

Reading the Past, Writing the Future

Lifelong learning: Concept and translation into policy and practice

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Kathmandu, 23 February 2017**

Overview

1. What do we mean by lifelong learning?
2. What does it mean applying the lifelong learning principle?
3. How is the lifelong learning principle translated into policy and practice in literacy?
4. Examples of integrated approaches to literacy & NFE from a multi-sector perspective
5. Recommendations



I. What do we mean by ,lifelong learning“?

The **concept** of lifelong learning is:

- Based on emancipatory, humanistic and democratic values
- Founded in the **integration of learning and living**
- Covering learning activities
 - for people of all ages,
 - in all life contexts and
 - through formal, non-formal and informal modalities
- Meeting a wide range of learning needs and demands



Lifelong learning: the integration of learning and living

The vision of lifelong learning supports the idea of **building bridges** between different...

- components
- actors
- institutions
- processes
- learning spaces (life spheres) and
- moments (life phases)

...to develop holistically designed learning systems.



2. What does it mean applying the lifelong learning principle?

- Creating learning opportunities across different settings over an individual's whole life
- „Unlocking“ people's potential by putting learning and the learner at the centre
- Promoting a culture of learning through favourable strategies and environments
- Adopting integrated, holistic, sector-wide and multi-sector approaches

LLL in the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP)

- „Literacy, (NFE) and **lifelong learning** have a large role to play in education reform in Nepal“
 - Literacy challenge among youth and adults (women!)
 - High number of out-of-school children
 - Large number of low skilled workers
- SSDP's literacy and **lifelong learning** „objective: „enhance functional literacy and cultivate reading & writing habits among youth and adults“
- **Lifelong learning:**
 - Only in connection with literacy and NFE?
 - Only for youth and adults?
 - A programme?
 - An activity? (NFE and LLL activities)

3. How is the lifelong learning principle translated into policy and practice in literacy?

- I. Literacy as a lifelong learning process
- II. Literacy as a life-wide learning process
- III. Literacy as part of a set of sector-wide and cross-sector reforms towards lifelong learning systems



I. Literacy as a lifelong learning process

a) Literacy as a continuous learning process

- Literacy learning is a **continuous** activity
- Written language increasingly becomes a **prerequisite** for people to adapt and upgrade knowledge, skills and competencies continuously

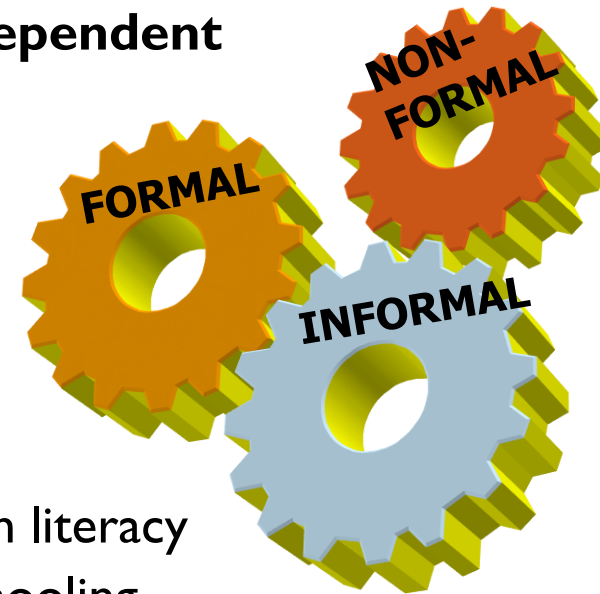
I. Literacy as a lifelong learning process (cont.)

b) Literacy learning across all ages and generations

The acquisition and development of literacy is an **age-independent** activity:

- before, during and after primary education
- in and out of school
- through formal, non-formal and informal learning

➔ It is never too early and never too late to start with literacy learning; not limited to and completed with formal schooling



