**National Report on the Situation of Adult Learning and Education (ALE)**

**National Commission UNESCO – Iran**

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**Introduction to this report**

As a follow-up to UNESCO IL report, the Education Department of the NC of UNESCO in Iran circulated a letter with your guidelines requesting reports on ALE activities, results, analysis and other relevant information from diverse stakeholders (for the most part governmental agencies) involved in this field in Iran.

Over the last few months we reached out to about 13 key Adult education providers (government agencies for the most part) requesting. We followed up with phone calls in order to ensure that we would have enough information to work on this report. To date (April 29, 2008), six reports (listed in the sources section of this report) have been received. We are pleased that two of the key stakeholders (the Literacy Movement Organization and the Technical and Vocational Training Organization) were able to share their results with us.

Unfortunately, due to lack of resources and time, we were not able to organize any events with the above-mentioned stakeholders in order to seek additional feedback, information etc (as per your suggested guidelines). With the exception of the analysis provided in the last section related to the upcoming conference in 2009, all other information included in this report is a direct extract and/or a summary from submitted reports.

## I. General Overview

According to the 2006 census the total population of Iran is 70 270 000. Rural population in Iran is about 33 percent of the total population.

According to the Technical and Vocational Training Organization (TVTO) of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA), one of the key challenges for Adult Education providers in Iran is their lack of access to labor market information (that is very limited). This is an impediment to realistic medium and long-term planning for AE operations. Currently no ministries are responsible for collecting and then distributing labor market information which can help the planning of training. TVTO and MOLSA are aware of this shortcoming and are planning to address it.

According to official statistics, the current estimated unemployment rate is 12.1 % (26% for youth). The Fourth Development Plan's target is to reduce unemployment to 8.4% by 2009. Despite the relatively high unemployment figure, employers report shortage of people with the skills required for the labor market. In other words, there is a serious incompatibility between supply and demand.

The above having been said, according to TVTO, the mismatch between supply and demand may be even worse than the official figures. Many researchers argue that the human capital under-utilization rate (including unemployment, visible and invisible underemployment and hidden unemployment) amounts to more than twice the declared rate of official unemployment. Better coordination of all types of policies, in particular the economic, investment and human capital development policies are needed.

TVTO analysts recommend an effective framework for balancing economic demand and human resource supply in order to achieve national competitiveness in world markets that could include the following elements:
- The establishment of a focus for economic development incorporating Human Resource Development (HRD);
- Benchmarking of productivity, competitiveness and HRD policies and practices;
- Assessment (evaluation) of the impact of training
- Knowledge management
- Development of high performance work environments in organizations

*Adult Education in Rural Agricultural Areas*

A report from the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad, department for education and manpower development stresses the need and importance of technical and vocational training for producers, agricultural workers and farmers in light of on-going technical advancements at the global level and the need for Iran to keep up with this progress. They identify one of the key challenges in the agricultural sector the illiteracy and/or low educational levels

of most farmers. They refer to about 10 million people who are classified as "uneducated". About 6 million of them live in rural areas. While 45.5% of the uneducated are over 15 years of age, the percentage of those in this group who are 40 years of age or older is 78%. It is important to mention that the agricultural sector workers in Iran are an ageing population. More than 50% of the population in rural areas is more than 40 years old. The ageing of this particular population is advanced as a reason for the tendency of agricultural workers to use more traditional methods of production and their lack of interest in applying new and advanced methods. Hence there is a need for targeted outreach and a more concerted effort in promoting AE in these areas.

*Literacy (information and analysis in this section are all provided by the Labor Movement Organization – LMO)*

According to the definition of literacy stated by the Statistic centre of Iran which is merely used for the purpose of assessment of literacy rate assessment, literate referred to a person who can read and write a simple text in Farsi or any other language whether she/he has a certificate or not.

According to the national census in 2007 out of total number of 63,899,030 of the population of 6 year and above of the country, 54, 0 64,275 people are literate and 9834755 people are illiterate. Out of this number 505482 people belong to the age group of 6-14 years. Based on the latest census of the country some 15.4 % of the population is illiterate. Country's literacy rate in the age group of below 30 and 50 year are respectively 96.4 and 91.2%.

Out of the total number of literate people, 28835000 (88.7%) are male and 25247000(80.3%) are female. During 2006 some 1347000 people were covered by literacy programs.

