

**Asia-Pacific Mid-term evaluation of LIFE
Questionnaire for LIFE focal points**

Background

The Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) was launched in October 2005 during the 33rd General Conference of UNESCO. It is a collaborative framework for action in which national governments, NGOs, civil society, the private sector, UN agencies and bilateral and multilateral agencies work together to combat illiteracy and empower disadvantaged groups, especially rural women and girls. The initiative targets 35 countries with the greatest literacy needs. In the Asia-Pacific Region, 9 countries were selected (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Nepal, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea).

Four years after the launch of the LIFE initiative, it is important to review and assess progress made in the situation of in LIFE countries in the region. A systematic assessment can provide useful information on the status and progress made in literacy especially disadvantaged and girls and women and help strengthening policies and strategies including effective programmes and activities development, resource mobilization and allocation for literacy, strengthening networking and coordination between various agencies and stakeholders. UNESCO Bangkok, as a UNESCO Regional Bureau for Asia-Pacific on Education, plans to undertake a mid-term review of LIFE. The major objectives of the evaluation are:

1. To contribute to assess progress in literacy situation in LIFE countries in the region towards achieving the EFA literacy goal of 50 per cent improvement in adult literacy, elimination of gender gaps in education and equal opportunities in access to education for, contributing to EFA and MDGs.
2. To analyze the impact of policies and strategies adopted by the countries in the region to achieve the goals of literacy
3. To formulate recommendations on how LIFE can make a difference in the 9 LIFE countries during the implementation of the 2nd half of the initiative and how UNESCO can best support with this.
4. To identify innovative approaches, lessons learned and shortcomings/gaps in the implementation of LIFE that will inform that way forward.

Substantial information will be collected from existing country reports (e.g., UNLD reports, CONFINTEA VI reports, and LIFE reports). In order to obtain comprehensive perspective, , we would like to collect additional information from 9 LIFE countries in the region through a questionnaire. Your reply will be a crucial input to the regional mid-term evaluation report as well as planning for the remaining years of LIFE.

Consultation with partners

In order to collect information from as diverse partners as possible, it is recommended that the LIFE focal point to fully consult all stakeholders to fill out the questionnaire. We encourage the country focal point to conduct interviews or a small group discussion with senior officials of Ministry of Education, EFA focal point, senior officials of department of non formal education, ARTC member organization and other NGOs to fill the questionnaire. To support the activity, UNESCO Bangkok will provide a small remuneration of US\$ 500 to the focal point.

Timeframe

Please return your reply by 31 August 2010.

QUESTIONNAIRE

(Please add extra pages for responses when necessary)

1. Awareness and visibility of LIFE in your country

How was LIFE launched and publicized?

- Workshop Information during meetings
 Other Please specify -----

Did the workshop/meeting allow you and the key stakeholders to understand and to use LIFE as an operational mechanism or strategy of implementation of the Literacy Decade? Please also provide reasons.

Following the launch of the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) and consultation with UNESCO Kabul, then Education Minister designated the LIFE as the national literacy framework in Afghanistan in order to contribute to the attainment of national literacy goals set in the NESP (and to wider nation-building strategy, Afghanistan National Development Strategy, ANDS) in 2007. The first LIFE Information meeting took place on 3rd October 2007 in the Ministry of Education, which was chaired by the Education Minister and UNESCO Kabul Director. After several LIFE information meetings with key literacy stake-holders, the LIFE Coordination Working Group has been set up, which consists of wide. The Literacy Department of MoE, as a national focal point of LIFE in Afghanistan and UNESCO drafted the Terms of References of the LIFE Coordination Working Group to clarify background and objectives of LIFE in Afghanistan, which was shared with the members of working group.

Please explain how LIFE has been used to bring the literacy issue more prominent in the national policy agenda in your country. Please list the reference documents, if any.

Under the LIFE in Afghanistan, two important documents have been developed through initiative from the Literacy Department and close collaboration with the LIFE partners. The Needs Assessment Report (NA) reviews and analyses the literacy situation in Afghanistan to identify gaps (between needs and reality in literacy situation) to be tackled in the priority areas for future literacy intervention. Based on the findings from the NA, the National Literacy Action Plan (NLAP) is envisaged as providing the government, donors and all other literacy stakeholders with a common vision, guiding principles and a sound national strategy that lays out a general framework necessary for the effective implementation of literacy programmes and plans. A vision (and targets) envisaged in the NLAP was integrated into the recent National Education Strategic Plan II (NESP II) for 2010-2014.

