ISESCO'S NEW LITERACY VISION

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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Foreword

Combating illiteracy following a scientific approach is undeniably a major instrument for the economic advancement and social empowerment of Muslim peoples in search for better living conditions. It is also an efficient key to the renewal of the Muslim Ummah's civilizational edification and to comprehensive sustainable development in the Islamic world.

However, illiteracy which pervades the social fabric still constitutes a tremendous hindrance to comprehensive sustainable development in many parts of the Muslim world. In fact, despite the high and diversified demand for learning opportunities, the statistics available to ISESCO point out that more than 70% of the world's 781 million illiterates are from Islamic countries. One major factor behind this is the shortage of funding, as literacy programs account for a mere 1% of national education budgets. A second factor relates to the lack of quality and efficiency in literacy programs. A third factor consists in the limited post-literacy programs, which in most cases reflects an absence of coordination between literacy programs and development-related activities in all fields.

Given that quality literacy intervention requires a general and continued mobilization as well as a collective and comprehensive involvement of all segments of society, ISESCO's literacy vision has moved from an individual approach with limited impact to a collective one based on a wider societal perception and apprehension of illiteracy. This literacy vision has been developed in accordance with the specific needs of Muslim communities and in line with Islamic teachings which regard education and learning (pursuit of knowledge) as an obligation for each Muslim.

Accordingly, ISESCO has placed greater emphasis in its new strategic literacy vision on the economic, social and cultural dimensions of literacy as a tool for addressing the aforementioned challenges and creating literate Islamic societies

rather than simply educating individuals.

It is indeed on the basis of that integrated, flexible and balanced paradigm that literacy has moved beyond the simple action of acquiring the technical skills of reading, writing and mathematics to more complex, pluralistic and influential dimensions which necessitate special resources and substantial investment. ISESCO believes that literacy could be instrumental in correcting most misconceptions about Islam and Muslims. To meet this goal, ISESCO's new literacy vision aims to contribute to reducing illiteracy in the Member States, strengthening the necessary collective competencies for the building of cohesive and cooperative societies based on the Islamic principles of justice, tolerance and respect for creative diversity, and integrating the productive individual within society as a crucial lever for human development.

ISESCO's new literacy vision targets illiterate populations aged 15 years and above, particularly men, women, young people and children, the population of remote and rural areas and poor districts as well as persons with special needs, who have never had any formal schooling and have not received enough training to be considered functionally literate in their living or working environment. This is part of fulfilling commitments undertaken in the relevant international conventions and declarations, mainly the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the recommendations of specialized international and regional conferences (Jomtien 1990, Dakar 2000, Belém 2009, Paris 2012 and Incheon 2015).

The decision to prioritize women and girls in this new vision is motivated by the fact that they constitute the nucleus of society and the guardians of Islamic social and cultural values. The other rationale sustaining that decision is related to the fact that most Member States' social indicators which ISESCO has monitored in its field reports show that illiteracy affects more women and girls.

To achieve these noble objectives and meet the needs of the said categories, ISESCO's new literacy vision calls for a redefinition of literacy from being only a field of knowledge undertaken by professional specialists to a social practice

with an economic dimension and development-related content carried out by governments, the civil society and the private sector, each within the scope of its compentence.

May Allah grant us success and lead us to the right path.

Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri

Director General of the Islamic
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization
(ISESCO)

1. CURRENT SITUATION OF LITERACY IN ISESCO MEMBER STATES

Youth and adult education, including literacy, is the coming wave which will overwhelm all types of education. Under its umbrella formal and non-formal education are merging and the cyber-space becomes overloaded with countless educational programs mainly designed for youth and adults. The social networks on the Internet have become an important learning resource and an active agent in the profound transformations occurring in the world. Literacy has now moved beyond the simple action of acquiring the technical skills of reading, writing and math to more complex and pluralistic dimensions which necessitate substantial financial budgets and investments.

