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United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# **EVALUATION OF LITERACY INITIATIVE FOR EMPOWERMENT (LIFE) IN NIGERIA**

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# EVALUATION OF LITERACY INITIATIVE FOR EMPOWERMENT (LIFE) IN NIGERIA

## Introduction

The Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) is conceived as a ten-year (2006-2015) strategic framework through which national governments, NGOs, civil society, the private sector, UN agencies, and bilateral and multilateral agencies collectively accelerate literacy efforts in 35 countries (including Nigeria) where illiteracy poses a critical challenge. As a key operational mechanism for the implementation of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD, 2003-2012), which is led and coordinated by UNESCO, LIFE is basically an initiative to support countries in achieving a 50 per cent improvement of their adult literacy rates by 2015. It is a framework of collaborative action for enhancing and improving national literacy efforts. It is a process in support of literacy which is country-led and country-specific. As a support mechanism embedded in national policies and strategies, LIFE provides technical support services and facilitation by UNESCO in the areas of policy, advocacy, partnerships, capacity-building and innovations. LIFE is the glue that binds all mechanisms and activities in adult literacy and empowerment and so this report reviews the variety of adult learning activities that have been undertaken in this area from 2006 to date. It takes into account the implementation processes and impact of these activities as well as the lessons learned from them applicable within the LIFE framework.

The launch of LIFE by UNESCO covering the period 2006-2015, provided a ray of hope for the development of a strategic framework for literacy education in Nigeria. A national stakeholder's forum on UNESCO Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) was held at the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) Board Room, Abuja on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2006 to launch the LIFE Initiative in Nigeria. It was attended by participants representing a variety of interests including government agencies, the civil society such as CSACEFA, NOGALSS and RAN, and the International Development Partners represented by UNESCO. Representatives of the education sector, represented by the FME and its parastatals- NMEC, NCCE, NCNE, NERDC, NOUN, ETF and the FCTA Mass Literacy Agency, were the hosts while other sectors present included Agriculture, Health, Women Affairs, National Orientation, Industry and the media.

In 2007, the Government of Nigeria partnered with policy-makers and literacy practitioners from all over the world, to see how lessons can be learned from the past and how literacy can be transformed into a national priority. Participants from 24 countries including Ministers of Education, Permanent Secretaries, Directors and Managers of National Literacy Programmes, United Nations Officials, donor and civil society organizations gathered in Abuja from 12-16 February, 2007. Benchmarks were developed for literacy and a series of proclamations made towards its total attainment. Roles and responsibilities were collectively assigned to different categories and levels of providers culminating in the Abuja Call for Action which was endorsed by all participants. The call for action at national and international levels was agreed upon by all participants, providing guiding principles for national, state and local governments as well as civil society and international actors to mobilise momentum for adult literacy and new investments that will accelerate literacy efforts.

In another vein, an International Workshop on Mass Literacy Campaign as a Strategy for achieving the EFA and education-related MDGs in Nigeria was held at the Sheraton Hotel & Towers, Abuja, between 26 and 28 September, 2007, which culminated in the LIFE NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION 2006 – 2008 as contained in Appendix 1 of this report

Each of these workshops/conferences provided a forum for discussing concrete action plans and country support aimed at advocating for literacy, identifying and discussing main challenges and achievements in literacy and presenting and disseminating effective literacy practices. The workshop also involved building cooperation among stakeholders, mobilising partners and resources for concrete interventions at the country level and developing recommendations greater programme effectiveness. In essence, the main emphasis of LIFE is on identifying concrete action at the country level in four strategic areas:

- (1) advocacy and communication to create national and international momentum and to mobilize awareness, commitment, partnerships and adequate resources for its expeditious implementation;
- (2) reinforcement of national capacities to develop appropriate policies and programmes and to create adequate human resources and institutions, including operational infrastructure;
- (3) delivery of programmes that effectively address poverty, gender inequalities and disadvantages related to health and social exclusion;
- (4) sharing of information to improve policies and practice by conducting research, supporting innovative and replicable programmes, promoting good practices, and undertaking monitoring and evaluation for assessing progress.

### **Purpose of the evaluation**

This evaluation is intended to assess the following:

1. Visibility and profile of LIFE in Nigeria
2. Contribution of LIFE as a catalyst for action and partnerships to boost literacy and non-formal education effort
3. Collaboration with and among UNESCO entities
4. Experience to be shared as good or innovative practice
5. Major planned activities in the country for the coming months and for which LIFE could be a supportive opportunity
6. How LIFE framework could best be used in the country, for example as platform for partnerships and synergic interventions
7. Making any other comments that may be useful for the success of LIFE implementation in Nigeria as contained in Appendix 2

### **Scope of the Study**

The evaluation covered all the 36 State Agencies of Adult and Non-Formal Education in Nigeria including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. It also includes five levels of partnerships that were identified at a national stakeholders Forum on UNESCO Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) which was held at the National Commission for Colleges of Education

(NCCE) Board Room, Abuja on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2006 during the launching of LIFE in Nigeria. :

- Government and relevant agencies, Universities and Research Institutes
- Civil society organization in Education, NGOs, CBOs, Trade Unions and Faith-based organizations
- International Development Partners including international NGOs
- The Organized Private Sector in Nigeria
- The Media.

### **Limitations of the study**

There are a few limitations in the study. The limitations observed include the following:

- Time constraints resulting in the ability of the consultant to visit all the project sites identified by respondents or even to interview all the stakeholders identified for LIFE.
- Similarly, due to time constraints the consultant was not able to interview all the key stakeholders that are involved in LIFE in Nigeria. A sample of the stakeholders was taken. It was assumed that the views and opinions of the stakeholders interviewed were representative of the true picture.
- Unavailability of the country Focal Point for LIFE and there not being a substitute person. LIFE related issues therefore had to be extracted from the inputs of other interviewees and documentation made available to the consultant.
- The consultant worked within the limitations of the information provided, therefore, there may be areas not fully covered or areas that received a great deal of attention.

