United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

**United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) (2003-2012)**
**Expert Meeting on UNLD Evaluation**
**9 – 10 May 2011**
**UNESCO Headquarters, Fontenoy, Room 4021**

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**<u>Meeting report</u>**

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| Executive summary |
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The Expert Meeting on United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) Evaluation took place on 9 and 10 May 2011 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France (Annex1: Agenda of the meeting), bringing around 15 experts (Annex 2: List of participants). Composed of four sessions, the meeting aimed to: develop preliminary outlines of the outputs of the evaluation; propose a set of indicators for evaluating the Decade; define data needs and develop outline instruments for data collection from a range of stakeholders; and to propose a set of research topics, regional studies and case studies to be conducted as part of evaluation. The experts made recommendations to UNESCO which leads the evaluation process as the global coordinator for the UNLD, key elements of which are summarized as follows.

Four proposed outputs:
- UN General Assembly report (2013);
- UNESCO Executive Board report (2013);
- Commissioned papers and studies on the identified themes; and
- A comprehensive database on a webpage to provide outcomes of the evaluation but to serve for a broader audience on a webpage where country profiles, data, papers and studies are made available.

Five foreseen steps to be taken:
- Identify appropriate documents, organize people, generate ideas, prepare thinking around how to envision this to be done
- Undertake initial activities much of which are clustered into the four instruments identified during the meeting as below with clarification about funding, actors, concrete actions and TORs for each. Regional or sub-regional meetings could be organized to capture different voices;
- Create a platform for knowledge and information management to make the compiled and standardized information available in various forms to be used by multiple-players;
- Analyze and compare information in light of particular purposes and targeted audiences of the final products; and
- Prepare the final products

It was recommended that the UNLD evaluation be conducted through four possible data collection instruments.
- A basic literacy/UNLD profile of all countries in the world, which would provide succinct information concerning the three main strategic objectives of the UNLD and the five dimensions of literacy addressed in CONFINTEA VI, using the reporting instrument for GRALE 2012 and end of the UNLD.
- For a smaller set of countries (to be determined - e.g. countries highlighted in GMR, 35 LIFE countries, E9 countries, small island states, developed countries, etc.), the creation of more in-depth profiles with detailed data and information highlighting literacy-

related changes during the UNLD. The process of drafting such profiles might involve several phases and potentially be the product of a commissioning process.

- Papers that address cross-cutting issues in adult literacy—for example, literacy and gender, literacy and disabilities, literacy and language, literacy in highly literate societies, literacy and sustainable development, literacy and health, literacy and peace. Some of these were special topics during the UNLD decade.
- Succinct information and analysis of data from development partners, notably multi-and bi-lateral organizations as well as from civil society organizations (NGOs, faith-based organizations, etc.) in terms of changes in literacy assumptions, their statements, policies and programmes.

To follow this meeting up, UNESCO will prepare an action plan for the end-of-decade evaluation and will organize consultations with UN agencies and other partners. Although this meeting was held on an ad hoc basis, UNESCO indicated that it would like to count on the expertises of this group during the evaluation process.

## Opening Session

Moderated by Mr Patrick Werquin, Section for Literacy and Non-Formal Education, Division for Basic to Higher Education and Learning, Education Sector, (ED/BHL/LNF), UNESCO, the meeting started with words of welcome by Ms Namtip Aksornkool, Chief, a.i., ED/BHL/LNF, UNESCO to be followed by opening remarks by Ms Mmantsetsa Marope, Director, ED/BHL. In her remarks, Ms Marope underscored the importance of the UNLD evaluation which should go beyond statistics to capture the actual progress on the ground. She also encouraged the Group of experts to reflect on what should be done after the Decade and 2015, hoping that the evaluation will help us reshape our thinking and strategy to embrace a notion of literacy as a continuum and address a further need to unpack a notion of "literacies" in the context of lifelong learning.

Subsequently, Ms Aksornkool gave a brief account of the origins and aims of the UNLD. The UNLD aims at giving a renewed focus on the ongoing and unresolved challenges of full, universal literacy in the world – a literate world, and mobilizing the international community, above all national governments. UNESCO has been fulfilling its monitoring, coordination and advocacy functions in collaboration with partners[1]. With the Decade coming to a close in 18 months, leaving many literacy challenges, she invited participants of this ad hoc meeting to share their insights and advice with UNESCO to prepare for the end-of- Decade evaluation. The official UNLD report will be submitted to the UN General Assembly at its 58th session in 2013, prior to which a UNESCO Director-General's report will be presented to the UNESCO's Executive Board at its string session in the same year.

## Session 1: UNLD Final Evaluation: Nature and Process

The discussion of this session was centred around the background document entitled "Explanatory note" prepared specifically for this meeting. With continued moderation by Mr Werquin, participants shared their initial feedback on the document, following the

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[1] The activities undertaken by UNESCO with partners include: preparation of different reports; plans of actions, publications and materials as well as creating UNESCO's Literacy for Empowerment (LIFE) initiative (2006-2015) as the organization's own programmatic response to the Decade; organization of two global and six regional conferences in 2006-2008; establishment of the UNLD Expert Group, activties related to the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP), the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) and production of the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE).

presentation on highlights of the explanatory note by Mr Clinton Robinson, Senior Programme Specialist, ED/BHL/LNF, UNESCO.

Mr Robinson stated that the first question for the evaluation, which is a complex exercise, is what is to be evaluated. This will then be followed by other questions such as what data to be collected and how as well as what would be the way forward towards a more literate world. The evaluation should present different types of outcomes, notably 1) achievement or impact of the Decade itself and 2) changes in the status and processes of literacy that occurred during the Decade whether or not they were stimulated by the Decade, for which different rigorous and subtle processes are required.

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**Three large strategic objectives of the UNLD (2009)**

1) Mobilizing stronger commitment to literacy
2) Reinforcing more effective literacy programme delivery
3) Harnessing new resources for literacy

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For the first output, three large strategic objectives set in 2009 with accompanying strategies and recommended actions could serve as the baseline despite lack of quantifiable indicators. Evaluating the achievement and impacts of the Decade will require both quantitative and qualitative data and the latter may be of a context-specific nature. Evaluation for the second output: in what ways and how far were the objectives of the UNLD realized through efforts took place during the Decade is more open-ended and could be based on two kinds of data: clear assessment of literacy progress, using existing data and a broad canvas of the ways in which the processes and practices of literacy provision/acquisition have changed. After proposing some potential steps to be taken for evaluation, Mr Robinson stated that ten years is a period long enough to observe change and trends, but it is quite short in the much longer process of achieving a literate world that should continue beyond 2015.

Subsequently, with the moderation by Mr Abelardo Brenes, Costa Rica, participants shared their feedback to the explanatory note. Main points raised are summarized below.

**Decade as a mechanism for ensuring long-term support for literacy from multi-stakeholders**
- UNLD can be perceived as a mechanism to secure long-term support for literacy. It triggered positive developments such as creating synergies between activities of different stakeholders. At the same time, as represented by the analysis of the 2011 GMR, there exists a critical view about the few changes and impacts that the Decade has delivered and the decade's relatively isolated position in the global political architecture for development.
- It was clear to all that another Decade will not be initiated, but participants share a serious concern about how to secure increased and sustainable support for literacy.  It is important that literacy remains as a development imperative for the international community and within broader development agenda such as EFA and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) beyond 2015. An idea shared was linking up the evaluation process with debates of the task Force set up by the five EFA convening agencies to reflect on EFA beyond 2015.  A need to strengthen inter-sectoral cooperation was also raised. It was noted that some of the ongoing processes such as

follow-up to CONFINTEA VI and the UNESCO's Literacy for Empowerment (LIFE) initiative will remain after the closure of the Decade in 2013.

