



Global citizenship and adult literacy

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Global citizenship and adult literacy

1. Introduction

This thematic paper examines major trends of the relationship between global citizenship education and adult literacy. It conceptualises both global citizenship and adult literacy from a lifelong learning perspective, analyses global citizenship education (GCED) within the broader framework of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, in particular Target 4.7, and the four pillars of the Delors Report, while emphasising the evolution of literacy into a multidimensional and complex concept and its transformative potential. The integration of content – such as global citizenship topics – and literacy reflects the essence of any literacy teaching and learning approach, as learning to read and to write is always centred on content that should be relevant to adult learners.

After examining available evidence on the contribution of adult literacy programmes to global citizenship education outcomes, this paper identifies current trends in adult literacy policies and programmes on the basis of examples from different world regions. The integration of global citizenship themes into literacy policies and programmes is not new to the field. There is a range of different ways how citizenship themes are linked with literacy policies and programmes, often with the aim of social, civic, economic and cultural empowerment of disadvantaged and marginalised individuals and communities. The paper concludes with some reflections on options that policy-makers, providers and practitioners might consider when taking decisions on, and some guiding principles for, successful integration of global citizenship issues into adult literacy and non-formal education programmes.

2. What do we mean by global citizenship and adult literacy? How are they interrelated?

The idea of (democratic) **citizenship**, entrenched in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), has been – and continues to be – a key element of UNESCO's vision for education. Together with the notions of lifelong learning, responsibility and solidarity, it has been conceptualised in UNESCO's two education flagship reports, the Faure Report published in 1972 (*Learning to Be*) and the Delors Report in 1996 (*Learning: The Treasure*

Within). With the launch of the UN Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) in 2012, fostering global citizenship became one of the three education priorities at the international level (Shultz and Elfert, 2018).

Citizenship learning or education has been termed in different ways such as 'democratic citizenship', 'active citizenship', 'critical citizenship' or most recently 'global citizenship' emphasising specific intentions and approaches of related education programmes. While the notion of **democratic citizenship** stresses the need to equip learners with democratic attitudes and values to enable them as democratic citizens to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities, **active citizenship**¹ highlights the view of citizens as social actors and the notion of 'citizenship agency', defined as 'the state of being in action or exerting power' (Schugurensky, 2005, p. 4). Active citizenship education seeks to foster civic participation at local, national, and global level through the use of methodologies that involve learners actively in their own learning and build the capacity to think critically and creatively. The term 'critical' in **critical citizenship** differentiates the notion of citizenship learning from potentially more conservative approaches² by striving to be transformational. It gives emphasis to the need to challenge prevailing paradigms and raise important questions (Andreotti, 2006; Pashby, 2009; Shultz, 2007).

The overall goal of **global citizenship education** is to empower learners to engage and assume active roles both locally and globally to face and resolve challenges and ultimately to 'become proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world' (UNESCO, 2016c, p. 2). This indicates that, in principle, the new concept of global citizenship embraces the different above mentioned intentions and approaches (i.e. democratic, active, and critical) and adds the global dimension. Globalisation can be understood within a complex and dynamic set of relationships – international, national and local – which creates new patterns of inclusion and exclusion (Shultz, 2007). However, the critical and transformative view of globalisation is not automatically reflected in the global citizenship education. We can observe a **continuum of possible approaches to citizenship in education** from more conservative to more progressive approaches. This draws attention to

¹ The term 'active citizenship' is mainly used in Europe and countries of the 'Global North'. Active citizenship is also presented 'as the radical force necessary to challenge the hegemony of the market and to protect the environmental and social well-being of society' (Shultz, 2007: 250).

² Conservative approaches ('civics' or 'civic education') are focused on the transmission of knowledge about history of the social order and the functioning of democratic institutions. Vanessa Andreotti distinguishes 'soft' from 'critical' approaches to global citizenship education (Andreotti, 2006).

the political dimension of citizenship education as it is 'very much determined by the nature of national political systems, power constellations, and public policy decision-making processes' (Tawil, 2013, p. 3).

While the notion of **global citizenship** has been criticised as being very broad, potentially confusing, ahistorical, unilaterally reflecting 'Western' worldviews and at the level of a metaphor (e.g. Tawil, 2013; Torres and Nunzio, 2015), there have been attempts to define it. For example, as 'a unique set of cross-cutting knowledge, skills and competences that enables an individual to act collaboratively and responsibly, to find global solutions to global challenges, and to strive for the collective good' (Keevy and Chakroun, 2015, p. 149). In recognition that global citizenship does not entail a legal status, UNESCO describes it as 'a common sense of humanity' or 'a sense of belonging to a global community' (UNESCO, 2016c, p. 2). In addition, global citizenship 'emphasises political, economic, social and cultural interdependency and interconnectedness between the local, the national and the global' (UNESCO, 2015, p. 14).

In the context of a conceptual framework that was proposed by Sobhi Tawil for UNESCO's 'Education for Global Citizenship', 'citizenship education' is understood as 'an area of teaching and learning, both formal and non-formal, for children, youth and adults, which is centred on the social, civic and political education that is considered to be an essential part of the formation of citizenship in any given context' (Tawil, 2013, p. 3). In his critical analysis of existing discourse and practice of global citizenship education, Tawil concludes that it is 'nothing more than an adaptation and enrichment of local and national citizenship education programs, whatever their approach, to the context of the intensified globalisation' (ibid., p. 6). Indeed, the interest in global citizenship seems to result from an increased attention to the global dimensions of recent changes and challenges as well as a trend in the international education discourse to focus more on content, relevance and assessment of education, socio-emotional skills, and competencies for employment and learning to live together (UNESCO, 2016c, p. 2).

In the meantime, a number of guidelines, tools, policy briefs and reports have been published by UNESCO (and others) (e.g. UNESCO, 2014a, 2015, 2016a, b, c; 2018a, b, c, d) to further clarify the global citizenship education (GCED) concept, themes and how it should be

implemented, although none of these has a particular focus on adult literacy or education.³ For example, UNESCO proposes that global citizenship education should be transformative, building the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that learners need to be able to contribute to a more inclusive, just and peaceful world. Global citizenship education should take ‘a multifaceted approach, employing concepts and methodologies already applied in other areas, including human rights education, peace education, education for sustainable development and education for international understanding’ and advance their common objectives. Global citizenship education should apply a lifelong learning perspective, beginning from early childhood and continuing through all levels of education and into adulthood, requiring both ‘formal and informal approaches, curricular and extracurricular interventions, and conventional and unconventional pathways to participation’ (UNESCO, 2015, p.15; UNESCO, 2014a).

The following key focus areas have been suggested to be considered in GCED: a sense of belongingness to common humanity; respect for diversity; a deep knowledge of global issues and universal values such as justice, equality, dignity and respect; global empathy, and a sense of solidarity; and behavioural capacities to act collaboratively and responsibly to find global solutions to global challenges, and to strive for the collective good (Keevy and Chakroun, 2015). Global citizenship education is based on the three domains of learning – namely, the cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural. These correspond to the four pillars of learning described in the Delors report ‘*Learning: The Treasure Within*’: *Learning to know, to do, to be and to live together* (UNESCO, 2015, p. 22). UNESCO proposes nine topic areas for GCED (see *Table 1*), which are clustered into the three domains and strive for the following key learning outcomes: informed and critically literate, socially connected and respectful of diversity, and ethically responsible and engaged (ibid. 25).

With the adoption of the SDGs and the Education 2030 Agenda (2015), GCED has been given new impetus. In particular, **SDG Target 4.7** highlights the importance of global citizenship education (GCED), that, together with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) should promote lasting, informed and value-based changes in the knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviour of children, young people and adults: ‘By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire

³ However, in some of these publications there is mention of the ‘great potential’ of non-formal adult literacy and education to boost the practice of citizenship education: it can play an important role in contributing to gender equality, which is one of the two overarching priorities of UNESCO, and the development of ‘life skills’ and intercultural/ multicultural competence (UNESCO, 2014a).

the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development' (WEF, 2016, p. 48). The global indicator (4.7.1) established for Target 4.7 measures the extent to which GCED and ESD, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed in national education policies, curricula, teacher education and, student assessments (UIS and GEMR, 2019, p. 15).

More than any other education target, SDG 4.7 links to the humanistic purposes of education, and their reflection in policies, programmes, curricular contents and teacher preparation. It also emphasises the important role of culture and the (inter-)cultural dimensions of education for peace, social cohesion and sustainable development. Lifelong learning, as a global educational paradigm and the overall guiding principle of SDG 4, also stands for the humanistic purpose of SDG Target 4.7, which is embraced by GCED.

SDG Target 4.7 has brought together GCED and ESD, which, in principle, pursue the same vision: to empower learners of all ages to become proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and sustainable world. The intention of both GCED and ESD is to help learners understand the interconnected world in which they live and the complexities of the global challenges faced, and develop their knowledge, skills, attitudes and values so that they can address these challenges responsibly and effectively now and in the future (UNESCO, 2016).

Effective implementation of GCED and ESD demand, therefore, teaching and learning approaches that foster a range of social and emotional skills, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. In the context of adult literacy and non-formal education programmes, such 'soft skills' are often subsumed under the term '*life skills*'.

The *UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education*, which was adopted 2015 in support of the Education 2030 Framework for Action and defines adult learning and education as a 'core component of lifelong learning', highlights '**learning for active citizenship**' as one of the three key domains of adult learning and education. This is achieved through 'what is variously known as community, popular or liberal education'. Learning opportunities for active citizenship are expected to empower adult learners 'to actively

engage with social issues such as poverty, gender, intergenerational solidarity, social mobility, justice, equity, exclusion, violence, unemployment, environmental protection and climate change’ (UNESCO and UIL, 2016, p. 7).

In a more recent publication (UNESCO, 2018c),⁴ UNESCO identifies a number of ‘unsolved tensions and misunderstandings’ within GCED: the ‘global versus local’ (unclear how local actions connect to global change); the targeting of the individual versus addressing the political and social context (unclear how macro-social, structural or political context that shape individual’s rights can be changed); the relevance of GCED in challenging environments (i.e. resource-poor, conflict-affected, remote and underprivileged contexts); and its being an aspirational goal with implementation challenges (mainly related to challenges for teachers to adopt new pedagogical approaches). In consequence, UNESCO proposes a renewed understanding of GCED by putting ‘Learning to live together’ at the core of its vision and contextualising and building it more in a local and country context. In addition, it proposes to focus on the development of the following skills: constructive civic and political engagement; self-awareness and emotional intelligence; critical inquiry; and skills for digital citizenship.⁵ It further aims to make a difference for marginalised populations; targeting those in a position to decide; redesigning teacher development; and expanding and diversifying partnerships (ibid., pp. 7–9). This renewed understanding is concentrating on marginalised and adult populations as well as addressing the fact that existing diversity of contexts and learning needs have to be addressed by a multiplicity of modalities in spaces that go far beyond formal schooling.