These identified gaps and limitations notwithstanding, the consultant is still confident that due to the extensive nature of the consultations held with a few of the stakeholders, the care taken to obtain objective interpretations from them as well, the nature of information collected have all helped in assuring the quality of the conclusions drawn for this study.

### **Instrumentation**

- The instrument covered some of the issues and questions addressed in the LIFE evaluation as required by UNESCO. This covers:
- Visibility and profile of LIFE in the country
- Assessment of the contribution of LIFE as a catalyst for action and partnerships to boost literacy and non-formal education effort
- Evaluation of the collaboration with and among UNESCO entities
- Experience to be shared as good or innovative practice
- The major planned activities in the country for the coming months and for which LIFE could be a supportive opportunity
- How LIFE framework could best be used in the country, for example as a platform for partnerships and synergic interventions
- Making any other comments that may be useful for the success of LIFE implementation in Nigeria as contained in Appendix 2

It is important to note that apart from the questionnaire, appropriate interview guides were used to collect relevant data and information on LIFE in Nigeria.

### **Administration of Instruments**

The questionnaires were either hand-delivered or sent by e-mail to samples of respondents identified in the population of the study in this report. In addition to the questionnaire, there were face-to-face oral and telephone interviews with some of the respondents in order to elicit more information from them and to cross-check the authenticity of their claims in the completed questionnaires. On the whole, 58 individuals/groups/organizations completed the questionnaire while 26 individuals were personally interviewed by the consultant. Different categories of persons interviewed were asked the same type of questions to make it possible for the consultant to cross-reference the answers. Programme documents and reports were also used to compare with the interview results in order to augment the information gathered.

### **Data analysis**

Data were analysed using:

- i. Content analysis
- ii. Triangulation
- iii. Descriptive Statistics

The content analysis employed in this study involved codification, classification and interpretation of the documents obtained with regard to the execution of LIFE programmes in Nigeria. Triangulation was employed in the interpretation of the analysed data in respect of each of the items of the instrument. It also involved analysing the data both from oral and written submissions of the respondents. The descriptive statistics included the use of percentages.

### **Summary of Findings:**

#### **1. Visibility and profile of LIFE in the country**

##### ***a. How was information about LIFE provided/ obtained?***

- i. Launching workshop - 34%
- ii. Information during meetings - 53%
- iii. Others (Specify) Through advocacy, especially during the September 8 celebration which is a regular and well-attended annual event in Nigeria; literacy by radio programme; and conversation with colleagues - 13%

This shows that most of the information about LIFE was communicated at workshops and meetings. It does appear however that information about LIFE, following its operational mechanisms, should show at all levels of implementation including community levels where most adult literacy activities take place. Perhaps this calls for greater harmonised actions by implementers.

***b. Did this information allow you to understand LIFE as a global strategic framework and key operational mechanism for achieving the goals and purposes of the UN Literacy Decade?***

Yes - 85%;

No - 15%

Those who responded “yes” see LIFE as a global strategic concept which is easily understood by for anyone working in the area of literacy in Nigeria. They see LIFE as a framework which allows them to know how to concentrate available resources on strategies that facilitate and promote the achievement of EFA goals, especially goals 4 and 5 on adult literacy and gender and MDG on poverty eradication.

Those who responded “no” however, did not see LIFE as achieving UN Literacy Decade in Nigeria because they claim that there are no visible signs for increase in literacy levels aimed at empowering the urban and rural poor. They based their arguments on the following issues:

- a. There is no policy change to provide a framework for local participation in literacy.
- b. Flexible programmes that cater for most of the illiterates are yet to be effectively developed.
- c. There is no adequate capacity building for literacy workers.
- d. Community participation is very low in literacy programmes.
- e. No significant effort has been made to ensure that Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) is seen as a global strategic framework for the implementation of United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012), in order to meet the Education for All (EFA) goals, with particular focus on adult literacy and out-of-school children.

The opinion of this group of persons though less in number, raises concerns that need to be addressed in order to achieve the purposes that LIFE should serve. All of the five points are strongly pointing towards institutional and policy gaps that must be addressed for LIFE to be fully applied across the country.

***c. Explain briefly how LIFE has been used to underpin and improve the literacy policy in Nigeria?***

- a. More than eighty-five percent (85%) of those who completed the questionnaire indicated that LIFE gave additional impetus for the pursuance of improved policy framework for literacy in Nigeria.
- b. About sixty-nine percent (69%) of the respondents observed that law-makers in the state and national Assemblies were able to see the link between literacy and empowerment. Thus, they were able to approve more funds for the activities of the State Agencies for Adult and Non-Formal Education in their efforts to bring literacy to the grassroots. As a result of this situation, there is an improved budgetary allocation to this sub-sector.
- c. About sixty-five percent (65%) of the respondents agreed that enlightenment campaigns through radio programmes and person- to –person literacy programmes have helped the citizenry to participate actively in LIFE programmes in different parts of the country.

These responses contrary to the 15% responses above indicate that policy reviews are already in place in a majority of states and programmes. The quantum of the offshoots however somewhat underscores the minority opinion of the 15% of respondents to item *d* above. Since this is self reporting instrument and as stated in the limitations observed in the study, it can be inferred as claimed that indeed, policies are being influenced by LIFE.