**Evaluation to be more forward-looking, setting a post-Decade literacy agenda based on evidence and lessons learnt**

- Purposes of the evaluation and the tone of the report are important. While recognizing the importance of a retrospective perspective, a broad agreement was reached that the evaluation should be also forward-looking to raise the profile of literacy, to set the future agenda and to generate opportunities for further political and financial commitment. Some questioned whether the report should be an advocacy document, rather than a genuine scientific publication.
- Related in part to repositioning literacy and non-formal education in the broader development agenda and in part to the evolution of concept of literacy, a need to make a paradigm shift was proposed. In a new paradigm in terms of acquisition of basic skills and competencies, literacy can be connected more to other areas of education and learning such as early childhood care and education (ECCE), technical and vocational education (TVET) and basic education provided through formal education. This could mitigate policy isolation of literacy given the high level of focus and resources that primary education has been enjoying and formal schooling being a major driving force for the increasing literacy rate.

**Proposals for the content of the end-of-Decade report**

- The report should capture some significant shifts made during the Decade, including the conceptual one as well as those at the institutional and programme levels. Unpacking the meaning of "political will" through looking into its complex relations with literacy and how it has been translated into effective policies and programmes was also proposed.
- Evaluation should go beyond the usual statistics to capture the nature and impacts of activities made on the ground in both developing and developed countries, considering diverse contexts and how those activities fit or not fit in global frameworks for literacy. It would be useful to compare the actual status of illiterates or new literates and statistical information such as test scores.
- The content of the report can be structured in line with the notion of literacy as a continuum with a lifelong learning perspective.
- The report should cover not only technical aspects but also political ones, ensuring balanced representation of different perspectives (e.g. country, multi- and bi-lateral organizations, civil society, academics, the private sector, teachers/facilitators and practitioners).
- The report needs to analyze conceptual trends (e.g. for instance, an increased understanding of diverse needs of different target groups in adult education) with an analysis of how this change has affected actual policies and practices.
- The experience of evaluation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was shared. The report presented at the UNESCO Conference on ESD (Bonn, 31 March-2 April 2009) included findings on ESD progress based on a country survey, processes and learning for ESD and ways forward identified. It proved to be effective to highlight more qualitative issues and differences made during the Decade, including policy analysis (e.g. UNESCO's policy change which resulted in an increasing focus on climate change).

**Data collection instruments and information source**
- We need to identify some key questions at this stage. It is clear from the mid-Decade report that literacy challenges will not be met by 2012. The end-of-Decade report can analyze why obstacles have not been overcome and some trends have not changed.
- It would be also useful to review the strength and weakness of previous reports.
- UNESCO (HQ and UIL) has developed a draft "Reporting instrument for GRALE 2012 and end of the UNLD" that can serve as a basis in collecting data from countries.
- Both quantitative (e.g. UIS, EFA Global Monitoring Report) and qualitative information is needed.
- Based on ESD experience and others, some cautioned strongly about the country survey because of the complexity of process, uneven quality and accuracy of data collected and strength of analysis. There appeared to be a consensus in the Group that a country survey is not sufficient and has to be complemented by other instruments.
- Contributions from different partners will enrich the report. Civil society might have a role to play to capture complex issues in diverse situations. Academics and researchers can play stronger roles in the evaluation process. A knowledge network is a way to capture the great of amount of the work that universities are doing. Equally important is involvement of learners to ensure their perspectives.

**Proposed outputs**
- There was a broad agreement about the recommended outputs of the evaluation, which were: 1) the obligatory Report for the 2013 UN General Assembly; 2) a report of the UNESCO Director-General for the spring session of the UNESCO Executive Board in 2013; and 3) commissioned papers, other studies and compilation and analysis of good practices to produce the reports.
- It was also recommended to create a comprehensive virtual data/knowledge base on literacy where information collected for the evaluation can be stored.
- Concerning a more comprehensive and longer report for a wider audience, several participants expressed that such an additional report would not be worth preparing. UNESCO also stressed the need for careful consideration, given many reports produced previously without making significant impacts.
- The idea of organizing an end-of-Decade conference was raised. While potential merits are foreseen, some cautioned about the amount of work and resources required for the effective organization of the conference. UNESCO shared the idea of organizing a session within the framework of the next International Conference on Education on EFA beyond 2015 which will be organized by the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (UNESCO-IBE) in 2013.

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**Session 2: Indicators and data**

Moderated by Mr Cesar Guadalupe and subsequently by Mr Scott Murray, this session was dedicated to identifying key instruments of evaluation as well as indicators and data that would be needed. Discussion on instruments was held first by the entire Group which subsequently broke into four sub-groups.

**General framework for evaluation**
Two sets of objectives and issues, at least, form the general framework for evaluation: three large strategic objectives of the UNLD and five dimensions of literacy addressed by the CONFINTEA VI: 1) policy; 2) governance; 3) financing; 4) participation, inclusion and

equity; and 5) quality[2].  It was also proposed to add organizational/governance frameworks to identify what works and what does not.

**Framework for country evaluation**
With the draft "Reporting instrument for GRALE 2012 and End of the United Nations Literacy Decade prepared by UNESCO", the group discussed about how to build on this. While the CONFINTEA VI follow-up process is characterized by standard practice that requires the involvement of all countries through official channels (e.g. UNESCO National Commissions, Delegations, in collaboration with its field offices), the preparation process of the UNLD evaluation might be able to enjoy more flexibility and freedom in the way it involves countries.

**Data collection instruments**
Participants recommended that the UNLD evaluation be conducted through four possible data collection instruments.

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1) A basic literacy/UNLD profile of all countries in the world, which would provide succinct information concerning the three main strategic objectives of the UNLD and the five dimensions of literacy addressed in CONFINTEA VI, using the reporting instrument for GRALE 2012 and end of the UNLD

2) For a smaller set of countries (to be determined - e.g. countries highlighted in GMR, 35 LIFE countries, E9 countries, small island states, developed countries, etc.), the creation of more in-depth profiles with detailed data and information highlighting literacy-related changes during the UNLD. The process of drafting such profiles might involve several phases and potentially be the product of a commissioning process.

3) Papers that address cross-cutting issues in adult literacy—for example, literacy and gender, literacy and disabilities, literacy and language, literacy in highly literate societies, literacy and sustainable development, literacy and health, literacy and peace. Some of these were special topics during the UNLD decade.

4) Succinct information and analysis of development partners, notably multi-and bi-lateral and organizations as well as by civil society organizations (NGOs, faith-based organizations, etc.) in terms of changes in literacy assumptions, their statements, policies and programmes.

*In the first two data collection instruments, the country is the unit of analysis. The third data collection instrument focuses on issues, while the fourth data collection instrument focuses on literacy statements and policies among developing partners. Information should be both prospective and retrospective in character.*

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While the first data collection instrument requires a common framework for all the countries, the rest can utilize different techniques and instruments such as survey, meetings, and interviews as well as peer pressure to mobilize information. To ensure quality inputs from countries in a timely manner, it was proposed to prepare a basic information sheet for a country to validate and build on, rather than asking them to prepare inputs from scratch.