Table-1: literacy rates and figures (2006 national census)

| Literacy rate and number in 6+yrs old | | | | | Illiterate population by age group | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total population | illiterate | literate | Illiteracy rate | Literacy rate | 6-14 | Below 30 yrs | Below 40 yrs | Below 50 yrs | 50+yrs old |
| 63899030 | 9834755 | 54064275 | 15.4 | 84.6 | 505482 | 1502122 | 2691968 | 4493995 | 5340760 |

Table-2: literacy rates and figures (1997 national census)

| Literacy rate and number in 6+yrs old | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total population | Literate population | Illiterate population | Illiteracy rate |
| 52,294,979 | 41582277 | 10712702 | 20.5 |

Table-3: Literacy gender and regional differences (2006 census)

| Country total | Literacy rate | | F/M literacy difference | Literacy rate | | Rural/Urban literacy difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | F | | Urban | Rural | |
| | 88.7 | 80.3 | 8.4% | 88.9% | 75.1% | 13.8% |

Source: Statistic centre of Iran

## I. Detailed description - various sections on adult learning and education

### 1. Policy, legislation and financing
#### 1.1. Legislative, policy and administrative frameworks of ALE

The Law of the Fourth Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plan (2005-2009) approved in September 2004 provides the legal framework for policies related to ALE among others *(analysis provided in this section has been submitted by the Technical and Vocational Training Centre – TVTO)*.

It is important to note that with this development plan, the government has set a target to transform the country into a knowledge economy/society over the next 20 years.  They recognize that this policy goal implies better education and training arrangements, a more highly skilled work force and increased value added production activities.  Although this is an important decision, the plan falls short of not clarifying incentives needed to effect the transition smoothly.

A)  Articles 43 to 57 of the Law of the Fourth Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plan (for the development period 2005-2009) of IRI dated September 2004 established the legislative framework which defines current training policies and means of implementation for knowledge-based development. According to the Technical and Vocational Training Organization (TVTO), which is one of the key institutions tasked to implement the plan, the main policy areas in the Articles are:
 Article 43 – Ensuring that educational policies and plans are prepared so that the workforce has the opportunity to learn the skills necessary to meet the labor market needs in the global economy;
Article 44 – Promoting human resource initiatives to maximize the use of information and communication technology
Article 45 – Developing human capital for the growth of knowledge-based activities in the government and private sectors
Article 46 – Training members of the workforce in up-to-date research and technological processes to support comprehensive national research and technological companies and systems
Article 47 – Providing training facilities in the free zones in order to support the research, technological and engineering entities located in the science and technology parks

Article 48 – Taking necessary initiatives in reforming the education system in order to enhance productive, innovative risk-taking and entrepreneurial potential, hence creating a spirit of independent learning and research, particularly amongst young people

Article 49 – Educating specialized, devoted, productive and entrepreneurial manpower in line with the needs of the software movement in different sectors of the country

Article 50 – Preparing plans to facilitate the predicted increase in demand for higher skill levels and promoting popular participation – whilst making optimum use of existing facilities;

Article 51 – Validating and extending items included in Articles 154 and 144 of the Law of the Third Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plan concerning the authority given to universities and institutions of higher education in order to allow them to form public companies to render scientific, research and technical services

Article 52 – Planning and implementing initiatives to guarantee equal access to educational opportunity, particularly in the less-developed regions, developing knowledge and skills, and enhancing productivity of human wealth, especially in the female population, as well as quantitative and qualitative development of human capital

Article 54 – Ensuring that Executive Agencies allocate a percentage of their expense credits for the design and implementation of in-service training programs for their own employees

Article 55 – Devising necessary mechanisms to expand knowledge and skill, to reform the educational pyramid of the labor force and to enhance capability of the human wealth, to reduce the gap between the country's level of knowledge and skill of the labor force and the level of global standards, and to create job opportunities for young people;

Article 57 – Developing communications and information technology, realizing a knowledge-based economy and attaining a higher regional status.


B) Iran is one of the signatories of the Education for All world convention and has taken big strides for realization of the goals of EFA.

In addition to that, providing of free education for all have been stipulated in many of legislative texts of the Islamic republic of Iran. In article 30  of the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, government have been committed to provide the free means of Education for all people.