***d. What are the strategies to develop partnerships or alliances around LIFE at the country level to mobilize political and financial support for literacy?***

The various strategies identified by 80% of the respondents include the following:

- Policy advocacy and dialogue with Federal, state and local education authorities.
- Community and local NGOs mobilization.
- Mobilization and coordination of International Development Partners (IDPs).
- Involving the universities and researchers.
- Cooperation with the media and private sector.
- South-south cooperation, particularly with Cuba.

***e. Does the country provide a framework or strategy for advocacy and resource mobilization for literacy and NFE? (If yes, how does it work? If not, which factors impede this and how to create one?)***

- i.* More than 78% of the respondents indicated that there is no published and well-articulated framework or strategy for advocacy and resource mobilisation for literacy in Nigeria.
- ii.* Before 2007, a substantial amount of funding received by NMEC came from UNESCO and UNICEF. Now, a greater part of NMEC programme funds come from the MDG relief fund while the development partners focus on capacity building and rendering of technical assistance in literacy.
- iii.* The former Executive Secretary of NMEC devised an advocacy methodology of reaching out to state executive governors and this yielded some fruitful results like increase in budgetary allocations given to the sector in the states he visited, increase and paying of facilitators' stipends and several others.

On factors that impede this action, it cannot be said that any attempt has been made to work out a coherent strategy for funds mobilisation for literacy. All inputs have been ad hoc and informed by sentiments expressed at workshops and seminars that do not get carried beyond the venue of the meeting. In order to create one, stakeholders have to sit together at a roundtable to discuss resource mobilisation for literacy as an issue. This way a framework can be worked out for mobilising funds from both public and private sectors on a consistent and organised basis.

*f. What are the concrete actions to reinforce commitment to literacy by?*

*i. The government (Ministries)*

About seventy-two percent (72%) of the respondents indicated the following actions to reinforce commitment to literacy:

- Complete overhaul of staffing levels in terms of quality and number.
- Policy development is one important action that can show that government is committed to literacy.
- Development of LIFE Action Plan, its funding and implementation and increased funding of adult literacy and NFE are manifestations of commitment and political will.
- Increase advocacy to government (ministries) that will ensure the right budgetary allocation(s) and release of funds for literacy programmes.
- Mass enlightenment campaigns through radio programmes and effective coordination of international literacy programmes.
- Networking and solidarity of government ministries with NGOs working with literacy. This is one key way to avoid institutional rigidities and programme duplication.
- Through ministerial workings with international partners for effective policy formulation and implementation.

It does appear that these responses are intended actions as respondents were not able to point out examples of these actions and where they seem to be working efficiently. Capacity for instance seem remain low despite the first claim / recommendation of complete overhaul.

*ii. The partners at the country level (bilateral donors and NGOs)*

Screening of would-be NGOs working with bilateral donors in Nigeria: Only those with right policies that include supervision/monitoring and evaluation systems should be included as partners.

- Most NGOs should have a framework for capacity building and organizational enhancement.
- Regular meetings, workshops and conferences would enhance sharing of ideas and effective future planning.
- Technical support from bilateral partners could be made more effective if the fully developed NGOS are assisted or shown how best to raise funds from bilateral donors. This can be done through occasional workshops/conferences on fundraising.
- NGOs must learn how to reduce overheads, and mobilise resources from the local/state/federal levels. They should not be too donor dependent.

- Bilateral donors and NGOs could show commitment by meaningful funding of literacy and adult education.
- Action Aid Nigeria strongly advocates for better funding and commitment to literacy. In 2007, it hosted an international conference on literacy with the theme ‘Writing the wrongs’ and supports the National Commission for Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in building the capacity of communities on REFLECT methodology.

*iii. The international partners (multilateral agencies and INGOs)*

- The international partners (multilateral agencies and INGOS) must understand the nature and mechanism of operations of the global partnerships and strategic policy framework.
- The international partners must not duplicate efforts. This can be achieved with well defined monitoring and evaluation strategies.
- Increased emphasis on country’s culture and people.
- Cross country references for best practices should be highlighted and published for emulation. This means most programmes should have an inbuilt mechanism for research that generates useful statistics.
- Capacity development for policy, planning and monitoring and evaluation for adult literacy and NFE.
- Increased awareness among IDPs about the importance of adult literacy.

***g. What is the impact of the actions of the government, the donors and NGOs in the implementation of literacy policy? Could you give some examples of these aspects?***

*i. Political*

- Improved citizens’ participation in democracy as people becomes more aware of their responsibilities and obligations.
- Enhanced awareness about human rights.
- Good governance – when people are more aware of their rights, then good governance is made possible and politicians adhere more to their campaign promises and avoid human rights abuses.
- Enhanced political commitment for literacy in all 36 states and the FCT.

These responses however, appear to indicate ongoing actions which can have considerable impact when the implementation of the LIFE work plan takes full effect.

*ii. Mobilisation of resources*

- Enhanced budgetary allocation for adult literacy and non-formal education. For example in 2007, the NMEC’s annual budget rose to NGN567 million compared to only NGN67 million in 2006.
- /community participation in most projects that ensure mobilization of resources.

- Considerable increase community-supported literacy interventions, enhancing prospects for sustainability.
- Many communities become increasingly less donor-dependent because of their ingenuity and creativity by harnessing local resource endowments and entitlements.
- Increased donor involvement and support for adult literacy.
- Some State governments provide free air time for broadcasting literacy programmes.

*iii. Promoting gender equality (in policy and programmes)*

- Development and adoption of the national Policy on Gender in Basic Education together with guidelines for its implementation.
- Increased awareness about gender issues in adult literacy and non-formal education.
- Understanding of adult literacy as a right.
- Gender issues reflected in LIFE Action Plan.
- Inter-sectoral cooperation between the education and culture sectors in UNESCO Abuja to provide literacy programmes and revolving micro-credit scheme to women in 3 communities in 2 States (Rivers and Ondo) and the Federal Capital Territory. NMEC through LIFE wants to form women cooperative groups for income generating activities after which they will be given equipment to start-off small scale businesses.