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[2] *Belém Framework for Action: Harnessing the power and potential of adult learning and education for a viable future* adopted at the Sixth *International Conference on Adult Education/CONFINTEA VI*, December 2009

Concerning selection of examples and cases for analysis and showcasing, developing a set of criteria is required.

**Presentation on UNESCO's KINL**

On the second day on 10 May 2011, the meeting started with Ms Aksornkool's summary of the previous day's discussion. This was followed by Mr Werquin's presentation on UNESCO's Knowledge and Information Network for Literacy (KINL). KINL is a platform for contact and exchange among literacy professionals globally. Participants' comments included: the importance of ensuring appropriate participants' profiles and their ownership and commitments; a need for quality control which involves reflective and systematic assessment of liability and validity of the content; a proposal for accommodating any information members may want to share; and promoting dialogue around both good and bad practices, even beyond KINL members. Mr Werquin invited participants to visit a test page for their further suggestions.

**Group Discussion**

Subsequently four sub-groups addressed the above-mentioned four broad categories of data and information and instruments required for the evaluation. Following the end of the group work, key outcomes were reported by each group to the entire Group for further discussion with moderation by Ms Malini Ghose, India. Points relevant to all the four instruments included: a need to coordinate processes and actions of the four instruments to avoid overlaps and to crease links between these exercises and a need to consider multiple venues in which outputs would be disseminated both on the web and elsewhere.

**<u>Group 1: Comprehensive review of countries, with focus on the "Reporting instrument for GRALE 2012 and end of the UNLD"</u>**

Participants:
- Mr Cesar Guadalupe
- Ms Ulrike Hanemann, Raporteur
- Ms Monika Troster

**A. General nature of the instrument**
- This part of evaluation will analyse specific information collected from governments and its trends. Expected result of trend analysis includes stronger commitment to mobilization for literacy, improving assessment and evaluation and more strategic partnerships. Challenges that can be addressed could include the definition of literacy, and prospects for development partners to intensify their support for literacy.

**B. Draft reporting instrument for GRALE 2012 and end of the UNLD**
- As a data collection instrument, the draft reporting instrument prepared by UNESCO which covers the UNLD three strategic objectives and dimensions of literacy identified by CONFINTEAVI will be used as a basis.
- An element about involvement of learners in policy decision-making can be added, as well as addressing quality aspects (e.g. curricula, teacher training and assessment issues).

- Concerning the scope of time covered by this instrument, the last chapter of the instrument asks about the entire period of the Decade, with the mid-term review taking care of the first part of the Decade.
- There is a need to make questions more specific and ensure a more systematic approach.
- The UNLD section may be repetitive.
- Open questions will best capture a broad range of realities.

### C. Discussion about the data collection process
- It has to go through an official channel (e.g. UNESCO National Commissions), but support from UNESCO Field Offices should be mobilize to facilitate the process.

## Group 2: In-depth study on selected countries

Participants
- Mr Ehsanur Rahman
- Mr Aaron Benavot
- Ms Namtip Aksornkool
- Mr Patrick Werquin, Rapporteur

### A. Identifying countries for which in-depth profiles would be created
Group 2 started with lists of countries belonging to three categories (E9 countries, LIFE countries, UNESCO's literacy priority countries) and then added a fourth category: the top 20 countries with greatest number of adult illiterate (15+), using conventional statistics. The following is a list of 21 key countries that includes countries that are found in multiple categories and are selected to increase geographical diversity.

*Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Sudan, Tanzania and Turkey.*

Although it would be helpful to have regional overviews of literacy in the developing world, it is difficult to collect contextualized information at the regional level. Thus, it was decided to ensure that the final list include representative countries from each region (e.g., a typical country in Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone Africa, and from the Arab States). This might mean to add a few more countries to the current list of 21.

Some suggested including more developed countries such as Canada, New Zealand, Norway, France, and the UK, in addition to Turkey, as well as countries which can present useful examples for other countries. Concerning the number of countries selected, it was raised that 21 countries could be too many for in-depth study. In Group2's view, it is doable given the richness of existing documentations for most of these countries. It was agreed that the actual number be determined after compiling the existing information, which shall help identify countries that could be dropped.

### B. Topics, issues and themes to be examined in each profile
Objective: Evaluation of literacy activities and trends during the Decade, and the specific impact of the UNLD on these developments

Themes to be addressed in the in-depth profiles: Five major themes were identified: **policy, governance, participation (including issues of inclusion and equity), quality, financing**.

To these themes the Group added the topics of **programme modality, capacity building, research activities, community participation (with special reference to high priority groups),** which are noted in UNLD documents. In addition to information on each of the above themes, Group 2 thought that there should be a **historical section** and a **forward-looking or concluding section** in each profile**.** Thus, in total, each UNLD profile would include 11 sections. An expert also recommended to include "equivalency approaches and mechanisms" as a theme.  The importance of capturing multi-sectoral nature of qualitative changes was also pointed out.

Method: In principle, country profiles would describe the extent to which there have been significant *changes* (or *on-going changes* which are likely to have an impact on developments taking place in the final 2 years of the decade) in each of the above topics/issues during the UNLD period (2003-2012). In addition, the profiles would evaluate the extent to which these changes are directly or indirectly connected to UNLD activities and initiatives and, if possible, assess the impact of the UNLD relative to other factors. To complement information provided by official government sources which may be biased and incomplete, it was proposed to involve also independent experts in the creation of the profiles.

**C. Types of data**
The draft UNLD profiles should first draw upon a wide array of existing sources, including the following: 1) 70 background papers commissioned for the 2006 GMR; 2) relevant background papers on literacy prepared for meetings in Abuja (Action Aid), UNESCO regional conferences and under the ADEA framework; 3) mid-decade reviews and four regional reports on EFA progress prepared for the Tenth Meeting of the High-Level Group on EFA ; 4) special reports prepared for the E9 meeting in Nigeria; 5) national and regional reports prepared for the CONFINTEA VI; 6) Forthcoming UNLD publications. It was also suggested to look at country and regional reports produced through on-going LIFE's mid-term review and reports prepared by the UNESCO's CapEFA programme.

**D. Process**
Step 1:   Develop 21 *initial* draft profiles considering each of the 11 thematic sections.
Step 2:   Identify information gaps and then call upon independent sources in each country to fill in the holes and comment on the other sections.
Step3:    Send draft profiles to official government sources and other in-country stakeholders for revisions and validation. (A consultation process could be organized at country or sub-country levels).
Step 4:   Prepare a concluding section with recommendations, emphasizing future literacy challenges:
Step 5:   Consider developing special profiles for highly representative cases (countries) in particularly important (or under-represented) regions.


**Group 3 Cross-cutting themes**

Participants
- Mr Abelardo Brenes
- Ms Malini Ghose, Rapporteur
- Ms Sara Elena Mendoza
- Mr Hongwei Meng
- Ms Sayeeda Rahman

**A. Rationale for having cross-cutting themes**
- The complexity of issues related to literacy whose definitions have been evolving.
- Literacy requires context-specific approaches to respond to diverse profiles, circumstances, needs and aspirations of different groups and populations.
- It is necessary to capture changes that have been introduced to certain aspects of literacy and non-formal education such as concepts of literacy, policies, and programmes.
- Addressing cross-cutting themes is a way to examine effectiveness of approaches (e.g. empowerment, development prospects, skills, and transformation) and to underscore differences made by inter-disciplinary approaches.
- There is a need to highlight practices and ensuring spaces for voices of teachers and educators.