Table 1: Comparative analysis of learning domains and topics of the four pillars of the Delors Report, the GCED, and SDG 4.7

Delors Report		GCED	SDG 4.7
<i>Four pillars</i>	<i>Domains/ core conceptual dimensions</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Topics</i>
Learning to know	<i>Cognitive:</i>	1. Local, national and global systems and structures	Human rights

⁴ Resulting from a consultation seminar on ‘Nationalistic perspectives and their implications for GCED’, organised by UNESCO, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, and the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU), held in June 2017 in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

⁵ Digital citizenship is appropriate, critical and responsible behaviour when using digital technology including social media, online forums, and other device features.

	To acquire knowledge, understanding and critical thinking about global, regional, national and local issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations.	2. Issues affecting interaction and connectedness of communities at local, national and global levels	Gender equality Global citizenship
Learning to learn		3. Underlying assumptions and power dynamics	
Learning to live together	<i>Socio-emotional:</i> To have a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity.	4. Different levels of identity 5. Different communities' people belong to and how these are connected 6. Difference and respect for diversity	Culture of peace and non-violence Appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
Learning to do	<i>Behavioural:</i> To act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world.	7. Actions that can be taken individually and collectively 8. Ethically responsible behaviour 9. Getting engaged and taking action	Education for sustainable development and lifestyles

Elaboration on the basis of the following sources: Delors et al., 1996; UNESCO, 2015, p. 15; WEF, 2016, p. 48

The *UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education*, defines **literacy** as a 'key component of adult learning and education. It involves a continuum of learning and proficiency levels which allows citizens to engage in lifelong learning and participate fully in community, workplace and wider society. It includes the ability to read and write, to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials, as well as the ability to solve problems in an increasingly technological and information-rich environment. Literacy is an essential means of building people's knowledge, skills and competencies to cope with the evolving challenges and complexities of life, culture, economy and society' (UNESCO and UIL, 2016, p. 7).

When unpacking this definition, the following key features can be identified: Literacy is related to written language, it is a means of communication and of participation in society; it includes problem-solving in environments which are increasingly shaped by ICTs; and it involves a learning continuum comprising different proficiency levels.

While, in a nutshell, literacy refers to a set of skills and practices comprising reading, writing and using numbers as mediated by written materials, we have to take notice of the fact that literacy has evolved into a **multidimensional** and **complex** concept. This has occurred in tandem with new social and pedagogical theories, as well as with technological and other developments, characteristic of the increasingly complex and globalised societies of the twenty-first century. While acknowledging the '**plurality**' of literacy and literacy practices, there is a need to use terminology which is clear and intelligible to everybody. This involves avoiding the metaphorical use of the term (e.g. media literacy, civic literacy, critical literacy, computer literacy, financial literacy, health literacy, etc.) to designate competency or skills in senses other than those directly concerned with written text (UIL, 2017).⁶

The acquisition of literacy does not only involve knowledge (e.g. of the alphabet, script, and language) and skills (e.g. reading fluency and comprehension), but touches also on attitudes, dispositions and motivation (e.g. confident and self-sufficient learners are more likely to use their literacy skills broadly) as well as on values (e.g. to critically assess the purpose of a message or to responsibly use the social media to interact with different audiences) (Hanemann, 2018). Therefore, literacy is best understood as a **competency** (that is more than a 'skill'): 'the (cap)ability of putting knowledge, skills, attitudes and values effectively into action when dealing with (handwritten, printed or digital) text in the context of ever-changing demands' (UIL, 2017, p. 2). Examples of how literacy competencies can be operationalised according to the four 'Delors pillars' are provided in the below Table 2. Literacy acquisition involves learning the code ('the alphabet'), making meaning and thinking critically. It is about linking spoken language with written language (text), decoding and encoding written forms of language, developing (phonological) awareness of sounds and words, and learning about and applying conventions of written language. Meaning making is only possible if this process is developed in a language that the learner masters and understands. In reading, critical thinking means thinking beyond a literal level by analysing meanings, responding to (different types of) texts critically, and reflecting on texts and on

⁶ Two examples of how a metaphorical use of the term 'literacy' can create confusion: (1) The youth-oriented Naturally Young Ecological Literacy Project (Turkey), which aims at environmental awareness and attitudinal change to behave in 'a more eco-friendly manner' (DVV, 2015, pp. 38–41) includes 'literacy' in their title but does not focus on the development of literacy competencies. (2) Çakmak et al., 2017 analyse the interrelationships between 'global literacy' and 'global citizenship', which again has nothing to do with literacy: 'Global literacy could be defined as having global knowledge, global awareness and the ability to grasp global events' (ibid.).

one's own reading. This does not only require to continuously developing higher levels of literacy proficiency but also demands advanced levels of language proficiency.

Understanding these **complex interrelationships between literacy, language and learning** (Hanemann, 2015b) is a prerequisite for designing and implementing meaningful learning activities that are focused on global citizenship topics.

Accessing, analysing and communicating information takes now place largely through the use of the Internet and digital devices and applications, such as personal computers, tablets, and smartphones. The increasing importance of **digital skills or competencies** (i.e. problem solving in technology-rich environments⁷) has added another dimension to the complexity of literacy. It has to be addressed within the dynamics of the multifaceted interrelationship of 'key information-processing competencies' (i.e. literacy, numeracy, language and problem solving in technology-rich environments) that are relevant to adults in many twenty-first-century contexts and necessary to fully participate in social, economic, cultural and civic life. The overall goal of the SDGs, 'to transform our world', has also to be applied to the field of adult literacy. This involves understanding literacy as a **social practice**⁸ ('literacy is an action taken by actors'⁹) and **activating its transformative potential** ('literacy is a capability for change'¹⁰). However, literacy can only unfold its full potential to 'transform our world' if it is approached from a **lifelong learning perspective** (Hanemann, 2015b).¹¹ Conceptualising literacy and numeracy from a lifelong learning perspective involves: understanding literacy as a continuous learning process which takes place across all ages and generations; embedding literacy (and numeracy) in or combining it with the development of other skills

⁷ 'Problem solving in technology-rich environments is defined as the ability to use digital technology, communication tools and networks to acquire and evaluate information, communicate with others and perform practical tasks' (OECD, 2013: 59).

⁸ The social practice approach to literacy (Barton, 2007, Barton et al., 2000, Hamilton and Hillier, 2006, Street, 1995 and 2005) looks at literacy as situated social practices and events that are embedded in collective action and specific contexts.

⁹ Lesley Bartlett stresses that literacy is more like a verb than a noun (Post, 2016: 755).

¹⁰ Ralf St Clair highlights the broader possible impacts of literacy to affect also social, political, psychological, health and family outcomes, in addition to economic ones (Post, 2016: 758).

¹¹ Ulrike Hanemann developed an analytical framework for 'lifelong literacy' to examine current trends in literacy within a lifelong learning perspective. This framework comprises three dimensions that are closely interrelated: (1) literacy as a lifelong learning process; (2) literacy as a life-wide process; and (3) literacy as part of a set of holistic, sector-wide and cross-sectoral reforms towards lifelong learning systems (Hanemann, 2015b).

and integrating it into other development activities; and ensuring that literacy is part of national or sub-national development strategies (ibid.).

Literacy programmes have to consider different proficiency levels in reading and writing. A contemporary understanding of literacy does not admit anymore a simple dichotomy of classifying a person as either 'illiterate' or 'literate'. These are just two opposite ends of a **continuum of proficiency levels**. The definition of a minimum level to be reached by all citizens of a country depends on specific contexts and purposes and must be established at policy level¹² (Hanemann, 2018).

Furthermore, two major stages should be distinguished in the process of an adult becoming an independent reader and learner. These are learning to read; and reading to learn. These two stages are combined through two learning spirals which are organised around a chosen subject matter or theme and are part of a 'system of literacy instruction' (Singh, 1976). This means that, while 'learning to read' is initially at the centre of an adult literacy course, the focus increasingly moves towards 'reading to learn'. This also means that **teaching and learning literacy is always around content**. Such content ranges from reflection- and discussion-generating words to complex texts about themes that are relevant for learners.¹³ Therefore, the integration of content or a 'subject matter' – such as global citizenship topics – and literacy reflects the essence of any literacy teaching and learning approach.

When analysing adult literacy programmes from around the world (refer to UNESCO's Effective Literacy and Numeracy Practices Database¹⁴), one has to conclude that none of the programmes is purely restricted to the development of literacy (and numeracy) skills. While the development of literacy and numeracy is one of the aims, such programmes typically pursue a multiplicity of objectives and address a broad range of learning contents. Even more, in a number of adult learning programmes literacy development is not flagged as the key purpose but rather '**embedded**' in another main goal or several objectives (for example,

¹² The Education 2030 Framework for Action recommends the completion of basic education as the minimum requirement for full participation in society, employability and access to further learning and training, and the literacy target 4.6 foresees the achievement of 'relevant and recognised proficiency levels in functional literacy and numeracy skills that are equivalent to levels achieved at successful completion of basic education' (WEF, 2016: 47).

¹³ For completely 'illiterate' persons such contents can be even represented through pictures to stimulate debate.

¹⁴ LitBase: <http://uil.unesco.org/literacy/effective-practices-database-litbase>

to culturally and linguistically empower an ethnic minority,¹⁵ or coping with natural disasters¹⁶). Therefore, it is important to take note of the huge **diversity** of adult education programmes involving literacy and numeracy components: these can be rather formal (i.e. equivalency programmes leading to recognised primary and secondary school certificates) or non-formal, of shorter or longer duration, focus on the development of basic or advanced proficiency levels, and be rather oriented towards general, vocational and/or ‘life skills’ themes. All of these programmes are, in principle, able to address global citizenship and SDG 4.7 themes.

While the social practice approach of literacy defines reading and writing as situated, social practices relevant at the local level, it is equally important to use literacy to **connect people in local contexts with a much wider world**. In this regard, Brandt and Clinton (2002, p. 337) argue that ‘understanding what literacy is doing with people in a setting is as important as understanding what people are doing with literacy’. In other words, as people become ‘more literate’, they become able to engage in different ways with the world beyond their own village and community. Such process reflects the goal of global citizenship education, namely, ‘to empower learners to engage and assume active roles both locally and globally to face and resolve global challenges’ (UNESCO, 2016c, p. 2).

In synthesis, there are **many ways** in which global citizenship and adult literacy are interrelated or rather connectable with each other. A prerequisite to make effective use of such linkages is a good understanding of both the intentions of global citizenship education – as well as of SDG Target 4.7. – and the involved dimensions, complexities and pluralities of literacy. This points to the need to professionalise the field of adult literacy and citizenship education by adequately investing in training, professional development, supervision, monitoring and evaluation, and research to ensure the quality of the service and its outcomes.