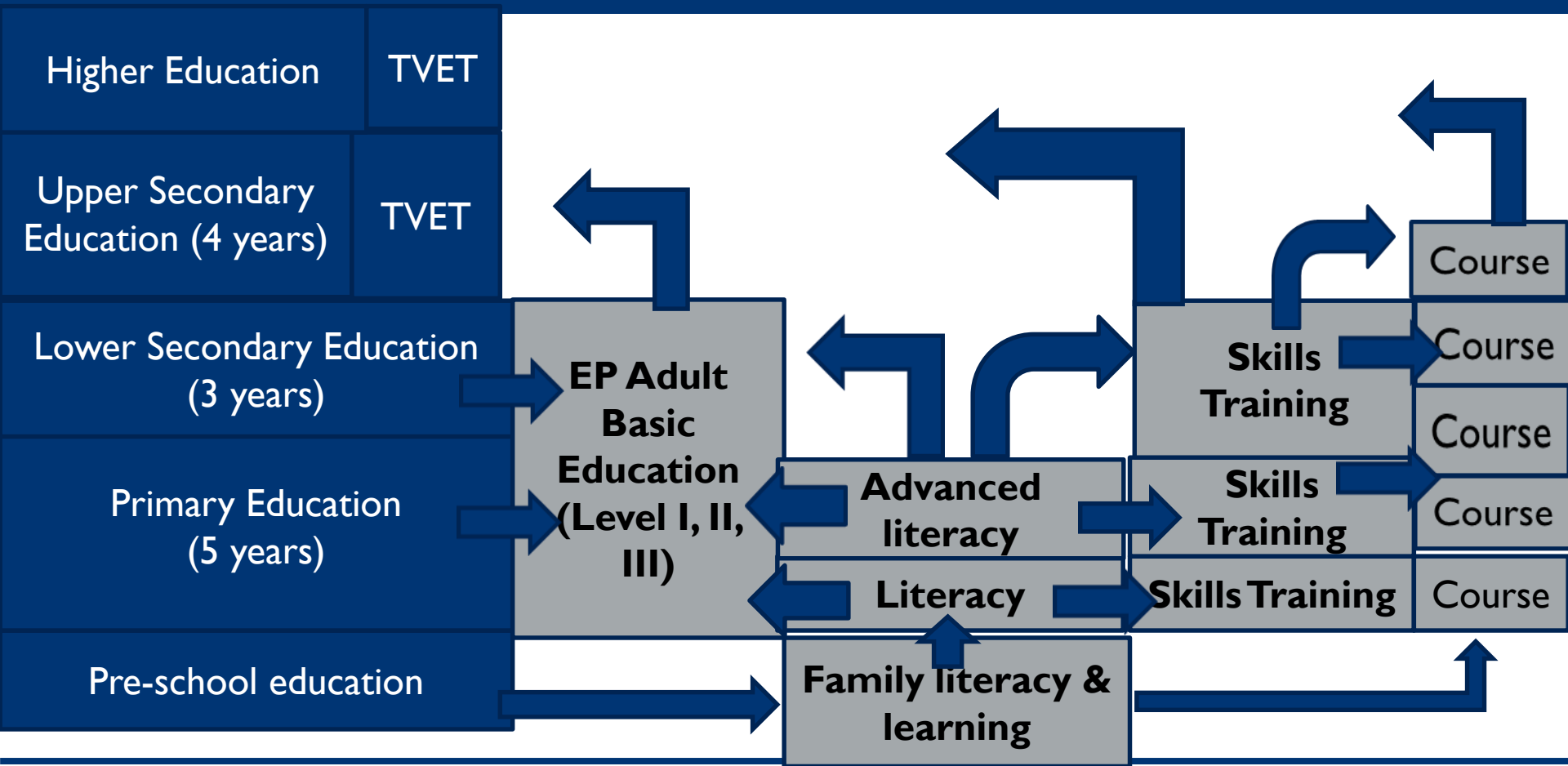
I. Literacy as lifelong learning process (cont.)