With respect to the importance of progress in literacy towards achieving the development goals of the country, in the most recent set of laws of the social, economic and cultural plan of the country, the government has committed to taking measures to ensure the equal access to education particularly in the less

developed regions, spread of knowledge, skills and to raise the productivity of the human capitals specially for girls and quantity and quality development of the general education. Item "Y" of the article No. 52 of the development law stipulated this matter as follows:

"Formulation and implementation of the strategic plan of the country, with consideration of the geographical, livelihood, social and cultural conditions of the different regions of the country with an approach of absorbing people and NGO partnerships so that [we reach the target of] total literacy of population [for those] below 30 yrs [of age] by the end of the 4$^{th}$ national development plan."

During the session no. 595 of the supreme council of the Cultural Revolution a 12- article resolution was approved. The articles of this important resolution calls for measures such as: expediting the literacy activities through building partnerships with relevant ministries, setting up the literacy headquarters in the provinces headed by governor-general, implementing the strategic plan of literacy by the end of the 4$^{th}$ five year development plan for the age group of 10-29 years and by the end of the 5$^{th}$ five year development plan for the age group of 10-49 years and other obligations are among

1.1.1. How is ALE organized within the government? What ministries are in charge or involved? Is ALE centralized/decentralized? How?

*Overview:*

Within the context of adult learning and education In the Islamic Republic of Iran a wide range of governmental organizations and ministries as well as non governmental and private institutions are actively involved in delivering various kinds of public education, cultural, technical and vocational education, specialized training, job and skill development training and especial training aimed at youth and adolescents. Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Municipalities, Ministries of Health and Agricultural Jihad, Ministry of Education, Universities, Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, are among these providers.

A few of the above act as key players and implementers of ALE-related programs:

*A) The Technical and Vocational Training Organization of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOSLA).*

TVTO is a branch of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. It is responsible for short-term technical and vocational training as defined in the Third and Fourth 5-year Development Plans. TVTO is part of the broader institutional framework of agencies involved in TVET/HRD. TVTO is directly linked to the Management and Planning Organization which sets out the HRD policy.

TVTO focuses considerable attention on training provision, while it is also responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of training (management of training).  There is an internal debate going on as to whether TVTO should focus on monitoring, management/regulation and evaluation activities and leave the delivery of training to the private sector.  As of this date (April 30, 2008), no formal decision has been made about this issue.

B) There is a *National Coordination Council* that consists of the Heads of the Ministry of Education, MOSLA, and the Management and Planning Organization.  Its representation might be expanded.  However the high level constitution of the Council means that policy issues are discussed but few practical outputs, such as regulations and procedures, are decided.  TVTO recognizes that its training can be made more responsive to labor market needs, however macro-level dialogue and coordination, involving ministries/agencies responsible for economic and investment planning, might be enhanced.  In its report, TVTO recommends the revival of the National Coordination Council on Human Resource Development with a wider and more technical representation as a solution to the existing challenges of coordination.

C) Another key player at the national level is the *Literacy Movement Organization.*  Literacy Movement Organization (LMO) is affiliated with the Ministry of education and is responsible for delivering literacy programs and services. The LMO head is the Deputy Minister. This organization consists of three deputies of Education, coordination of partnerships and the administrative and logistic deputy.

D) Another significant player in the TVET field is *the Ministry of Education (MOE)*.  The MOE's Kar Danesh program was set up to respond to the demands of the labor market. The graduates receive a high school diploma and the course is of three years duration on a full time basis. It is formal training and 90 percent of students are young.  50% of male students get a job after completion, 10% go on to further education. A lot of the courses hat female students take are not employment-oriented, being more hobby- or household-management related.  There is some career guidance provided. The Kar Danesh program has been operating for the last 11 years and there are now 4000 Kar Danesh schools.

*Many other Ministries have the responsibility of providing AE opportunities to their target communities and that according to the mandate and area of focus of each Ministry.  Examples of such detailed programs and activities are outlined below (section 2).*

E) Municipalities are also tasked with providing adult education programs. For example, in the Municipality of Tehran there is an Office of Education and Logistics that plan AE activities.

## 1.2. Financing of ALE
### 1.2.1. Public investment in ALE

The TVTO (as with many similar agencies) is funded directly through government sources. The government wants to become a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and, since Human Resource Development is a key criterion for WTO membership, TVTO funds are secure. The funds allocated to TVTO are channeled through the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs budget. TVTO's programs are free for trainees and therefore the program is not subsidized through trainee fees. TVTO works closely with a number of bilateral and international agencies including KOICA, JICA, World Bank and ILO. It is currently negotiating a large program/loan with the World Bank.