¹⁵ <http://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/wananga-embedded-literacy-new-zealand>

¹⁶ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/literacy-21st-century-promoting-innovative>

3. The contribution of adult literacy programmes to global citizenship education outcomes

While there is a general belief that adults with high proficiency levels in literacy and numeracy (i.e. high education levels) demonstrate better knowledge of global citizenship¹⁷ values and principles, there is little empirical evidence of a direct causal correlation. Yet, recent research supports such an assumption, even if it takes a rather limited and linear approach. For example, in most **OECD countries** participating in the PIAAC survey, higher literacy skills levels were associated with independent positive effects on such outcomes as adults' willingness to engage in the political process, political efficacy, trust and good health (Post, 2016, p. 761). An analysis of OECD PIAAC data for adults with low proficiency in literacy and numeracy addressed their employment and training situation¹⁸ (Grotlüschen et al., 2016). The **German** 2018 'LEO' survey data for adults at the lowest literacy level (1) were analysed with regard to their political practices and competences¹⁹ (University of Hamburg, 2019). These are some of the rare examples of attempts to establish associations between literacy levels and global citizenship outcomes.

Another example is an analysis which combined information on state assembly elections between 1980 and 2007 with information on literacy 'rates' across 287 districts in **India**. It aimed to show the relationship between women's political participation and women's literacy (defined in the traditional binary way of being either 'literate' or 'illiterate'). The analysis confirms that narrowing the gender literacy gap raises women's participation and competitiveness in politics. Average literacy over the period was 34 per cent for women and

¹⁷ In this section, which focuses on the impact of adult literacy programmes on citizenship education outcomes, no clear distinction is made between citizenship, active citizenship and global citizenship, as the global dimension of citizenship education has been added only recently, and the examples are from different periods and contexts.

¹⁸ Adults with low proficiency in literacy or numeracy are more likely than the rest of the adult population to have not completed upper secondary level education, to have been born in a country other than the country in which they took the test, to be of older age and to be unemployed. However, while they are more likely than the rest of the adult population to show these characteristics, the majority of them do not. Indeed, 65 per cent of the adults with low proficiency in literacy or numeracy completed upper secondary (and 9 per cent completed tertiary); 62 per cent were born in the country in which they took the test, and 56 per cent are in employment (Grotlüschen et al., 2016: 9).

¹⁹ The results can be summarised as follows: (1) adults with low levels of literacy are to a lesser extent politically active than the general population; (2) however, they are not uninformed or generally uninterested; (3) but they are less involved (also via social media) in everyday political life (University of Hamburg, 2019).

55 per cent for men. The authors estimated that raising the female literacy rate to 42 per cent would increase the share of female candidates by 16 per cent, the share of votes obtained by women candidates by 13 per cent and female voter turnout by 4 per cent (Bhalotra et al., 2013; UNESCO, 2014b, p. 175).

Furthermore, improving male literacy also has a positive impact on women's political participation. The authors believe that this is perhaps the case because literate men are more likely to vote for women candidates and, as party leaders, to field women candidates (ibid.). Raising women's participation in politics is vital not only to achieve gender equality but also because evidence shows that women politicians tend to be both less corrupt and more proactive in representing the interests of children's well-being. Further, other research (Beaman et al. 2012) in India shows that the institutionalisation of women's participation in politics results in aspirations for, and investments in, girls' education increasing and thereby breaking the intergenerational cycle of reproducing gender inequalities. Thus, the authors conclude that investing in (women's) adult literacy and education improves democratic governance by stimulating increases in women's political engagement. They suppose that the long-run impacts are likely to be larger than traditionally estimated (Bhalotra et al., 2013).

However, given the overall purpose of this paper, it is rather the contribution of adult literacy *programmes* and *interventions* to global citizenship outcomes that should come into focus. Yet, there is not much systematic research on the direct impact of adult literacy programmes on global citizenship education outcomes. Most impact studies on global citizenship education outcomes focus either on formal education, or more generally on adult learning and education, and at times explicitly 'beyond the 3Rs or literacy' (e.g. Brookings Centre for Universal Education and Youth Advocacy Group, 2017; UIL, 2013 and 2016b; UNESCO 2018a). Also when reviewing information on the impact and results of large-scale campaigns and programmes in general, it becomes clear that statistical data on literacy is weak in many countries (Hanemann, 2015a, p. 48).

Little attention seems to have been devoted to examine the causal effects of adult literacy programmes on citizenship-related factors such as political engagement, social cohesion, diversity tolerance, conflict prevention and resolution, peace-building or other issues.

Existing studies focus mainly on women and on the impact of literacy upon the individual: little research has examined the impact at the family/household, community, national or

even international level. Some effects of literacy, for example those on culture, identity and social cohesion are intrinsically difficult to define and measure. Usually, there are no attempts to assess how long effects last after programmes end.

Nevertheless, there are bits and pieces of evidence that indicate that there is positive correlation between literacy learning and global citizenship outcomes. For example, the UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006 on literacy provides some evidence on personal ('human') benefits such as the improved self-esteem, empowerment, creativity and critical reflection that participation in adult literacy programmes and the practice of literacy may produce (UNESCO, 2005, p. 138/139). The same report provides examples of political, cultural, social and economic benefits, 'especially when empowerment is at the core of programme design' (ibid., pp. 139–145).

The second and third UNESCO Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE 2 and 3) also offer some evidence on the personal, community and societal outcomes of adult literacy programmes (UIL, 2013 and 2016b). Among countries responding to the GRALE 3 survey, about two-thirds responded that literacy programmes help develop democratic values, peaceful coexistence and community solidarity (UIL, 2016b, p. 110). Almost three-quarters of the countries that responded said that literacy programmes make a large contribution to active citizenship and community participation (ibid., p. 111). However, typically those responses were not supported by empirical evidence.

An evaluation of adult literacy and numeracy programmes implemented in the **United Kingdom** in the context of the *Skills for Life* strategy (2001–2010) found statistically significant evidence that participating in those programmes and retaining literacy competencies have a positive personal and social impact on individuals and communities (Vorhaus et al., 2011). A survey of 1,200 beneficiaries from 2000 to 2005 in **Ghana** showed that the national literacy programme has reinforced public health campaigns and had a positive impact on healthy lifestyles (ODI/DFID, 2006). Literacy programmes that respect **linguistic diversity** and the mother tongue of the participants were reported to help strengthening communal identities and collective histories (Alidou and Glanz, 2015).

Evidence on the impact of **family literacy** programmes shows that they prepare care-givers to succeed as parents and employees, enhance bonds between parents and children, strengthen connections between families, schools and other institutions, and revitalise

neighbourhood networks, leading to social cohesion and stronger communities (Family Strengthening Policy Centre, 2007; UIL, 2017b).

There is much anecdotal evidence of the impact of literacy programmes on **women's empowerment**. Researchers have been concerned to find statistical evidence that there are positive connections between female literacy and health indicators such as decreased child mortality and fertility rates. The assumption that non-literate women cannot participate fully in society, and an instrumental approach to women's literacy (narrowly focusing on women's reproductive role) as 'the key to development' has been criticised (Robinson-Pant, 2008). In the context of literacy, the notion of empowerment has been related to 'the set of feelings, knowledge, and skills that produce the ability to participate in one's social environment and affect the political system' (Stromquist, 2009, p. 2). This ability comprises cognitive, economic, political and psychological dimensions. Research evidence (e.g. Infante, 2000; Prins, 2008) supports a correlation between literacy and empowerment. However, according to Stromquist, literacy most commonly leads to psychological empowerment, while the cognitive, political and economic dimensions of empowerment are less likely to emerge (Stromquist, 2009, p. 10).

Field research on the contribution of a non-formal adult literacy programme (NFALP) to women's empowerment in **Timor Leste** found that rural women did experience empowerment through their participation in the NFALP, the most common empowerment dimension experienced being its personal or psychological dimension (Kotsapas, 2011). A study on the impact of a functional adult literacy programme on the empowerment of women in **Turkey** indicates that the programme contributed to women's social integration, positive self-concept, and family cohesion, in addition to cognitive gains. Sustained social benefits were observed over time through a second study, though no change was found in possible employment outcomes (Kagıtcıbası et al., 2011), which confirms the findings of Stromquist (2009) mentioned above.

An example of ethnographic research conducted in **Nepal** shows that literacy programmes may also cause unintended political effects, contributing to civil unrest by providing a forum for people to criticise the dominant political structures. While the term 'political benefits' of literacy is usually related to 'government-intended' citizenship education outcomes, the case of Nepal suggests that literacy interventions may also result in unintended political

consequences. As a result, a number of young women in particular joined the Maoist cadres during the civil war in Nepal (Robinson-Pant, 2010).

There are many examples of linkages between ***social-political movements*** and ***literacy campaigns*** (Hanemann, 2015a). In his historical analysis and with contemporary examples Boughton (2016) demonstrates that, in the right context, mass literacy campaigns can be transformative through social movement learning. This is supported by the Freirean vision of popular education (or ‘critical pedagogy’), in which mass literacy campaigns are an integral part of a broader struggle for human liberation (Freire and Macedo, 1987).

A recent study on the contribution of two major adult literacy campaigns implemented in ***South Africa*** – the South African Literacy Initiative and the Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign – illustrates the way in which literacy interventions can contribute to the enhancement of the quality of life of vulnerable communities. The social assets and the web of interconnections emerging from the social movement context of the literacy campaigns provided a network of agency and resilience to the desperation of poor communities in rural South Africa. Based on learner feedback reflecting on the outcomes of their participation in the campaign, evidence shows the critical role the literacy interventions played in fostering community cohesion and peaceful coexistence. Bringing people with common problems together in literacy learning groups, enabled them to collectively develop strategies to address the challenges. The process of becoming literate enhanced learners’ confidence and thereby their social and political participation (McKay, 2019).

4. Global citizenship education in adult literacy: Current trends in policies and programmes

Indeed, (active or global) citizenship and SDG 4.7 themes have a long-standing tradition in adult literacy policies and programmes: their intentions, goals and themes are reflected in many adult literacy policies, strategies, campaigns and programmes of the past and present. In particular, literacy programme providers from civil society, though occasionally also from governments, have long included these themes in their curricula, learning materials and teacher training activities. However, they have not done so under the label ‘Global Citizenship Education’.

As these literacy policies and programmes mainly target vulnerable and disadvantaged population groups who have been excluded from educational (and other) opportunities, they often adopt a vision of social transformation and redressing social injustice. They seek to combine different dimensions of sustainable development including social equality, economic empowerment and environmental sustainability. As, in many countries, most of the literacy programmes are targeted at (young) women, the issue of gender equality and women's empowerment is a central concern of such policies and programmes. The policies and programmes that take a lifelong (and life-wide) learning approach seek to integrate literacy (as a complex and continuous process) with other (development) activities, including those focused on health, employment, active citizenship and family and community relationships.

Emancipatory and transformative approaches to adult literacy call for a particular emphasis on global citizenship and SDG 4.7 themes in their curricula and learning materials. Raising awareness ('conscientisation') and encouraging learners to critically analyse, understand and transform their realities through 'generative' words and themes is the purpose of the popular education (*'educación popular'*) movement in Latin America, which has its counterparts in other world regions. Advocates of the 'critical pedagogy' movement (e.g. Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren) stress the political dimension of education and place great stress on critical consciousness, emancipation, liberation, social justice and political action. Themes such as human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, active citizenship and cultural diversity have long been at the centre of such emancipatory adult literacy programmes.