Did you create a coordination structure for LIFE? Who is participating in this and how is this structure working?

As mentioned above, the LIFE Coordination Working Group has been established. Over 30 organizations have been registered as a LIFE partner of the working group. Some of the key members are, listed alphabetically: the Afghan government ministries (Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Women's Affairs), ANAF AE, Cetena-Group, GTZ, Helvetas IIZ/DVV, JICA, NFUAJ, NSDP (MoLSA), UNESCO, UN-Habitat, UNICEF and WFP. The monthly LIFE coordination working group meeting has been co-chaired by the Deputy Minister for Literacy of the Afghan Ministry of Education and UNESCO Kabul, and the LIFE steering committee (consisting of the Literacy Department, ANAF AE, JICA, NFUAJ, UNESCO, UN-Habitat) functions as a secretariat for

the LIFE. Establishment of the LIFE coordination working group at sub-national level (province and district) is currently in preparation stage.

What difference has the creation of the coordination structure made to literacy work in your country?

Specific objectives of the LIFE Coordination Working Group are;

- 1. Facilitate coordination among all development partners involved in literacy to achieve literacy goals set in the NESP*
- 2. Facilitate communication concerning LIFE progress among stake-holders*
- 3. Advocate LIFE in Afghanistan at national, sub-national, regional and international levels*
- 4. Create awareness of and linkage between literacy activities in Afghanistan and global literacy goals/movements such as EFA, UNLD, UNDESD, and MDGs*
- 5. Act as a forum for information sharing and thematic guidance among LIFE partners*
- 6. Strengthen inter ministerial and inter sectoral linkage to further enhance quality of literacy education*

Not only literacy providers but also representatives from different sector (which is relevant to literacy education) participate in the Meeting, where wide range of related issues is discussed and LIFE partners are asked to make a short-presentation. Most notably, coordination with the Education Development Board (EDB) and the National Qualification Framework (NQF) opened an avenue for literacy to be mainstreamed into the wider educational/developmental agenda in the country. Consequently, the LIFE coordination working group has been designated as a sub-group of the EDB (currently the Human Resource Development Cluster), which enabled literacy stake-holders to deliver their voices to higher political/nation-building discourse in the country.

2. Advocacy and communication

Did you develop an advocacy and communication strategy around LIFE to reinforce national commitment to literacy?

If yes, how does it work?

If not, how to create one?

Yes. The LIFE in Afghanistan put strong emphasis on the International Literacy Day (ILD) as an important opportunity to advocate significance of literacy and to mobilize national commitment to literacy education among government and society in Afghanistan. Through technical and financial contribution from LIFE partners, global and national ILD posters were distributed and broadcasts were made through national television and radio channels in 2008. In 2009, the literacy campaign week was organized from 2nd to 9th September, and a large gathering took place in Kabul where the Afghan Vice President, Minister of Education as well as representatives from UNICEF and UNESCO emphasized their commitment to promoting literacy education in the country. 'The Power of Literacy', a book containing personal stories from literacy learners from around the country, was also published, giving authentic voice to the learners on how literacy has impacted their lives. Currently, LIFE website is under development process, which would further advocate literacy as well as call for more collaborative efforts among literacy stake-holders.

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

As mentioned above, the LIFE coordination meeting was designated as a sub-group of education sector under the wider Human Resource Development Cluster chaired by the Minister of Education. Through this, LIFE has had a robust channel to make its approach felt to a wider audience and push for the mainstreaming of literacy into the wider development discourses and programmes. In this context, the LIFE Action Plan 2010 has been collaboratively developed by the LIFE partners, which prioritized thematic areas and activities to focus the efforts of LIFE partners in a more coordinated and collaborative way. The Plan identified five thematic areas, namely 1) coordination, 2) advocacy, 3) campaign and public awareness, 4) capacity development and quality improvement, and 5) resource mobilization. Under each thematic area, the major activities were then enumerated, as described in the chart below.