### 1.2.2. Civil society support to ALE (e.g. religious institutions, unions, NGOs)

Some NGOs in Iran are active in the area of Adult Education. For example, the Society for the protection and assistance of socially disadvantaged individuals (SPASDI) – Bam chapter, they have been providing vocational training opportunities in the city of Bam (post-earthquake). Their chapter in Bam was established in 2003 in order to address immediate emergency and relief needs of earthquake survivors. They soon realized that many women who were widowed as a result of the tragedy were now finding themselves as heads of household but were not able to provide for their families due to lack of marketable skills. SPASDI organized a series of vocational training programs for earthquake survivors in fields such as accounting, computer programming and sewing. From 400 people who registered in these courses in 2006/2007 about 300 of them were women. A high percentage of their participants were able to finish their courses and receive a certificate recognized by the government. Some of their graduates are now fully employed (many self-employed) having put their newly acquired skills into practice. (www.spasdi.org).

The Red Crescent Society – Iran Institute for Higher Practical Scientific Education according to its mission (with a focus on education related to

prevention of damages caused by major disasters, capacity building and improvement of quality of life in society) conducts general education programs across 10,000 villages in Iran. Through two different such programs they have reached about 3,000,000 people. They also offer First Aid workshops to up to 2,000,000 people every year. One of their most significant activities that contribute towards Adult Education in Iran is through publication and distribution of a broad range of publications (books, manuals, pamphlets etc.) on topics such as Guidelines for crisis management, basics of first aid, a series on life skills, a series on children health, etc.

2. <u>Quality of Adult Learning and Education: Provision, Participation and Achievement</u>
   2.1.    Provision of ALE and institutional frameworks: The provision of ALE in terms of organization, coordination, management and available infrastructure. Major trends that have emerged since 1997 (example of good practices)
      **2.1.1.** Which institutions are responsible for managing and co-coordinating ALE at national level? **(This question has been partly addressed as per 1.1.3. above.)**

      i. One of the most active organizations at the national level is the Literacy Movement Organization. In late 1980's, a need was identified to establish a council on literacy in Tehran in order to devise national policies and strategies with oversight from the President and with participation by a number of key ministries such as Education, Culture, Higher Education, Agricultural Jihad, Health and heads of the Literacy Movement organization and the Islamic Republic of Iran's Broadcasting. This initiative soon led to the formation of Literacy Support Council branches in provincial centers and towns followed by centers in a number of districts and villages. In 1990, concurrent with the International literacy year, literacy mobilization project was put into effect in Iran. During the implementation phase of this project, more than 3 million people including school-aged children, illiterate youth and adults benefited from literacy programs.

      Literacy Movement Organization is affiliated with the Ministry of Education and is responsible for delivering literacy education above all to adults. Directorate of literacy are spread over 31 provinces of the country. The organization also has 300 offices at the township level. Presently more than 3500 Community Learning centers and 111303 are providing literacy education services across the country.

**ii.** Another key organization is the Technical and Vocational Training Organization (TVTO) of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

TVTO operates in both the public and private economic sectors. Its headquarters are located in Tehran with 29 General Offices nationwide and a central instructor Training Centre in Karaj. TVET organized and/or controls training courses of between 3 and 24 months duration in:

- 549 fixed centers, mainly in urban areas;
- Mobile centers for rural areas (each province has two large mobile workshop trucks, two vehicles and trailers for instruction and instructor living quarters, and 20 tents)
- More than 11,000 private training centers are affiliated with TVTO

**(please see detailed description of this organization under 1.1.3.)**

iii. *The Ministry of Social Welfare*, in line with the Law of the Fourth Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plan (2005-2009) has devised three programs for low-income individuals with an AE component. The programs are: a) National Program for community-based capacity building; b) Comprehensive Plan for capacity-building of women without support and women head of household; c) Plan to control and diminish social damages. Education related to Low income groups include:

- Awareness raising and capacity building for local communities and target groups in order for them to discuss their needs, challenges, opportunities, existing resources and assets in the community to help them find appropriate local solutions to address social needs
- Workshops to increase self-esteem, self-reliance, creativity and innovation
- Improve knowledge level, vision and beliefs of participants in the areas of rights and responsibilities of citizens and participation in development programs
- Capacity building and education towards creation of employment for target groups
- Promote and establish a culture of saving and preservation of national resources and the best approach to use it towards eradication of local and community barriers and problems