*iv. Improving the quality of literacy programmes*

- LIFE Action Plan lays emphasis on quality of human and material resources development. Capacity development of literacy providers is one of the most important parts of the Action Plan. In addition, LIFE also provides avenues for monitoring and evaluation of programmes.
- Quality of literacy programmes have drastically improved as programmes are tailored toward life skills and entrepreneurial skills development. Up to 15 language primers have been developed; facilitators and technical committee members have been trained and retrained.
- More emphasis on monitoring and evaluation.
- Enhanced capacity development for policy-makers and programme managers.
- Enhanced coordination among literacy providers as a result of the LIFE Action Plan.

**2. How do you assess the contribution of LIFE as a catalyst for action and partnerships to boost literacy and non-formal education efforts? (At policy and programme levels? at national and local levels?)**

The assessments by the respondents are as follows:

Excellent: 12%; Very Good: 40%; Good: 35%; Fair: 13%.

a) *What are the achievements?*

- 100% community participation in literacy programmes which are self-driven.
- Evolvement of three –tier levels of LIFE programmes in our communities – mother and child literacy, drop-out teenage back to school programme and mothers’ empowerments with self-driving micro-agric development women’s project.
- Increase in literacy levels for mother and child at least 40% in project communities
- Full consultation and involvement of stakeholders provided through national forums in all the 36 states, FCT and NGOs were consulted for the development of the LIFE National Action Plan and its reviews were always highly participatory through:
  - Outreach to the grassroots
  - Involvement of development partners
  - National and state ownership of the National Action Plan ensured synergy of actions at all levels of government – federal, states and local.
  - Increased funding for the sub-sector through the MDG Fund, scaled-up of the literacy by radio project which is LIFE flagship project for Nigeria.

b. *Which difficulties had to be surmounted during the implementation of LIFE and how where they addressed?*

More than seventy-nine percent (79%) of the respondents indicated that:

- Adult literacy and NFE continue to be marginalized and underfunded.
- Community participation and ownership of literacy/empowerment programme is key. Local/community participation and development of right partnerships was the greatest challenge. Success was however, achieved through long years of working in the same communities and gradual build up of confidence and trust at all levels.
- Funding was also a critical situation which had to be surmounted. However, some professionals acting as volunteers saw the need of contributing to their nation by establishing a few projects at the beginning without monetary compensation.
- From the onset it was difficult to realise that promoting literacy is not a business venture but a way of satisfying the needs of the poor. The main challenge has been that of funding the implementation of LIFE. This was surmounted through intense advocacy and campaigns undertaken to persuade influential stakeholders such as parliamentarians, the presidency and local level community leaders on the importance of adult literacy and NFE for the achievement of EFA and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.
- There is the misconception that LIFE is a UNESCO programme and should be funded by UNESCO. This was addressed through constant sensitization that LIFE should be country-driven. Initially, several Ministries and Parastatals participated in LIFE activities with the hope that they would get funds from it but when this was not forthcoming, they withdrew. This was equally addressed through constant inclusion and

participation of these Ministries in LIFE activities. Advocacy for the inclusion of Adult and Non-formal Education in the Universal Basic Education Intervention Funds have not yielded the desired result. The discussion is still on-going and it is being addressed through the mobilisation of different voices from diverse backgrounds including that of CSOs like the Nigeria National Council for Adult Education.

*c). What are the results concerning the literacy situation obtained through LIFE?*

- The holistic approach of LIFE ensures good results in different dimensions.
- Rapid results are guaranteed especially in poor rural communities. The added element for empowerment mostly for mother and child – the most vulnerable members of the community ensures success of literacy programmes.
- Harnessing local initiatives and resources ensure sustainability of literacy programmes.
- LIFE is based on partnership and advocacy which is another sure way for success.
- Cross –country and international networking and policy ensure the replication of best practices.
- Wide participation increased the percentage of literate adults and thereby increased literacy level in the country.

**3. How do you evaluate the collaboration with and among UNESCO entities (Headquarters, UIL, BRED A, cluster / country offices)? What would you propose for its improvement?**

- UIL role is clear. But what of BRED A? The work of BRED A is too focused in selected countries. The effect of BRED A has not been adequately felt in Nigeria. UIL should have an international workshop for selected INGOS on how to raise funds at the international scene. Progressive NGOs/INGOs are limited in their actions to fast track their work.
- There is the need for collaboration at sub-regional and regional levels as managed by BRED A through adequate funding. This should be vigorously continued for the exchange and sharing of information on best practices in literacy and NFE in the region. It is also a good forum for the review of LIFE strategies.

**4. Is there an experience to be shared as good or innovative practice? If yes, which one? How could it be up-scaled at national level?**

- The key innovative practice is the self-driven approach by the local women themselves using the government local education authority as the facilitating mechanism for coordinating literacy activities at the village level.

