Contribution prepared for the *Final Evaluation of the Implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD): Education for All*

Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to be submitted to the UN General Assembly at its 68th session

Literacy from a Right to Education Perspective

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UNESCO

2013

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I.   The Right to Education, the Right to Literacy and Human Rights

According to various international normative instruments, the overriding goal of education is to achieve the full development and realization of individual human beings. With this goal in mind, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), among others, enshrine the human right of every individual to education.

The human right to education, as a social good, constitutes a solid foundation for human development. Its implementation, protection, fulfillment and promotion can lead to the creation of opportunities, freedom of choice, economic sustainable growth, improvement of health conditions, poverty reduction, social mobility enhancement, and prevention of autocratic rule (Coomans, 2007, p.185). In other words, education is a means to risk-prevention, as well as a tool that can help improve the human quality of life in a sustainable manner. Not only does the right to education have intrinsic value, but it is indispensable for the exercise of all human rights. A quality education as a right becomes the concrete key that empowers individuals to fully develop their personalities and participate in society through the acquisition of knowledge, human values and skills. Thus, education as a right can provide a solid tool in poverty reduction strategies worldwide.

However, the basic foundation of the education of human beings lays principally on being able to understand, read, write and calculate. These essential life skills translate into the broader term of "literacy". Since they are foundational skills in order to exercise the right to education, literacy can thus be considered as an essential right. General Comment No. 13 on the right to education adopted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights explains that article 1 of the World Declaration on Education for All defines "basic learning needs" as "essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning".

Literacy for all is at the heart of basic education for all. Creating literate environments and societies is essential in order to achieve the goals of eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy. It is evident that a vital component of the right to education is literacy; not only as a tool, but as a right that helps achieve the fulfillment of this universal human right, the full development of the person, and therefore, the possibility of enjoying and exercising all other human rights.

II.   Education For All (2000) and the United Nations Literacy Decade (2002)

In April 2000, more than 1,100 participants from 164 countries gathered in Dakar, Senegal for the World Education Forum. Teachers, prime ministers, academics, policymakers, and non-governmental bodies to the heads of major international organizations adopted the "Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments"[1]. The Dakar Framework for Action lays out a set of goals and strategies for achieving the Education for All (EFA) goals by 2015. The Framework reaffirms "the vision of the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990) that all children, young people and adults have the fundamental human right, to a basic education that will develop their talents, improve their lives and transform their societies". All of the six EFA goals[2], as established by the Dakar Framework, concern literacy, which is explicitly targeted in three of the goals:

- **Goal 3:** meeting learning needs of youth and adults.
- **Goal 4:** achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy.
- **Goal 6:** achieving recognized and measurable learning outcomes by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and life skills.

Almost two years later, on 18 January 2002, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution No. 56/116[3], thereby proclaiming the ten-year period beginning on 1 January 2003 the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD). The UNLD was designed around the outcome of the World Education Forum and the special session of the General Assembly for the five-year review of the World Summit for Social Development.

The launch of the UNLD recalled the right of every individual to education as inalienable and adopted Resolution No. 49/184[4] of 23 December 1994, by which the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education was proclaimed for the ten-year period beginning on 1 January 1995. All governments were urged to intensify their efforts to eradicate illiteracy, to direct education towards the full development of the human personality, and to the strengthening of respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Resolution No. 56/116 affirms that "literacy is crucial to the acquisition, by every child, youth and adult, of essential life skills that enable them to address the challenges they can face in life, and represents an essential step in basic education,

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[1] The Dakar Framework for Action, EFA, is available online at
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001211/121147e.pdf

[2] The six EFA goals are, as established by the Dakar Framework of 2000: 1) Expand early childhood care and education; 2) Ensure universal primary education; 3) Meet youth and adult learning needs; 4) Improve levels of adult literacy; 5) Ensure gender parity and equality in education; and 6) Improve the quality of education.

[3] General Assembly Resolution No. 56/116 is available online at
http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/56/116&Lang=E

[4] General Assembly Resolution No. 49/184 is available online at
http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/49/184&Lang=E

which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century". The UNLD urged "Member States, in close partnership with international organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations, to promote the right to education for all and to create conditions for all for learning throughout life". Therefore, governments were urged to take the lead in the coordination of UNLD activities at the national level, bringing all relevant national actors together in sustained dialogue on policy formulation, implementation and evaluation of literacy efforts, as well as to lend greater financial and material support to increase literacy rates and achieve the EFA goals and those of the UNLD.

The ten years of the Decade have already elapsed since its launch in 2002. The year 2012 marked the last year of the UNLD and the half-way point of the implementation of UNESCO's Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE). On that note, UNESCO organized the High-level International Round Table on Literacy on International Literacy Day (ILD), which is celebrated globally on 8 September of each year, as a means to create the opportunity for reflection, planning and action for the remaining three years for achieving the EFA goals. The Round Table was part of a three-day forum, entitled "Reaching the 2015 Literacy Target: Delivering on the promise", which was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 6-8 September 2012. The forum involved over 40 countries facing literacy challenges, including the 36 countries of LIFE, and contributed into the final evaluation process of the UNLD. This was an opportunity that allowed countries to reflect on the achievements of the Decade and plan for concrete actions to scale up efforts over the next three years by building on effective existing practices as well as envisioning the post-2015 literacy scenario and the challenges to be collectively addressed.

Hence, the key questions that must be addressed in order to evaluate the Decade are: what measures have been taken at an international, regional and national level since the period 2000-2002 to implement the UNLD, in contribution to the achievement of the EFA Goals? How has literacy been enshrined in legal frameworks at an international, regional and national level during this period? Below are some examples of answers to these questions.

III.   **The Legal Framework of the Right to Literacy: international, regional and national level**

A. **Implementation of the right to literacy at the international level since 2000**

How has the "Right to Literacy" been legally framed at the international level since the year 2000? What instruments have been developed since then and how do they enshrine literacy?

