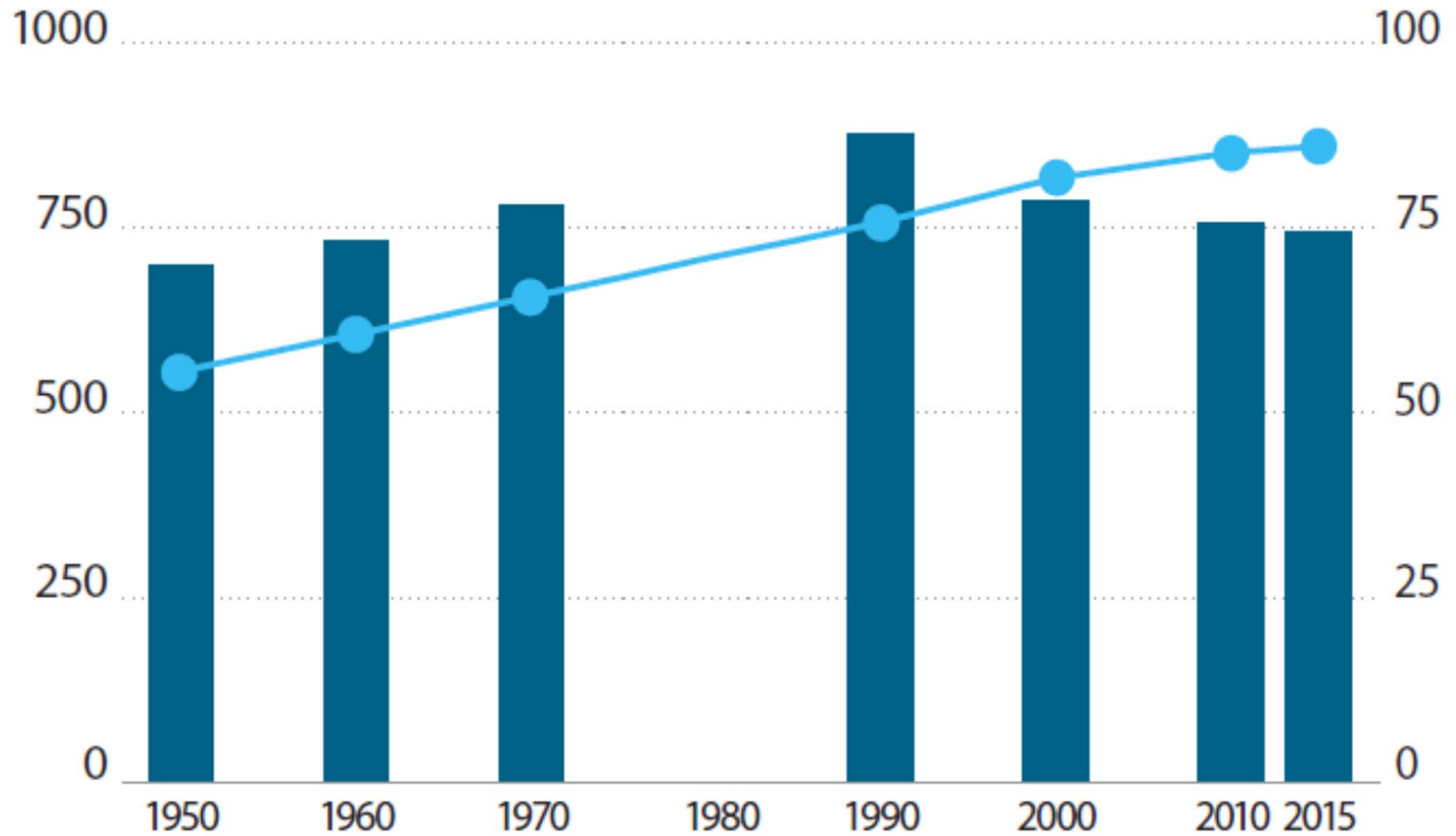# Opportunities and challenges of measurement and monitoring ALE

Shailendra Sigdel, Statistical Advisor

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)