Planned educational activities for women head of household include:
- Capacity-building of families with women as head of household
- Teaching life skills
- Vocation and employment generation workshops
- Workshops on writing economic activity plans
- Financial and accounting workshops
- Planning and management workshops

Planned educational activities for vulnerable groups:
- Life Skills Education
- Consultation pre- and post-marriage for couples to discuss relationships of married couples
- Teaching child rearing or children education

iv. *The Ministry of Agricultural Jihad* has tasked a deputy for education and manpower development. The department has 64 agricultural training centers across the country. They are financed through governmental channels and provide free educational courses on request.

The goals of the department are:
- to provide learning opportunities for farmers in order for them to demonstrate desirable work ethics and habits
- to analyze business, management skills and agricultural competencies of agricultural workers
- to promote leadership and participation skills necessary for the development of active citizenship
- For interested individuals to learn about career opportunities in the agricultural sector and to set career objectives
- To provide continuous education programs and promote life-long learning
- To educate farmers about how new technologies impact agriculture and how agriculture impacts the environment

The department holds planning and training for agricultural students, rural communities and staff of the ministry. It also has the responsibility to conduct needs assessment, planning and coordination of agricultural education in all of the agricultural training centers in the country.

The department is comprised of a number of bureaus:

a) **Staff training bureau**:  This bureau conducts needs assessment and determines the educational needs of the staff in the Ministry in order to increase and enhance their level of knowledge and on-the-job skills.  The training is offered through long and short-term training sessions and courses (in relation to agriculture, management, administrative skills, etc.)

b) **Formal education and agricultural vocations bureau:**  This bureau studies, analyses and classifies vocational activities and skills in the agricultural sector.  It also collects information about different producers and manpower in regards to literacy rate and relevant skills.  They set priorities and design training courses for different regions according to needs.  They provide guidance to agricultural education centers for necessary manpower training.  They set educational standards and appraise the content of education materials.

   Example of training offered by this bureau includes:
   - Formal training: upon completion of this training, trainees will receive a diploma or a technical certificate.
   - Training of agricultural producers:  organization of short-term training programs according to training needs identified through assessments of provincial agricultural organization.

c) Bureau of educational technology and services:  This bureau receives programs related to training courses and analyses them.  They produce educational packages (print and audio-visual).  They provide educational technology services to all ministries, organizations and dependent companies.

In addition to the above, managers in the agricultural sector also receive regular training sessions to improve their technical skills in farm management.  One particular program worth mentioning is training of farmers in relation to their knowledge of pest management in order to reduce the use of pesticides and promote efficient use of chemical fertilizers.

   v.  **Sazmane Behzisti (Organization for Healthy Living)** has a mission to promote a healthier society through prevention activities among others.   It cooperates with a number of other governmental organizations such as Agricultural Jihad and Literacy Movement Organization in order to provide educational opportunities and conduct awareness raising activities across the country.   They also contribute towards the development of appropriate literature on this topic for people with different literacy levels.   Over the last eight years, the organization has seen its number of participants grow significantly.  70% of

learners in its programs are from rural areas and 30% from cities.  90% of participants are women.

In addition to education related to healthy living and healthy families and communities, the organization also provides awareness raising sessions on mines (in affected areas). One important activity is related to education on addiction prevention and harm reduction.  This education is provided through centers, mobile outreach and street outreach.   Trainers are trained across provinces to deliver such services locally.

2.2.    Participation in ALE

The TVTO Statistical year Book (2004) reveals a strong quantitative performance by TVTO. TVTO centers (both government and private centers) trained 1.87 million people in 2003.  This constitutes the total number of trainees who were offered training by TVTO centers (including both Government and private).  61% of trainees were women and 39% were men. However in the Government TVO centers, the proportion of male trainees was higher:  60.3%, compared to 39.6% for female trainees.
TVTO produced new training standards for 155 occupations and revised 41 existing standards in 2002.  However, there is general agreement at training is not meeting labor market needs and that quality standards could be improved.  Pass rates of certificates indicate a substantial regional variation ranging from 46.4% in Kohkiluyeh and Boyer ahmad and 52% in East Azerbaijan to 77.6%, 76% an 87.6% in Esfahan, Fars and Tehran provinces respectively.