In order to achieve the EFA goals and implement the core of the UNLD, activities and initiatives are dependent on national governments, partnerships and coordination between governments, institutions and civil society at an international, regional and national level. Obligations and political commitments under international instruments must be reflected in national constitutions, legislation, policies, strategies, programs and outcomes. Literacy considered not only as part of

the right to education but as a right itself, should therefore be reflected in the legal and administrative measures of governments worldwide. Furthermore, the right to education must be enforced in administrative courts and national human rights institutions, as well as by Ombudspersons where they exist. In violation of their right to education and its components, such as literacy, citizens must be able to have legal recourse before the law courts or administrative tribunals in order to make the exercise of their right effective and make governments accountable for protecting their right when violated.

Since the year 2000, two international normative instruments that enshrine literacy within their texts have been adopted: 1) the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2008 (CRPD), and 2) the Beijing E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting Declaration of 2001. This does not mean that at an international level other measures or initiatives have been taken to foster literacy, but as of normative instruments adopted at an international level since the year 2000, these are the two instruments that are of highest mention.

In the CRPD, literacy is conceived through different means for persons with disabilities. Fulfilling the human right imperative requires more resources as the following articles demonstrate. According to article 24(3) States Parties shall take appropriate measures, including:

- *Facilitating the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication and orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring;*
- *Facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community;*
- *Ensuring that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, deaf or deafblind, is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social development.*

Moreover, in order to help ensure the realization of this right, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to employ teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language and/or Braille, and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education. Such training shall incorporate disability awareness and the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities (article 24(3)). Article 24(5) of the CRPD establishes the right to lifelong learning, which includes literacy, for persons with disabilities.

In 2001, the E-9 adopted the E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting in Beijing, China. The nine high-population countries reaffirmed their commitment to the goals set by the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, March 1990), to the Delhi Declaration (December 1993), and to the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) in order to meet basic learning needs of all their peoples and set up strategies to face the challenges regarding the right to education, such as eliminating

illiteracy, reducing the gender gap, providing early childhood education, eliminating geographical educational disparities especially in rural areas, improving quality of education and providing teacher training and assuring safe and caring school environments.

B. Implementation of the right to literacy at regional level since 2000

Since the year 2000, five regional normative instruments that enshrine literacy within their texts have been adopted: 1) the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union of 2000 (Europe); 2) the Dar-Es-Salaam Statement of Commitment "The Education to Build the new Africa" of 2002 (Africa); 3) the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa of 11 July 2003 (Africa); 4) Resolution of the 29th Conference "The role of parliaments in the promotion of Education and Culture in Africa" of November 2006 (Africa); and 5) the African Youth Charter of 2006 (Africa).

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission solemnly proclaimed the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union on 7 December 2000 in Nice, France. Article 14 of the Charter enshrines the right to education. Although it does not explicitly enshrine "literacy" as an element, it does refer to "vocational and continuing training" and "compulsory education":

> *1. Everyone has the right to education and to have access to vocational and continuing training.*
> *2. This right includes the possibility to receive free compulsory education.*

The Eighth Conference of Ministers of Education of African Member States (MINEDAF VIII) met in Dar-Es-Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, on 2-6 December 2002. During the Conference the MINEDAF adopted the Dar-Es-Salaam Statement of Commitment. In this Commitment eliminating illiteracy is conceived as a main challenge. The Conference reaffirmed the strong political commitment of the States to education for all, which should take the form of various indispensable reform measures, including those relating to the allocation and rationalization of resources. Among the concrete measures to be adopted, particular attention was agreed to be devoted to the following goals:

- *To increase the percentage of the primary education budget in the education budget (not below 50 %), not forgetting the pre-school level, non-enrolled children and adult literacy.*
- *To allocate sizeable resources in order to ensure equity with regard to girls' education and literacy and training of women by eliminating discrimination.*

According to article 12 of the Commitment, particular attention should also be devoted to an inter-African cooperation that entails more intensive exchange of information, experience and experts in the field of education in general, including non-formal education for non-enrolled children as well as adult literacy. Moreover, article 13(c) establishes that for the promotion of education that is life-long, the following actions must be undertaken:

(i) to take intensive actions to promote literacy and post literacy education as a fundamental learning tool throughout life and within the framework of the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012); […]
(iv) to provide appropriate training to supervisory and training staff in literacy and non-formal education for young people and adults, based on the guidelines identified, and to improve the living and working conditions of such staff.

On 11 July 2003, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa was adopted by the African Union. The Protocol assures women's right to full access to education without discrimination enhancing equality of opportunity, providing for gender sensitization and human rights education at all levels of education curricula. Endeavors to increase enrolment and retention of women in school and elimination of all stereotypes in textbooks, encourages positive action towards elimination of illiteracy among women, promotion of women's education and training at all levels and all disciplines and inclusion of women with disabilities in professional and vocational education. Article 12 enshrines the right to education and training, specifying that States Parties shall take specific positive action to, inter alia, promote literacy among women, as well as take all appropriate measures with the view of achieving full realization of this right, and shall, in particular, avail multiple access points for education and skills development including opportunities outside of mainstream educational institutions, e.g., workplace skills development, distance learning, adult literacy and national youth service programs.

Likewise, Resolution of the 29th Conference "The role of parliaments in the promotion of Education and Culture in Africa" was adopted by the African Parliamentary Union on 28 November 2006. The Resolution recommends greater effort in overcoming illiteracy and promoting basic education, as well as creating opportunities for the excluded to take part in the educational system. It urges for greater effort to be made in order to overcome illiteracy and promote basic education by providing the necessary financial resources, the appropriate teaching means and competent teachers.

Finally, the African Youth Charter was adopted by the African Union in July 2006. The Preamble of the Charter highlights the concern over the situation of African youth, many of whom are marginalized from mainstream society through inequalities in income, wealth and power, unemployment and underemployment, infected and affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, living in situations of poverty and hunger, experiencing illiteracy and poor quality educational systems, restricted access to health services and to information, exposure to violence including gender violence, engaging in armed conflicts and experiencing various forms of discrimination. Furthermore, the Charter, like the Protocol, affirms that States Parties shall take all appropriate measures with a view to achieving the full realization of the right to education and in particular to avail multiple access points for education and skills development including opportunities

outside of mainstream educational institutions, e.g., workplace skills development, distance learning, adult literacy and national youth service programs (article 13.4(g)).

