually enrol in your Adult Literacy Programme? Please mark Most common age group=1, Second most common age group=2, etc.

Age group	Males	Females
Under 15		
15-25		
25-35		
35-50		
Above 50		

39. What is the extent of similarity of the background of learners and facilitators/teachers? Please mark with an X in the table below.

Socioeconomic status	X
Same	
Similar	
Different	
Cultural/Ethnic/Religious group	
Same	
Similar	
Different	
Location of Residence	
Same community	
Neighbouring community	
Within the same District	
Other (please specify):	

B. Enrolment, Retention and Completion

40. What is the typical/average number of female learners per learner group at enrolment?

41. What is the typical/average number of male learners per learner group at enrolment?

42. What is the typical number of female learners per learner group after the first 6 weeks of your Programme (i.e. After dropouts)?

43. What is the typical number of male learners per learner group after the first 6 weeks of your Programme (i.e. After dropouts)?

44. What is the typical number of female learners per learner group after the first year of your Programme (i.e. After dropouts)?

45. What is the typical number of male learners per learner group after the first year of your Programme (i.e. After dropouts)?

46. What is the typical number of female learners per learner group at the end of your Programme (i.e. Number who complete Programme)?

47. What is the typical number of male learners per learner group at the end of your Programme (i.e. Number who complete Programme)?

48. What is the typical number of female learners per learner group who successfully learn to read and write?

49. What is the typical number of male learners per learner group who successfully learn to read and write?

50. How long does it take for an average participant to successfully complete a programme, so that they are able to read and write basic texts about their daily lives and will not lose their skills?

51. What is the average number of contact hours with a learner group to achieve this?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) 0-50
- b) 50-100
- c) 100-150
- d) 150-200
- e) 200-300
- f) 300-400
- g) 400-500
- h) 500-600

52. How often do learners meet in a week during your Adult literacy programme?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3
- d) 4
- e) 5
- f) 6

53. How often do learners meet in a week during your Post-literacy phase of the programme?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3
- d) 4
- e) 5
- f) 6

54. Where do learners usually meet for sessions?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Someone's house
- b) At a School
- c) At a Community centre
- d) Under a tree
- e) Under a built Shelter
- f) In the Workplace

3. Teaching and Learning

A. Facilitators

55. What is the typical age of a Facilitator in your Adult Literacy programme? Please mark 1=most common age, 2=second most common age, etc.

Age group	Males	Females
Under 15		
15-25		
25-35		
35-50		
Above 50		

56. Does the age of a facilitator impact the teaching-learning process?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Yes
- b) No

57. If Yes please describe in the space below in no more than 3 lines.

58. What is the average pay for facilitators?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) None
- b) Honorarium/Stipend
- c) Equivalent to minimum wage for hours worked
- d) Above minimum wage

59. How does pay for an Adult Literacy facilitator compare to the average pay for a Primary school teacher for hours worked?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Less than _
- b) _ to _
- c) _ to _
- d) _ to double
- e) About double
- f) More than double

60. Please rank the incentives in the table below from 1 to 5, with 1=most important, 2=second most important, etc.

Incentives	Rank
Additional pay based on results	
Access to credit	
Access to Further Education	
Certificate of Training and Achievement	
Increased status in their Community	
Show of appreciation from Learners	
Provision of food parcels/other goods	

61. How long does a Facilitator stay with your Programme on average? Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) 0-3 months
- b) 3-6 months
- c) 6-9 months
- d) 9-12 months
- e) 1-2 years
- f) 2-3 years
- g) More than 3 years

62. Does the sex of a Facilitator impact the functioning of a session/class, the content of learning or learning outcomes? Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Yes
- b) No

63. If Yes please describe the impact in the space below.

64. Who selects the Facilitators? Please rank from 1 to 5, with 1=Lead selector, etc

- National committee
- District committee
- Members of the Community
- A local agency
- Local community leaders
- Learners/participants choose
- Other (please specify):

65. Please indicate in the table below (with an X) the % of Facilitators/Teachers in your Literacy programme who have completed the following:

Schooling	Percentage
1-3 years Primary	
Completed Primary	
Lower Secondary	
Upper Secondary	
University	
Other (please specify):	
Total	100%

66. Is initial training provided for Facilitators?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Yes
- b) No

67. If Yes how long does the initial training last?

68. What is the typical content of the initial training for Facilitators? Please rank from 1 to 10, starting with 1=most important content, etc.

