



MINISTRY
OF EDUCATION
MALAYSIA



Asia-Africa Inter-Regional Seminar on SDG 4 (Education 2030)

“Youth and adult literacy in the framework of lifelong learning for all”

11-13 September, 2019
[Hotel Meliá Kuala Lumpur](#)
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

CONCEPT NOTE

1. BACKGROUND

In September 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) was adopted at the UN General Assembly, laying the way forward for creating a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable society. Recognizing the essential role of education for the success of all 17 of its goals, the goal on education calls upon all nations to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (SDG 4).

As SDG 4 is an ambitious and transformative agenda, it requires participatory governance and coordinated partnerships at all levels and across sectors. To ensure its full achievement, the principles of stakeholder involvement, ownership and accountability within and between countries must be upheld and embedded in all stages of planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Governments should fully and genuinely engage the stakeholders and partners in designing and implementing relevant education policies and strategies that are adapted to country and local contexts in the pursuit of SDG4.

Literacy is recognized as a right and a foundation for lifelong learning and sustainable development. Although literacy has been high on the development agenda over the past decades, 750 million adults – 2/3 of whom are women – still do not have basic reading and writing skills, according to the latest available data for 2016.¹ Southern Asia is home to almost one-half of the global illiterate population (49%) while 27% of illiterate adults live in sub-Saharan Africa, 10% in East and Southeast Asia, 9% in North Africa and West Asia.²

Youth and adult literacy and numeracy is one of the 10 targets of Sustainable Development Goal 4 and is 1 of the 3 global quantitative targets that express a commitment to universalize basic education

¹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Literacy – February 2019 release. <http://data.uis.unesco.org/>

² UNESCO Institute for Statistics, “Literacy Rates Continue to Rise from One Generation to the Next”, Factsheet No. 45, September 2017

for all by 2030.³ Specifically, Target 4.6 ensures that “all youth and substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.”

Target 4.6 regards literacy not as a standalone set of skills that can be developed and completed within a short time frame, but rather as one component of a complex set of core competencies which requires sustained learning and updating on a continuous basis. Hence, the critical need to ensure that youth and adult literacy is adequately reflected in sector policies, strategies and plans so that efficient and relevant literacy learning opportunities are developed. It also calls for a sector-wide and cross sectoral lifelong learning approach involving stakeholders from all relevant fields, at the national and local levels, representing all groups of society as well as comprehensive governance and monitoring structure.⁴ While Ministries of Education are best placed to integrate literacy into education sector policies and strategies, in practice however, responsibility for literacy is often shared by several ministries.

UNESCO, as the specialized UN agency for education, was entrusted by the education community to continue in its mandated role to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 agenda. UNESCO Asia Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok and UNESCO Multi sectoral Regional Office for West Africa (Sahel) in Dakar support SDG4-Education 2030 through different areas of interventions, such as but not limited to the harmonized approach of integrating SDG4 in national education policies and strategies and building effective partnerships and synergy at the national level in their regions. The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) is the only organizational unit in the UN family that holds a global mandate for lifelong learning. UIL promotes and supports lifelong learning with a focus on adult learning, continuing education, literacy and non-formal basic education.

The Government of Malaysia is supporting UNESCO with the Project “Strengthening National Capacity for Sector-wide Planning to Achieve SDG4 in Asia-Pacific through South-South Cooperation: Africa Outreach” via the Malaysia Funds-in-Trust under the Malaysia-UNESCO Cooperation Programme (July 2018-August 2019).

To contribute to the attainment of the objectives of this Africa outreach project, and facilitate sharing of experiences on SDG4 implementation at the regional level, UNESCO in close collaboration with Malaysia Ministry of Education will hold an **Asia-Africa Inter-Regional Seminar on Education 2030** with special focus on literacy for lifelong learning.

2. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The over-all aim is to provide countries from two regions (Asia and Africa) a platform to share experiences, and discuss issues, and challenges in implementing SDG4 Target 4.6 in the context of lifelong learning. The specific objectives of the seminar are:

- 1) To exchange innovative initiatives and experiences in youth and adult literacy.
- 2) To provide a forum to discuss how education policy makers can improve national plans and strategies to promote youth and adult literacy and lifelong learning for all.

³ UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning 2017. Literacy and Numeracy from Lifelong Learning Perspective. Policy Brief No. 7.

⁴ UN General Assembly 2018. Literacy for life: shaping future agenda and education for democracy.

- 3) To strengthen inter-regional collaboration on youth and adult literacy in the framework of lifelong learning.

3. EXPECTED PARTICIPANTS

The Seminar will bring together around 35 international as well as the participants from relevant institutions and organizations from Malaysia.

- (1) One senior government representative responsible for youth and adult literacy education at national level will be invited from the following countries:
 - **Asia: (Proposed:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand)
 - **Africa: [Proposed:** Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Gambia, Nigeria, Senegal, Tchad, Mali, Cameroon and Mozambique).
- (2) Experts working in the field of youth and adult literacy education from civil society organisations, multilateral and bilateral development organisations will be invited to participate at their own cost.