C. Implementation of the Right to Literacy at national level since 2000

i. Constitutional frameworks for literacy

During the UNLD some countries have adopted constitutions that enshrine the right to literacy as an essential component of the right to education. For example, in **Afghanistan**'s Constitution of 2004 the Government is obliged to implement literacy programs. Likewise, **Bahrain**'s Constitution of 2002 specifies that the "necessary plan to combat illiteracy is laid down by law". Several other countries (**Iraq, Myanmar, Senegal, and South Sudan**) have adopted constitutions during the literacy decade that place the primary responsibility to eradicate illiteracy on the Government. For example, **the Dominican Republic**'s Constitution of 2010 states that the State shall eradicate illiteracy and ensure education for people with disabilities (article 63(6)). Moreover, article 68 of the Constitution of **Colombia** (as last amended in 2009) enshrines the goals of the eradication of illiteracy and the education of individuals with physical or mental deficiencies or with exceptional capabilities as special obligations of the State. The goals of adult education consist of updating knowledge and training of adults, eradicating illiteracy and develop in adults the capacity to participate in the economic, political, social, cultural, and communitarian life (article 51).

ii. Legislative frameworks for literacy

Many countries have reformed their legislation with regards to literacy during the UNLD. Below are some examples of how literacy was translated into legislation. These examples were chosen with the following criteria: that they reflect a worldwide overview by maintaining a regional balance and that the policy was adopted between the years 2000-2012. Moreover, they do not intend to be exhaustive.

A common type of legislation is to set the eradication of illiteracy as a goal of the educational system and let such an ambition guide the policy making. For example, **Argentina**, **Djibouti**[5] and **Liberia**[6] have adopted this legislative technique. The Argentinean National Education Law

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[5] The Law on the orientation of Djibouti's education system of 10 July 2000 (*Loi portant orientation du système éducatif Djiboutien*) stipulates that the purpose of education is to make the Djibouti people capable of contributing to the social and cultural development of their country (article 7), and that the education system has the objective of, inter alia, combatting illiteracy by removing socio-economic and cultural barriers, especially among women (article 8).

[6] Liberia's Education Law of 2001 outlines the country's Education Policy's cardinal principles, such as, reducing illiteracy by providing quality, realistic and practical education at all levels for all citizens without discrimination, enhancing women's rights and ensuring equal access to all possible opportunities.

No. 26/206 stipulates the goal of guaranteeing literacy as well as compliance with the compulsory nature of schooling and its link with the job market.

Another type of initiative that many countries employ is to institutionalize pathways, through law, to achieve literacy for those who do not complete basic education. For example, the Education Law of **Bahrain** frames the goal to combat illiteracy and innumeracy in connection to the provisions of a free of charge basic education (articles 7 and 9). In its legislative framework the goal of eradicating illiteracy and innumeracy, is called a "national responsibility" and the law calls for the development of effective strategies that should be adopted to encourage lifelong continuing education. Likewise, the **Republic of Korea** revised the Lifelong Education Law of 1999 in 2007 in order to strengthen lifelong education and to frame literacy in this light throughout the 21st century.

According to **Lithuania**'s Law on the Amendment on the Law on Education (2006), the purpose of basic education is to provide an individual with the basics of moral, sociocultural and civic maturity, general literacy and the basics of technological literacy, to cultivate national consciousness, to foster an intent and the ability to make decisions as well as to continue learning (article 10).

In **Bolivia**, the Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Pérez Education Law No. 70 of 2010 establishes that the Bolivian Education System guarantees the implementation of literacy and post-literacy policies and programs to facilitate young people and adults to continue their education by safeguarding the intra-cultural, inter-cultural and multilingual character of the State (article 5(17)). Bolivia serves is an example of how the principles of access to and the continuation of education for all are executed by combating illiteracy, since illiteracy is associated with extreme poverty, marginalization and cultural discrimination as a result of historical processes (Sanchez Moretti, 2012). Moreover, provisions of literacy under Law No. 70 implement article 84 of the Bolivian Constitution, which stipulates that both the State and society have the duty to eradicate illiteracy through programs that are sensible to the cultural and linguistic reality of the Bolivian population.

iii.   Policy frameworks for literacy

An overview of literacy oriented policies since the year 2000 could shed light on the way that the UNLD has been translated into national policies. Below are national policy examples that have the goal of not only achieving literacy, but of implementing and fulfilling the right to literacy for all individuals. Just as the legislative examples above, these examples – which are presented in alphabetical order – were chosen with the following criteria: that they reflect a worldwide overview by maintaining a regional balance and that the policy was adopted between the years 2000-2012. These examples do not intend to be exhaustive.

In **Australia**, the National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (NIELNS) was launched in 2000 as an element of the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program. The objective of NIELNS set to achieve literacy and numeracy for indigenous students at levels comparable to those achieved by other young Australians (Drabsch, 2004). Moreover, in June 2011, all Education Ministers released the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan (2010-2014)[7], after it received endorsement by the Council of Australian Governments. The Action Plan identifies national, systemic and local actions in six priority domains that evidence shows will contribute to improved outcomes in Indigenous education. The priority domains of the Plan are:

- Readiness for school
- Engagement and connections
- Attendance
- Literacy and numeracy
- Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development
- Pathways to real post-school options
- Students from minority groups

The Australian Government continues to provide funding under the English as a Second Language-New Arrivals (ELS-NA) Program[8] to enable newly-arrived school students from non-English speaking backgrounds to gain the English language skills they need to succeed at school and beyond school. The 2007-2008 budget provided additional funding for children of refugees. Targeted approaches such as the Smarter Schools National Partnerships (Literacy and Numeracy, Low Socio-economic Status School Communities and Improving Teacher Quality) are resulting in more indigenous students receiving the best literacy and numeracy teaching available, through for example, professional development for indigenous education workers to enable the delivery of bilingual education.

In **Austria**, in light of current developments and trends regarding the utilization of new technologies and of the Internet, but also with a view to emphasizing their positive potentials and capabilities, the IT steering group of the Ministry of Education has set out "Web 2.0 – making sensible use of IT networks"[9] as the core theme for the current school year. The objectives is to impart media literacy by taking the ICT and media use of young people as the starting point, involving the potential of social networks, upgrading the know-how about safer internet and encouraging critical and reflected use of the media. Consumer education is among the aspects considered.