Empowerment and transformative approaches to adult literacy are not only applied by civil society organisations. Governmental adult literacy programmes, in particular campaigns, have also used such social transformation approaches. For example, in the 1980s, a literacy campaign in Ecuador adopted human rights as the thematic axis of learning content. The literacy campaign in Nicaragua, which emerged out of the context of a war of liberation from 40 years of dictatorship, had a strong focus on social-political goals (i.e. political awareness, understanding between Nicaraguans of different classes and backgrounds, social cohesion), not only for learners. One of the most important results of the campaign was the interaction between urban and rural populations. Living together with the rural population had a deep impact on young volunteers (literacy workers) and allowed them to gain new insights into

the socio-economic and cultural realities of their country. This political consciousness affected the development of an entire generation (Hanemann, 2005a).

How are global citizenship education themes linked to or integrated in adult literacy policies and programmes? In the following sections we will examine examples of policies and programmes from all world regions that have succeeded in the integration of global citizenship and SDG 4.7 themes into adult literacy programmes. Most of the adult literacy policies and programmes address more than one objective and cover several of the four ‘Delors pillars’, global citizenship topics or SDG 4.7 themes (see *Table 1*).

For example, the *National Literacy Strategy* of Morocco includes sets of educational, civic, social, health-related (‘hygienic’) and economic objectives (Royaume du Maroc, 2004). The *Functional Literacy Programme of the Argan Cooperative*,²⁰ run by the Moroccan Association Ibn Albaytr, is an example of a literacy programme that shows how economic empowerment can be combined with environmental sustainability while supporting women’s empowerment, too. It aims to promote a balanced relationship between people and nature. The argan tree serves as a buffer against the Sahara desert but is also a source of oil used in cooking, the cosmetics industry and traditional medicine. The programme is delivered in Amazigh, a Berber language, and combines teaching the practical skills of managing cooperatives with awareness-raising about the importance of preserving the argan forest and information about new family laws (i.e. gender equality) (Hanemann, 2015c). Despite this multidimensionality in the vast majority of adult literacy policies and programmes, for the purpose of a better overview on current trends the analysis of the following examples of literacy policies and programmes is structured around a few major thematic areas.

4.1. Literacy policies and programmes with a focus on women to reduce gender disparities

After announcing that literacy would be its key programme instrument for emancipation and empowerment of women, in 2009 the Government of **India** launched the *Saakshar Bharat Centrally Sponsored Scheme* of the Department of School Education and Literacy (DSEL) and Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), with a particular focus on women’s

²⁰ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/functional-literacy-programme-women-argan>

literacy (Government of India, 2009; Hanemann, 2015a). The national literacy strategies of **Mozambique** (Republic of Mozambique, 2011) and **Afghanistan** (Ministry of Education/ Literacy Department Afghanistan, 2013) also pay special attention to women and girls. Women's literacy is closely linked to women's empowerment, for decades a declared objective of many adult literacy programmes. Women's empowerment should be organised as a participatory process that is transformative in nature and challenging to existing power structures. Mainstreaming gender into adult literacy involves taking into account the processes, outcomes and impacts of the whole programme cycle and needs to be informed by an understanding of existing gender awareness, identities, roles and relationships, as well as the possibilities of transforming these in or as a result of such learning processes (Hanemann, 2015e).

Often literacy programmes targeting women take a functional approach, linking literacy learning with income generating activities in ways that are directly responsive to local needs and potentials. The *Integrated Women's Empowerment Programme*²¹ in **Ethiopia**, for example, combines literacy education with non-formal vocational skills training and entrepreneurial or business training and support, which helps adult women in rural areas to improve their livelihoods. The *Gender Justice for Marginalised Women Programme*,²² in **Indonesia**, is an integrated programme which offers opportunities for basic literacy and life skills training, including health education. Most importantly, it also offers training in reproductive health, childcare, psychological support and other care services to marginalised women in urban slums and rural communities. The main objective of the *Literacy, Training and Employment for Women Programme*²³ of the **Algerian** Literacy Association (IQRAA) is to encourage women and girls to acquire literacy skills and professional qualifications, and thus achieve rapid social and economic integration.

Khabar Lahariya (New Waves), implemented by the NGO Nirantar in India, is a remarkable programme which links literacy with the production of a contextually relevant and gender-sensitive low-cost weekly rural newspaper. Participating women have learned skills in news gathering and production, creating a pool of community-based female journalists who

²¹ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/integrated-womens-empowerment-programme-iwep>

²² Hanemann, 2015e: 75/76

²³ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/literacy-training-and-employment-women-algeria>

produce and disseminate essential news about their communities. The achievements of this programme include an enhanced culture of reading within communities, increased civic awareness, gender empowerment and the generation of employment and income. Given the predominantly traditional context, this programme has also encountered severe challenges in engaging and retaining learners and in encouraging trained women to move around their communities collecting news and information. In order to address some of these context-related challenges, Nirantar set up Sahajani Shiksha Kendra – the Literacy and Education for Women’s Empowerment Programme – focused on rural women’s and adolescent girls’ empowerment through village-level and residential literacy camps. The programme’s outreach activities target women from marginalized communities such as Dalits and Adivasis.

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4.2. Literacy policies and programmes with a focus on community empowerment

The overall objective of the *National Action Plan for Adult Literacy (NAPAL)* for **Uganda** – titled ‘Deepening Adult Literacy for Socio-economic Transformation’ – is to ‘empower communities to access information and effectively participate in development process’

²⁴ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/khabar-lahariya-news-waves-india>

(Republic of Uganda, 2011, p. 11). Interestingly, NAPAL takes a clear result-based approach by using a 'Global impact monitoring Model' to monitor and evaluate the extent to which the plan has produced changes in the lives of the participants of the literacy courses and their communities. It considers four dimensions of change: (1) changes in the lives of learners and their communities; (2) changes in policies and practices affecting learners' lives; (3) changes in learners' participation and active citizenship; and (4) changes in civil society and communities' capacity to support adult literacy (ibid., p. 24).

The *General Norms for the Alternative and Special Education Subsystem* of the **Bolivian** Ministry of Education has established that adult literacy programmes have to be linked to productive socio-communal activities (*Actividades Sociocomunitarias Productivas*). Such socio-communal learning activities include living together with the community and Mother Earth, awareness processes to promote educational inclusion, sessions to analyse and discuss the current situation, visits to and practical training in production centres, exchange of experiences, productive initiatives, socio-community educational fairs, reading events; all activities linked to practice and theory according to the characteristics and conditions of the regions where the literacy centres are located (Ministerio de Educación, 2016, p. 33).

In Asia and Africa, community-based literacy programmes geared towards sustainable rural development are quite common. The *Nepalese Community Learning Centres Programme*²⁵ of the governmental Non-Formal Education Centre (NFEC) is such an example. In addition to literacy, it provides livelihood skills training and support to establish income generating projects, and promote health and civic education, and knowledge of environmental management and conservation.

The *Palestine Early Childhood, Family and Community Education Programme*²⁶ encourages parents, predominantly mothers, to take an active role in the education of their children. The intergenerational and community-based approach of the programme aims to promote community empowerment through lifelong learning. The different sub-programmes reflect the programme's strong focus on women. These include the Mother to Mother Programme, the Learn to Play Programme, the Young Women Empowerment and Prevention of Early Marriage Programme, and the Combating Domestic Violence Programme.

²⁵ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/community-learning-centres-nepal>

²⁶ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/early-childhood-family-and-community-education>

The empowerment of women and adolescent girls is at the heart of the *Tostan Community Empowerment Programme's*²⁷ activities in **Senegal**. The programme works with the whole community so that the women can actively participate in and lead community activities. Particular attention is paid to mobilising people to promote positive social change, often resulting in the elimination of social norms and practices that harm women. One of the important lessons of the programme is that trying to force change through coercive action and condemnation can be counterproductive as it can cause people to become defensive and, thus, more likely to cling to their traditional beliefs. Tostan shows that a programme that is participatory and works from the bottom up can succeed when its design takes into consideration needs identified by the learners themselves.

4.3. Literacy policies and programmes in multicultural and multilingual contexts with a focus on cultural empowerment

Ensuring that cultural and linguistic diversity is no cause for exclusion from learning opportunities demands that special attention is paid to the role played by learners' first language in becoming literate and its use as a medium of instruction. UNESCO has developed a normative framework for 'education in a multilingual world' that supports the principles of mother-tongue instruction, bi-/multilingual education and intercultural education as a means of protecting cultural and linguistic rights and improving educational quality (UNESCO, 2003). These principles are particularly relevant to teaching and learning literacy, since language, culture and literacy are closely related. In addition, culturally and linguistically sensitive literacy policies and programmes recognise and value indigenous cultures, knowledge and methodologies, and promote the development of intercultural competence (going beyond the mere coexistence of people of different cultures).

While stressing a right-based approach to education, the *National Policy of Non-formal Education of the Ministry of Education, Literacy and National Languages* of **Mali** applies the principle of bilingualism (languages of instruction are the official language French and the 13 national indigenous languages) in non-formal education. The promotion of the national languages in literacy and non-formal education is seen as a contribution to the conservation and development of the national cultural patrimony. The purpose of non-formal education in Mali is to form a patriotic citizen and builder of a democratic society, a development actor

²⁷ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/tostan-community-empowerment-program-senegal>

deeply rooted in its culture and open to universal civilisation (Ministère de l'éducation, de l'alphabétisation et des langues nationales, 2009). The use of mother language as an essential factor for literacy learning is also part of the *Adult Literacy Strategy of Mozambique* (Republic of Mozambique, 2011, p. 22).

The *National Literacy Strategy of Malta* promotes a policy of bilingualism and biliteracy in Maltese and English (Ministry for Education and Employment, 2014). The strategy further seeks to promote 'a literate community which provides opportunities for learners to make sense of their experiences and to make connections with their histories, cultures and communities. Through increased access to books and the language arts participatory democracy is strengthened' (ibid., p. 8).

In Latin America, a lack of literacy skills and basic education affects indigenous women more than it does in other groups. The *Bilingual Literacy and Reproductive Health Project*²⁸ in **Bolivia** takes a multicultural and bilingual approach to empowering indigenous people. This involves integrating indigenous knowledge systems into the learning process and promoting the development of bilingual literacy skills. The open discussion of sensitive topics such as intra-familial violence against women and women's rights has led to increased awareness and participation of women in civic life. Likewise, the *Mexican Bilingual Literacy for Life (MIB) Programme*²⁹ aims to empower indigenous peoples through the creation of bilingual educational opportunities that value and respect the indigenous culture and identity. The use of learners' respective mother tongues in teaching basic literacy skills is particularly benefitting rural indigenous women who have less exposure and opportunity to learn the mainstream language (Spanish).