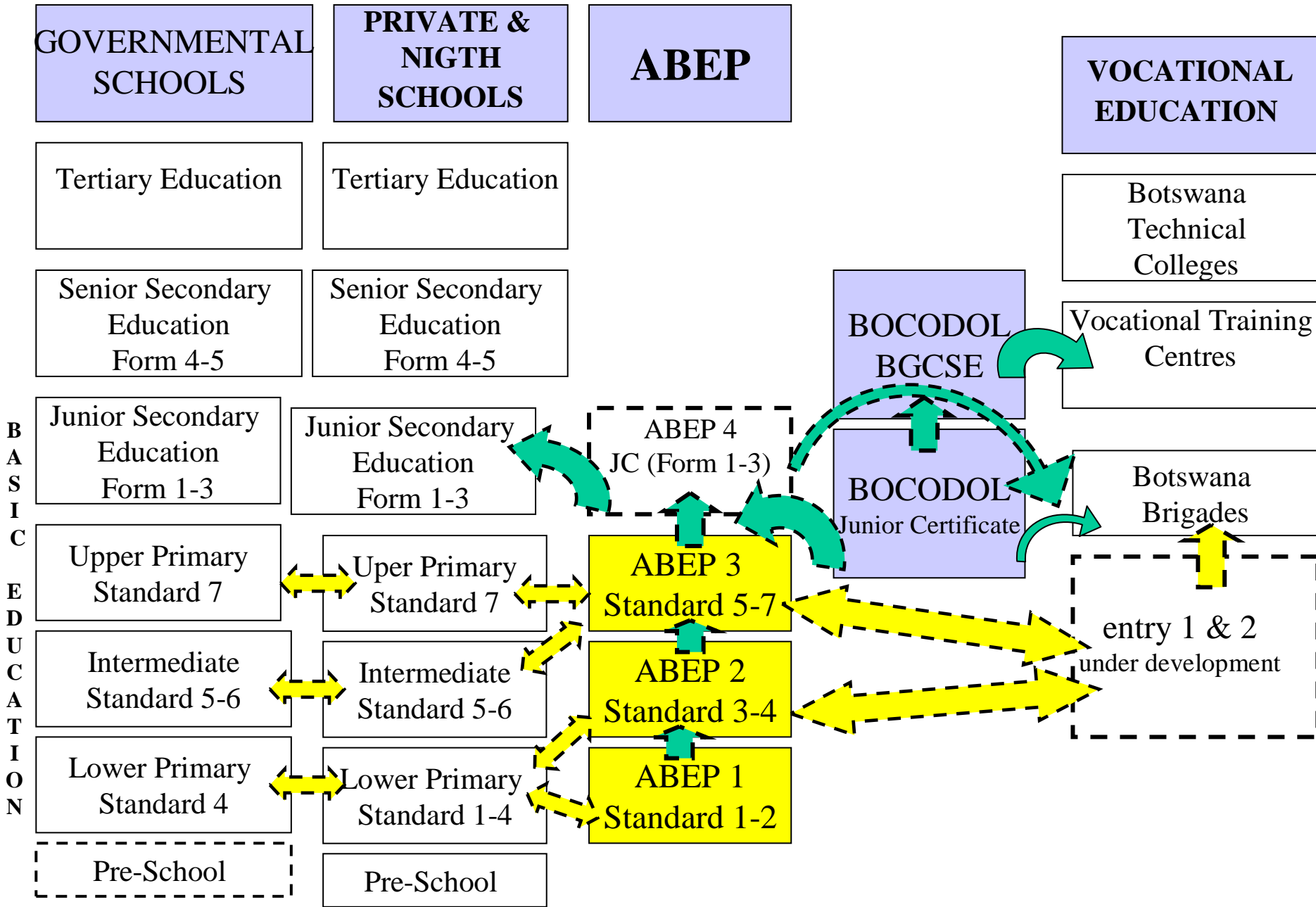
c) Literacy as a continuum of proficiency levels

- no definite line between a „literate“ and „non-literate“ person (two opposite ends of a continuum of proficiency levels)
- simple dichotomy still reflected in statistical reports on „literacy **rates**“ (in process of being discontinued)
- SDG 4.6 requires to report on % of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed **level of proficiency** in (a) literacy and (b) numeracy

Formal Education

Non-Formal Education





Which are the implications of dealing with literacy as a learning continuum?

- **competency-based curricula**
- **common framework of competency levels** that span across formal and non-formal education and reach from very basic to advanced proficiency levels (e.g. **NQFs**)
- **standardized tools to assess** learners'/ citizens' proficiency levels to diagnose/ monitor/ validate learning progress
- **recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA)** of the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning (including literacy and adult basic education)
- **lifelong learning systems** allowing for flexible progression through different proficiency levels and alternative pathways („building blocks“), encouraging **continuity** of learning

II. Literacy as a life-wide learning process

a) Literacy as a process going beyond learning in the classroom

- People use and further develop their reading and writing skills in different ways and a wide range of life spheres
- Many resources in different spaces or places as literacy-stimulating learning environments
- Creation of culture of reading and learning supported by dynamic literate environments – also in local languages
- Creation of requirements and opportunities for the use, improvement and retention of literacy skills



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II. Literacy as a life-wide learning process

b) Literacy learning combined with the development of other skills

- Linking literacy to livelihoods, to TVET, to practical skills, etc. for **income generation**
- Combining literacy with „**life skills**“ in domains such as health, human rights, citizenship, leadership, gender, parenting, environmental conservation, etc.
- Strategies range from **incorporating** skills acquisition into literacy programmes to including some literacy & numeracy learning into skills development programmes



II. Literacy as a life-wide learning process

c) Literacy as a situated social practice

- Literacy as part of social practice which is embedded in collective action
- Requires to pay attention to how literacy fits into learners' lives, what it means to them and where potential sources of interest or difficulty might lie
- Recognises literacy practices and sources of knowledge which already exist in community life and at the local level
- Open up and strengthen different access points for literacy (e.g. libraries, Internet cafés, health centres, unemployment offices, etc.)