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[7] For more information please consult the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations at:
http://deewr.gov.au/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-education-action-plan-2010-2014
[8] For more information please consult the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations at:
http://deewr.gov.au/english-second-language-new-arrivals-program
[9] For more information, please consult: http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/20247/aen_65.pdf

In order to implement the legislative and administrative regulations regarding the eradication of illiteracy and adult education, such as the Ministerial Decree No. 1474 of 2007 on the Regulation concerning registration for programs of continuing education and the Ministerial Decree No. 154 of 2012 amending some of the provisions of Ministerial Decree No. 674 of 2012 on the Regulation of registration and acceptance on programs of continuing education, the Ministry of Education in **Bahrain** has provided many facilities and programs to help achieve success in eradicating illiteracy[10]. These include:

a) The opening of nursery schools for mothers studying in continuing education centers.
b) The provision of transport for learners and teachers, especially women.
c) The provision of counseling and careers advice in the academic year 2006-2007 to help learners increase their self-confidence and to guide them in the direction that closely corresponds to their needs, abilities and inclinations, as well as to motivate them to continue learning.
d) Piloting the urgent program to eradicate illiteracy in the form of two intensive training courses.
e) The creation and piloting of a program based on the idea of integrating the skills of family education with those of literacy (in the Arabic language).
f) The organization of literacy courses for non-native speakers of Arabic through a program to eradicate illiteracy among them.
g) The organization of a program to put an end to computer illiteracy for male and female learners who are studying in the literacy and continuing education programs.
h) The trial run of the intensive program in reading, writing and arithmetic in the literacy centers.
i) The implementation of a program to build reading skills among the semi-literate which relies on the exploitation of their writing skills and to promote these skills in a functional way employing all reading aids. Training for this began in the academic year 2005-2006 with the purpose of creating senior female instructors to work in the program. Their performance in the following years would be used a basis for establishing this type of training in literacy centers.

One of the main features of **Bangladesh**'s 2010 National Education Policy (BNEP)[11] is creating an illiterate-free society. With this goal, the Post Literacy and Continuing Education for Human Development Project-1 (PLCEHD-1) is being implemented in 32 districts. The main objectives of the project are: to develop human resources of the country, to include about 1.3 million neo-literates and school dropouts from the 11-45 age group in post literacy and continuing education

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[10] Information extracted from Bahrain's State Report within the framework of the 8th Consultation on the Implementation of the 1960 UNESCO Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education, 2012.
[11] For more information please consult Bangladesh's National Education Policy (2010) at: http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Bangladesh/Bangladesh_National_Education_Policy_2010.pdf

programs to consolidate, maintain and upgrade their literacy skills, as well as to help develop their life pattern by increasing their incomes through providing trade-based skills training. The project was started in 2001 and completed in December 2007 covering about 71 percent of the targeted population. Furthermore, BNFE has been implementing the "Post Literacy and Continuing Education for Human Development Program-2" (PLCEHD-2) since 2002. The Government of Bangladesh has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank and grant from the Department for International Development and Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation towards the cost of the project. The total budget provision for the program is about Taka 6014.06 million for five years. The project period is from July 2002 to June 2013, with Division 6, District 29, Upazilla 210 as the location of the project, and, with 1.2 million neo-literates of the 11-45 age group as the target group.

In **Belgium**, the Flemish Government approved a "Strategic Literacy Plan" at the end of June 2005 (Ministry of Education and Training of the Flemish Community, 2009). It led to an operational action plan which included quite a number of partners: the training providers, employers and employees as well as welfare organizations. The plan ended in 2011, shall be evaluated to serve as a basis for a new one. Moreover, on 2 February 2005, a cooperation agreement was entered into by the French Community, the Walloon Region, and the French Community Commission (COCOF) on literacy training for adults. The agreement aims to improve cooperation of policies, reinforce literacy policies, and draw up an annual assessment, since policies on literacy are based on the actions of different administrative bodies. A steering committee has been set up, in which the following organizations are represented:

- The Continuing Education Service of the General Directorate for Culture, the Department of Social Advancement Education, and the Department for Equal Opportunities (French Community).
- The Social Cohesion Service, the Service for Vocational Training, and the Bruxelles-Formation Partnership Service (Brussels-Capital Region).
- The Community and Regional Office for Vocational Training and Employment, the Department for Social Work and Immigration, and the General Directorate for the Economy and Employment (Walloon Region).

Moreover, literacy courses aim to assist learners in acquiring prerequisites and in updating knowledge related to reading, writing and calculating, with a view to attending vocational training that leads to a qualification, or basic education courses. These courses are targeted at people who do not hold a primary education certificate (*certificat d'études de base*) or equivalent diploma. Some providers of literacy courses also teach French as a foreign language to adults.

In **Brazil**, between 1997 and 2004, literacy partnerships included 2,050 municipalities, 144 companies and 209 higher education institutions. The cost per learner was US$62, including grants to facilitators, local coordinators, snacks and textbooks for learners, and training and

evaluation. In 2003, the Brazilian Government launched an accelerated initiative The Literate Brazil Programme (*Programa Brasil Alfabetizado*) funding government agencies and NGOs with experience in adult literacy to enable them to expand their coverage. The program was set to be coordinated by the Ministry of Education and operate through a highly decentralized structure. It functions in 3,699 municipalities, just over 1,000 of which have been accorded priority status because they have illiteracy rates over 25%. In 2004, the initiative expanded its partnerships with local governments. Further decentralization was planned for 2005 (GMR, 2006, p. 233).

In accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations Literacy Decade, **Croatia** launched the "For a Literate Croatia: The Way to a Desirable Future - A Decade of Literacy in Croatia 2003 - 2012" project (Agency for Adult Education, 2008). This project is under the authority of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, while stake-holders are government offices in the counties, primary schools and adult education institutions that implement licensed primary education for adults. Since the beginning of the project about 25 million HRK were secured in the budget. The project allows people older than 15 years to complete primary education and to train for simple tasks in an occupation. Currently, the project involves about 6000 participants, of which about 50% of students are older than 15 and younger than 30 years, about 40% of participants are older than 30 but younger than 50 years, and about 10% of participants older than 50 years. The project is currently implemented in 18 counties and in the City of Zagreb, and out of the total number of registered participants 70% have completed primary education and training for simple jobs. In terms of gender representation, about 70% of participants were male and about 30% were female[12].