LIFE Action Plan 2010	
Theme	Activity/Objective
Coordination	Development of structure and follow-up mechanism for Provincial/District LIFE Coordination Working Group Meetings
	<i>To expand LIFE at the sub- national level</i>
	Development of LIFE website
	<i>To share information and good practices at the provincial, national and global level</i>
	Development of Literacy/NFE-MIS
	<i>To establish a systematic and sustainable monitoring system for NFE programmes</i>
	Registration of literacy stakeholders under LIFE
	<i>To involve all literacy stakeholders in the LIFE strategic framework</i>
	Establish/ strengthen Literacy Resource Centre
<i>To establish a resource base/archive on literacy and non-formal education</i>	
Advocacy	Establishment of robust linkage with the Literacy High Commission with special focus on literacy for women
	<i>To support policies and strategies for sustainable literacy</i>
	Formulation of national guiding principles for planning and management of literacy programmes
	<i>To strengthen national capacities for literacy programme design, management and implementation</i>
Campaign and Public Awareness	Organization of Nationwide Campaign for Literacy
	<i>To raise awareness at national and sub national levels and reinforce the national commitment to literacy</i>
	Development of print and electronic media for nationwide awareness raising for adult Literacy
	<i>To ensure public – private partnership in literacy and non-formal education</i>

Capacity Development and Quality Improvement	Review and finalization of the National adult literacy curriculum and primers
	<i>To upgrade national adult literacy curriculum and primers</i>
	Establishment of linkage between literacy and the National Qualification Framework
	<i>To synergize formal and non-formal education and vocational/skill training systems</i>
	Establishment of Literacy Teachers Training Institute (LTTI)
	<i>To establish a institute specializing in non-formal and adult literacy education</i>
	Accreditation and certification of literacy learners
	<i>To develop cohesive framework for learner accreditation and certification system</i>
	Teacher's Certification
	<i>To develop a certification system for the literacy teachers</i>
Resource Mobilization	Expansion of Mosque based literacy programme
	<i>To involve Imam's in the delivery of literacy programmes</i>
	Establishment of Community Learning Centers (CLC)
	<i>To strengthen community involvement in literacy</i>
	Expansion of literacy programme for Kuchi's
<i>To organize literacy courses for Kuchi</i>	

LIFE Coordination Working Group currently put larger focus on the above prioritized activities. Some of the activities have been already initiated by LIFE partners whereas continuous efforts have been made to mobilize funding for other activities.

2. Policy for sustainable and empowering literacy

What are the concrete actions for strengthening capacities for the development of policies for sustainable literacy begun by different stakeholders (e.g. government, civil society, private sector, bilateral and multilateral donors, etc.)?

There have been several efforts by different stake-holders to strengthen capacities of policy development. Notably, UNESCO has started development of literacy/non-formal education information management system (Lit/NFE-MIS), and preparation of conducting the Afghanistan Literacy Assessment Survey (ALAS), which aim to augment the capability for accurate strategic planning of literacy intervention. JICA has started its 4 years programme to build knowledge base planning capacities of the Literacy Department through enhancing monitoring and supervision system. UN-Habitat's efforts to establish national learners/teachers qualification standards and the Literacy Teachers Training Institute are also significant contributions to develop policies of literacy interventions based on common standards. In addition, coordination with the National Qualification Framework strengthens capacities of integrate literacy policies into wider policies to make literacy more sustainable and more relevant in Afghan context.

3. Delivery of empowering literacy programmes/extent of national ownership

In your country, has there been an assessment of needs, technical support requirements, and identification of capacity gaps to design, manage and implement LIFE-related programmes?

Yes No

If yes, provide the list of relevant documents

The Needs Assessment Report (NA) for literacy, the National Literacy Action Plan (NLAP)

Does your country have a human resource development plan for LIFE-related programmes ?

Yes No

If yes, please provide the list of document

Aforementioned the Human Resource Development Cluster, in which the LIFE Coordination Working Group was designated as a sub-group developed report.

Did the financial allocation to LIFE-related activities increase since 2005?

Yes No

If yes, how significant is it?

A little significance Significance Very significance

Financial contribution to literacy sector has been significantly increased since 2005. Several large scale literacy interventions have started by international agencies such as UNESCO, UN-Habitat, UNICEF and JICA etc. However, increase of budget allocation to the literacy sector within the government's core budget is still modest.

Did your country increase staff for LIFE-related activities since 2005?

Yes No

If yes, where and what kind of staff have been increased?

	Kind of staffs (professional, administrators/managers, technical/implementers)
Ministry/departments	
Provincial/districts	<i>Professional, managers</i>
Local/grassroots level	<i>At district level, professional and managers</i>
Others	

Under the restructuring process within the Ministry of Education in 2008, number of literacy related officials at provincial and district level has been increased.

What is the impact of LIFE in the implementation of literacy policy? State some examples of some aspects (e.g. with regard to political impact, resource mobilization, gender equality, etc.) ?