According to TVTO Iran has yet to develop a systematic approach to promote and provide lifelong learning systems.  The Fourth Development Plan introduces the objective of converting Iran into a Knowledge Economy/Society.  This idea will inevitably involve the introduction of lifelong leaning for all if a Knowledge Society is to be achieved.

TVTO is striving to reach out to adult workers, both employed and underemployed/unemployed.  TVTO's training provision is largely confined to young people as noted (73% of trainees were younger than 30 years of age, of which nearly 60% were less than 25 years old).  Collaboration with some companies exists and some of these industry-linked programs are impressive, however these initiatives appear to be reactive rather than proactive.  TVTO may need to get involved more pro-actively in a dialogue concerning investment and industry development to determine how skills development can contribute to their development.

Although some statistical information exists on lifelong learning in Iran, there are still important gaps. For example, statistics of training provided by non-formal organizations and NGOs are lacking.  This situation is preventing development of a concrete strategy on lifelong learning.  The concept of lifelong learning should be included as part of the national Human Resource Development Strategy.

2.3.    Monitoring and evaluation programs and assessing learning outcomes

The Technical and Vocational Centre (TVTO)

TVTO focuses considerable attention on training provision, while it is also responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of training – i.e. management of training. TVTO's monitoring and management functions therefore might be given greater attention.  There is an internal debate going on as to whether TVTO should focus on monitoring, management/regulation and evaluation activities and leave the delivery of training to the private sector.

 The Technical and Vocational Training Centre (TVTO) recognizes the importance of quality assurance and a realistic set of indicators to evaluate their success rate.  For example, they mention that the notion of skills for employability could be more fully disseminated throughout the system.  This would help to eliminate the view that provision of training is an end in itself. For example the performance of TVTO centers is assessed by the pass rate and not by the employment performance of trainees.  This means the emphasis is on the quantity of training, instead of employability.  The monitoring system might be altered to place greater emphasis on the relevance of the skills provided.

With regards to quality assurance, there are detailed procedures for accrediting training providers.  The assessment criteria might place less emphasis on the proportion of trainees obtaining certificates and more emphasis on the success rate of job placement.  There might be greater assessment by TVTO of each centre's ability to link skills demand and supply in local areas or to link with employers for work experience and similar arrangements.

The system of skills assessment and certification might ensure that trainees have a common set of qualifications and that these qualifications are reliable for employers.  Currently there is an effort to improve 'output-based' quality assurance of certification by setting up new assessment centers.  The results of this effort are not yet known.  A quality assurance mechanism which

examines the 'process' of training provision at the level of the training centre might be needed.

TVTO regional offices submit detailed reports (including the number of trainees and of those who obtained certificates and their grades) to the head office every three months.  TVTO has made strenuous efforts to produce statistics of all its activities. Such information is essential for the running of the organization but it falls short of what is required to facilitate informed decision-making.  A major item missing from the report is the number or proportion of graduates who obtained employment (i.e. Employment rate).

<u>Literacy Movement Organization</u>

In their 2006 publication, LMO has outlined some of its evaluation methods and approaches.

Every year the LMO assesses results from the previous year in order to review its work plan for the following year and incorporate the lessons learned in a national plan.  The assessment includes challenges in the fulfillment of the objectives.  LMO examines educational textbooks, evaluation from learners (and their level of satisfaction as participants in the program), as well as group leaders.  Every year the success of the plan is compared against previous years in order to assess progress.

*Evaluation of learners*:  the director general of education who is based at the LMO headquarters and evaluation compiles the methods of assessment in every field and relays its findings and recommendations to provincial branches for execution.

It is compulsory for all learners to submit a handwritten evaluation at the time of the return of educational textbooks.  This evaluation should include: the influence of the textbook in the learners' life, comments about the context, recording a recollection related to the subject of study, to write a summary of the textbook.  In addition to this, provincial capitals and towns may launch book reading contests in their sphere of activity in order to encourage learners to become interested in the projects of the LMO; To extract several parallel or nearly-related questions from the context of the textbook and launching competitions; to prepare a questionnaire about the subjects in every textbook; to prepare crossword puzzles related to the contexts of each textbook.