In **Cuba**, the "*Yo, Sí Puedo*" (*Yes, I Can*) Literacy Program was launched by the Cuban Government in 2001 thanks to the initiative of Leonela Relys Diaz, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences. With cooperation from Cuba's Latin American and Caribbean Pedagogical Institute (IPLAC), the program has been and is being implemented in about 28 countries worldwide[13]. Cuban teachers in 28 countries have implemented the program's methodology thereby helping about 3,605,955 people become literate as of December 2007. This initiative is an example of South-South cooperation, which began in Haiti through radio lessons in 2002 and in Venezuela through video classes in 2005 (Torres, 2009, p. 32). The program's methodology allows students to become literate in a minimum of 7 weeks. Its formative structure is divided in 3 stages: training; teaching how to read and write; and consolidation. A pupil's knowledge level is measured through a pedagogical diagnostic that can classify the pupil as: 1) "pure illiterate", i.e., pupils who have no relation whatsoever with education and have never been to

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[12] Information extracted from Croatia's State Report within the framework of the 8th Consultation on the Implementation of the 1960 UNESCO Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education, 2013.

[13] In alphabetical order, the "*Yo, Sí Puedo*" Literacy Program method has been or is being implemented in the following countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Mozambique, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Tanzania , Timor Leste, Uruguay and Venezuela.

school; 2) "semi-illiterate", i.e., pupils who have gone to school or know how to write some letters or words, or have forgotten what was learned due to the lack of practice; or 3) "special illiterates", i.e., pupils with special educational needs due to physical and/or mental restrictions.

The Federal Ministry of Education of **Ethiopia** formulated the Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) Framework, Guide Line and Implementation strategy[14]. Curriculum has been developed thereof, which was followed by raising awareness of teachers and stakeholders on the promotion of adult education. The federal member states of Ethiopia have been capacitated to uphold FAL in their respective regions. A Memorandum of understanding has been signed with other line ministries, such as the Ministry of Women, Children and youth affairs, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affair, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Agriculture, with the aims of advancing FAL.

The current policies and goals of the Ministry of Education of **Greece** rest on five pillars, inter alia, digital convergence (equality of access, reducing digital illiteracy, developing new technology distance teaching, etc.) – noting in this regard the current initiative of the Ministry of National Education to provide all entering lower secondary school students with a free laptop computer at the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year. Furthermore, multilingualism, language learning and the promotion of learning of the Greek language abroad are also a priority (European Commission, 2009).

In the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, community learning centers initiated by the Literacy Movement Organization (LMO)[15], a government agency, have enrolled 3.1 million illiterates from 2000 to 2006 in preliminary basic education courses. Around three-quarters of those enrolled successfully complete their courses. The LMO is the main and largest literacy organization in Iran with more than 50,000 instructors and 6,000 administrators working all over the country and its branches are located in more than 300 villages of 28 provinces. LMO has been actively promoting literacy and continuing education, as well as conducting various literacy programs for illiterate children and adults in the country, including army, prisons, factory workers and minority tribes. The majority of the target groups of its literacy programs are women and girls in rural areas, and the Literacy Resource Centre is expected to contribute to further improvement and expansion of LMO's efforts to provide them with literacy and life skills. Expenses for literacy programs, informal education and short-term technical-vocational training courses are sponsored by the government (GMR, 2010, p. 102).

According to the Education Strategic Vision for 2020 of the **Lao People's Democratic Republic**, the educational vision will focus on, inter alia, eradicating illiteracy among the population by providing people living in absolute poverty with the means of improving their quality of life. The Government has engaged in great efforts to solve the illiteracy problem. The

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[14] For more information on the FAL Framework, please consult:
http://www.adeanet.org/triennale/Triennalestudies/subtheme2/2_3_04_MoE%20Ethiopia_en.pdf
[15] For more information please consult the Literacy Resource Centre Network of the Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO: http://www.accu.or.jp/litdbase/literacy/lrc/index.htm

Ministry of Education, through the Department of Non-Formal Education (NFE), provide four types of NFE programs to improve living and working conditions and to develop activities oriented towards self-sufficiency and employment: literacy training for out-of-school adults, usually organized at the village level and conducted during the evenings or weekends; upgrading programs for the general adult population by enabling them to gain primary, lower secondary and upper secondary equivalency in full-time compressed programs; upgrading courses for government cadres organized at both the provincial and district levels, sometimes using special facilities; and skills development programs that are linked to literacy programs are offered to illiterate adults and out-of-school youth (Ministry of Education of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, 2008).

The Institute of Training and Development of **Mauritius** carries out the 9 month part-time Second Chance Program to provide basic and advanced literacy and numeracy and life management skills to 16-21 year-olds who have dropped out of the school system and are not in full-time employment. Since its implementation in 2009, about 468 youngsters for both Mauritius and Rodrigues, successfully completed the program while for the third run, which started in March 2011, 333 participants were enrolled in both Mauritius and Rodrigues. This Program aims to prepare the youth for a vocational training program which would eventually qualify them to be selected for the Circular Migration Program[16].

The *Instituto Nacional para la educación de los adultos* (INEA) is **Mexico**'s decentralized institution that has institutionalized an adult education model at country- level. INEA's mission is to contribute so that youth and adults of 15 years and over can have more opportunities to improve their life conditions by offering them basic education and better support to allow them to develop their skills and competences for life and work. In order to achieve this, the INEA carries out the Education for Life and Work Model program (*Modelo Educación para la Vida y el Trabajo –* MEVyT), as well as the New Focus on Basic Education Model program for children of ages 10-14 years (*Modelo Nuevo Enfoque de Educación Básica para primaria de jóvenes 10-14*) ; children who did not start or continue primary education. The INEA's infrastructure is composed of: 144,000 attention centers in the thirty-one federal entities and the Federal District; 123,709 study circles; 18,189 meeting points; and 2,508 community plazas[17]. The INEA serves about 2.4 million people a year, and from 2006 until 2010 the Indigenous Bilingual MEVyT was extended unto seventeen of Mexico's federal entities (INEA, 2010). The INEA counts on literacy materials in forty-six indigenous languages as well as on "The Word" (*La Palabra*) and mathematical modules to carry out its literacy mission. Other governmental institutions that contribute to the national literacy mission include the Centers for Adult Basic

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[16] Information extracted from Mauritius' State Report within the framework of the 8th Consultation on the Implementation of the 1960 UNESCO Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education, 2013.