The National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) by the Afghan Ministry of Education is the most important education policy, in which literacy is identified as one of the priorities for recovery and reconstruction. Through collective/collaborative efforts of the LIFE partners, the National Literacy Action Plan (NLAP) has been development, and the vision and targets of the NLAP was fully reflected into more recent NESP II. Through this practices, literacy stake-holders became sharing a common literacy vision and goals, strengthen ownership of literacy policy, and enhance understanding of necessity of more collaborative/collective efforts in planning/implementation of literacy interventions.

4. Innovation

How has LIFE been used to identify, document, and share knowledge and inspire innovations?

The monthly LIFE Coordination Meeting acts as a forum for sharing information/knowledge (through discussion/presentation) and good practices. Minutes of discussion is also circulated to LIFE partners. In addition, forthcoming LIFE website aims to disseminate good practices of LIFE partners to wider audience.

5. How do you evaluate the contribution and results of LIFE as a catalyst for action and partnerships around the literacy and non-formal education strategies? (At the political level, at the level of literacy and non-formal education strategies?)

What are the achievements?

Some of the remarkable achievements are 1) development of Needs Assessment, 2) development of National Literacy Action Plan, 3) designation of LIFE working group as a sub-group of Human Resource Development Cluster and following development of LIFE Action Plan (2010).

What are the difficulties/challenges in the implementation of LIFE related works?

While coordination at the central level has been greatly strengthened through LIFE, coordination and communication at sub-national level (province and district) is still very weak. Serious challenges are how we can avoid duplication of literacy delivery and ensure quality of literacy programme provided by different provides at field level. Those issues have been often raised by LIFE partners and some efforts have been made, but more rigorous coordination/monitoring is also imperative at sub-national level. It is hoped that establishment of Provincial LIFE Coordination Working Group can be a first step to strengthen coordination/collaboration among literacy stake-holders at field level.

Have any programmes from your country been shared as example of effective practice? If yes, which ones and on what occasions?

Progress of different programmes such as Enhancement of Literacy in Afghanistan (ELA) of UNESCO, Learning for Community Empowerment Programme (LCEP-II) of UN-Habitat, the LEAF of JICA, literacy for police/army training etc were shared through power-point presentation/discussion at the monthly LIFE Coordination Working Group Meeting.

6. What evaluation do you make of the support of the UNESCO for LIFE? What would you propose for its improvement?

UNESCO support is very vital for the LIFE to work and to be effective. Since the launch of LIFE in Afghanistan, UNESCO Kabul has been working side by side with the Ministry of Education/Literacy Department and LIFE's members for delivery of a well coordinated and objective oriented literacy program in Afghanistan. Specifically, UNESCO Kabul Has played the following role in support of LIFE Afghanistan:

1. Technical assistance: Due to specialization of UNESCO in education in general and adult education in particular, it has provided and continue to provide expertise and technical assistance in areas of need. For literacy situation analysis, planning and evaluation and system development, LIFE has benefitted from UNESCO professional team.

2. Networking: At national level and particularly at regional and international level LIFE members has benefitted from UNESCO's network (both south to south and north to south).

3. To some extent UNESCO provided funding for the LIFE joint imitative such as public campaign.

For improvement of UNESCO support to the LIFE Afghanistan, we recommend the following:

1. As we are expanding LIFE to provinces and have asked our provincial managers to coordinate LIFE members' activities in the provinces, we need to enhance their capacities for undertaking the given responsibilities as well. Therefore it is recommended to plan and carry out a capacity building program for provincial staff of LIFE members.

2. One international expert from UNESCO should be stationed in LD and work inclusively for LIFE. That person can help LIFE's members.

**7. Are there upcoming opportunities in your country in which LIFE can be further promoted?
Please provide details.**

As mentioned above, the International Literacy Day (ILD), launching of LIFE website, and establishment of Provincial LIFE Coordination Working Group are expected to further promote LIFE in Afghanistan.

8. How can LIFE position itself better to play its role in your country, as a platform for strengthening partnerships, as a catalyst to further promote literacy in your country?

As mentioned above, LIFE has greatly strengthened coordination and communication at the central, but weak coordination and communication at sub-national level (province and district) is still serious challenge to deliver quality literacy education to large number of Afghan population in effective and efficient manner. Whilst, LIFE in Afghanistan needs to further encourage participation from literacy providers and other sectors at central level, partnership and coordination at sub-national needs to be established urgently, so that national policy/vision can be shared at field level whereas innovation/good practices as well as field reality/needs can be addressed to the policy makers more efficiently.

THANK YOU!