III. Literacy as part of a set of holistic, sector-wide and cross-sector reforms towards lifelong learning systems

a) Literacy as part of a broader set of skills

- Literacy cannot be treated as a stand-alone set of skills that is developed and „completed“ within a short timeframe and is then over and done with
 - A set of **key competencies** referring to written communication, accessing and (critically) processing information, requiring reading, writing & numeracy skills, as well as digital competency and ability to pursue and organise one's own learning
- part of a wider concept of **human development**

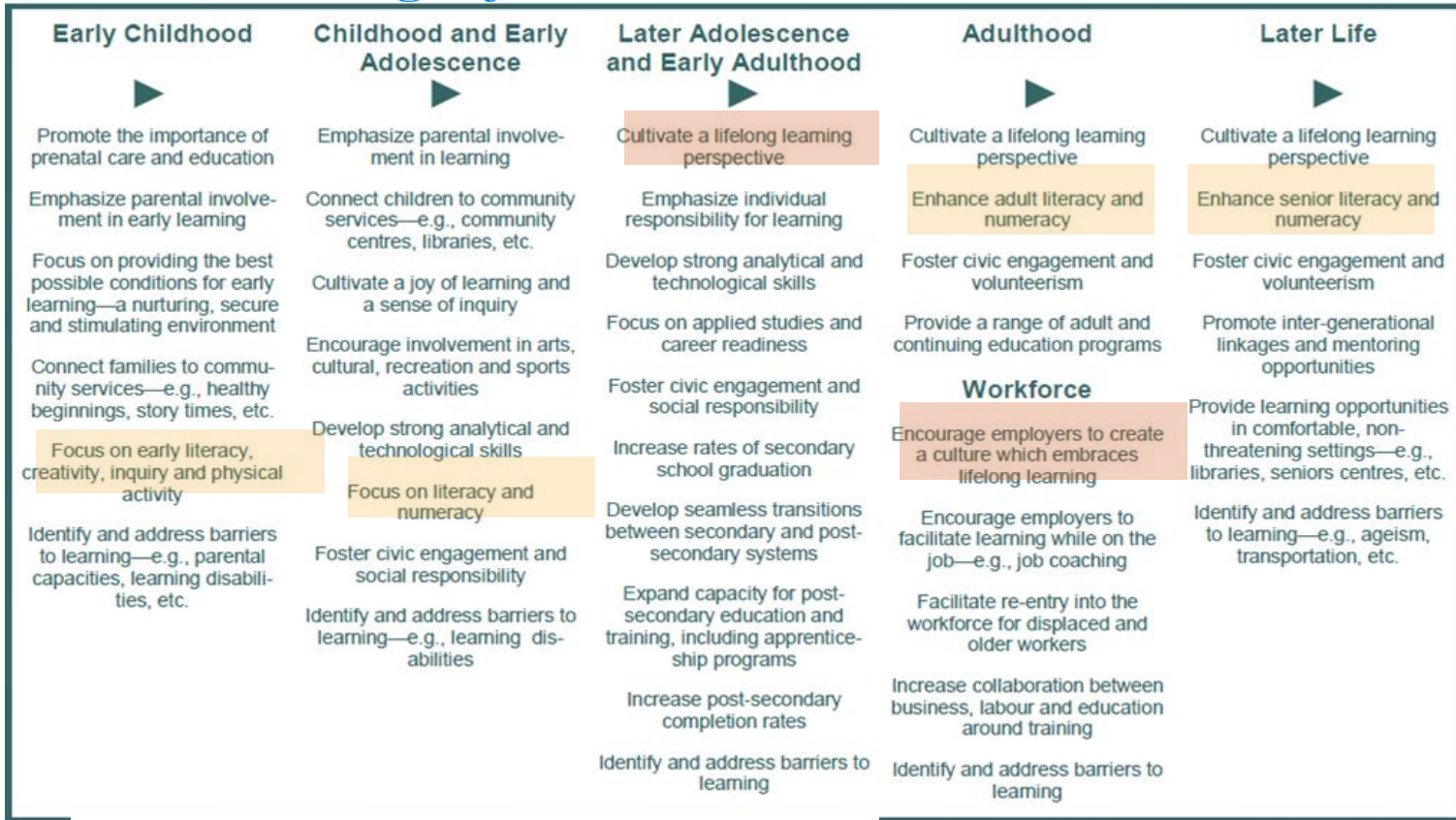


III. Literacy as part of a set of holistic, sector-wide and cross-sector reforms towards lifelong learning systems

b) Literacy as part of sector-wide reforms

- The integration of literacy into sector-wide education or LLL policies/frameworks to make literacy a national priority
- Long-term political commitment, partnership development, financial stability and continuity
- Addressing literacy challenges simultaneously on complementary fronts and across different age groups, while strengthening preventive approach