2.4. Adult educators/facilitators' status and training (human resources available for ALE)

<u>Technical and Vocational Training Organization</u>

TVTO identified trainer education as a major concern as they assess the quality of training as being 'uneven'. There are concerns regarding how current the curriculum is and regarding the quality of 'master trainers'. The Instructor Training Centre (ITC) is the sole source of instructor training in Iran. Possession of a Bachelors' Degree has now been introduced into the criteria for the selection of instructors to improve the quality of instructors, however many existing instructors do not possess the degree. Many instructors work on a contract basis without permanent status (66.8% of TVTO instructors are employed by contractual companies).

The linkage between Instructor Training Centers (ITCs) and industry could be improved. The practice of allowing master trainers to assess the instructors who they have trained might be reviewed. Obligatory refresher trainer is deemed a good concept. To be effective, ITC trainers themselves must have first class skills which should be demonstrably better than the instructors they are training.

3. <u>Adult Literacy</u>
   3.1. How is literacy defined in your country? Have there been any changes since 1997? Please explain

A definition provided by the Literacy Movement Organization: "Adult literacy in Iran is the precondition of all other learning processes [that] link the skills acquired by an adult person and [is] located on a continuum of adult education and lifelong learning. Literacy is an opportunity for the development of people and communities. Literacy also acts as the prerequisite of active and effective social participation and a means for empowerment at the individual and social levels. "

*Overview (Provided by the Literacy Movement Organization)*

Effective practice and innovative literacy programs

- Establishment of more than 3500 community learning centers by the end of 2007 and planning for establishment of more centers (up to 6000) by the end of the 4th Five years development plan of the country
- Development of the content of the main literacy textbooks relevant with the educational environment
- Creating a suitable infrastructure for education through the media

- Organizing literacy celebration in villages where the literacy rate has reached 97%. This year around 6000 villages will be included in this program.

Literacy Opportunities:

- Religious beliefs
- Literacy support rendered by the supreme leader and his representative in the organization
- 20 years perspective and literacy related laws approved by Islamic Consultative assembly
- International context of UNLD and EFA and commitment of the government to the literacy programs
- Educational innovations and reform of the teaching- learning methods as well as basic life skills education
- Taking advantage of a strong educational network at the national level
- Synergies between adult literacy and formal schools

Main Challenges:

- Lack of nominal data and information of the illiterate and low literate people
- Failure in complete elimination of illiteracy among school age children and drop outs and working children
- Weak partnership among different organizations in the literacy field
- Dominance of verbal culture in social communication
- Lack of financial resources
- Lack of an appropriate strategy for developing and sequencing of the post literacy and lifelong education programs

3.2.    Which new policies have been adopted and implemented?
For the last three decade, literacy has been consistently formulated as a national policy and action priority.

3.3.    Please give examples of effective practice and innovation literacy programs.
Literacy Movement Organization has implemented a number of interesting programs since 1998:
- *Corresponding Services Project*: this project was designed in line with promoting continuing education through distance education. It was first implemented in 1998 with the aim to promulgate instruction and teaching the illiterates and low literate people and change classroom education to distance education throughout the country. This program targets learners who are at the third stage of continuing literacy groups, as well as holders of final and fifth grade certificate or those with equal level education who don't continue their regular education. Some of the goals from this program include a) strengthening self learning by learners, b) to promote a spirit of public

and inter-sectoral partnerships, c) to enrich the learning environment of the learners and to cultivate a culture of book reading, d) to empower people and promote a society committed to learning.

- *Reading with Family Project*: This is a book-based educational program in which the instructor acts only as an observer and guide. The goal is to promote self-learning and self-reliance among learners at various levels while ensuring that they still have access to an instructor. The program's primary target audience is participating learners and the secondary target audience is the family of learners. The implementation of this program has resulted in promoting book reading in the family and society, reducing the gap between women and men literates by allowing learners to read their textbooks with their families, by preventing loss of learners and increasing the percentage of the graduates in the classrooms, etc. Some of the key challenges of this program are related to motivating project activists to participate (such as teachers and executive staff), the difficulty of compiling and publishing textbooks proportional to the number of learners.

- *Community Learning Centers (CLCs)* – These centers were established in 2000 with support from UNESCO Office for Asia and Pacific in order to improve the rate of literacy among masses. The centre's objectives include: a) to create necessary conditions for masses and especially among women to benefit from educational opportunities, b) to improve the quality of education among villagers, c) to help local institutions to intervene in community affairs during all the stages of education and generation of revenues, etc. The activities of the centre include: a) providing continuing literacy groups in order to encourage more participation by the target group, b) Combining literacy education with life skills, c) providing job skills through workshops, d) offering diverse social activities.