Content	Rank (1-10)
Reliable methods of Teaching (mastery of alphabet, words/sentences, numbers, basic calculations)	
Discussing the role of Facilitators/Teachers outside the classroom	
How to use "multiple literacies"	
Gender training	
Political/Ideological education (basic analysis of class, caste, gender, power relations)	
Theoretical understanding of Literacy	
Team building amongst Facilitators/Teachers	
Understanding of Group dynamics	
Participatory tools for engaging learners in a critical discussion of local problems	
Preparation of learning materials	
Discussion of local development issues	
Mobilization of resources and support	
Other (please specify):	
Other (please specify):	
Other (please specify):	

69. Is follow-up training provided for Facilitators?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Yes
- b) No

70. How regularly after initial training is follow-up training provided? Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Every week
- b) Every 2 weeks
- c) Every 4 weeks
- d) Every 6 weeks
- e) Every 8 weeks
- f) Every 12 weeks
- g) Every 6 months
- h) Every year

71. How often do Facilitators from different areas meet to share and/or exchange ideas with each other? Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Every week
- b) Every 2 weeks
- c) Every 4 weeks
- d) Every 6 weeks
- e) Every 8 weeks
- f) Every 12 weeks
- g) Every 6 months
- h) Every year

B. Trainers

72. How much training do Trainers receive at the National level? Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) 0-5 hours
- b) 5-10 hours
- c) 10-20 hours
- d) 20-40 hours
- e) 40-60 hours
- f) 60-80 hours
- g) 80-100 hours
- h) 100-150 hours

73. How much training do Trainers receive at the local level? Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) 0-5 hours
- b) 5-10 hours
- c) 10-20 hours
- d) 20-40 hours
- e) 40-60 hours
- f) 60-80 hours
- g) 80-100 hours
- h) 100-150 hours

74. What is the ratio of Trainers to Facilitators?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) 1 to 5
- b) 1 to 10
- c) 1 to 20
- d) 1 to 25
- e) 1 to 30
- f) 1 to 40
- g) 1 to 50
- h) 1 to 60

75. Is there a forum where Trainers meet to exchange ideas?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Yes
- b) No

C. Supervisors

76. How many learner groups is a Supervisor responsible for?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) 1 to 10
- b) 10 to 20
- c) 20 to 40
- d) 40 to 60
- e) 60 to 80
- f) 80 to 100
- g) More than 100

77. How often does a Supervisor visit his/her learner groups? Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Once a week
- b) Once every 2 weeks
- c) Once a month
- d) Once every 2 months
- e) Once every 3 months
- f) Other (please specify):

78. What are the main reasons for visits by the Supervisors? Please rank from 1 to 8, with 1=most important reason, 2=second most important reason, etc.

Reasons	Rank
Support/Advice	
Identify Facilitators' concerns	
Training	
Monitoring (formal assessment of teaching)	
Monitoring (formal assessment of learners)	
Other (please specify)	
Other (please specify):	
Other (please specify):	

79. What is the duration of training provided to a Supervisor? Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) 0-5 hours
- b) 5-10 hours
- c) 10-20 hours
- d) 20-40 hours
- e) 40-60 hours
- f) 60-80 hours
- g) 80-100 hours
- h) 100-150 hours

80. Is there any forum for Supervisors to meet and exchange ideas?

D. The Learning Process

81. What types of reading materials are available to Learners in your Programme? Please rank the ten most easily accessible materials, as well as the ten most important materials, with 1=most accessible (commonly available to Learners); 1=most important, etc.

Reading materials	Most important	Most accessible
Learner-generated materials from own Group		
Learner-generated from other Groups		
Facilitator-generated materials		
Government publications		
NGO-produced materials		
Stories		
Children's books		
Poetry		
Newspapers		
Health-related materials		
Information on Basic rights		
Information on income-generating schemes		
Newsletters from the Programme/Agency		
Political materials		
Religious materials		
Primers/Textbooks		
Visual materials		
Other		
Other		

82. What types of reading and/or writing materials are provided to Learners in your Programme? Please mark all that apply (with X).

Materials	Free	Minimal charge to Learner	Learner buys materials
Pens			
Pencils			
Exercise books/Notebooks			
Manuals			
Primers/Textbooks			
Newspapers			
Other reading materials (please specify):			

83. Who is involved in the developing of learning materials for Learner groups?

Please rank from 1 to 5, with 1=Most important contributor, 2=second most important contributor, etc.

Contributors	Rank
State/National resource centre	
Agency experts in Literacy in the Capital city	
Experts in other development areas in the Capital city	
Local experts in Literacy	
Local experts in other development areas in the Capital city	
Trainers	
Facilitators, in Workshops	
Facilitators, individually	
Learners	
Other (please specify):	

84. What is the source of information for preparation of your learning materials? Please mark all that apply (with X).

Sources	
Research into Social practices	
Research into local development needs	
Participatory needs assessment with Learners	
Evaluations of previous interventions	
Academic literature	
Other	
Other	
Other	

85. What methods do you use for teaching Literacy (reading & writing) to Adult learners? Please rank from 1 to 10, with 1=most commonly used, 2=second most commonly used, etc.