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1000   100

750   75

500   50

250   25

0   0

1950   1960   1970   1980   1990   2000   2010 2015

■ Number of illiterate adults   ■ Adult literacy rate

Main sources of data:

- Annual UIS literacy survey

  o From census or national household survey

- UIS analysis of survey data

  o Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), etc.
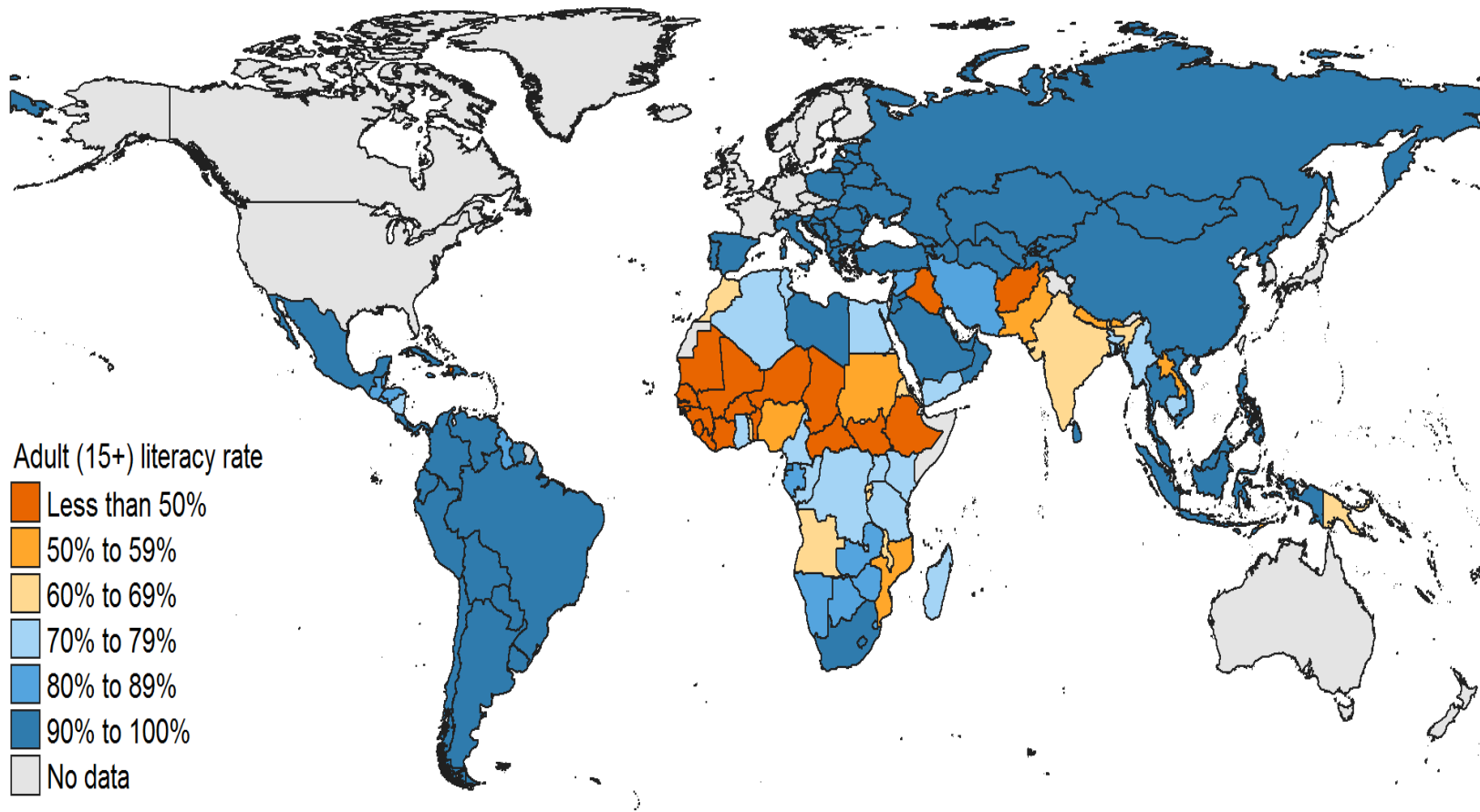
Challenges:

- Timing: Frequency of census or survey (normally every 10 years for census), data release date
- Sample design, national coverage, excluded populations
- Countries in conflict
- Focus of survey is not literacy, included as an explanatory variable
- National definition of literacy may change over time
- Self-declaration or literacy test

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o **Definition of literacy** "the ability to read and write, with understanding, a short simple sentence about one's daily life"

o This definition is very limiting. It suggests a dichotomy between literates and illiterates, when it is acknowledged that in reality there exist various levels of proficiency.

o The definition also makes no allowance for the different types of literacy skills needed for work, or for family life, nor that of numeracy

o Various sources population censuses or household surveys in which the head of the household answers one question: "*Can you (and others in your household) read and write a simple sentence? "*excluding with understanding

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How do literacy rates look like?

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Adult (15+) literacy rate
- Less than 50%
- 50% to 59%
- 60% to 69%
- 70% to 79%
- 80% to 89%
- 90% to 100%
- No data

According to UIS data, the majority of countries missed the Education for All (EFA) goal of reducing adult illiteracy rates by 50% between 2000 and 2015.

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- **Adult literacy rates: 15 years and older**
- **Youth literacy rates: 15 to 24 years**
- **Adult illiterate population**
- **Youth illiterate population**
- **Elderly literacy rates: 65 years and older**
- **Elderly illiterate population: absolute number of elderly illiterates**
- **Literacy metadata (definitions, data sources, declaration mode)**
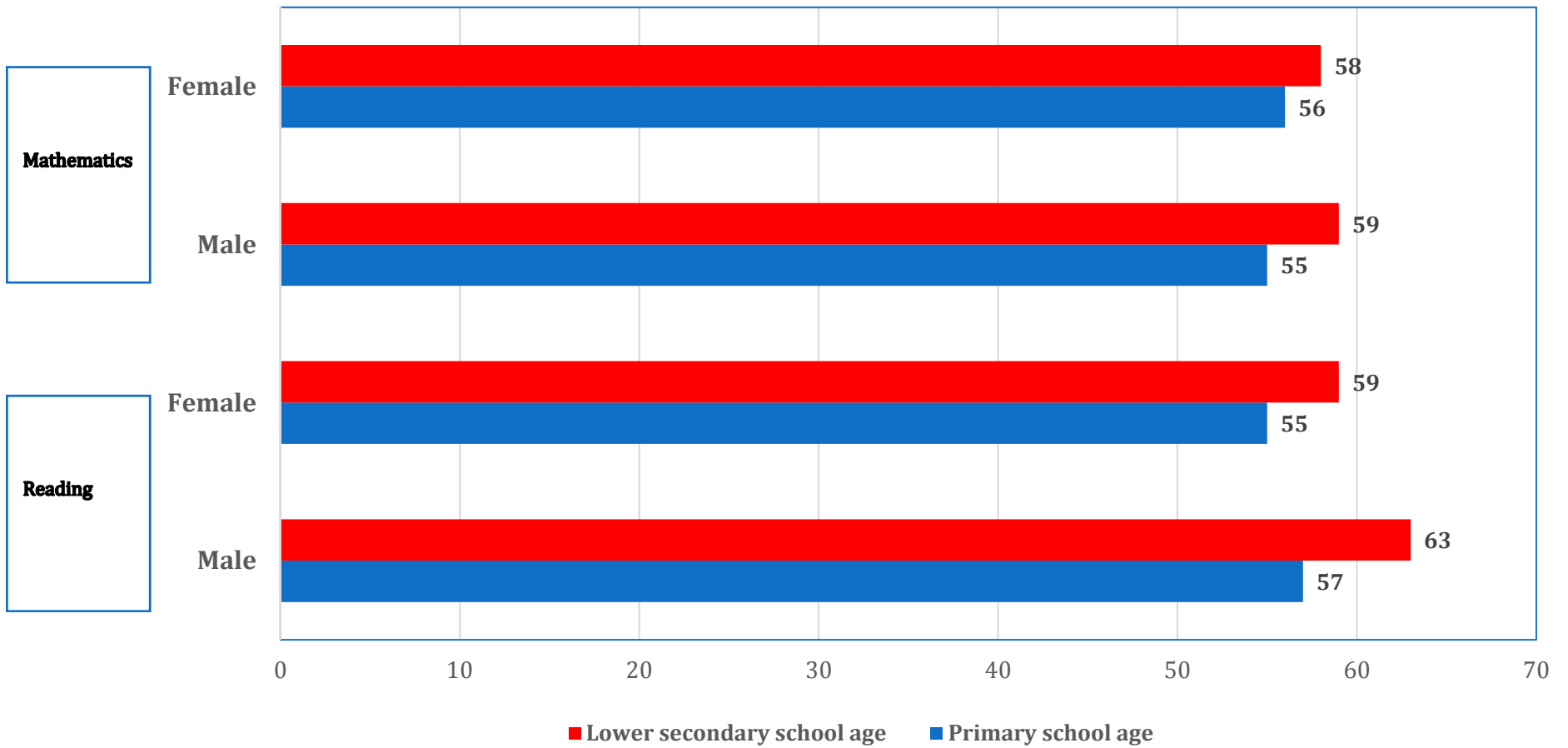
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Sources of Literacy - India	Percentage
Literate without any schooling	0.4
Literate without formal schooling: through NFEC/AIEP/TLC	.1
Others	.2
Literate with formal schooling	99.0