**B. Identifying particular cross-cutting themes**
The group 3 identified the following seven cross-cutting themes:

1) **Equity** (e.g. gender, inclusion/exclusion, language, age, literacy in special contexts, literacy in conflict and post-conflict countries, displacement, natural disasters);
2) **Literate environment and sustaining literacy** (e.g. communicate practices, multilingualism);
3) **Measuring literacy / assessment** (e.g. different approaches to measurement);
4) **Literacy and the use of technology** (e.g. teaching and learning processes, communication, skills building);
5) **Quality** (e.g.; educators, pedagogy, interaction);
6) **Policies, governance and accountability mechanisms** (e.g. how have policies addressed challenges/issues); and
7) **Partnerships** (e.g. governments, civil society, regional networks, networking, advocacy strategies, link with other sectors)

**C. Deciding on the process through which the data and information would be generated**
- Some questions in the general questionnaire
- Review of literature
- Collecting and analyzing existing data
- Commission specific papers (e.g. networks of civil society)
- Mobilizing the UNESCO's regional offices and other Sectors

**D. Other related issues raised:**
- The work can be more focused and in-depth if overlapping areas are identified. Information collected and used by other groups can feed into the work of this group.
- There is a question about which cross-cutting themes are more critical and value-added.
- The further clarification of the final product and audience will decide the nature and process of the work.
- A serious literature review is critical to identify the real information gap
- This work can provide evidence, particular gaps and issues and policy recommendations through an analytical approach to both policy-makers and others such as researchers and practitioners.
- A case can be made for removing the dichotomy between formal and non-formal education by investigating what has been done by the Decade in this respect.

**Group 4: Evaluation for multi-and bi-lateral organizations and civil societies (e.g. UN agencies, development banks, regional organisations)**

<u>Participants</u>
- Mr Bryan Maddox, Rapporteur
- Mr Scott Murray
- Mr Daniel A. Wagner
- Ms Mari Yasunaga, Rapporteur

Due in part to time constraints, the group focused mainly on an evaluation of multilateral organizations.

**A. Orientations of evaluation and assumptions**
- **Process failure, but not content failure:** There are two different dimensions of evaluation, namely the UNLD coordination process across agencies and activities carried out by each partner. The level of involvement of other partners in the UNLD has been low, but there have been relevant activities carried out by multi-lateral agencies, which, however, have not always been aligned with the UNLD. The coordination process and activities – which to some extent is interlinked - have to be evaluated separately.
- **UNESCO is the global coordinator, but the UNLD is not UNESCO's:** We should not be stuck with the attribution of the insufficient progress only to UNESCO. But UNESCO, as the UNLD global coordinator, should be evaluated on two dimensions—first, its leadership role and seond, its activities as seen through its programmes, budget and institutional arrangements. On coordination, the evaluation has to look into, among other things, coordination mechanisms, processes (e.g. 6 regional conferences) and funding issues (e.g. special fund created in 2004 that led to LIFE, existing UN funds).
- **Retrospective or prospective: It was proposed to make a paradigm shift through this evaluation for more coherent and broader approaches to literacy and non-formal education** with a perspective of lifelong learning and also to bridging fragmented efforts. Youth and adult literacy and non-formal education tend to be dealt with in isolation from other related areas such as formal basic education. For instance, a content analysis of an organization's documents can be conducted to illustrate their past, current and future perceptions about literacy and non-formal education, even if it is not their explicit areas of focus. Some agencies have been moving away from traditional interpretation/ways of work.
-  This would have some implications for future work such as content design, and the development of indicators and assessments. At the same time, the importance of maintaining a historical perspective was also mentioned. There are ways to evaluate impacts made by each agency on UNLD and more broadly the EFA agenda, including a literature review and analysis of institutional programmes and inputs.
- **Progress made but challenges remain:** On the ground, some progress has been made, but there still remain some changes such as quality, effectiveness and efficiency as well as data and statistics. How coordinated/uncoordinated activities of different agencies have progressed and how those can be done differently after the UNLD?
- **Advocacy:** Some achievements have been made by UN agencies, but more should be done. Advocacy for literacy and non-formal education is still lacking a strong champion.

**B. Method and instruments**
The group discussed potential methods and instruments to evaluate multi-and bi-lateral agencies and civil societies, but the discussion time was insufficient.

- A review of UNESCO's activities and leadership as well as institutional memory could be done through interviews and a literature review, but it should be an external evaluation.
- Using a questionnaire would be a waste of time.
- The evaluation should cover relevant issues at all levels. At the country level, it was recommended to use existing frameworks such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and UN's "Delivering as One" process.

**Session 3: Covering key topics and regional perspectives**

Moderated by Mr Hongwei Meng, the Group focused on identifying specific research topics and exploring ways to capture regional perspectives, noting the complementary nature of this discussion to the ones held in the previous sessions.

**Identify specific topics of research**
- While recognizing potential overlap of some topics to be covered by the four instruments, the group identified research areas that would still need to be addressed at different levels. Some ideas proposed include:
    - Revisiting (or re-working) definitions of literacy for conceptual clarification
    - Financing of literacy programmes and opportunity costs for not investing enough in literacy or high cost benefit of literacy
    - Literacy and labour market and employment
    - Literacy and human rights, peace and tolerance
    - Literacy and cultural aspects
    - Literate environment (a forthcoming UNESCO publication will cover this topic)
    - Perception of learners about the provision and content of literacy programmes;
    - Impact of literacy programmes and workable models
    - Identifying factors of people remaining illiterate or becoming literate
    - Measurement
- Concerning the purpose and use of research, it was proposed to package and present research to appeal to governments since they play such a critical role. It is important to think about what kind of evidence is needed to ensure that literacy receives a higher profile and to change the perceptions of policy-makers. A social practice model that UNESCO has promoted in the Decade framework could be revisited for a review.
- Also mentioned is the political nature of literacy. Why a powerful entity might or might not want to promote literacy or promote literacy in a given language and context is an uneasy but important issue.
- There is a dearth of high quality research on literacy issues in developing countries, while organizations such as the World Bank have not promoted studies focusing on literacy. These kinds of quality and quantity disparities in research should be addressed.

**Covering regional perspectives**
- It was proposed to revisit the CONFINTEA VI documents and other useful existing publications. For instance, in Latin America, a number of publications are available, including the state-of-art information on adult education for four countries and documents of the Organization of Ibero-American States for the Education, Science and Culture (OEI) on financing literacy and adult education programs.

- What is the added value of regional perspectives? It is worth exploring emergent regional perspectives: are there specific agenda and policy priorities, definitions of literacy and key players, which are common in a region?.
- It was recommended to bring partners together ideally at the regional or sub-regional level to engage them in collective discussion, provided there is no resource constraint.
- A global report can be shared at the regional level so that more context specific and qualitative information can be prepared in a complementary manner.
- It is highly recommended to involve UNESCO colleagues working at the regional level.
- This links up to the discussion held yesterday about good case studies.