[17] The Community Plazas initiative represents another element of INEA's overall educational strategy. These plazas are located in rural and peripheral urban locations around the country and are equipped with computers, Internet connection, a video library and a range of other media (Valdes, 2009).

Education, the National Council for the Promotion of Education, night schools, cultural missions and civil society organizations. Furthermore, Cuba's *Yo, Sí Puedo* method has been running in a number of municipalities in seven of Mexico's thirty-two states (Valdes, 2009). According to the 2005 census, the illiteracy rate among indigenous groups, which represent 10% of the total population, was 36.1% compared to the national illiteracy rate of 8.4%. The illiteracy rate among indigenous women was even higher (Valdes, 2009).

In **Nauru**, the Youth Affairs Division within the Department of Education offers programs that address illiteracy for early school leavers. These programs also include life skills and entrepreneurial skills. A concreting project involving functional literacy and numeracy plus concreting skills has also been implemented in the local communities[18].

With the implementation of "We, Mother and Daughter are at School for Literacy" campaign in **Turkey** (2008), illiterate mothers and daughters have had a chance to become literate with free literacy courses in Public Training Centers (European Training Foundation, 2011). This campaign aims to target the literacy of 3 million adults in 4 years' time[19].

In **Venezuela**, with the mandate of alphabetizing one million people in one year (July 2003-July 2004), the Robinson Mission was one of the first social missions of the country that gave way to others, e.g., the Ribas Mission and the Sucre Mission. The Robinson Mission aimed to alphabetize without any type of discrimination. It achieved in including the penitentiary system benefiting 1,554 prisoners. The mission has two phases: the first aims to eliminate illiteracy and the second to complete primary education. About 70,000 people from aboriginal groups (i.e., *kariña, wayuu, piaroa, jiwi, yanomami, warao, piapoco, warenquena, barí, yekuana, pemón, maquiritare, yukpa*, and *pumé*) also participated, out of which 38,500 women and 31,500 men. Moreover, the *Yo, Sí Puedo* manual was translated into some of the indigenous languages and adapted to the Braille system for the blind. About 7,154 people with special needs were included as well (Ministry of Communication and Information, 2005, p.13). Two and a half million Family Libraries (*Bibliotecas Familiares*), which contained twenty-five books each, were distributed to graduates of the Robinson Mission in 2004-2006 (Torres, 2009, p. 27).

D. Monitoring Literacy

Getting closer to achieving the six EFA goals and implementing the UNLD becomes more natural for governments by addressing national education challenges through policy-making and initiatives. However, this depends on the capacity of a country's governance, implementation and follow-up mechanisms. To follow-up literacy progress at country-level, mechanism that

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[18] Information extracted from Nauru' State Report within the framework of the 8th Consultation on the Implementation of the 1960 UNESCO Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education, 2013.

[19] For more information about the campaign, please consult: http://www.etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/F0848DABBB254B06C125794A0035C5CB/$file/Adult%20literacy%20education_Turkey.pdf

involve statistics, indexes, rates and indicators must be further developed and well implemented in order not only to measure what percentage of a country's population is literate, but to measure the implementation and fulfillment of the right to literacy. This latter goal would imply a mechanism that evaluates qualitative and quantitative indicators across a country's constitutional, legislative and policy frameworks.

UNESCO, as a central international forum where Member States can draw up common rules and establish international normative instruments that are legally binding, serves as a standard-setting and monitoring actor with the mission of advocating and protecting the ethical, moral, normative and intellectual issues of our times. For example, UNESCO measures the progress towards the EFA goals through the EFA Development Index (EDI). The EFA Development Index (EDI) is a composite index that provides a snapshot of overall progress of national education systems towards achieving the EFA goals (GMR, 2012, p. 306). Due to data constraints, the composite index currently focuses only on the four most easily quantifiable goals, with literacy being one of them:

- **Universal primary education** (Goal 2): measured by the primary adjusted net enrolment ratio (ANER), which measures the proportion of primary school age children enrolled in either primary or secondary education.
- **Adult literacy** (Goal 4): measured by the literacy rate for those aged 15 years and over.
- **Gender parity and equality** (Goal 5): measured by the gender-specific EFA index (GEI), an average of the gender parity indexes of the primary and secondary gross enrolment ratios and the adult literacy rate. The gender parity aspect of the goal is measured by the gender parity index (GPI) of the primary and secondary gross enrolment ratio. Owing to the lack of cross-country comparable measures of gender disparities in learning outcomes, which are an aspect of gender equality, the GEI uses the GPI of the adult literacy rate as a proxy indicator for this second part of the gender goal.
- **Quality of education** (Goal 6): measured by the survival rate until grade 5.

One indicator is used as a proxy measure for each of the four EFA goals, and each of those EDI components is assigned equal weight in the overall index in accordance with the principle of considering each goal as being of equal importance. The EDI value for a given country is the arithmetic mean of indicators measuring each of its components, as shown by the formula below:

$$\text{EDI} = 1/4 \text{ (primary ANER)}$$
$$+ 1/4 \text{ (adult literacy rate)}$$
$$+ 1/4 \text{ (GEI)}$$
$$+ 1/4 \text{ (survival rate to grade 5)}$$

Since they are all expressed as percentages, the EDI value can vary from 0 to 100 percent or from 0 to 1 when expressed as a ratio. The higher the EDI value, the closer the country is to achieving EFA as a whole. The GEI is obtained by calculating a simple average of the three GPIs:

$$GEI = 1/3 \text{ (primary GPI)}$$
$$+ 1/3 \text{ (transformed secondary GPI)}$$
$$+ 1/3 \text{ (transformed adult literacy GPI)}$$

For 2008, only 127 countries had the data required to calculate the EDI. Many countries are still excluded, among them a number of countries in conflict or post-conflict situations and countries with weak education statistical systems (UNESCO, GMR 2011, p. 262). This fact, coupled with the exclusion of Goals 1 and 3, means that the EDI does not yet provide a fully comprehensive and global overview of EFA achievement; thus the need to strive to perfect a set of indicators that can more accurately measure the progress of education at country-level. Even though the EDI must improve its assessing capacities and resources, which are nonetheless linked to the education system and government of each country, it is a step forward to improve the monitoring of the progress and status of education worldwide. This shows that literacy-related statistical data serve as an essential element that helps measure progress in realizing the EFA goals.