Sources of Literacy- Nepal	Percentage
Formal schooling	92.3
Taught at home	3.4
Govt. literacy course	2.1
NGO literacy course	0.9
Other	1.2

Sources: Nepal: NLSS 2010-11: India: NSSO: 2014

Proportion of children and adolescents **not achieving MPLs** by age group and learning domain

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Mathematics

Female
- 58 (Lower secondary school age)
- 56 (Primary school age)

Male
- 59 (Lower secondary school age)
- 55 (Primary school age)

Reading

Female
- 59 (Lower secondary school age)
- 55 (Primary school age)

Male
- 63 (Lower secondary school age)
- 57 (Primary school age)

■ Lower secondary school age ■ Primary school age

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o In indicator 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 skills and minimum levels of proficiency of youth and adults achieving in digital literacy and numeracy

o Percentage of youth/ adults participating in education and training in the last 12 months, by type of programme (formal and non-formal) and by age group (Started collecting)

o In indicators 4.6.1 is about youth and adults achieving fixed level of proficiency in functional literacy and numeracy

o In indicators 4.7.4. and 4.7.5 is about students showing adequate understanding of issues

- The measurement of "functional literacy"- literacy as a continuum of skills that cannot be fully captured with traditional dichotomous measures of literacy.

- The literacy assessment provides:

  - Robust data on the distribution of reading and numeracy skills within the youth and adult and other required populations

  - High quality comparable information on the level, "proficiency" and distribution of key information processing skills in the adult population

  - Measures "multiple literacies" rather than "literacy" and find if those levels are adequate e. g. digital

  - Need to use a wide array of tasks that reflected the types of materials and demands at different moments in the life long cycle

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Countries participating in cross-national learning assessments, by income level