## Session 4: The way forward

Moderated by Mr Werquin, the Group exchanged ideas about the main components of a plan for the UNLD evaluation and effective ways to move forward in youth and adult literacy beyond 2015.

Finalizing the action plan
- Elaborate activities concerning the four proposed instruments and identify funding and responsible individuals/organizations for each instrument, taking into consideration governmental frameworks.
- Recall the CONFINTEA VI process and finalize the questionnaire at least by July 2011 so that the questionnaire can then be translated and sent to countries by the beginning of August.

Events and reports
- Concerning the end-of-Decade conference, this may not be such a good use of funds. UNESCO's management is not keen on organizing a global conference. A session on literacy at the next ICE on EFA agenda beyond 2015 (Geneva, 2013) was proposed.
- At the global level, a general report will be produced as a follow-up to CONFINTEA IV and will also focus on literacy, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2012. It is important to coordinate these processes.

Literacy agenda beyond 2015
- Literacy is under political and economic pressures, and participants shared views about how to shape the literacy agenda beyond 2013 and 2015. A strong message emerged from the group that youth and adult literacy is a continuum and part of lifelong learning should not remain separated and isolated from formal education and other types of learning.
- Within this perspective, the literacy and non-formal education agenda must be integrated into the broader EFA agenda encompassing other pathways of education as an effective way to raise the profile of literacy. Also, the UNLD has not adequately captured other issues that cut across development such as economics and marginalization, which calls for broadening the scope of literacy work. At the same time, colleagues cautioned about a simple conceptual integration of literacy to other agendas such as disability, as it does not guarantee anything concrete given the complexity of issues. Some ideas about "connecting" literacy to other agendas included strengthening leadership and institutional management, enhancing effectiveness of coordination, more information production and sharing good practices and ensuring better understanding of literacy.

- On assessment, fragmentation is an area of challenge because different types of assessments cover different population groups.
- The UNLD evaluation and the following process can feed into the review processes of other agendas, notably EFA and the MDGs and shaping a renewed agenda beyond 2015.

**Closing session**

Mr Aaron Benavot provided an oral report of the meeting, touching upon several major points that emerged from the rich discussion.

There are five phases of activities, that are foreseen.
- Phase 0: identify appropriate documents, organize people, generate ideas, prepare thinking and plans around how this is to be done.
- Phase 1: undertake initial activities much of which are clustered around the four instruments discussed in Session 2 with the need for clarification about funding, actors, concrete actions and TORs for each. Regional or sub-regional meetings could be organized to capture different voices.
- Phase 2: Create a platform for knowledge and information management to make the compiled and standardized information available in various forms to be used by multiple players.
- Phase 3: Analyze and compare information in light of particular purposes and targeted audiences of the final products.
- Phase 4: Prepare the final products

Four proposed outputs:
- UN General Assembly report;
- UNESCO Executive Board report;
- Commissioned papers and studies on the identified themes; and
- A comprehensive database on a webpage to provide outcomes of the evaluation but to serve for a broader audience on a webpage where country profiles, data, papers and studies are made available.

Mr Benavot stated that the UNLD evaluation is different from that of ESD as literacy is much more focused thematic activity and there is more consensus about the value of literacy as compared to ESD. He reminded the group of the abundance of available information and the usefulness of existing infrastructure (e.g. CONFINTEA VI, LIFE, E9) as potential platforms that can be used more strategically by UNESCO in managing the evaluation process and beyond to move the literacy agenda forward. The effective use of related forthcoming events, including ICE, CONFINTEA VI follow-up and the launch of GMR2012 on skills, should also be explored.

Following the oral report, some participants stressed that the UNLD evaluation should be prospective, in addition to the retrospective nature of evaluation in the general terms, to move the literacy agenda forward by reflecting on potential activities for the post Decade period and putting them on the agenda. The end of the Decade is not the end of literacy, and literacy challenges will certainly remain. It is crucial that the intention of the UNLD evaluation is expanded to capitalize on this opportunity and learn prospective lessons for continued and sustained commitment to the literacy agenda.

In closing the UNLD Expert Meeting on Evaluation, Ms Aksornkool explained several future steps that are envisaged on UNESCO's side.

- UNESCO will reflect on the rich and intensive discussions and will plan activities, and set priorities in light of the available resources.
- Accordingly, it will prepare the revised version of a consolidated action plan.
- It will also consult with other UN agencies.

The evaluation will provide all interested parties with an opportunity not only to counter the deficiencies but also be aware and build on effective policies and practices available at country level. Ms Aksornkool stated that UNESCO would also reflect on its roles as the global coordinator and a development partner for literacy. Ms Aksornkool thanked all the participants for sharing their invaluable insights and advice, stating that UNESCO would like to maintain this group and count on their expertise.

## Annex 1: Agenda

**United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD)**
**Expert Meeting on UNLD Evaluation**
**9 – 10 May 2011**
**UNESCO Headquarters, Fontenoy, Room 4021**
**Agenda**

**Objectives:**

- To propose a set of indicators for evaluating the Decade
- To define data needs and develop outline instruments for data collection from a range of stakeholders
- To propose a set of research topics, regional studies and case studies to be undertaken as part of the evaluation
- To develop preliminary outlines of the outputs of the evaluation and initial perspectives on an end-of-Decade international meeting.

| Monday 9 May 2011 | |
|---|---|
| 9:30 – 10:00 | **Registration:** Pick-up of the badge at the UNESCO Fontenoy main entrance |
| 10:00 – 10:20 | **Opening Session**<br>*Moderator: Mr Patrick Werquin,* ED/BHL/LNF, *UNESCO*<br><br>Welcome remarks, Ms Mmantsetsa Marope, Director, Division for Basic to Higher Education and Learning, Education Sector (ED/BHL), UNESCO<br><br>**Introduction to the agenda and the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD),** Ms Namtip Aksornkool, Chief a.i. Section for Literacy and Non-Formal Education,(ED/BHL/LNF), UNESCO |
| 10:20 – 10:45 | **Session 1: UNLD Final Evaluation: Nature and Process**<br>*Moderator: Mr Patrick Werquin,* ED/BHL/LNF, *UNESCO*<br><br>**Nature and process of final evaluation,** Mr Clinton Robinson, Senior Programme Specialist, ED/BHL/LNF, UNESCO |
| 10:45 – 11:00 | Coffee break |
| 11:00 – 12:30 | **Session 1: UNLD Final Evaluation: Nature and Process** (continued)<br>*Moderator: Mr Abelardo Brenes, Costa Rica* |