Civil society organisations can play a strong role in developing and promoting the use of local languages adult literacy programmes. Such is the case with the *Federation of Associations for the Promotion of the Guera Languages (FAPLG)*,³⁰ which was established with the aim of developing the local languages of the Guera region in **Chad**. It uses a community-based approach working with member associations that run literacy programmes in 15 African languages. Respecting all languages and treating them equally can play a critical role in

²⁸ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/bilingual-literacy-and-reproductive-health-bolivia>

²⁹ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/bilingual-literacy-life-bll-mevyt-indigena>

³⁰ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/mother-tongue-literacy-guera-region-chad>

fostering national cohesion. The *Kha Ri Gude (Let us Learn) Adult Literacy Programme*³¹ in **South Africa** is offered in all 11 official languages. In addition, it provides instruction in English as a second language.

In the Asia and Pacific region, a number of literacy programmes support the empowerment of minority communities by building on their linguistic and cultural resources, thereby strengthening their identity and position in mainstream society. For example, the empowerment of an ethnic and linguistic minority – the Parkari community in **Pakistan** – is the focus of the *Parkari Literacy Project*,³² which is implemented by the Parkari Community Development Programme (PCDP). Through linking literacy with community development, it is promoting the use of the Parkari language as the most effective means of involving members of the community. Being able to read and write in one's mother tongue means being able to record, transmit and have access to the cultural heritage of the community. Mother tongue-based multilingual literacy and community-based approaches empower indigenous minority communities in north-eastern **Cambodia** to analyse and address the challenges they are facing because of globalisation and increasing marginalisation, enabling them to both sustain their unique identity and culture, and to adapt. For example, the *Identity-Based Community Development Approach* (IBCD) employed by International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC) starts with participatory reflection processes on cultural change, and then uses 'reflection–action' cycles to enable communities to identify their challenges and plan initiatives to address them (DVV, 2015, p. 28–33).

4.4. Literacy policies and programmes with a focus on economic empowerment

In a number of countries, national literacy policies and strategies have a strong focus on vocational, employability and workplace skills, emphasising the benefits of such adult literacy programmes to the national economy. The implicit link to citizenship education is broadly related to learning to work together (i.e. teamwork, mediation, ethical behaviours, etc.) and to use sustainable environmental approaches at the workplace. For example, the *Australian National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults* is centred on four priority areas of action necessary for adult learners to successfully engage with foundation skills provision, namely: (1) raising awareness and commitment to action; (2) ensuring adult learners have

³¹ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/kha-ri-gude-let-us-learn-adult-literacy-programme>

³² <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/parkari-literacy-project-pakistan>

high-quality learning opportunities and outcomes; (3) strengthening foundation skills in the workplace; and (4) building the capacity of the education and training workforces to deliver foundation skills (Australian Government/ Department of Education and Training, 2012, p. 3).

A component of economic empowerment is often the key motivating factor, 'hooking' adult learners into literacy programmes. Since most of the potential participants of youth and adult literacy programmes live in poverty, and their participation in these programmes is voluntary, it is essential to ensure its (immediate) relevance to learners by including economic empowerment dimensions in programme designs. Therefore, many adult literacy programmes take a functional and community-based approach, linking literacy learning with income generating activities and practical skills training. The *Adult Literacy and Skills Training Programme* (ALSTP)³³ in **South Africa**, for example, takes an integrated approach to literacy skills training and theme-based training on livelihood development (income generation, food production and preservation), as well as health education, civic education and sustainable environmental conservation.

In many cases, these programmes aim to support participants in organising themselves into community-based self-help groups, committees and cooperatives to receive financial and technical support from the government for local development. This is the case, for example, in the *Integral Functional Adult Education (IFAE) Programme*³⁴ in Siliti, **Ethiopia**. Other examples of community-based programmes that integrate literacy with income generation include the *Ganokendra (Community Learning Centres) programme*³⁵ in **Bangladesh**, the *Community Learning Centre Programme*³⁶ in Gansu, **China**, the *Vocational Village Programme*³⁷ in **Indonesia**, the *Community-based Adult Learning and Development*

³³ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/adult-literacy-and-skills-training-programme-alstp>

³⁴ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/integrated-functional-adult-education-ethiopia>

³⁵ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/litbase/ganokendra-model-community-learning-centres-bangladesh>

³⁶ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/community-learning-centres-clc-programme-china>

³⁷ <http://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/vocational-village-programme-indonesia>

Programme (CALDP)³⁸ in the **Philippines**, the *Community Learning Centres*³⁹ in **Uzbekistan**, and the *Community Learning Centre Programme*⁴⁰ in **Vietnam**, which has a strong focus on ethnic minorities.

The *Youth and Adult Literacy and Basic Education Programme* (PAEBA)⁴¹ in **Peru** uses an approach that combines literacy and numeracy learning with vocational skills training. The primary aim of the **Chilean** government's *Chilecalifica Programme*⁴² is to enhance Chile's social and economic development by improving employability and promoting active citizenship, thus facilitating the involvement of individuals in all aspects of economic and social life. Its objective is to enhance opportunities for lifelong education and training, especially for young people and adults living in poverty, through improved access to vocational and professional education. The *Basic Literacy and Vocational Training for Young Adults programme*⁴³ in **Haiti** also combines basic literacy education with vocational training in certain small-scale trades to enable unschooled young people to engage in income generating activities (Hanemann, 2015c).

4.5. Literacy policies and programmes with a focus on civic and social empowerment

The *General Guidelines for Youth and Adult Education* (including literacy) of the **Colombian** Ministry of National Education emphasise the civic and social dimensions of education. The guidelines stipulate a rights-based approach and the following conceptual foundations: popular education (understood as a participatory and transformative process, in which learning is based on the individual and collective practice and experience of participating learners); learning to learn; exercise of citizenship (development of a culture of active citizenship and peace where not only the necessary knowledge for the development of citizenship and human and fundamental rights are studied, but also that these are

³⁸ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/community-based-adult-learning-and-development>

³⁹ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/community-learning-centres-uzbekistan>

⁴⁰ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/community-learning-centres-active-tool-national>

⁴¹ <http://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/youth-and-adult-literacy-and-basic-education>

⁴² <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/lifelong-learning-and-training-project-chile>

⁴³ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/basic-literacy-and-vocational-training-young>

respected, exercised and developed in a reflective practice with the various local, regional and national actors); productivity and competitiveness (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2017, p. 45–56). A ‘social model’ informs their pedagogical approach to adult learning: learners develop competencies to participate in the construction and transformation of their reality, as conscious, free, responsible, critical and proactive citizens (ibid., p. 62).

The **Moroccan Literacy Strategy** includes civic objectives such as becoming aware of one’s cultural, social and economic rights as well as of one’s constitutional obligations; acquiring the ability to participate actively in political life; getting to know the constitutional institutions and the basic elements of the democratic structure; and developing a spirit of dedication to the home country. The social objectives include halting imbalances between regions and gender by more importance to the rural world and to women; making learners aware of their obligations to the family and society; developing the spirit of solidarity and collective work; consolidating attachment to spiritual and social values; and becoming aware of the best way to use free time, especially among young people (Royaume du Maroc, 2004, p. 34).

The promotion of civic and social engagement is the aim of many adult literacy programmes, such as the **Portuguese Letters for Life Programme**,⁴⁴ the **Cambodian Educational and Social Development of Garment Factory Workers Programme**,⁴⁵ or the **Tanzanian Folk Development Colleges Programme**.⁴⁶

The social dimension, and, in particular, the empowerment of marginalised communities, is often at the heart of programmes run by NGOs such as the **Angolan Association for Adult Education’s (AAEA) Participatory Liberating Literacy Instrumented by Active Communities (APLICA) programme**.⁴⁷ The primary aim of this programme is to fight poverty and social injustice and to reduce inequalities in gender and educational access by providing non-formal education and empowering learners to produce sustainable changes in their communities.

4.6. Literacy programmes with a focus on health and HIV/AIDS

⁴⁴ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/letters-life-portugal>

⁴⁵ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/educational-and-social-development-garment-0>

⁴⁶ <http://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/folk-development-colleges-tanzania>

⁴⁷ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/participatory-liberating-literacy-instrumented>

Few programmes combine literacy learning with **health issues**, which are part of social development. Two examples are the *Supporting Maternal and Child Health Improvement and Building Literate Environment (SMILE) programme*⁴⁸ in **Cambodia**, a model integrating literacy and maternal and child health education as well as strengthening literate environments at home and in communities, and **Brazil's** *Alfabetizando com Saúde* (Learning to Read and Write in Good Health) programme.⁴⁹ The latter has been implemented by the Curitiba City Council in Brazil, which provides adult literacy programmes that simultaneously promote health awareness, help prevent outbreaks of disease, increase environmental awareness and promote healthy life styles (Hanemann, 2015c).

Particularly in Southern Africa, but also in other regions, there is a wealth of experiences with integrating adult literacy and basic education with HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation. Intentions of such programmes range from the deconstruction of myths and harmful beliefs through science- and rights-based information to the transformation of attitudes and behaviour with regard to stereotypes, sexuality, gender and power relationships and towards populations infected and affected by AIDS. Gender sensitisation and developing empowering educational strategies with a clear gender perspective play a particular role in related provision (Aksornkool, 2005; UIE, 2002). Comprehensive sexuality education also plays a central role in preparing young people and adults for a safe life, and should be a component of all HIV-prevention learning activities. Many adult literacy programmes, however, include knowledge on sexuality and sexual and reproductive health issues,⁵⁰ but fail to address the HIV/AIDS topic or, conversely, inform about HIV/AIDS risks and prevention but to not provide the necessary knowledge about sexuality.

Botswana is one of the most affected countries by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Therefore, HIV/AIDS has become a priority theme which is cutting across the curriculum of the Adult Basic Education programme (ABEP)⁵¹ which the Ministry of Education and Skills Development's Department of Out of School Education and Training (DOSET) launched in

⁴⁸ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/supporting-maternal-and-child-health-improvement-0>

⁴⁹ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/alfabetizando-com-saude-learning-read-and-write>

⁵⁰ For example, the Bi-Alfa and Reproductive Health Programme in Bolivia (<http://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/bilingual-literacy-and-reproductive-health-bolivia>).

⁵¹ <http://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/adult-basic-education-programme-abep-botswana>

2009. Other adult literacy programmes, such as the *Kha Ri Gude Adult Literacy Programme*⁵² in **South Africa** have included HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention issues, but not with a priority focus.

The *Grandmothers-to-Grandmothers Campaign* conducted by the Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF)⁵³ could serve as a model for critical global citizenship learning around the HIV/AIDS theme. The SLF found out that grandmothers in AIDS-affected communities in Southern Africa were getting together to support and sustain each other. In 2006, the SLF organised a meeting of 100 African grandmothers affiliated with SLF-supported projects in **Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia** and **Zimbabwe** taking place in Toronto, Canada, with around 200 grandmothers from across **Canada**. The meeting represented an important move to place marginalised voices (those of older women and those of the ‘front lines’ of the pandemic) on the international stage, resulting in the ‘Toronto Statement’ which was presented at the XVI International AIDS Conference. The report on the grandmothers’ meeting (Landsberg-Lewis, 2007) was critically analysed on the basis of the assumption that citizenship learning is central to the push of building global solidarity around the particular global issue of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. However, while the movement contributed an important agenda to global activism by putting historically marginalised voices on the global agenda representing a strong potential for collaboration between groups from different contexts, it also represented limitations as a model of global citizenship: it failed to critically address tensions and conflicts, nor issues of power dynamics. The level of transformative learning was not evident in the analysed report (Pashby, 2009).