	Assessment		No assessment
Low-income countries:	■ (red) Assessment		■ (pink) No assessment
Lower-middle-income countries:	■ (orange) Assessment		■ (tan) No assessment
Upper-middle-income countries:	■ (green) Assessment		■ (light green) No assessment
High-income countries:	■ (blue) Assessment		■ (light blue) No assessment
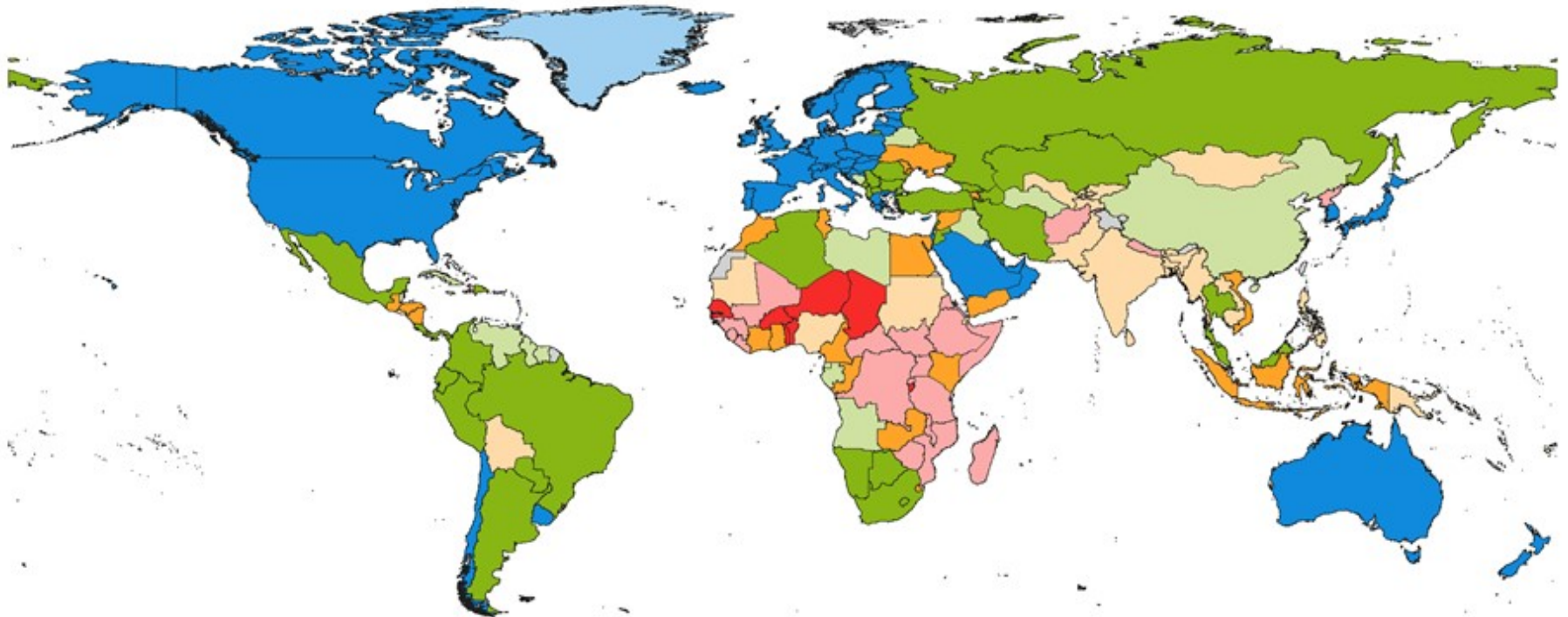
Note: The depiction and use of boundaries and related data shown on this map are not warranted to be error free nor do they necessarily imply official endorsement or acceptance by UNESCO.

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Target 4.6:

By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

Indicator 4.6.1: Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex

Need to clarify on definition:

- ALL youth and A SUBSTANTIAL PROPORTION of adults?

- Age group breakdown: Who is youth? Who is an adult?

    - PIAAC/OECD > youth between 16-24; adult > 16 – 64

    - UNESCO > youth > 15 -24; adult > 15 +

- How is literacy defined?

- How is numeracy defined?

- Minimum proficiency level > moving away from literacy rate % to the proficiency levels in literacy and numeracy

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o Inputs of task forces of GAML and recommendations of TCG will pave the ways to monitor literacy relates indicators at global, regional and national levels

o the approach must provide access to tools and methods informed by international technical expertise to enhance capacity

o How best on-going household survey can be utilized to measure "functional" literacy ?

o What could be the doable (financial, human resources and capacity) options for developing countries to measure functional literacy and use for policy ?

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Opportunities and challenges of measurement and monitoring ALE

Shailendra Sigdel
Statistical Advisor
s.sigdel@unesco.org

Learn more: http://uis.unesco.org/

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