Methods	Ranking
Starting with the Alphabet	
Generative words/Syllables	
Whole language approach	
Using real materials	
Structured primers/textbooks	
Learner-generated texts	
Facilitator-generated texts	
Other	
Other	
Other	

86. What writing activities do Learners undertake during your Literacy programmes? Please rank from 1 to 5, 1=most common activity, etc.

Writing activities	Rank
Dictation	
Copying from the Board	
Short paragraphs on subject of their choice	
Answer questions in exercise books	
Practicing formal writing (completing forms, official letter writing)	
Real functional writing (writing actual letters, completing actual forms)	
Creative writing (poetry, short stories)	
Group writing based on discussions of local issues	
Writing articles for newsletters	
Other (please specify):	
Other (please specify):	

87. Who decides the choice of language for your Adult literacy programmes? Please mark all that apply with X.

Decision maker	
National Government	
Local Government	
Local Agency	
Facilitator/Teacher	
Learner	
Local community	
Mix of above	
Other (specify)	

88. What language is usually used for initial Literacy work?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Mother tongue
- b) Local dominant language
- c) Official national language

89. What language is usually used for Post-literacy work?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) Mother tongue
- b) Local dominant language
- c) Official national language

90. How much does choice of language for a Programme impact on the motivation of the Learners?

Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) A lot
- b) A little
- c) Not much

91. How much does choice of language for a Programme impact on the successful completion of a Programme by a Learner? Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) A lot
- b) A little
- c) Not much

92. How does your Programme ensure that those issues important to the local area or the Learners are addressed? Please mark all that apply with X.

Methods
Learners develop their own agenda (s) and control the curriculum
An initial survey is conducted to determine important/relevant issues
Program content is designed by experts, at District, Regional and National levels, based on relevant issues
Other (please specify):

93. What methods do you use to stimulate discussion and analysis in your Group?

Please rank the most commonly used methods, with 1=most commonly used method, 2=second most commonly used method, up to 10=least used method.

Methods
Participatory visuals e.g. Maps, calendars/timelines, matrices, diagrams
Role play
Theatre
Song
Dance
Puppets
Music
Use of codification
Posters/Pictures/Photos
Participatory videos
Story-telling
Case studies
Proverbs/Sayings
Radio/Television
Videos/DVDs
Newspapers
Gossip/Local news
Blackboard

94. Which is the most important media/communication tool for raising awareness about your Programme or publicising it? Please rank from 1 to 6, with 1=most important tool, 2=second most important tool, etc.

Tools	Rank
Radio	
Television adverts	
Newspapers	
Word of mouth	
Direct mailing	
Billboards	
Community Organizations	
Other (please specify):	
Other (please specify):	

95. Is your Literacy/Post-literacy programme closely linked to other development interventions?

Please mark all that apply with an X.

Development interventions
HIV/AIDS
Water & Sanitation
Micro-credit groups
Child care groups
Agriculture/Rural development groups
Environment/Ecology groups
Urban migration
Employment
Health programmes
Pre-school/School
Other (please specify):
Other (please specify):

4. Learning Outcomes

96. Which of the following do you consider to be most evident short and long term outcomes, for men and women? Please rank the 10 most evident short and long-term outcomes, starting with 1=most important/common, 2=second most important/most common, etc.

Outcomes	Short-term outcomes	Long-term outcomes
Reading & Writing		
Using numbers		
Increased knowledge of health information		
Increased knowledge of Agriculture		
Increased knowledge of income-generating schemes		
Ability to fill forms and use reading and writing skills in daily life		
Improved health practices among learners		
Greater equality between sexes		
Greater awareness of Rights		
Greater social/community cohesion		
More effective use of local development funds		
Lower rates of HIV/AIDS		
Better uptake of immunisations		
Attendance of school by girls		
Help with Homework		
Confidence to speak in public places		
Confidence in defending one's own rights		
Building/strengthening local organizations		
Increased accountability of local governments		
Learners taking leadership positions in local organizations		
Learners taking leadership positions in local organizations		
Other (please specify):		
Other (please specify):		
Other (please specify):		

97. What type of evidence is available for the learning outcomes chosen above? Please indicate with an X in the appropriate spaces in the table below.