4.7. Literacy programmes with a focus on peace-building in (post-)conflict contexts

Studies have shown that education is an essential foundation of peace, tolerance and a healthy civil society (UNESCO, 2012 and 2013). While conflict is usually acting as a catalyst for ‘illiteracy’, it is equally holding the potential to become an opportunity for literacy and change. However, literacy cannot be tackled in isolation. Its role and potential to exacerbate conflict (in the worst case) must be carefully analysed and comprehensively understood in

⁵² <http://preprod.uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/kha-ri-gude-let-us-learn-adult-literacy-programme>

⁵³ This foundation was started in 2003 by the Canadian Stephen Lewis, former United Nations Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, with the aim to address the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on African women and girls by mobilising financial support from Canadians.

relation to the various social, political, ethnical, cultural, religious and security dimensions of the conflict or post-conflict situation. Any substantial progress in peace-building and social development has to be inclusive and allow for participatory processes, one of the prerequisites for this is literacy. Community participation and ownership, which constitutes one of the six core minimum standards (INEE, 2004) for education in conflict or post-conflict situations, is key in order to really meet the learning needs of the conflict-affected populations and to pave the way for sustainable long-term development processes (Hanemann, 2005b).

The *National Literacy Strategy* (2013) of **Afghanistan** places literacy as a cornerstone of peace and development in Afghanistan. It includes special strategies for targeting women, ethno-linguistic minority groups (e.g. Kuchi), and military, police, and veterans. A particular focus is on the peaceful reintegration of the ex-military and police personnel into civilian life. Measures are foreseen to establish a mechanism for integrating literacy training into skills development programmes that are implemented by other line ministries ('embedded literacy'). Community Learning Centres (CLCs) will be the basis for such embedded learning. A 'demand-driven approach' to literacy will encourage individual and household decision making, personal responsibility and community, civil society and private sector involvement. The local communities and the beneficiaries will take an increasingly active role in management and implementation of provision of literacy training. Thus, broad community participation will be essential for the realisation of a demand-driven approach.

Karamoja, in the north-east of **Uganda**, was for a long time considered a conflict zone, with a heavy military presence to suppress the violent raiding and ambushes. The Government of Uganda and international development partners have over the years offered peaceful and more sustainable alternatives to cattle theft and pillage, with increasing success. The introduction of more sedentary lifestyles, better access to education and health services, along with economic alternatives to traditional pastoralism, have given people in the region more possibilities. However, an adult education project focused on skills training, income generation and livelihood improvement shows that such transition takes time and presents manifold challenges. For the traditional Karamojong warriors and their families, it comes with a complete change of lifestyle. The project, which was implemented by the German DVV International, offers non-formal training to improve demobilised warriors' understanding of farming and more sedentary animal raising. Basic literacy and numeracy

were an integral part of the curriculum. While being an ex-warrior comes with loss of pride and often reluctance to modernise, and keeping the former warriors interested in training and motivated to take on new activities proved to be a challenge, the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills had an obvious effect on self-appreciation and identity, supporting overall learning success (DVV, 2015, p. 73).

There are programmes in conflict-ridden areas that try to tap into literacy's power to build peace. For example, the *Literacy for the Peaceful Coexistence of Communities and Good Governance programme*⁵⁴ run by the *Collectif Alpha UJUVI* brings together literacy, peace education and traditional conflict-resolution techniques to promote dialogue and cooperation among North Kivu's six conflict-affected territories in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**. The programme specifically targets women – who suffer particularly in conflict zones, aiming to improve their status and help involve them in their community's decision-making processes and conflict resolution.

The examples of *literacy programmes for women* in **Kosovo** and **Afghanistan** show that as literacy has the potential to instil new values, attitudes, skills and behaviours, it can also help promote new social relations that will build resilience to conflict and trauma. The development of a culture of dialogue and awareness about the need to change unequal, unjust and violent relationships is part of the intended curricula (Hanemann, 2005b).

The curriculum and learning material of the '*Dritare Jete*' *Literacy and Basic Education Programme for Girls and Women* in post-conflict **Kosovo** has a strong focus on peace-building and education.⁵⁵ The five cross-cutting objectives are: learning to live together (peace and tolerance); learning to be (personal identity and gender sensitivity); learning to change (development of myself and my environment); learning to know or to learn (autonomy and engagement in a lifelong learning process); and learning to act (life skills). At level IV of the programme, a whole learning unit is dedicated to the theme 'Learning to live together' comprising the following sub-themes: 'Me and the Others'; 'We live in a multi-ethnic society'; 'How equal are citizens in our democratic system?'; 'The way out of violence is equality'; and 'How can we build satisfactory partnerships and relationships?'. Related learning activities emphasise the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, self-awareness and constructive conflict-solving skills.

⁵⁴ <https://gemreportunesco.wordpress.com/2011/09/07/when-literacy-clears-a-path-to-peace/>

⁵⁵ Curriculum of the Literacy and Basic Education Programme for girls and women Level I-IV (unpublished).

Mobilising peoples' capacity for resilience through writing down and sharing their experiences with others seems to be a promising approach in coming to terms with their multiple traumas and shifting toward constructive action. The **Colombian** NGO, CLEBA,⁵⁶ has been working in adult literacy for many years to serve internally displaced people in Medellín who fled from rural communities heavily affected by the armed conflict. Their adult literacy project focus on the key topics of citizenship, human rights and peace education using a methodological approach called '*pedagogy of the text*,'⁵⁷ which is aiming at the creation of authentic texts by learners based on their own real-life experiences (Hanemann, 2005b).

4.8. Literacy programmes with a focus on environmental awareness and protection

While we can observe that many adult literacy and education programmes have incorporated environmental topics into their curriculum, only a few have made environmental sustainability their core concern. An example is the education work of the *Namib Desert Environmental Trust* (NaDEET),⁵⁸ which has set up an environmental education centre on the NamibRand Nature Reserve in southern **Namibia** to work with children and adults in local communities. Participants are offered hands-on experiential learning and have the opportunity to reflect on their real-life experiences in relation to climate change. The *Community-Based Forestry Management Programme*⁵⁹ in **the Gambia** is another example of a programme that combines economic and environmental themes by supporting the empowerment of local communities to become environmentally conscious entrepreneurs making sustainable use of natural resources. This programme is implemented by the government Forestry Department in partnership with local NGOs. There seems to be an increase in educational initiatives that aim to mitigate the impact of natural disasters that are often a consequence of global warming. For example, the **Indonesian** programme *Promoting Innovative Literacy Education in Coping with Natural Disasters*,⁶⁰ in central Java, has a special thematic focus on enhancing resilience against

⁵⁶ <http://www.cleba.org.co/>

⁵⁷ <http://www.cleba.org.co/pedagogia-del-texto>

⁵⁸ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/nadeet-environmental-literacy-projects-namibia> and <http://www.nadeet.org>

⁵⁹ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/community-based-forestry-management-programme>

⁶⁰ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/literacy-21st-century-promoting-innovative>

natural disasters. The programme helps communities to prepare for natural disasters and assist families in the recovery process after they have occurred. Rather than risk prevention, it focuses on risk reduction through (formal) education, science and awareness in schools and communities. Most of the educational system's training initiatives aimed at disaster risk management target teachers in the formal education system.

4.9. Teaching and learning literacy using ICTs and combining literacy with digital competence

New technologies have the potential to contribute to effective teaching and learning literacy and numeracy: enhancing access and outreach, motivating learners to engage or re-engage in learning, improving the quality of teaching and learning, developing digital competencies and boosting the possibilities for lifelong learning. However, the great potential of ICTs for learning can also be challenged by limitations. It is difficult to catch up with ICT skills, especially for the older generation, which is why they are at risk of being left behind. In addition, a lack of literacy skills is often connected to poverty, which may restrict access to and the efficient use of those technologies. Mobile phones, tablets and personal computers are further extending their reach and offer a high value with regard to literacy teaching and learning. Meanwhile, despite growing use of mobile phones and personal computers, access to the internet is still restricted in many parts of the world (Hanemann & Scarpino, 2016b). The *National Literacy Strategy for Malta* highlights the importance of digital competence for people's lives. Learning literacy through digital modes is nurturing the development of digital competence. The Maltese policy includes a number of recommendations such as the use of mobile technologies and tablets in teaching and learning, and the setting up of a national online support system for the implementation of new technologies (Ministry for Education and Employment, 2014, p. 52–55).

The *Civic Education Information Service for Female Iraqi Leaders programme*⁶¹ was initiated by Souktel (Iraqi technology company) and international development agency Mercy Corps, as part of Mercy Corps' Empowering Women Peace Builders project in *Iraq*. The aim of mobile services in the context of this programme is to connect female community members in leadership positions in rural regions of Iraq with peers or mentors in other parts of the country. Mercy Corps' activities within the programme are intended to support women

⁶¹ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/civic-education-information-service-female-iraqi>

leaders in becoming more self-confident and empowered in voicing women's rights. As they improve their skills and competencies in terms of leadership, advocacy, networking and communication, they also become more proactive in effecting social change. The mobile phone information service for female leaders helped to mitigate the isolated situation in which women in rural areas often find themselves. The common use of mobile phones was a key means of increasing information exchange among women and of enhancing literacy, numeracy and civic participation.

The **Cambodian Pink Phone Project**⁶² is another example of the way that mobile technology has empowered women leaders at grassroots level to reduce domestic violence incidents in their communities by enabling them to take action in a timely manner. The use of tablets has been successfully piloted in the Amazon rainforest of **Colombia** through the Pilot Project of *Sistema Interactivo Transformemos Educando* in the Department of Guainía⁶³ offering the learning software in four different indigenous languages in addition to the national language. The many examples of literacy and numeracy practices using web-based learning programmes through computers include the *Web-Based Literacy Programme*⁶⁴ (WBLP) in **Turkey** which promotes the development of ICT skills together with literacy, numeracy and other cognitive skills among young people and adults through e-learning. This is seen as a way to democratise education. Similar web-based literacy programmes are functioning in **Canada**,⁶⁵ **Germany**⁶⁶ and **Ireland**.⁶⁷

The objectives of the programme *Alphabétisation de Base par Cellulaire (ABC): Mobiles 4 Literacy* in **Niger** are to teach learners how to use a simple mobile phone, including turning the phone on and off, recognising numbers and letters on the handset, making and receiving calls, and writing and reading SMS messages as well as to improve adults' reading, writing and numeracy skills, to enable them to better function in daily life. The programme helps learners to practise their newly acquired literacy skills outside the classroom using mobile phones. At the same time, by using the mobile phones learners are more prepared and

⁶² <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/pink-phone-cambodia>

⁶³ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/sistema-interactivo-transformemos-educando>

⁶⁴ <http://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/web-based-literacy-programme-wblp-turkey>

⁶⁵ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/alpharoute-canada>

⁶⁶ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/ich-will-lernen-i-want-learn-germany>

⁶⁷ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/write-ireland>

better informed when making decisions about business, health, and other household matters. A growing number of literacy programmes opt to use mobile technology to support literacy teaching and learning, for instance the *Mobile Literacy Programme* in **Afghanistan**,⁶⁸ the *Mobile-Based Post Literacy Programme* in **Pakistan**,⁶⁹ and the *Cell-Ed Programme*⁷⁰ in the **United States of America**. Such initiatives seem to have great potential to create a new learning culture, democratising access to information and facilitating communication among individuals and groups to enhance social, economic, political and cultural participation at the local, national and even international level. However, they also face multiple challenges and entail new risks, which global citizenship education will have to address more systematically in the future.