- The Literacy by radio project in Nigeria is an excellent example of good practice, especially the processes of advocacy which led to its acceptance and ownership by the country. The project has been scaled up to all states in the country. In order to maintain momentum, funding the project must continue to be greatly enhanced.
  - Literacy when combined with life skills becomes more relevant to the needs of the learners, yields more fruits and reduces drop-out rate. Literacy by radio programme lessons address issues on different life skills, health matters, personal hygiene and simple economics that are very relevant to learners.
  - Utilization of Debt Relief Funds for adult literacy.
  - South-south cooperation, particularly with Cuba.
- 5. Which are the major planned activities in the country for the coming months and for which LIFE could be a supportive opportunity**
6. The LIFE Action Plan largely outlines the wide-range of planned activities. These include: capacity building for policy-makers and programme managers; policy advocacy and dialogue involving particularly the presidency, state governors and other high-level national figures; monitoring and evaluation, establishment of 109 LIFE communities nation-wide; organization of the 8<sup>th</sup> E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting in Abuja in 2001; and promoting literate environment through promotion of reading habits.
- 7. Based on the foregoing, how could the LIFE framework best be used in the country, for example as a platform for partnerships and synergic interventions**
- By bringing together of credible NGOS, government literacy agencies, international development partners, the media, private sector, and researchers to build effective and sustainable partnerships for literacy. Through this forum, a sustainable framework for funding literacy can also be developed to help in resource mobilisation and increase partnerships.
  - By promoting coordination and synergy through regular updating of the LIFE Action Plan.
  - More advocacy work by NGOs.. Also, issues of human rights in the area of education need to be communicated more powerfully to Federal Government/Federal Ministry of Education, etc. by UNESCO.
  - LIFE framework could work better than it has in Nigeria by building the capacity of LIFE focal point in what he/she needs to be doing. There should be a clear cut terms of reference for the focal point. There should be well defined guidelines of the number of meetings that is expected to be called by the focal point. There should be focal points from line ministries to give them a sense of belonging to be able to respond to issues on LIFE.

- By making optimum use of the forthcoming E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting to foster new partnerships and strengthen existing ones.

**8. Please make any other comments that may be useful for the success of LIFE implementation in Nigeria.**

- The results and impact of the strong technical support of UNESCO-Nigeria for NGOs is dampened owing to lack of access to substantial funds by certified and accredited NGOs.
- UNESCO should reinforce its support and maintain its facilitation and coordination of LIFE in Nigeria so that the momentum already gathered through the years could be maintained and not reduced. From time to time, UNESCO Abuja should bring stakeholders together to discuss LIFE and its status in Nigeria.
- Nigeria's geographical spread is such that creative ways have to be devised for reaching the teeming population of non-literate rural dwellers among others. There is therefore the need for enhanced funding of literacy activities. Literacy is one area that UNESCO has comparative advantage but it may lose it due to inadequate funding. It is important that community learning centres should be equipped with basic learning materials like radio cassette, tapes and primers to respond to the needs of the learners in the community.
- There is indeed no coherent knowledge of adult learning networks and opportunities in Nigeria. It is imperative to conduct a survey of adult learning and literacy in Nigeria which should become a working document for intervention and implementation of the LIFE strategy.

### **Challenges**

The literacy and NFE in Nigeria are still saddled with a wide-range of constraints some of which are quite debilitating. Some of these are listed below:

- Adult literacy continues to be a neglected area, with both the Nigerian Government and IDPs failing to provide the required level of funding.
- The huge size and complexity of Nigeria makes it enormously difficult to plan and deliver quality literacy programmes.
- Weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms,
- Complex and sometimes cumbersome governance structures.
- Limited capacity of federal and state organizations responsible for literacy.
- Low capacity at NMEC as the coordinating entity for literacy activities in Nigeria.

- Frequent turnover of staff.
- Huge data gaps that make informed policy-making and credible planning immensely difficult..

## **Conclusion**

Based on the definition of literacy agreed upon during a June 2003 meeting organized by the UNESCO Institute for Education, the Basic Education Section of UNESCO and the UIS in Paris, literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve his or her goals, develop his or her knowledge and potentials, and participate fully in the community and wider society.

In Nigeria, as in most countries in Africa, the above definition of literacy is yet to be fully realised because the country is still battling with how to make the illiterates read, write and calculate. In essence, the literacy challenge is inseparable from problems such as poverty, the HIV pandemic, and conflicts. Access to literacy and education is a basic right, while literacy skills represent a meta-tool that enables people to access multiple other tools, acquire fundamental rights and amass a wide range of competencies, information and knowledge.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- There is the urgent need for the formulation of efficient and effective strategies aimed at improving programme delivery to the teeming population in Nigeria. The application of multiple delivery methods should be continued because of the advantage of broadening stakeholder participation in implementation of UNESCO - supported activities which enhances ownership.
- Baseline surveys should be conducted before launching new activities in as far as it is possible within the given timelines.
- Follow up training workshops / conferences should be embarked upon to ensure implementation of results so that conferences and training workshops do not seem to become an end in themselves.
- There is the need to strengthening the capacity of NMEC and State Agencies of Mass Education by employing capable professionals who understand how to go about implementing LIFE Action Plans.
- The appointment of the focal point for LIFE should be expedited and a committee for implementing LIFE activities in Nigeria should be established.

## APPENDIX 1

### LIFE NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION 2006 – 2008

S/ N	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	AGENCIES	TIME FRAME	BUDGET N
<b>A</b>	<b><u>Planning Meetings</u></b>						
1	Preparatory Meetings	To prepare for national stakeholders meeting	7 meetings by inter-ministerial planning committee	Hosting of the National Stakeholders Forum	Federal, NGOs, IDPs, FCT SAME	Feb - Mar 2006	N30,000.00
2	National Stakeholders Forum	<p>§ Creation of awareness;</p> <p>§ Preparation of a strategic work plan for the LIFE Project in Nigeria;</p> <p>§ Identification of fiscal policies and strategies for promoting literacy in Nigeria; and</p> <p>§ Creation of an image for the LIFE project that will entrench literacy and life long learning as national life style.</p>	Forum Strategies included presentation of a lead paper, LIFE Logical Framework, addresses, group work and plenary discussions.	<p>§ Better awareness on LIFE and existing literacy efforts in the formal and non-formal sectors in Nigeria; and Innovations /good practices;</p> <p>§ Identification of fiscal policies, partnerships and strategies for promoting literacy in Nigeria; and a befitting image for LIFE discussed towards sustainable national impact.</p>	FME, NMEC, UBEC, NCCE, NCNE, FCT-SAME, FMWA, NOA, ITF, FMI, FMH, FMARD, NAN, UNESCO, ILO, NOGALSS, RAN, CSACEFA, ACTIONAID	17-Mar-06	N600,000.00