Current socioeconomic and political changes in the world call for paradigm change as literacy and adult education are no longer to be considered as a fundamental human right but also as a social movement towards the realization of that right in terms of the socioeconomic development of the Islamic world. In this context, literacy and adult education should be used to strengthen respect for human rights and promote the right to difference, respect for the other and cultural diversity, which are the essential principles of democracy in the interconnected knowledge society. Therefore, emphasis should be placed on the political dimensions of literacy and the related challenges in order to create literate societies, rather than making individuals literate.

Literacy and adult education, as a social movement, must also pay attention to popular culture and mass media, especially TV, from which illiterates gain all sorts of simplified economic, social and scientific knowledge.

To perform these roles, literacy and adult education should be transformed from being a technical field of knowledge undertaken by professional specialists to be a social practice undertaken by civil society, private sector and local community organizations.

In Islam, literacy and adult education are more than a right; they are a "Faridha" and as such nobody is allowed to give them up. The promotion of literacy and adult education is also in consonance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Literacy is an integral part of social movement in adult education; the report of CONFINTEA VI held in Brazil states that:

> *"Literacy is an indispensable foundation that enables young peoples and adults to engage in learning opportunities at all stages of learning continuum. The right to literacy is an inherent part of the right to education. It is a prerequisite for development of personal, social, economic and political development. Literacy is an essential means of building people capacities to cope with the evolving challenges and complexities of life, culture, economy and society".*

Within this context, UNESCO has come up with a practical definition of literacy which reflects the importance given to context and usage:

> *"Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society".* [1]

In accordance with the aforementioned statement, literacy has become a multi-dimensional field with many forms and objectives to cope with a rapidly changing world.

1.1. Illiteracy and the world

The 2015 UNESCO Global Monitoring Report reveals that there are 781 million illiterate adults. A longitudinal study of this rate shows a decrease of

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(1) UNESCO report "Global literacy challenge: A profile of youth and adult literacy at the mid-point of the United Nations Literacy Decade 2003-2012 (p. 18).

illiteracy rate, from 18% in 2000 to 14% in 2015[2]. However, it should be noted that this decrease did not make it possible to materialize the international commitments set during the World Education Forum in Dakar, in 2000, which aimed at reducing by 50% the number of illiterates in the world, especially among the female population.

In fact, a comparative statistical analysis carried out in 2013 by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics(UIS)[3] shows that the world contains 757 million illiterate adults aged 15 years and more and 115 million young illiterates, whose age ranges between 15 and 24. This analysis indicates that at the level of both adults and young people, women constitute the majority of the illiterate population of the world (c.f. tables below).

Adult literacy rate by region and gender, 2013

	Central Asia			Central and Eastern Europe			East Asia and the Pacific			Latin America and the Caribbean			World			Arab states			South and West Asia			Sub-Saharan Africa		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
	100	99	100	99	98	99	97	93	95	93	92	92	89	81	85	86	70	78	77	58	68	68	52	60

NB: M= Male; F= Female; T= both
Source: Extract from the News bulletin of UNESCO Institute for Statistics, September 2015, N°32, page 4.

Youth literacy rate by region and gender, 2013

	Central Asia			Central and Eastern Europe			East Asia and the Pacific			Latin America and the Caribbean			World			Arab states			South and West Asia			Sub-Saharan Africa		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
	100	100	100	100	99	100	99	99	99	98	98	98	93	89	91	93	88	90	88	80	84	76	65	70

NB: M= Male; F= Female; T= both
Source: Extract from the News bulletin of UNESCO Institute for Statistics, September 2015, N°32, page 4.

Concerning the geographical distribution of the illiterate population in the world, according to these UNESCO data, the countries of South and West Asia alone contain more than half of the total number (51%). As for Sub-Saharan Africa, there is 25%; 12% in East Asia and the Pacific; 7% in the Arab States and 4% in Latin America and the Caribbean. The remainder, or less than 1%, is in the other areas of the world.