Since General Comment No. 13 on the right to education adopted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights explains that article 1 of the World Declaration on Education for All defines "basic learning needs" as "essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving)", literacy is therefore an element to monitor for when monitoring the right to education. However, there are few developments from a normative instrument perspective that monitor literacy. One noteworthy example is connected to the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (CADE), as well as the 1960 UNESCO Recommendation against Discrimination in Education.

The Guidelines[20] for the preparation of reports by Member States on the application of the CADE and the 1960 Recommendation approved by UNESCO's Executive Board at its 186th session in May 2011 (186 EX/Dec., 19) refer to literacy with respect to adult education and lifelong learning. The monitoring guideline that attempts to identify progress made with respect to the provisions of the CADE concerning the implementation of the right to education includes some of the characteristics of literacy, such as adult education, lifelong learning, basic learning needs, life skills and the elimination of illiteracy. The Guidelines state the following:

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[20] These Guidelines are intended to assist Member States in the preparation of the Reports on the implementation of the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education as well as the 1960 Recommendation against Discrimination in Education.

(iv) Adult education and lifelong learning

> *(b) What are the measures being implemented to ensure equitable access to basic and continuing education so that the **basic learning needs** of all young people and adults are met through elimination of **illiteracy**, and equitable access to appropriate learning and **life-skills** programs?*

Another international mechanism that can monitor literacy is the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)[21]. The UPR is a new and unique mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council improving the human rights situation country-level of each of the United Nations Member States. Under this mechanism, the human rights situation of all Member States is reviewed every 4.5 years. Forty-two States are reviewed each year during three Working Group Sessions dedicated to fourteen States each. These three sessions are usually held in January/February, May/June and October/November. The result of each review is reflected in an outcome report listing the "recommendations"[22] the State under Review will have to implement before the next review. The Institutional-building text of the Human Rights Council, as set out in resolution A/HRC/RES/5/1 of 18 June 2007, indicates that the review shall assess to what extent States respect their human rights obligations contained in:

- The Charter of the United Nations
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Human Rights instruments to which the State is party (human rights treaties ratified by the State concerned)
- Voluntary pledges and commitments made by the State (including those undertaken when presenting the candidature for election to the Human Rights Council)
- Applicable international humanitarian law

Below follow some of the examples (in chronological order) of UPR recommendations specifically addressing literacy and the right to education from Sessions 13, 14 and 15[23]. These

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[21] For more information on the UPR please consult: http://www.upr-info.org/-UPR-Process-.html

[22] UPR Recommendations are suggestions made to the State under Review to improve the human rights situation in the country. They can be of different nature and issue and are the key element of the review. During the first cycle, about 21,000 recommendations were made to 192 States. The State under Review has the possibility to accept or not recommendations. Its response to each recommendation must be clearly explained in writing in a specific document called "addendum". This addendum should be submitted to the Human Rights Council in advance of the adoption of the report at the HRC session.

[23] UPR Sessions 13,14 and 15 included the following countries: Bahrain, Brazil, Ecuador, Finland, India, Indonesia, Tunisia, Morocco, and the United Kingdom (first week of Session 13); Algeria, the Netherlands, Philippines, Poland, and South Africa (second week of Session 13); Argentina, Benin, Czech Republic, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Republic of Korea, and Ukraine, (first week of Session 14); Japan, Pakistan, Peru, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, and Zambia (second week of Session 14); Bahamas, Barbados, Botswana, Burundi, France, Luxembourg, Mali, Romania, and Tonga (first week of Session 15); Israel, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Serbia, and United Arab Emirates (second week of Session 15).

UPR sessions were selected so as to shed light on one of the ways that literacy (under its broader scope and conceptualization) and the right to education are monitored at an international level during the last year of the UNLD, as well as to shed light on progress and recommendations related to literacy and the right to education that have been made recently as the international community transitions from the UNLD towards post-2015. These achievements and recommendations and observations once again evidence the close relationship between literacy (in a broader sense) and the right to education.

1. **Ecuador (UPR Session 13, Monday, 21 May 2012**):

In Ecuador, increased efforts have also taken place in the area of education at all levels, with a notable increase in enrolment from the indigenous population; generally, the State continues to enhance the right of indigenous people.

2. **Morocco (UPR Session 13, Tuesday, 22 May 2012):**

Morocco was recommended to ensure better access to education by women and girls; and to codify the principle of gender equality in all areas of its national legal framework.

3. **Indonesia (UPR Session 13, Wednesday, 23 May 2012):**

Indonesia was questioned by the Working Group on their efforts taken to ratify the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as steps to address the challenges of street children.

4. **Brazil (UPR Session 13, Friday, 25 May 2012**):

Brazil was questioned by the Working Group on their efforts taken to address the situation of street children.

5. **Algeria (UPR Session 13, Tuesday, 29 May 2012**):

Algeria was recommended to strengthen efforts to advance the right to education.

6. **Gabon (UPR Session 14, Tuesday, 23 October 2012**):

In Gabon, a number of measures have also been made in the area of education, in particular the realization of universal primary education.

7. **Ghana (UPR Session 14, Tuesday, 23 October 2012**):

Ghana has taken positive measures towards the achievement of MDGs, including the eradication of extreme poverty and the provision of universal primary education.

8. Benin (UPR Session 14, Thursday, 25 October 2012):

In Benin, steps have been taken to enhance children's education and their protection. Moreover, the Government has endeavored to guarantee free education for the entire population in accordance with the MDGs.

9. Pakistan (UPR Session 14, Tuesday, 29 October 2012):

Pakistan was encouraged by the Working Group to ensure the provision of free primary education to all children and taking additional measures to reduce illiteracy.

10. Zambia (UPR Session 14, Tuesday, 30 October 2012):

In Zambia, the Government enacted Education Act No. 23 of 2011 to further enhance the right of children to education. Moreover, the Government built schools in most rural areas to improve access to education and has undertaken mass recruitment of teachers for both urban and rural areas.