4. DATE & VENUE

6 – 8 August 2019 (3-days); [Hotel Meliá Kuala Lumpur](#), Malaysia

5. METHODOLOGY

Through plenary presentations, discussions and group work, the Seminar will address the following questions:

- *What are the critical issues to be addressed in achieving literacy for all by 2030 (SDG4 Target 4.6)?*
- *How are national governments and other stakeholders addressing them? What are good and innovative practices?*
- *How can we work together among countries and across regions?*

To inform the seminar discussions, regional thematic background papers (Asia and Africa) on youth and adult literacy in the framework of lifelong learning will be prepared ahead of the seminar.

To exchange good practices, participants are invited to prepare poster presentation and bring materials (i.e. leaflets, teaching-learning materials and audio-visual materials) for exhibition during the seminar.

6. EXPECTED RESULTS

- Innovative initiatives and practices in youth and adult literacy education are shared among participants and document through a seminar report
- More partnership activities are planned among participating countries.

7. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Time	Sessions
Day 1 (11 September 2019)	
AM	<p>Opening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome address by MOE Malaysia - Opening statements - Overview of the Seminar Agenda by UNESCO Bangkok or UIL - Introduction by participants by TBD - Group photo <p>Keynote speech: Malaysia’s experience with multi-ministerial partnership for lifelong learning by the Ministry of Education (TBD).</p> <p>Session 1: New approaches to address the unfinished agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNESCO Strategy for Literacy: achieving literacy for youth and adults (SDG4.6) through lifelong learning by UIL - Panel discussion
PM	<p>Session 2: Regional reports on youth and adult literacy (SDG 4.6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation on Africa report - Presentation on Asia report - Discussions <p>Session 3: Government policies and strategies for youth and adult literacy in a holistic, cross-sectoral and lifelong learning perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Malaysia’s experience with improving literacy through rural community development: it’s historical progress from 1960s to present by the Community Development Department (KEMAS), Ministry of Rural Development – Malaysia - Tchad’s experience with making a case to include youth and adult literacy in the development of the Education Sector Plan - Discussion
Evening	Dinner with Malaysian Cultural Show (to be confirmed)
Day 2 (12 September 2019)	
AM	<p>Session 4: Good practices in bridging gender gap in literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bangladesh’s experience in reducing gender gap - Projet d’alphabétisation fonctionnelle des jeunes filles et jeunes femmes au Tchad or ‘PAJEF’ and Mozambique - 1 country (Africa or Asia) - Discussion <p>Session 5: Innovative practices to improve access and learning outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Senegal’s experience with the institutionalization and implementation of polyvalent teacher (preschool - primary - literacy class), Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for literacy facilitators and integration of the facilitators training in teachers training institutions. - Philippines’ experience – local curriculum development - Gambia’s experience with the family literacy approach

Time	Sessions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNESCO Online Course on Community Learning Centre and Lifelong Learning by UNESCO Bangkok – to show Module 2 on financing. - Group discussions
PM	<p>Session 6: Monitoring and assessment of youth and adult literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RAMAA - Africa’s experience with measuring literacy programme participants’ learning outcomes by Burkina Faso - India’s experience with literacy skills certification - GAML 4.6 – work in progress for the development of international guidelines and standards for assessment of literacy skills by UIL - Group discussions
Day 3 (13 September 2019)	
AM	<p>Session 7: Plenary sharing of group discussions of Session 5 and 6</p> <p>Session 8: Planning for Asia-Africa Inter-regional Cooperation in Youth and Adult Literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some countries to share their experiences with South-South Cooperation (i.e. Korea’s BRIDGE Programme in Asia & Africa, China’s support on women’s education, Thailand’s experience with hosting study visits) - Group brainstorming sessions
PM	<p>Session 8: cont’d</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plenary discussions <p>Closing: Way forward and follow-up action</p>

8. LANGUAGE

English and French will be the working language of the seminar. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided during the plenary sessions

9. ORGANIZING PARTNERS

- Malaysia Ministry of Education, Putrajaya Malaysia (<https://www.moe.gov.my>)
- UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, Bangkok Thailand (<https://bangkok.unesco.org>)
- UNESCO Dakar Office, Dakar, Senegal (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/dakar>)
- UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Hamburg, Germany (<http://uil.unesco.org>)

For further information, please contact:

UNESCO Asia- Pacific	UNESCO Dakar
Mr. Nyi Nyi Thaung Programme Specialist Section for Inclusive Quality Education UNESCO Bangkok Tel: +66 2 391 0577 E-mail: nn.thaung@unesco.org	PIEUME Calice Olivier Programme Specialist Education Section UNESCO Dakar Tel: 00221 33 864 96 17 Email: co.pieume@unesco.org
Ms. Amalia Serrano Programme Officer Section for Inclusive Quality Education UNESCO Bangkok	

UNESCO Asia- Pacific	UNESCO Dakar
Tel: +66 2 391 0577 E-mail: am.serrano@unesco.org	

ABOUT THE MALAYSIA-UNESCO COOPERATION PROGRAMME (MUCP)

Through the Malaysia-UNESCO Cooperation Programme (MUCP), 17 countries in Asia Pacific region including one country from Africa (Gambia) underwent a 5-day technical training on education sector planning in 2017. Aside from the technical knowledge gained, the training also provided an opportunity for countries to collaborate with other countries and learn from Malaysia’s experience in preparing their education blue print.