4.10. Literacy campaigns linked to social movements and transformation

The use of campaigns to mobilise people and resources on a large scale to achieve ambitious objectives within a limited period of time is a long-established practice (Bhola, 1984, 1997 and 1999; Arno and Graff, 1987; Lind, A. and Johnston, A., 1990). Justifications may be ideological and political (following political and structural changes, revolutionary conditions, building new societies, nation-building following independence and war or conflict), economic (increasing productivity), or cultural and educational (literacy as a precondition for participation in a new social order and for empowerment of previously excluded and marginalised population groups; Bhola, 1999; Boughton, 2016). Often, literacy campaigns supported social, economic, cultural and political reform or transformation, and followed a common political approach of commitment and mobilisation (Hanemann, 2015a).

In the past decade we can observe an increasing tendency for governments in many countries to launch literacy campaigns as national mobilisation strategies which are often linked to a socio-political movement. Justifications for mobilising societies for mass literacy campaigns are usually rights-based, often seeking to redress social injustice. However, an analysis of adult literacy campaigns and programmes around the world from 2000 to 2014 found that most large-scale campaigns failed to achieve their overly ambitious targets

⁶⁸ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/mobile-literacy-programme-afghanistan-afghanistan>

⁶⁹ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/mobile-based-post-literacy-programme-pakistan>

⁷⁰ <http://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/cell-ed-innovative-education-through-cell-phones>

because the complexity of such undertaking is often underestimated by policy-makers (Hanemann, 2015a; UIL, 2016a).

In a number of countries large-scale literacy campaigns or programmes were launched after a political change or after civil war and independence (e.g. Afghanistan, Iraq, Timor-Leste, and South Sudan). Clear linkages between an ideological-political movement and a literacy campaign can be seen in the cases of Bolivia, Nicaragua and Venezuela, and to some extent also in the cases of Ecuador and Peru. For example, the *Movimento al Socialismo* (MAS) movement in **Bolivia**, which won the elections in December 2005, was closely linked to the ‘campaign for the eradication of illiteracy’ (2006–08) and the ‘refoundation’ of Bolivia’s education system as the first step towards ‘decolonisation’. Social mobilisation for literacy also played an important role in Nepal, Nicaragua and Pakistan. Social mobilisation is often undertaken through a network of influential local leaders such as teachers, elected officials and religious leaders (Hanemann, 2015a).

In the context of the *Literate Brazil Programme* (*Programa Brasil Alfabetizado*), state forums for adult and youth education were set up to involve all actors engaged in youth and adult literacy work: local and state governments, universities, social and popular movements. These have contributed to raising public awareness, as well as providing forums for debate and social control of public policy. In **Indonesia** the *National Movement to Hasten Compulsory Nine-Year Basic Education and the Fight against Illiteracy* (NMHFAI) was set up by presidential instruction to advance the *AKRAB! Literacy campaign* by mobilising stakeholders for partnerships at all levels including religious, welfare and women’s organisations (Hanemann, 2015a).

The **South African Kha Ri Gude literacy campaign** is another example showing how literacy classes can be linked with community development by using a ‘social movement learning’ approach. The campaign operations were located in a social nexus which supported the learners and which transcended the learning groups by bridging them with the wider community. This resulted in increased social networks and enhanced self-esteem, enabling learners to develop agency and collectively work to improve their personal, family and community life circumstances. The campaign played an important role in developing human agency through clustering and interlinking learning groups. In this way learners felt empowered to bring about change, for example by putting pressure on local authorities to fix community problems, or by establishing local development projects (McKay, 2019).

4.11. Training of literacy educators/professionals to better address global citizenship education

The backbone of a literacy programme that effectively integrates global citizenship education and SDG 4.7 themes is a pool of professionals including managers, trainers, educators and facilitators. To better meet the demands of global citizenship education, educators of adult literacy programme need a solid professional basis and continuous professional development opportunities.

For this purpose, the non-governmental DVV international⁷¹ and the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) jointly developed the '*Curriculum globALE*' (DVV International/ DIE, 2015), a cross-cultural global curriculum framework for the training of adult educators. By providing a common reference framework it aims at advancing the professionalisation of adult literacy and education on an international scale and at supporting adult literacy and education providers in the design and implementation of train-the-trainer programmes. The Curriculum globALE explicitly follows a human rights-based approach and is built on four general principles, namely competency-orientation, action-orientation, participant-orientation and sustainability of learning.

While the main contents of the thematic modules are focused around planning, organisation and evaluation as well as teaching and learning of adult literacy and education, the intentions of global citizenship education and SDG 4.7 are reflected in the Curriculum globALE insofar as it emphasises the need to address diversity, context and relationships, among other things. Most importantly, it aims at the following globally valid, cross-cutting issues/ topics/ principles: a gender-sensitive approach; sustainable development and climate change; and sustainable development, peace and democracy.

On the basis of its experience working in Africa, Asia and Latin America, DVV International has developed an intercultural-didactic additional qualification for integration work with refugees at German Adult Education Centres (VHS) in the shape of *Curriculum interculturALE* (DVV International, 2018). This is a tailor-made intercultural training course for instructors and volunteer learning guides who work with refugees in low-threshold German language courses. Topics include diversity and cultural dialogue, active citizenship and civic education,

⁷¹ The DVV represents more than 920 Adult Education Centres (VHS), the largest providers of continuing education in Germany, while DVV International, the Institute for International Cooperation of the DVV, cooperates with more than 200 partner organisations in over 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe.

and intercultural learning. Awareness-raising, critical thinking, and transformative action are further emphasised in the learning objectives (ibid.).

In **Brazil** the **Network for Citizenship Education** (*Rede de Educação Cidadã* – RECID) has worked since 2003 to train educator multipliers and grassroots leadership. It covers policies of solidarity economy, the territories of citizenship, popular health education, environmental education, human rights education, and youth and adult literacy. The intention of RECID is to develop educational practices based on the production of knowledge that can serve as instruments capable of influencing decision-making. The overall objective of RECID is to develop, together with socially vulnerable families, a process of education and organisation aiming to facilitate their access to public services (e.g. emergency services, local, work and income, education, health and food security structures, etc.) and personal attributes (e.g. critical awareness, citizen participation, self-esteem) that increases the potential for the proposal of new policies, respecting the Brazilian realities and diversity. This is a process to foster a new generation of ‘policy subjects’ and the expansion of work at the grassroots, with a view to strengthening democracy in all social spaces (RECID, 2005 in DVV, 2015, p. 103).

The **South African Kha Ri Kude literacy campaign** established ‘**communities of practice**’ (COPs) where educators, supported by their respective supervisors, were connected with each other in a system of clusters for cooperative learning. These COPs were inspired by the principle of *ubuntu/botho*⁷² according to which learning is a ‘communal event in a social sense’ that allows opportunity to share communal resources in order to sustain communal engagements. This in-service training and learning system improved their support for learners and also enabled the campaign to extend beyond the classroom into the broader social nexus (McKay, 2019).

5. Conclusions

The integration of citizenship education and SDG 4.7 themes into adult literacy policies and programmes is not new to the field of adult literacy and non-formal education. Citizenship constitutes a key component of the lifelong learning paradigm, while ‘learning to live together’, which was considered the most important among the four pillars of learning by

⁷² *Botho* or *ubuntu*, in the South African context, refers to the ideal of being human.

the Delors Commission, remains a core concern of global citizenship education in the twenty-first century. The transformative potential of adult literacy can best unfold if it is approached from a lifelong learning perspective. Indeed, a contemporary understanding of literacy involves seeing it as a lifelong and life-wide learning process as well as part of a holistic learning system that enables learners to contribute to ‘a more inclusive, just and peaceful world’ (UIL, 2017a; UNESCO, 2015, p. 15). Indeed, the development and application of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values around citizenship (‘citizenship competence’) are a lifelong and life-wide process that is complex and occurs in a variety of settings.

Learning literacy, numeracy, language, and increasingly also digital skills, is always connected with, dependent on, content. In other words, the integration of literacy and content reflects the essence of any literacy teaching and learning approach. Such content, which needs to be relevant to the adult learners as their participation in literacy programmes is voluntary, usually includes global citizenship and SDG 4.7 themes. Tapping the transformative potential of literacy, understood as a social practice, requires empowering approaches to teaching and learning. This is in line with the pedagogical guidance provided by UNESCO for global citizenship education. Therefore, in principle, global citizenship and adult literacy are a ‘perfect match’.

Examination of existing literature shows that there is a long-standing tradition of adult literacy policies, strategies, campaigns and programmes addressing key intentions and contents of citizenship education. They usually aim to be transformative and relate to fundamental human rights and development issues. We do observe, however, that over time there have been some changes with regard to the concept of citizenship education (e.g. emphasising the global dimension), some issues have become more visible (e.g. environment, empowerment of women, cultural and linguistic diversity), and others have emerged and been added as new issues (e.g. digital citizenship).

The analysed examples of policies and programmes show that the global dimensions of citizenship and SDG 4.7 have been rather absent in adult literacy *so far*. The local and the (national) country context continue to be the main reference for citizenship and SDG 4.7 themes. This main focus of adult literacy and learning programmes on local and national citizenship issues is in line with the rationale that in order to engage in learning, adults need to be motivated by themes that seem (directly and immediately) relevant to them. It is further supported by UNESCO’s recent call for ‘greater national and local ownership’ of

global citizenship education, ‘regardless of what name it is given’. Ensuring ‘deeper local and national relevance’ of global citizenship notions requires an improvement in the contextualisation of global citizenship education starting from the local situation while also including the notion of ‘interconnectedness between the local and the global’ (UNESCO, 2018b, p. 10/11). There are many entry points to promote the full range of values, attitudes, and behaviours that are at the core of global citizenship education. Globalisation itself, along with rapid changes and, above all, the advancement of the use of digital technologies, will increasingly push adult literacy and learning beyond local and national contexts to develop a shared sense of humanity.