Due to the success of community learning centers, they have managed to garner support from relevant government offices and departments as well as in-kind and programmatic support from UNICEF and UNFPA.

- *Basic Literacy education through television broadcasting* is another initiative tested by the LMO as a means to further literacy education in Iran. A number of factors led to the design and conceptualization of this program that was tested in the province of Hamedan: scattered nature of adult learners, shortage of educational buildings, rising educational costs, the wide scope of

media coverage, accessibility and repetition of television programs.

3.4.  Please illustrate how policies and programs focus on gender. Describe the importance given to women and other target groups.

As regard to the cultural and social context of the Iranian society, involvement of the female instructors in the literacy classes of women and girls and teaching female learners in separate classes are among the effective strategies in retaining and absorbing young women and girls in literacy classes. In 2007, some 43,132 (84.6%) of the LMO instructors were female. In the current year a total of 1,248,420 learners were women. The number of male learners compared with women was 223,511.

Examples of gender-sensitive, gender-focused programming:

- Community Learning Centers (CLC): According to a report from LMO, the majority of beneficiaries in the community learning centers have been rural girls and women.  For example many girls and women have taken job skills courses in the area of embroidery, flower making, weaving, crochet, cotton shoe making etc.  as well as teaching basic life skills such as teaching of women's rights, principle of nutrition, child rearing, individual and group hygiene, etc

- Based on research by LMO, number of illiterates among families with women as heads of household is much higher than the average family in Iran.  In fact, 55% of women head of household in urban areas and 70% of women in such conditions in rural areas are illiterate.  Their lack of education unfortunately leads many of them and their families to live in dire poverty.  In order to address this situation, LMO in partnership with UNFPA and the governor general of Khuzestan launched a joint initiative entitled*: "combination of literacy and education of basic life and job skills for girls and women who earn bread for their families."* This project was able to attract 615 women and girl participants who received literacy and job skills courses.  In addition to this effort, the LMO soon started workshops on income generation activities and provided small loans to help these families. In addition to aforementioned goals and objectives, LMO realizes that one of the results of the program is to break the isolation of participants.  LMO believes that the combination of strategies used, such as combining literacy and job skills, provision of services in 5 point areas in the city, provision of small loans for income generation activities backed by workshops on the topic, exhibition of goods produced by women participants in order to help them market their businesses, etc all contributed to the success of this initiative.

3.5.  To what extent do policies and programs aim at building literate environments? What progress could be achieved?

In line with encouraging the learners to use their learnt literacy skills

- Organizing nationwide book reading contexts for learners and newly literate people
- Development of local and provincial learning contents
- Production of provincial publications for neo literates and low literate people
- Development of inter-sectoral partnerships with other institutions and organizations for book development
- Setting up mobile libraries with a participatory approach
- Providing support for production of local and provincial radio programs for neo literates
- Printing a half page for newly literates in the official newspaper of the country on the weekly basis
- Development of literacy material by learners including their own hand written materials and wall papers
- Setting up periodical book exhibition
- Development of more than 400 titles of booklets and reading materials in different formats for using in the post literacy programs and study in reading circles
- Development of educational packages about religion, social issues, health , culture and literature

Another interesting example of programs geared towards promotion of a literate environment is the project called: "Reading with Family" as explained above.

4. Expectations of Confintea VI and future Perspectives of ALE
5.

Explain country's principal expectations of CONFINTEA VI and on the main challenges that ALE has to address in your country in the future

Ideas for CONFINTEA VI:
- Best practices for education of Adult Educators/trainers and teachers (refresher courses, recommended curricula, available resources online and otherwise)

- Best practices and models of national coordination of efforts in relation to AE

- Ways to improve outreach strategies to rural and isolated areas in order to promote AE programs among farmers and their families and encourage their active participation

- Opportunity for participants to discuss proactive ways to apply a gender lens in adult education, best strategies to overcome barriers to participation of women in AE programs

- The role and importance of incentives in promoting a learning society (financial, awards, recognition, etc.) and some promising practices in this field

- The connection between adult learning and learning in schools as children and youth, how can we promote the concept of lifelong learning throughout the school system

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