S/ N	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	AGENCIES	TIME FRAME	BUDGET N
3	Sub-Regional Meeting, Niamey	Share best practices and experiences in literacy among the 4 LIFE countries § Develop Needs Assessment and LIFE Country Paper Guideline	Meeting of the LIFE Team from the 4 LIFE countries	§ The in-depth state of Literacy in each of the Countries will be discussed. § Needs Assessment and LIFE Country Paper Guideline will be proposed and validated § Best practices and interesting experiences towards developing partnership strategies within and between countries for a successful implementation of LIFE at Regional level.	Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal	22-24 March 2006	UNESCO Sponsorship
4	Development of National Plan	§ To guide the process to arrive at achievable goals. § propose budget.	§ Meeting of the LIFE Team - Meeting of the LIFE Steering Committee	National LIFE Plan developed	Coordinated by LIFE Focal Promotion/NMEC/UNESCO/ UNICEF	15 July 2006	N160,000.00

S/ N	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	AGENCIES	TIME FRAME	BUDGET N
<b>B.</b>	<b><u>Advocacy/Sensitization</u></b>						
5	Advocacy with the Presidency. State Governors, FCT Minister, Local Government and Civil Society. Create an image for LIFE	<p>§ To give LIFE legitimacy</p> <p>§ To Pave way for resources</p> <p>§ Create an accepted image for LIFE.</p> <p>§ Create an accepted image for LIFE</p>	<p>§ Consultation - Relevant and ES NMEC, UNESCO, LIFE FP- Visits to SSA (MDGs) and DG (NOA)</p> <p>§ Lobby team constituted</p> <p>§ Dialogue with the Presidency</p> <p>§ Advocacy visit to NAN - Press Release.</p> <p>§ Advocacy with Assembly members.</p>	<p>Presidential Committee on LIFE Established,</p> <p>*Launch of a National Campaign for Literacy.</p> <p>§ Launch of a national campaign for literacy.</p>	LIFE FP, NMEC, MDG,(EFA) UBEC, UNESCO, NOA, SMOE,, AGEAS/area Councils, FRCN, NTA, State Radio Station. *FMI	July 2007; *Aug/Sept 2007	communication document N100,000.00
6	Advocacy/ Capacity for Sectoral Heads	<p>§ To share experience on LIFE with target groups</p> <p>§ To mainstream LIFE into identified related programmes</p> <p>§ To build the capacity of target on LIFE</p>	<p>§ Meetings</p> <p>§ Workshop + 5 days on proposals writing, *Advocacy with Assembly members.</p>	<p>§ LIFE mainstreamed into the related programmes of all sectors</p> <p>§ Sectoral Heads capacity building</p> <p>§ Empowering technics</p>	<p>§ National LIFE Team</p> <p>§ Directors of SAMEs, NGOs and Government Agencies, SUPEBS, SOME, MDG, (EFA) AGEAS/Area Councils, FRCN, NTA, State Radio Stations</p>	Sept/October 2006	\$26,000 = N6,000,000
7	High level Consultation for financing LIFE. National and States Assembly, LGC, Political Groups, NGOs, Civil Society.	<p>§ To mobilise adequate resource and show political will.</p>	<p>§ HME to lead consultation with IDPs and a possibly S-S E-9 Country for financial and technical assistance.</p> <p>Increased national and state allocation to literacy.</p>	<p>To develop better interaction and visibility between Nigeria and the IDPs and S-S countries.</p>	FME, IDPs, EFA/MDG, UNESCO, NMEC, NCNE	5th July 2007 or next available date	N150,000.00

S/ N	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	AGENCIES	TIME FRAME	BUDGET N
				*Scholarly scheme raised for literacy.			
8	Policy Reform	<p>§ To broaden NFE scope in the National Policy on Education To entrench NFE on UBE Law § Update/Review NMEC decree 17 of 1990 and State Edicts.</p>	<p>§ Meeting of LIFE steering committee with related Group: propose revision of NPE &amp; NMEC Decree</p>	<p>Component of NFE strengthened in National Policy on Education Revision of NMEC Decree</p>	By, National Team on LIFE UNESCO, UNICEF, UBE	2006-2007	N200,000.00
9	Social dialogue/ Mass Mobilization on the role of Literacy for Empowerment as key to national development and economic emancipation	<p>§ To popularise LIFE § To leverage mass participation for increasing literacy rate by 50%</p>	<p>§ The NOA to use its structure at National, State, LGA and Ward Levels and collaborating agencies to communicate/sell LIFE objectives and benefits to all Nigerians.</p> <p>§ Theatre involvement in popularization LIFE.</p> <p>§ LIFE Advocacy materials posters Bill Board etc.</p>	<p>§ A national steering committee on LIFE established and functional.</p> <p>§ Build a nationally accepted successful image for LIFE.</p>	IDPs to assist with funds "Grenogory" NMEC second chance (Radio TV)	2006-2008	N5m N150m to be determined N100m