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|---|---|
| 12:30 – 13:00 | **Participants' initial reactions to the "Explanatory note" circulated earlier** (5-7 minutes per participant)<br><br>**Discussion** (see 'Explanatory Note') |
| 13:00 – 14:30 | Lunch |

| | |
|---|---|
| 14:30 – 15:30 | **Session 2: Indicators and data**<br>*Moderator: Mr Cesar Guadalupe, Senior Programme Specialist, UNESCO Institute for Statistics*<br><br>**Discussion on data needs and sources:**<br>*This session will address key questions, including: What will be the outputs of the end of the Decade evaluation? What kinds of data are needed for the indicators identified? Where will these data be obtained? What is the relation between quantitative data and qualitative data? What kind of questions can be asked: open (narrative data) and closed (potential for statistical analysis)? What will be the best use of 10 years of GMR data?* |
| 15:30 – 15:45 | Coffee break |
| 15:45 – 17:45 | **Session 2: Indicators and data** (continued)<br>*Moderator: Mr Scott Murray, President, DataAngel Policy Research, Inc.* |
| 17:45 – 18:00 | **Wrap-up of the first day**<br><br>*Discussion on process to assess the progress/interaction of the day and suggestions for possible adjustment of Tuesday's programme* |
| 19:00 – 21:00 | Dinner hosted by UNESCO<br>　　Le Bistro Breteuil<br>　　*3 Place Breteuil, 75007 Paris*<br>　　*Tel: 01 45 67 07 27* |

| Tuesday 10 May 2011 | |
|---|---|
| 9:30 – 9:15 | **Session 2: Indicators and data** (continued)<br>*Moderator: Mr Hongwei Meng, China*<br><br>**Summing up of yesterday's discussion**, Ms Namtip Aksornkool, Chief a.i., ED/BHL/LNF, UNESCO<br><br>**Presentation on UNESCO's Knowledge and Information Network for Literacy (KINL),** Mr Patrick Werquin, ED/BHL/LNF, UNESCO |

| | |
|---|---|
| **9:15 – 11:00** | **Group Work:** Participants are requested to split into four groups each of which is tasked to do the following.<br><br>**Introduction to the group work**, Ms Namtip Aksornkool, Chief a.i., ED/BHL/LNF, UNESCO<br><br>▪ **Group 1:** General evaluation that can be applied to all countries<br>▪ **Group 2:** Evaluation with specific details for more in-depth analysis for selected countries<br>▪ **Group 3**: Handling cross-cutting themes such as gender, marginalized populations<br>▪ **Group 4**: Evaluation for multi-and bi-lateral organizations and civil societies (e.g. UN agencies, development banks, regional organisations), |
| **11:00 – 11:15** | Coffee Break |
| **11:15 – 12:30** | **Session 2: Indicators and data** (continued)<br>*Moderator: Ms Malini Ghose, India*<br><br>**Presentations of outputs of the group discussion** (10 minute presentation per group)<br>**Group 1**:*Ms Ulrike Hanemann, Senior Programme Specialist, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning*<br>**Group 2**: *Mr Patrick Werquin, ED/BHL/LNF, UNESCO*<br>**Group 3**: *Ms Malini Ghose, India*<br>**Group 4**: *Mr Bryan Maddox, Senior Lecturer, School of International Development, University of East Anglia, UK and Ms Mari Yasunaga, Programme Specialist, ED/BHL/LNF, UNESCO*<br><br>**Discussion** |
| **12:30 – 14:00** | Lunch |
| **14:00 – 15:00** | **Session 3: Covering key topics and regional perspectives**<br>*Moderator: Mr Hongwei Meng, China*<br><br>**Identify specific topics for research**<br>*The first part of this session explores dimensions of literacy which need particular elucidation at this point in history, with the aim of proposing a few key topics. These may be on the value, context, impact, role of literacy, on its links with development, gender, ICTs, social cohesion, etc, and on ways of delivering and costing/funding literacy.*<br><br>**Bringing regional perspectives**<br>*The second part of this session aims at identifying the best way of capturing regional perspectives (overviews, case studies, topics specific to particular regions, …) as well as how to do this.* |
| **15:00 – 15:15** | Coffee break |

| 15:15 – 16:45 | **Session 4: The way forward**<br>*Moderator: Mr Patrick Werquin,* ED/BHL/LNF, *UNESCO*<br><br>*This session intends to iIdentify concrete steps that can be taken, leading up to 2013. It also intends to have an initial discussion on effective ways to move forward in youth and adult literacy in the post-Decade and post-2015 period, drawing lessons learnt from the UNLD to make tangible impact on the ground. .* |
|---|---|
| 16:45- 17:15 | **Closing session**<br>*Moderator: Mr Patrick Werquin,* ED/BHL/LNF, *UNESCO*<br><br>***Oral report of the meeting****: Mr Aaron Benavot, Professor in the Department of Educational Administration and Policy Studies, University at Albany-State University of New York*<br><br>**Closing remarks**, Ms Namtip Aksornkool, Chief a.i. ED/ BHL/LNF, UNESCO |

## Annex 2: List of participants

| Participants | Title and organization | address |
|---|---|---|
| Mr Aaron Benavot | Professor<br>Department of Educational Administration and Policy Studies, University at Albany-State University of New York | 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222 ·<br>USA |
| Mr Abelardo Brenes | Professor, University for Peace | Apartado 95 Barrio Mexico<br>1005 San José<br>Costa Rica |
| Ms Malini Ghose | Nirantar<br>A Center for Gender and Education | B 64 Sarvodaya Enclave<br>New Delhi 110017<br>India |
| Mr Cesar Guadalupe | Senior Programme Specialist, UNESCO Institute for Statistics | C.P. 6128 Succursale Centre-ville<br>Montreal, Quebec, H3C 3J7<br>Canada |
| Ms Ulrike Hanemann | Senior programme Specialist<br>UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) | Feldbrunnenstr. 58<br>20148 Hamburg<br>Germany |
| Mr Bryan Maddox | Senior Lecturer<br>School of International Development,<br>University of East Anglia | Norwich NR4 7TJ<br>UK |
| Ms Sara Elena Mendoza | Instituto Nacional para la educación de los adultos (INEA) | Fco. Marquez 160.5o.piso<br>Col. Condesa<br>06140 Mexico, D.F.<br>Mexico |
| Mr Hongwei Meng | Chinese National Commission | 37 Damucang Hutong Xidan<br>CN - 100816 Beijing<br>China |
| Mr Scott Murray | President<br>DataAngel Policy Research, Inc. | 19 McIntosh Way<br>Kanata Ontario<br>Canada K2L 2N9<br>Canada |
| Mr Ehsanur Rahman | Executive Director<br>Dhaka Ahania Mission | House 19, Road 12<br>Dhanmondi RA, Dhaka 1209,<br>Bangladesh |
| Ms Monika Tröster | German Institute for Development, Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) | Heinemannstr. 12-14<br>53175 Bonn<br>Germany |
| Mr Daniel A. Wagner | Professor & UNESCO Chair in Learning & Literacy<br>Director, International Literacy Institute & International Educational Development Program | University of Pennsylvania Graduate school of Education 3700 Walnut Street Philadelphia, PA 19104-6216<br>USA |
| Ms  Mmantsetsa Marope, | Director, Division for Basic to Higher Education and Learning, Education Sector (ED/BHL), UNESCO | 7 place Fontenoy<br>Paris 75007<br>France |
| Ms Namtip Aksornkool | Chief a.i. Section for Literacy & Non-Formal (ED/BHL/LNF) | |
| Mr Clinton Robinson | Senior Programme Specialist, ED/BHL/LNF | |
| Mr Patrick Werquin | Consultant, ED/BHL/LNF | |
| Ms Sayeeda Rahman | Programme Specialist ED/BHL/LNF | |
| Ms Mari Yasunaga | Programme Specialist, ED/BHL/LNF | |
| Ms Liliane Rogozyk | Secretary,  ED/BHL/LNF | |
| Ms Bibiane Ameganvi | Secretary,  ED/BHL/LNF | |
| Ms Miriam Cochran | Intern, ED/BHL/LNF | |

## Annex 3: A background document: Explanatory note

**UN Literacy Decade 2003-2012**
**Final evaluation of the Decade**

**~~ EXPLANATORY NOTE ~~**

**Overview**
   **Background**
   **Outputs**
   **Indicators and data**
   **Data sources**
   **Evaluation process**
   **Data collection instruments**
     Collecting data from governments
     Collecting data from civil society
     Collecting data from multilaterals and bilaterals
   **Possible timetable**
   **Costs**
   **Risks**


*Background*

As coordinating agency of the UNLD, UNESCO was charged by the UN General Assembly to prepare biennial progress reports on the Decade. Thus, UNESCO submitted reports in 2004 and 2006. In 2007-2008, UNESCO undertook a mid-Decade Review, gathering data from Member States and using especially commissioned regional and topical studies – the Review was submitted to the UN General Assembly in July 2008 and presented by UNESCO to the General Assembly Third Committee in September 2008.