The economic empowerment dimension seems to enjoy continued popularity among both adult learners from marginalised backgrounds and governments. Programmes that combine literacy with income generating, practical and vocational skills seem to be in high demand. In some countries, particularly in the Global North, workplace-based and employment-oriented skills training programmes are promoted by governments. There may be an emerging trend of ‘vocationalisation’ of adult literacy/ basic skills programmes to the detriment of social and political aspects of citizenship education. However, civil society providers of adult literacy programmes, often depending on government or international aid funding, seem to pay close attention to the broader spectrum of development-relevant dimensions of individual’s and communities’ empowerment.

While all of the analysed policies and programmes demonstrate that they are able to address (more or less well) global citizenship and SDG 4.7 themes, it is difficult to determine to what extent the global citizenship elements reflected in adult literacy policy, strategy and programme documents have been translated into concrete curricula, learning materials, methodologies, teacher training, and — above all — meaningful and transformative learning activities. In order to obtain a clearer idea of how well policies and programmes are implemented in praxis, it would be, of course, necessary to analyse curricula, textbooks and training programmes, to observe classes, and measure the (cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural) changes that learners are able to demonstrate in the course, at the end of such processes, and even beyond.

This literature analysis, however, can only draw from information and lessons that providers of the analysed programmes have shared to formulate some reflections on options and principles, which have no claim to being comprehensive or conclusive.

Policy-makers, providers and practitioners need to evaluate different **options** when they seek to successfully integrate global citizenship themes into adult literacy policies and programmes. The linkage of global citizenship and adult literacy can be established in a variety of ways, and to different degrees. Non-formal education is a favourable context for a range of implementation modalities which can be situated along a continuum of ‘minimalist’ to ‘maximalist’ models of interventions. This can be, for example, the inclusion of a citizenship topic in the curriculum, at the one end, and the organisation of the whole curriculum around global citizenship education (e.g. human rights), at the other end. There are unlimited possibilities to make use of context-related situations and issues as entry points to citizenship topics in adult literacy courses. Decisions on which topics should be prioritised and which learning activities and approaches used need to involve adult learners, and if possible, their communities.

For disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalised young people and adults, the main target group of literacy programmes, citizenship themes need to be contextualised and start from the local and country context before moving to the global dimensions by localising global issues. Local values, worldviews, traditions and cultures should be incorporated and valued, too. The use of local languages should be allowed to help adult learners to express their feelings and opinions and facilitate the inclusion of local/ indigenous knowledge.

Participatory and activity-based teaching and learning approaches will contribute to fostering a range of social and emotional skills, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. In the context of adult literacy and non-formal education programmes, such ‘soft skills’ are usually subsumed under the term ‘life skills’.

With regard to gender equality and women’s empowerment, adult literacy programmes that strive to become ‘gender-transformative’ can include ‘soft skills’ such as critical thinking, awareness, self-esteem and the strengthening of ethno-cultural and linguistic identities, aiming at the transformation of prevailing power relationships. Progress towards social transformation can be supported by both traditional and non-traditional approaches, and resistance to such changes can be successfully addressed by involving men, families and community leaders and by taking small steps and a bottom-up approach. Analysis of the programmes suggests that women’s empowerment is an ongoing process rather than a short-term outcome (Hanemann, 2015e).

In general terms, the success of multilingual and multicultural approaches to literacy and citizenship education depends on consultative, participatory and democratic decision-making, as well as optimal use of existing skills and resources (Ouane and Glanz, 2011). It is important to be aware that mother tongue-based literacy not only facilitates the learning process, but is also a crucial symbol of identity, unity and self-determination. It is closely intertwined with culture and local values, wisdom, worldviews and tradition (Hanemann and Scarpino, 2016a). The creation of an effective demand for adult education and a culture of learning supported by fertile and dynamic learning environments – also in local languages – should be a focus of related policies and strategies. This points to the need to pay attention to opportunities for learners to apply newly acquired literacy and citizenship knowledge and skills also outside the classroom context.

Empowerment of marginalised communities and community-based approaches to adult literacy and learning for global citizenship is often a focus of national development strategies. Youth and adult literacy programmes that successfully integrate citizenship themes yield benefits that go beyond those made explicit in the SDGs, such as increased self-esteem, empowerment, openness to change and resumption of learning. Literacy combined with citizenship education plays a vital role in promoting tolerance to diversity and conflict prevention (UIL, 2017), in particular in post-conflict and peace-building contexts.

However, adult learning programmes that integrate citizenship themes should not only respond to the needs of government, international agencies and other institutions with the power to decide which kinds of learning are valued and supported, but also recognise literacy and learning practices and sources of knowledge that already exist in civic life and at a local level. Such a strategy should open up and strengthen different access points for adult learning (e.g. libraries, internet cafés, health centres, employment offices, cultural centres, etc.) and create structured learning opportunities along with other (informal) activities designed to develop and sustain literacy and other citizenship-related competences (ibid.). Through integrated, embedded and multisectoral approaches – such as family learning, literacy embedded in vocational training, linked to income generation or the development of entrepreneurial skills, literacy as part of livelihood, agricultural extension or health programmes, and literacy linked with active citizenship initiatives and social movements – learning can become more meaningful, motivational and ‘natural’, in particular for disadvantaged population groups. This means that different government ministries and

entities need to collaborate and share responsibility for integrated programmes. This further involves promoting strategic partnerships and synergies across sectors, and longer-term (financial) commitment (UIL, 2017).

Educators are at the forefront of the learning process. Without sustained investment in human resources to build professional capacity, integration of global citizenship and SDG 4.7 themes with adult literacy cannot succeed. The quality of such processes does not only depend on the qualification and professional development of the adult educators. It also relies on a range of professionals with the capacity to develop and implement policies and programmes, design curricula and learning materials, train and supervise the educators, build and coordinate partnerships and collaboration initiatives, develop quality-assurance strategies and criteria and conduct research on good practice and innovation, among other skills.

In the context of accelerated technological developments, the concept of literacy must be expanded to include the dimension of problem-solving skills required in technology-rich environments. This is particularly important for elderly adults and for people who live in remote areas or are isolated for other reasons. A number of analysed examples show the crucial role of mobile technologies for social nexus and agency. Therefore, a systematic use of information and communications technology (ICT) is important to extend the coverage of adult literacy programmes by reaching both learners and teachers with relevant training opportunities. 'Digital citizenship' should become an additional focus of global citizenship education, and the importance of media and information competence cannot be emphasised enough in a context where a rise in nationalist perspectives has been observed across the world (UNESCO, 2018c).

Successful large-scale literacy campaigns and programmes are linked to processes of social change and development. Analysed examples show that the social movement context of literacy campaigns is able to foster community cohesion and collective transformative action. Therefore, linking literacy campaigns to social change and mobilisation processes offers the possibility to reach many people with global citizenship themes. However, it is necessary to work with a vision to achieve transformative learning not only of individuals but of whole communities. Further, it is advisable to be aware of a number of challenges facing the campaign approach, including the setting of unrealistic targets, the continuity of learning

processes after the campaign has ended, and the failure to develop human resource capacity with a longer-term perspective (UIL, 2016a).

On the basis of the analysis of the 'good practice' experiences, it can be inferred that the aims of global citizenship education and SDG 4.7 can be best achieved if they are made part of national lifelong learning systems. This means that related content and teaching and learning approaches should not only be integrated into adult literacy programmes, but mainstreamed at all levels and in all forms of education (formal and non-formal education, technical and vocational education and training, and adult learning and education), and linkages between formal, non-formal and informal learning should be strengthened.

On the basis of the analysed 'good practice' examples and the options discussed, the following general **principles** are suggested to guide the integration of global citizenship and SDG 4.7 themes into adult literacy policies and programmes:

(1) Use a rights-based approach: Respecting and promoting respect for human and citizen's rights should be the starting point for all citizenship-related discussions and activities in adult literacy programmes.

(2) Foster gender equality: It should be ensured that learning materials, language and activities are gender-sensitive, avoid stereotyping, problematise gender disparities, unequal power relations and gender-based violence, and respect women's rights.

(3) Strengthen learners' agency: This requires activity-based learning approaches that respect and build on learners' prior knowledge and experience, and encourage them to take control of their own learning, be self-reflective, organise themselves and learn from each other.

(4) Empower learners, their families and communities: Learning activities should reach beyond the individual learner and the classroom and address citizenship and SDG 4.7 intentions and contents in the broader context of engaging and empowering also learners' families and communities. Community-based approaches should seek to be participatory and oriented towards both immediate needs and longer-term strategic change.

(5) Prioritise 'learning to live together': Developing and strengthening competencies for positive relationships should be at the core of adult literacy programmes. This involves organising teaching and learning in a way that offers opportunities for the development of interpersonal competences (e.g. acknowledging others, respecting differences,

negotiating different interests, constructively solving conflicts, being attentive to others, knowing how to talk and to listen, belonging to a group, and the ability to be co-responsible for the situation as a whole).

(6) Enable and encourage the participation of learners with disabilities: Inclusiveness should be a key principle of all adult literacy programmes. Respecting persons with different abilities and supporting them in participation in learning activities is part of 'learning to live together', emphasising the development of ethically responsible behaviour (e.g. solidarity, care for others, empathy).

(7) Value cultural and linguistic diversity: Citizenship contents should be addressed in culturally and linguistically sensitive ways. Cultures and identities of learners, their families and communities should be respected. The principles of mother-tongue instruction, bi-/multilingual education and intercultural competence should be promoted as a means of protecting cultural and linguistic rights. Indigenous cultures, knowledge and methodologies should be recognised and valued.

(8) Support the development of literacy, numeracy, language and digital competence: This involves making use of and creating opportunities to link citizenship-related activities with the development of literacy (such as reading and discussing a newspaper article, comparing electoral programmes of different political parties, writing a complaint letter to a local authority, writing minutes of a neighbourhood meeting). The various ways in which literacy and numeracy are developed and used in different contexts should be respected.

(9) Encourage critical inquiry and thinking: The development of critical inquiry and thinking skills are key for navigating through an increasingly complex and media-dominated world. Citizenship themes should be addressed in creative and problem-oriented ways that stimulate critical evaluation, rigorous scrutiny, and logic inquiry, and at the same time discerning different viewpoints.

(10) Use integrated and 'embedded' approaches: Bringing learning as close as possible to peoples' everyday lives and the different purposes for which they need or want to learn is a key principle of making lifelong learning work for marginalised and disadvantaged populations. Integrated approaches such as family and intergenerational learning, or approaches that 'embed' literacy and/or citizenship in other (learning) activities (such as computer and language courses, income generating activities, arts, sports, and other

kinds of social and cultural activities) can motivate adults to (re-) engage and persist in learning.

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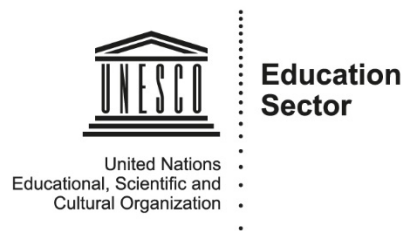
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UNESCO Education Sector

Education is UNESCO's top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation on which to build peace and drive sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education and the Education Sector provides global and regional leadership in education, strengthens national education systems and responds to contemporary global challenges through education with a special focus on gender equality and Africa.



The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to *"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."* The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.