S/ N	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	AGENCIES	TIME FRAME	BUDGET N
10	Collaboration with the NTS (National Teachers' Scheme) NYSC Volunteers and NYSC	§ To provide special training as facilitators to scheme members.	§ NMEC and SAMEs to train on agreed manuals /guides adapted from UNESCO and PRA-REFLECT methodology.	Effective facilitation of adult learners for personal and community development.	NMEC, NYSC, NTI/NCCE	Aug/Sept 2007	N1.5bn
	<b><u>Funds/Resource Mobilization</u></b>						
11	Recruitment of facilitators, collaboration with NYSC Community Development Programme.	§To provide additional Education graduates for Literacy work.	§ NMEC and SAMEs to train on agreed modules /guides. §Drawing up and signing MOU.	An MOU on Literacy Campaign with NYSC, NCCE.	NCCE/ NYSC - NUC, NMEC	Aug.- Sept. 2007	N1.5.m/ Group of Education graduates in each NYSC set
12	Resource Mobilisation and Partnership	§ To establish a synergy of related groups with policy/ private initiatives/ cooperation etc, § Mobilise for funds for LIFE	§ Lobby related financial Institutions § Mobilise the Organised Private Sector - § To Partners made to contribute to LIFE funds	§ Partners Forum on LIFE Established. § Ministry of Finance, Presidency and others made to contribute to LIFE Special Fund	By Focal Point, NMEC, UNESCO, UNICEF, USAID, WB, ETF, SMEs and NGOs/ Cooperatives	Aug/Dec 2007	N500,000.00
D.	<b><u>Training Needs</u></b>						

S/ N	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	AGENCIES	TIME FRAME	BUDGET N
13	Participatory Needs assessment at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ To determine the needs of the community</li> <li>§ To sensitize Local Government Officials</li> <li>§ To gather data at the local community levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Development of instrument of Administration Instruments</li> <li>§ Collation of data</li> <li>§ Capacity building for LGAs official</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Support of the Local Community enlisted</li> <li>§ Their immediate needs determined</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ By National Team Steering Committee</li> <li>§ UNESCO, UNICEF and others</li> <li>§ RAN, NOA</li> </ul>	2007 - 2008	N10m
14	Capacity Building for Leadership of NGOs/CBOs and NNCAE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ To strengthen the capacity of target groups on LIFE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Meeting</li> <li>§ Training Workshops</li> </ul>	The entire leadership of NGOs, CBOs and NNCAE improved on LIFE	By National Team on LIFE	Aug. 2007	N5m
15	Broadening the resource base of Teachers (Capacity building)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ To increase teachers knowledge base</li> <li>§ Broaden their roles</li> <li>§ Empower them on LIFE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Meeting with NUT</li> <li>§ Workshop with NUT members</li> </ul>	Teachers become LIFE vanguard	By National Team UNESCO etc	2007	N5m

S/ N	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	AGENCIES	TIME FRAME	BUDGET N
16	Development of Database on NFE issues/ Data on Literacy activities in Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ To harmonise existing programmes</li> <li>§ To provide a Management Information System (on Literacy) in NFE for improved coordination.</li> <li>§ To identify gaps.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Participation in UNESCO LAMP Project.</li> <li>§ Interface with NPC and NBOs</li> <li>§ FME/EMIS</li> </ul>	A national EMIS for the NFE Sector	NMEC, FME, NBS	2007 – 2009	N25m
	<b><u>Monitoring and Evaluation</u></b>						
17	Development of Monitoring and Evaluation tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ To train the developers</li> <li>§ To produce a monitoring tools</li> <li>§ To prepare an Evaluation Framework.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Workshop meeting pilot testing. *Procurement of vehicles for monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Monitoring and Evaluation</li> <li>§ Instruments developed</li> </ul>	By National Team, Technical Assistance from UNESCO	2007 - 2008	N3m
18	Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Periodic Review of programming/work in LIFE</li> <li>§ Follow-up language issues (1st 6 month after the Plan)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Meetings *Curriculum material production.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§Monitoring and Evaluation.</li> <li>§Language literacy materials produced.</li> </ul>	NMEC, LAN	On-going 2006 - 2015	N5m

S/ N	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	AGENCIES	TIME FRAME	BUDGET N
	<b><u>Sector Programme/Projects</u></b>						
19	Literacy by Radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Increase access to community education and literacy,</li> <li>§ Empower rural communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Production of 25 language</li> <li>§ training of facilitators</li> <li>§ Broadcast of lessons</li> <li>§ Monitoring and Evaluation</li> </ul>	2,384,000 learners made literate	Literacy by Radio in 25 local languages (NMEC)	2007	N335m
20	Setting up 109 LIFE Communities nation wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Establish model learning, conscientized communities</li> <li>§ Empower communities to carry on their developments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Conscientization</li> <li>§ Needs assessment</li> <li>§ Prioritization</li> <li>§ Action Planning</li> <li>§ Development of Priority projects.</li> <li>§ establishment of community learning centres</li> </ul>	109 LIFE Communities established	CSOs, SAMEs, LGAs, UNESCO, NMEC	2007 - 2009	N235.4m

S/ N	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	AGENCIES	TIME FRAME	BUDGET N
21	Developing the Reading competencies of all Nigeria children	<p>§ To empower 150,000 teachers and inspectors of Education with skills and strategies for promoting teaching and learning through effective use of reading and writing for 6 million Nigeria children in the school curriculum in 3 years.</p> <p>§ To training teachers to enable children read and write</p> <p>§ To promote partnership of home, community and school in literacy teaching and reading</p> <p>§ Modeling reading in problem solving</p>	<p>§ To empower teachers, make books available, teacher/pupil community participation, *Training workshop for teachers and facilitators in reading skill; * Documentation of folklores for Adult Neo literates; *Creating library corners in the community learning centres.</p>	<p>*150,000 school teachers, inspectors and facilitators would have been trained in the teaching of reading skills; *Folklores in the language of neo-literates would have been documented; *Library corners created at learning centres.</p>	IRA, RAN, NILLAN, UNICEF, UNESCO, Office of MDG; also submitted to Laura Bush Foundation.	2006/2008, 2007 - 2015, 2007 - 2009.	\$9.7m (at \$25,000 per training of 390 teachers), *N250m, N40m