A further progress report was submitted in July 2010, and resulted in a resolution (UN Resolution A/65/448 of December 2010) defining the timetable for the presentation of the final report on the Decade, of which the relevant parts are as follows:

> "17. Requests the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to seek the views of Member States on the progress achieved in implementing their national programmes and plans of action for the Decade and to submit the next progress report on the implementation of the International Plan of Action to the General Assembly in 2013;

> "18. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-eighth session, under the item entitled 'Social development', the sub-item entitled 'United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all'."

Although the resolution speaks of 'the next progress report', it will in fact be a final report on the Decade. UNESCO worked to schedule this report for presentation in 2013 – after the end of the Decade, rather than in 2012 which would have meant reporting on only nine of the ten years.

*Outputs*

The report to the UN General Assembly will follow that body's strict guidelines on length (less than 10k words if the same as on previous occasions), and on the basis of the mid-Decade experience, this produces a highly condensed and abbreviated appreciation of progress during the Decade. Thus, in addition to the formal report to the General Assembly, a further expanded report on the Decade will be prepared, in a format more accessible to a wider public. The public report will provide an opportunity to raise the profile of literacy as the Decade closes and as the MDG and EFA target dates approach. It will also enable a broader picture of literacy to be painted, making full use of the data and research collected in the course of the final evaluation.

In order to strengthen still further the profile of literacy on educational and development agendas, it would be strategic to organize an international conference after the end of the Decade. This will provide an opportunity to present and debate the outcomes and impact of the Decade, and to mobilize UNESCO and its partners for the subsequent strategies to tackle the continuing challenge of youth and adult literacy. It is abundantly clear that neither the ten years of the Decade, nor the fifteen years of EFA (and the MDGs[3]) will have made a significant dent in the numbers of youth and adults without access to written communication through literacy.

### Indicators and data

No evaluation can proceed without clearly stating what is to be evaluated, how the changes effected can be measured, what questions must be asked, what data needs to be collected and how this will be done. The final stage is a coherent and consistent analysis which leads to meaningful conclusions and lessons for the future.
Determining indicators is a delicate business and needs to be negotiated with relevant partners; an Expert Group can serve as a forum in this regard, with the possibility of bringing further partners/specialists into the debate as necessary. Indicators need to have at least the following characteristics:

- Relevant: do they measure/assess something that we want to know? Do they follow from the objectives?

- Realistic: is it possible to obtain information on the indicators? Are the indicators too big or too broad to lead to an assessment that makes sense?

- Feasible: can specific data be collected on the indicators? Is there time to do so? Can appropriate instruments be developed? Are there sources that are available / willing / reliable where data can be sought?

- Coherent and consistent: can a rounded picture be painted from the set of indicators chosen? Do they adequately cover the field?  Can they be linked (compared / contrasted / analyzed) in a reasonable and logical way?

Evaluating a Decade presents several significant and specific challenges, the resolution of which will determine the shape of the evaluation:

- What is the baseline from which an evaluation starts? The first half of UNLD suffered from lack of clarity in its objectives. The designers of the Plan of Action established outcomes for the Decade and key areas of action. The nature of the objectives was less clear. For the second half of the Decade, three large strategic objectives have been stated, with accompanying strategies and recommended actions. The strategic objectives offer a broad starting point for the final evaluation, but it is clear that there are no quantifiable

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[3] The MDGs made no mention of promoting universal literacy.

baseline indicators which would permit a rigorous statistical assessment of the outcomes, let alone the impact, of the Decade.

- How can a Decade as such be evaluated? What kinds of questions and what types of data would give a reliable and solid basis for saying whether the Decade has been a success or not? This question has neither a simple nor a straightforward answer. Two major considerations must be distinguished:

  1. The outcomes (and impact) of the Decade per se: what was achieved in youth and adult literacy as a direct result of the Decade? What happened during those ten years that would not have happened without the Decade?

  2. The changes in the status and processes of literacy that occurred during the Decade: in what ways and how far were the objectives of the Decade realized through efforts that took place whether or not they were stimulated by the Decade itself? Such progress is clearly of interest since it shows how the world has moved forward in literacy during the period of the Decade.

Distinguishing these two considerations, on the one hand, prevents any sense of claiming too much for the Decade itself, while, on the other, it sets the Decade in the context of overall achievements and challenges in literacy during this period of history. The evaluation processes should seek to provide data on both considerations:

1. Given the international and global scope of the Decade, as well as its status as an initiative of the 192 Member States of the United Nations, an evaluation of the outcomes (and impact) Decade itself will address upstream phenomena, such as the policy environment, budgetary priority-setting, delivery modes, assessment and monitoring & evaluation practices. In other words, the indicators for the first of the two considerations are likely to be of a qualitative nature. Quantitative data may be generated by, for example, counting the number of countries that have adopted new or stronger policies or increased budgets. Even though these quantitative data mask important questions and realities in each country, it is not insignificant to know how many countries have given greater attention to literacy or have improved delivery or are reaching more people, and so such data will be collected as far as possible from governments.

   The qualitative data will tell the more complex and fuller story of how countries and other stakeholders have responded to the literacy challenges over the Decade; this will include data on the nature (rather than the number) of processes, innovations, policy changes, partnerships, research advances, profile of literacy in institutional agendas, and more.

2. Evaluation of the second consideration – in what ways and how far were the objectives of the Decade realized through efforts that took place whether or not they were stimulated by the Decade itself – is more open-ended. It cannot, of course, attempt to evaluate the many actions that are part of literacy efforts. It should aim at using two kinds of data:

   - A clear assessment of progress in literacy over the Decade, using the existing data from the ten years of reporting by the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR). This will provide data on the evolution of headline literacy rates, disaggregated by gender and age group, at global, regional and national levels. A limited amount of data may be available on direct assessment of literacy levels, from the initial LAMP process, for example. However, as such testing is quite recent (except in OECD countries), there may as yet be little to conclude as far as change over time is concerned.

   - A broad canvas of the ways in which the processes and practices of literacy provision/acquisition have changed over the Decade. This will address the complex and multiple dimensions of literacy, and the means to obtain such data will include case studies on countries, regions or programmes, as well as research on various types

of literacy/literacies and on their use, on aspects of provision/acquisition, on conceptual issues, and on links between literacy and other social phenomena.

*Data sources*

The promotion and provision of literacy necessarily engages a wide range of stakeholders, from institutions which are directly involved in organizing or delivering literacy programmes to those that require or facilitate the use of written communication. In addition, the Decade is owned by the whole of the UN system, through its General Assembly, and thus the relevant UN agencies are also stakeholders.