Outcomes	Published research	Peer-reviewed research	External evaluation	Personal testimonies	Personal observations	Self-evaluation by Learners
Reading & Writing						
Using numbers						
Increased knowledge of health information						
Increased knowledge of Agriculture						
Increased knowledge of income-generating schemes						
Ability to fill forms and use reading and writing skills in daily life						
Improved health practices among learners						
Greater equality between sexes						
Greater awareness of Rights						
Greater social/community cohesion						
More effective use of local development funds						
Lower rates of HIV/AIDS						
Better uptake of immunisations						
Attendance of school by girls						
Help with Homework						
Confidence to speak in public places						
Confidence in defending one's own rights						
Building/strengthening local organizations						
Increased accountability of local governments						
Learners taking leadership positions in local organizations						
Learners taking leadership positions in local organizations						
Other (please specify):						
Other (please specify):						
Other (please specify):						

98. Please indicate (with X) the amount/level of impact that your Programme had on each of the Millennium Development Goals below.

Millennium Development Goals	Very high	High	Low	Very low	No impact
Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015					
Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling by 2015					
Eliminate gender disparities in primary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015					
Reduce child mortality					
Improve maternal health					
Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and other major diseases					
Ensure environmental sustainability. Reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water					
Develop a global partnership for development between rich and poor countries					

99. Please indicate the sources of your evidence in the table below with an X.

Millennium Development Goals	Published research	Peer-reviewed evaluation	External evaluation	Personal testimonies	Personal observations	Self-evaluation by Learners
Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015						
Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling by 2015						
Eliminate gender disparities in primary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015						
Reduce child mortality						
Improve maternal health						
Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and other major diseases						
Ensure environmental sustainability.						
Reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water						
Develop a global partnership for development between rich and poor countries						

100. What are the major challenges faced in the context of literacy efforts? Please choose all that apply, marking with an X.

Challenges	
Lack of time available to Learners	
Insufficient funding to run Programme effectively	
Erratic/Unsustained funding	
Lack of support from own Agency/Organization	
Lack of support from other relevant Agencies/Organizations	
Competition from other Programmes	
Obstacles put by family members on Learners	
Obstacles from Local community/Elite who distrust the Programme/want people to stay in their place/fear of perceived political impact	
Obstacles from religious/political leaders	
Lack of perceived benefits of Literacy Programmes	
Difficulties of actually learning: adult learners get frustrated by slow progress	
Other (please specify):	
Other (please specify):	
Other (please specify):	
Other (please specify):	

101. Please name 5 key ingredients that have contributed to the success of Programme that you would recommend to others?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

5. Literacy Costs

102. At what level can you most accurately report on the costs of your Literacy programme? Please bold appropriate answer.

- a) National level
- b) District level
- c) Local level
- d) Learning group

103a. For your level of operation, please report on the costs for your Literacy programme over one year, in the table below. If your Programme last less or more than a year, please adjust your figures accordingly.

Please specify costs below in US Dollars
Programme development costs (e.g. publicity, mobilization, planning, more??)
Learning material costs (e.g. Please suggest examples)
Staff costs (e.g. facilitators/trainers/ supervisors pay)
Professional development costs (e.g. training)
Management costs (e.g. supervisor evaluations)
Total costs

103b. What is the number of enrolled learners the above costs cover?

103c. What is the number of successful learners the above costs cover?

103d. What is the cost per enrolled learner?

103e. What is the cost per successful learner?

104. Are the above costs adequate?

- a) Yes
- b) No

105. If No, please specify in the space below 5 areas that need strengthening and an estimate of additional costs to achieve this.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

106a. For your level of operation, please report on the costs for your Post-literacy programme in the table over one year below. Please specify costs below in US Dollars

Please specify costs below in US Dollars
Programme development costs (e.g. publicity, mobilization, planning, more??)
Learning material costs (e.g. Please suggest examples)
Staff costs (e.g. facilitators/trainers/ supervisors pay)
Professional development costs (e.g. training)
Management costs (e.g. supervisor evaluations)
Total costs

106b. What is the number of enrolled learners the above costs cover?

106c. What is the number of successful learners the above costs cover?

106d. What is the cost per enrolled learner?

106e. What is the cost per successful learner?

107. Are the above costs adequate for your Post-literacy programme?

- a) Yes
- b) No

108. If No, please specify those areas that need strengthening and an estimate of adequate cost to achieve this.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Thank you very much for completing this Survey.
Please e-mail the completed form to
yaikah.jeng@actionaid.org.**

*Please list below the titles of the key documents (external evaluations, research documents, surveys, etc.) that you are sending with the survey. Also append the actual documents.

*In this space, please add any personal comments/observations/ anything you feel is of importance that we should know about.

APPENDIX 5: REFERENCES

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ACRONYMS

- EFA** Education for All
- EFA GMR** Education For All Global Monitoring Report
- GCE** Global Campaign for Education
- NGO** Non Governmental Organisation
- UPE** Universal Primary Education