S/ N	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	AGENCIES	TIME FRAME	BUDGET N
22	Empowering Rural Women in Nigeria through Literacy within the context of Improving Access to Community Educating Using Radio" Women are 2/3 of illiteracy population	<p>§ To reduce illiteracy among women and empower them to improve their living condition of their family.</p> <p>§ To establish a national radio station dedicated to link and educate to enhance achievement of MDGs.</p>	<p>§ Establishment of 220 Integrated Community Learning Centre \$5.5m</p> <p>§ Establishment of National Radio Station \$30m</p>	*220 REFLECT communities established; *A dedicated Radio Station for Adult Literacy and NFE	Submitted to Laura Bush Foundation.	2007/2008	N266.8m
23	Refurbishing Equipment and Infrastructure at the Kano Literacy Centre; Establishment of more Literacy and NFEs; Institutions, e.g. market and workplace centres, Model Resource Centres, Girl Child Centres, Adult Vocational Centres, Women Education Centres, Basic and Post Literacy Centres, the Adult Literacy training institutes.	□ To renovate the Centre and equip it to serve as a centre of excellence for Mass Literacy in the Region	- Rehabilitation of Existing facility - provision of equipment - printing press etc; *Upgrading Adult Literacy Training Institutions; *ICT for NFE.	Equipment and infrastructure improved and update for efficient Mass Literacy Services Provision nation wide, *Use of ICT; *Literacy Facilities upgraded	NMEC and Kano State Government; FME/NMEC, States	2008 2012	N252m; N8b

S/ N	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	AGENCIES	TIME FRAME	BUDGET N
24	South-South Youth Empowerment Programme	To promote Boys education and reduce boy-drop out.	*Various Innovative programmes for boys out of school; *Entrepreneurial Training and loans; *Procurement of Equipment for training.	Boys Drop Out in South-South empowered in trades of their choice	ITF, NMEC, NCNE	2007 - 2008	N80m
27	Micro finances/Credit/Extension Services	To provide credit scheme to adult learners;		Participants on Literacy Programme	EADAN, NAPEP, FMARD/FMF	2007 - 2008	N20b
28	Primary Health Care & HIV/AIDS Education	*To provide HIV/AIDS education to learners	*Training on use revised curriculum for literacy programme	Adult learners receive HIV/AIDS; *Prevention Education	FMH, NMEC	2006	N5m

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE EVALUATION OF LIFE PROJECT IN NIGERIA**

Dear colleagues,

Within the *LIFE Vision and Strategy Paper*, it is foreseen that the effectiveness of the process in support of literacy through LIFE will be assessed by the outcomes at country level. Effective monitoring and evaluation in each country and timely incorporation of lessons learnt will be critical factors for the success of UNESCO's LIFE initiative. With the aim to implement LIFE better during the next biennium (35 /C5), we think it is an appropriate moment to undertake an evaluation of LIFE implementation in each country, in collaboration with UIL.

In order to facilitate the work, we have proposed below some key issues and questions to be addressed which we expect you to please submit to me at this workshop. Please note that we plan to organise an experience sharing national and regional meeting on the results of this evaluation of LIFE by the end of this year.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Best regards

Professor T. O. Fasokun  
President, Nigeria National Council on Adult Education

**Some of the issues and questions to be addressed in the LIFE evaluation**

**(Please feel free to add more issues and questions as deemed fit)**

**1. Visibility and profile of LIFE in the country**

How was information about LIFE provided/ obtained?

Launching Workshop

information during meetings

Other  specify -----

Did this information allow you to understand LIFE as a global strategic framework and key operational mechanism for achieving the goals and purposes of the UN Literacy Decade?

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Explain briefly how LIFE has been used to underpin and improve the literacy policy in the Nigeria?

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What are the strategies to develop partnerships or alliances around LIFE at the country level to mobilize political and financial support for literacy?

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Does the country provide a framework or strategy for advocacy and resource mobilization for literacy and NFE

If yes, how does it work?

If not, which factors impede this and how to create one?

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What are the concrete actions to reinforce commitment to literacy by?

- The government (Ministries):

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- The partners at the country level (bilateral donors and NGOS)

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- The international partners (multilateral agencies and INGOS)?

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What is the impact of the actions of the government, the donors and NGOs in the implementation of literacy policy? Could you give some examples of these aspects?

- Political impact

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- mobilization of resources

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- Promoting gender equality (in policy and programmes)

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- Improving the quality of literacy programmes

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**2. How do you assess the contribution of LIFE as a catalyst for action and partnerships to boost literacy and non-formal education efforts? (At policy and programme levels? at national and local levels?)**

What are the achievements?

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Which difficulties had to be surmounted during the implementation of LIFE and how where they addressed?

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What are the results concerning the literacy situation obtained through LIFE?

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**3. How do you evaluate the collaboration with and among UNESCO entities (Headquarters, UIL, BREDa, cluster / country offices)? What would you propose for its improvement?**

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**4. Is there an experience to be shared as good or innovative practice? If yes, which one? How could it be up-scaled at national level?**

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**5. Which are the major planned activities in the country for the coming months and for which LIFE could be a supportive opportunity**

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**6. Based on the foregoing, how could the LIFE framework best be used in the country, for example as a platform for partnerships and synergic interventions**

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**7. Please make any other comments that may be useful for the success of LIFE implementation in Nigeria.**

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