11. Peru (UPR Session 14, Thursday, 1 November 2012):

Peru was recommended to increase implementation programs to combat the worst forms of child labor and prohibiting child labor for children under 15 years or who have not completed compulsory education.

12. Mali (UPR Session 15, Tuesday, 22 January 2013):

Mali was recommended to strengthen programs to reduce poverty and access to education services.

13. Botswana (UPR Session 15, Wednesday, 23 January 2013):

Botswana was acknowledged for its progress towards achieving MDG Goal 2 on universal primary education.

E. The Way Forward: between lessons learnt and challenges

The above country examples suggest that since the year 2000, countries have bolstered up on legal and administrative measures not only with the aims of eradicating illiteracy, but also of implementing literacy as a right, which had its highest momentum thus far in history since the launch of EFA and throughout the United Nations Literacy Decade (2002-2012). This is evidence that literacy is retained as a high priority, and thus, as an essential key of education and human development. The challenges that literacy faces as of post-2015 continues to be its full eradication within the most socio-economic marginalized sectors of the world's population, specifically targeting vulnerable groups, such as girls, women, street children,

indigenous peoples and linguistic minorities. Moreover, the overall analysis also shows that literacy is bigger in scope and concept than just acquiring the human skills of reading, writing and calculating.

Literacy is a national urgency and priority in most constitutions and laws of education worldwide. This suggests that literacy is not just a basic human learning step, i.e., learning how to read, write and count, but is a right and a tool that contribute to the psychological development of a human being (whether young or old) that facilitates the acquisition of the skills and capacities necessary to not only survive, but to thrive in life, in society and in the market (Sanchez Moretti, 2012). One of the aims of the process of literacy is to encourage youth and adults to develop and apply basic reading, writing and numeracy skills, which shall in turn prepare them to face difficult situations in their everyday lives. Thus, literacy contributes to the achievement of the principal goal of education as established by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, i.e., the full development and realization of individual human beings.

At a policy level, cooperation of literacy initiatives range from the local to the international level. Examples of these initiatives are Mexico's literacy programs in forty-six indigenous languages carried out by the National Institute for Adult Education, and the Education for Life and Work Model Program (*Modelo Educación para la Vida y el Trabajo*), as well as Cuba's *Yo, Sí Puedo* and the *Yo, Sí Puedo Seguir* Literacy Program implemented in almost thirty countries worldwide, mainly throughout Latin America and Africa. It is noteworthy to highlight that in the Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of 3 March 2009, Recommendation 22 encouraged Cuba to continue with enlightened initiatives such as the *Yo, Sí Puedo* (Yes, I Can) literacy program in diverse regional, national and local realities (a program which is aimed at implementing the right to education, broaden the scope of its cooperation in sharing and replicating its home-grown methods of combating illiteracy) as well as the Operation Miracle in the field of health in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Honduras (Human Rights Council, 2009, p.25). The Cuban method has been contributing to the eradication of illiteracy, teaching more than 3.6 million people in twenty-six countries to read and write (Human Rights Council, 2009, p.6).

Under a broader scope, these literacy and post-literacy measures taken are contributing to the institutionalization of not only adult education, but of lifelong educational programs (formal and non-formal) with special focus in education for minority linguistic groups and for girls and women, through international, regional and country-level legal frameworks, i.e., through international treaties and declarations, as well as within constitutions, legislation and polices with the aims of eradicating illiteracy and empowering individuals (whether young or old) through the fulfillment of the right to education.

Currently, the EFA Goals target of 2015 is around the corner. The international community has once again gathered to stipulate a new agenda that goes beyond 2015. In June 2012, the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda published "Realizing the Future We Want for All". Paragraph No. 66 of the Agenda reaffirms the importance of the Human Right to Education, specifically referring to universal access to quality educational opportunities and its direct link to inclusive and sustainable social development, which constitutes the post-2015 vision. Paragraph No. 67 establishes that lifelong learning, starting from early childhood education, and covering skills/vocational training are of priorities for social development and investments. The Post-2015 vision sees education as an indispensable key for inclusive economic growth, development and transformation necessary to respond to the challenges of our contemporary globalized community, and reaffirms Basic Education as a human right in itself and a condition for the realization of other rights (Sanchez Moretti, 2012). Literacy, however, is not explicitly mentioned; it can therefore be considered as an element of "Basic Education".

From all the examples provided by this paper, literacy has come to evolve both as a targeted goal and also as a human entitlement to achieve the full realization of individuals. In other words, literacy is a human right itself. This is evidenced by the prevalent new provisions included in many State constitutions and education laws worldwide. However, since literacy has not yet an international normative instrument of its own, and, since it is not explicitly declared as a human right in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it relies on the implementation, principally, of the right to education, and secondly, of normative instruments (international, regional and national) that include literacy within their provisions. Literacy can therefore be monitored from a goal perspective, i.e., literacy as a goal to reach, as well as from a human entitlement, i.e., literacy as a human right for all and consequently a duty for the State.

Literacy must always be of high priority for the international community, governments and the civil society. Governments, policy makers and stakeholders should keep in mind the conceptual variety of what literacy is, since the definition and modalities of literacy depend on the cultural, political, economic and scientific environment of a respective population. Policy-making for literacy must therefore be sensitive to these specificities and realities at national and local level. Since the principal goal of education is to achieve the full development of the individual, literacy education has to be functional and culturally sensitive, because if it is not, it will not give the learner the tools to develop within his or her society. For example, national policy must take into account the linguistic context of literacy-building. Governments should sustain activities and develop policies that enable people to learn in a language that facilitates daily communication, as well as execute literacy programs that provide initial learning in the mother tongue and then add a second language, offer social, cognitive, psychological and pedagogical advantages (GMR, 2006, p. 228).

Literacy is at the core of EFA as a learning tool, a learning process and a learning outcome, all contributing to the achievement of broader human development goals (GMR, 2006, p. 216). This fact can only be of added value in conceptualizing and recognizing literacy as a human right as

part of the human right to education. As a tool, process, outcome and right, literacy for all and in its various forms should be present with great emphasis on the UN post-2015 agenda and development goals, but specifically, under a rights-based perspective as a crucial element of the right to education and the rest of the human rights family.

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