Thus data will be collected from:

- The governments of UN Member States, and in particular their agencies responsible for literacy provision. The latter will include not merely education or youth ministries, but also user departments such as rural development, social affairs, women's affairs, health, agriculture and so on.

- Civil society organizations, including international NGOs and their national offices, national NGOs/CSOs and possibly a selection of community-based organizations. Note that data from civil society will necessarily be a sample, given the diversity and number of organizations involved.

- Multilateral agencies, and in particular the relevant UN agencies including at least: UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNAIDS, FAO, WFP, WHO, ILO. In addition, the World Bank and regional development banks will also be sources of information.

- Bilateral aid agencies

- Professionals in literacy: through the new *Knowledge and Innovations Network*, it will be possible to obtain input from a wide range of professionals, researchers and practitioners in the field. While such data will not be in any way representative, it will provide perspectives and examples from the vantage point of committed and sustained engagement with literacy.

We cannot expect a 100% response rate from these stakeholders, nor consistent quality of data, and so it is the composite picture of data from all these various sources that will enable a somewhat rounded evaluation of the Decade. In addition, a number of research studies will be commissioned on specific dimensions of literacy, as well as on particular regional or national perspectives. This meeting will discuss the topics which the research studies will address.

*Evaluation process*

As indicated in the 2009 International Strategic Framework for Action, a number of steps will be involved in preparing the final evaluation. These processes will include:

- Finalization of indicators to be used in the final evaluation with input of external experts and relevant UNESCO stakeholders, and based on the original UNLD Action Plan, the mid-Decade Review, and the International Strategic Framework for Action which set direction for the second half of the Decade.

- Description of data needs for each indicator

- Dialogue with partner institutions at global and regional levels on collaboration in the evaluation process

- Outline of the structure of the formal and extended reports

- Design, testing and revision of data collection instruments

- Data collection from and by Member States, on a regional basis

- Data analysis at regional and global levels
- Drafting of both the formal and extended reports

The aim of convening a small expert group is to obtain broad and experienced perspectives on the design of the evaluation and its processes. The group may meet only once, or may have an ongoing role during the evaluation, by means of electronic communication, to review data collection instruments, research reports, other inputs, and sections of the draft report.

### *Data collection instruments*

Instruments will be developed for the different groups of stakeholders, based on the data needs and the role of each stakeholder.

### Collecting data from governments

Governments are frequently solicited by UN and other agencies for reports on their activities and achievements in education. In order to reduce the burden of such requests, the UNLD data collection instrument will be combined with that of the first follow-up monitoring report of CONFINTEA VI.

UIL has responded to the request of CONFINTEA VI to engage in more regular monitoring of adult learning and education, and thus plans to publish a first monitoring report towards the end of 2012. While the report will cover the full range of adult learning and education, following the schema of the Belém Framework for Action, it will also focus on a particular theme, in this case that of adult literacy. Thus, governments would be faced with a questionnaire relating to adult literacy for CONFINTEA in the first half of 2012, with another one, relating to UNLD, less than a year later. UNESCO has taken a decision, therefore, to combine these two processes, designing an instrument that captures the data on literacy required both for the CONFINTEA monitoring report and for the UNLD final evaluation. The instrument will feature an expanded section on literacy with questions relative to the particular needs of UNLD evaluation. Some of the other data collected through the questionnaire will also be relevant to UNLD. The advantage of combining the two processes is that we are more likely to get a large number of responses from governments – the response rate from governments for the mid-Decade review was disappointing. Given the closer target dates of the CONFINTEA exercise, the questionnaire is already under development and will be sent to governments in the second half of 2011, to be completed during that period. This meeting has the opportunity to comment on the UNLD-specific section/questions before the whole instrument is finalized.

### Collecting data from civil society

A specific questionnaire will be designed which addresses both the advocacy and the delivery roles of civil society, and which takes account of the various levels at which civil society organizations are active. It will also address some of the same dimensions of literacy as the government questionnaire (e.g. facilitators, multilingualism, financing, …)

### Collecting data from multilaterals and bilaterals

Separate questionnaires will be developed for these agencies, focusing on their respective roles as international catalysts, programme operators or funders. These agencies and civil society will be asked to respond during 2012.

**Possible timetable**

In the light of the timetable envisaged by the UN General Assembly, a provisional plan for the evaluation and reporting is as follows:

| Timing | | Action | Notes |
|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| 2011 | | | |
| | March | Govt questionnaire dev't | With CONFINTEA |
| | May | Expert group | To advise on indicators, and evaluation process |
| | June – August | Dialogue with partners – external and internal* | Solicit and process inputs; specify potential collaboration |
| | August-September | Define data needs and design remaining instruments | In collaboration with relevant partners via virtual consultations |
| | September | Collect govt data | With CONFINTEA |
| | September | Commission research studies | Regional, national, topical studies |
| | October-December | Pilot/test data collection | For civil society, multilaterals, bilaterals |
| 2012 | January-February | Assess results of pilot and revise instruments | |
| | March – May | Data collection | In all Member States |
| | June-September | Assemble data and analyse results at regional level | |
| | September-December | Compile data at global level and analyse | |
| | December | Expert group** | Examine initial analysis |
| | December | Official end of Decade | |
| 2013 | January-March | Finalise analysis, first draft of formal report | Also examine outline of extended report |
| | April | Expert group | Examine first draft |
| | May-June | Complete writing of final draft | Submit to UN GA 30 June |
| | May-September | Draft extended report | Including virtual consultations on sections |
| | September | Publish extended report | In time for UN GA session |
| | October | Possible final conference | |
| | | | |
| * Internal partners will include at least UIL, UIS, Regional bureaux, cluster and national offices; external partners will include willing UN agencies, NGOs, professional associations and others. <br> ** If a final conference is planned, this group could also address the programme, including UNESCO's plans/strategies for the future, based on the UNESCO Literacy Strategy currently under development (Jan 2011). | | | |

*Costs*

- Personnel costs at UNESCO will be absorbed by regular and extra-budgetary resources.

- Expert meetings and commissioned research studies will be financed by the regular budget, as part of UNLD international coordination.

- Preparation and publication of the longer public report (in at least three languages) will be financed from the regular budget, as part of UNLD coordination.

- Funds for the proposed international conference (2013) need to be identified.

*Risks*

Evaluating a Decade is a complex process which will be spread over more than two years; a number of risks are therefore associated with the enterprise.

- Risk: UNESCO fails to provide adequate leadership and support to the process
    - ➢ Mitigation: ensure internal ownership of the process through consultation and regular, transparent communication with HQ and field entities.

- Risk: Personnel are inadequate for the work involved, including lack of continuity, resulting in delays, gaps and possible confusion.
    - ➢ Mitigation: Assign enough personnel over the whole period, with attention to continuity and documenting the process.

- Risk: Stakeholders fail to respond in sufficiently large numbers to requests for data, resulting in less than representative data.
    - ➢ Mitigation: Use existing networks and contacts to increase chances of response; send reminders; combined UNLD/CONFINTEA approach to governments.

- Risk: Funds are unavailable for a final conference.
    - ➢ Mitigation: budget funds in 36 C/5, identify a host country willing to co-finance; seek extra-budgetary resources at an early stage.