Source: Lifelong Learning Strategy for the City of Vancouver

III. Literacy as part of a set of holistic, sector-wide and cross-sector reforms towards lifelong learning systems

c) Literacy as part of national development strategies

- Successful combination of learning and living requires a holistic approach to literacy by linking it with other essential development tasks
- Literacy is critical in the achievement of the SDGs related to poverty, food security, health & well-being, gender equality, water, environment, work, peace, etc.



4. Examples of integrated approaches to literacy and NFE from a multi-sector perspective

a) Intergenerational approaches to literacy

Family literacy programmes

- Bring together different components of the education system (ECCE, primary school, adult & community education)
 - Encourage and value all forms of learning
 - Support literacy development of different generations
 - Use/create synergies and foster a culture of learning at home, in school, and in the community
- Break the intergenerational cycle of low education and literacy skills

Learning Families Intergenerational Approaches to Literacy Teaching and Learning



4. Examples of literacy as part of inter-sectoral development strategies (cont.)

b) Integrated approaches: literacy for sustainable development

- Educational programmes combined with key dimensions of sustainable development (e.g. nutrition, health, sanitation, gender equality, work, environment)
- Linking literacy with income-generating activities, practical skills training, and socio-economic development programmes
- Empowerment of marginalized communities (self-help groups, CLCs)

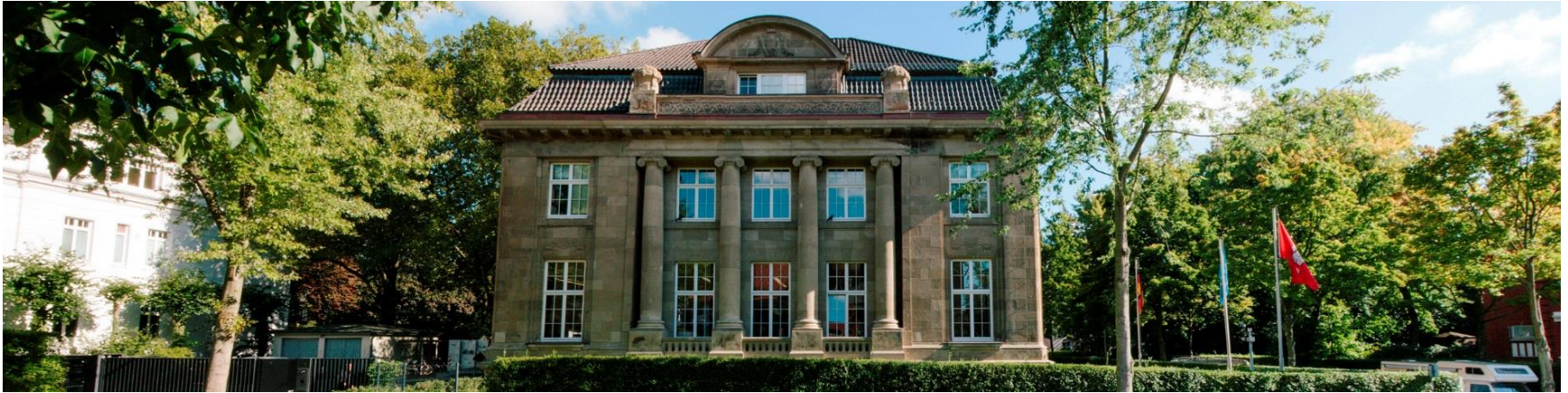
Transforming Our World
Literacy for Sustainable Development



5. Recommendations

1. Pay close attention to the demand-side of literate environments and the development of a culture of learning
2. Address the national literacy challenge with integrated, multi-sectoral approaches
3. Enable the continuity of literacy and numeracy development towards a basic education qualification
4. Integrate literacy and numeracy into holistically designed learning systems and sector-wide strategies
5. Make literacy and numeracy instrumental in the achievement of the SDGs

Thank you!



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