Taking account of the current statistical data, it proves necessary to intensify efforts in the world, so as to ensure greater access to fundamental literacy competences, which constitutes an indispensable condition to achieve the new literacy rate of the Sustainable Development Goals that the international community has set for itself by 2030.

1.2. Illiteracy in the Islamic world

a) Quantitative analysis of illiteracy in the Islamic world

With regard to the literacy situation in the Islamic world, in the absence of accurate data in some of these countries, it is then difficult to calculate with exactitude the related illiteracy rate. However, the data published by the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, make it possible to be close to reality.

In fact, in the classification of the States at the international level, the literacy rate is part of the key indicators of Sustainable Human Development. Therefore, it is important for countries to grant it all the required attention, through accurate data retrieval.

The statistical analysis of the literacy rate in the world reveals, on the one hand, a great disparity between the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Co-operation (OIC) and the rest of the world, on the other hand, the disparity between Islamic countries and even within the same countries, between men and women as well as between urban and rural areas.

Thus, the SESRIC Report 2014[4] shows an adult literacy rate of 72,3% for OIC Member States, lagging way behind the world average which was 82% and developing countries non-member of the OCI which recorded an average of 84,5%. This same difference is posted at the level of youth; that is an average literacy rate of 82% in OIC Member States, as against 88,6% in the rest of the world.

The comparative analysis of the statistical data between adults and youth in OCI Member States reveals that the latter record better literacy rates (82%) compared to the former (72,3%). In fact, thanks to schooling and access to the system of non-formal education, young people enjoy more access to fundamental competences in literacy.

In addition, in these States, among both youth and adults, there is a strong disparity between men and women in the access to literacy. For this reason, among adults, a literacy rate of 78,8% is posted for the men as against 65,6% for the women. Among youth, there is a literacy rate of 85,6% for men and 78,5% for women. However, it is important to note that in OCI Member States the difference between genders concerning access to competences in literacy is larger in adults (13,2%) than in youth (7,1%)

The analysis of statistical data at the regional scale[5] shows progress in literacy in the Arab World. Thus, between 1990 and 2013, adult literacy rate edged up from 55% to 78% and that of youth from 74% to 90%. However, this projection should not hide the great disparities between rich countries of the region having high literacy rates (more than 90%) and those less affluent (approximately 60%).

Like the Arab World, Asia shows some progress in the literacy rate. Thus, from 1990 to 2013, adult literacy rate rose from 47% to 68% and youth rate from 60% to 84%. However, in this region, there is also a strong disparity between the

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(4) SESRIC Education and Scientific Development in OCI Member States, Report 2014.

(5) News bulletin of the Statistical institute of UNESCO, September 2015, N°32 .

Member States of Central Asia, which records very high rates of literacy (99%), compared to those of South and West Asia, which have relatively low literacy rates, approximately 60%.

The Bulletin of UNESCO Institute for Statistics also reveals that most African Member States of ISESCO recorded adult literacy rates below 50%. With regard to youth, in sub-Saharan Africa, rates recorded amounted to approximately 70%.

The analysis of the statistical data of UNESCO Global Monitoring Report on EFA 2015[6] shows that in 2012, in the Latin America region, the two Member States of ISESCO, namely the Republic of Guyana and Suriname recorded an average literacy rate of 90%.

In conclusion, the table of the entire set of data stated above shows that illiteracy will still persist in the Islamic World.

To deal with this situation and the pressing need to solve this problem, it was necessary to re-examine ISESCO programs, with a view to developing a new vision likely to better contribute to the improvement of literacy level in Member States.

B) Qualitative analysis of literacy in the Islamic world

According to the previous analysis, several observations have been made on the issue of literacy in Islamic countries on the level of priorities as well as management and actions carried out in this field. These can be seen along the following lines:

- persistence of significant illiteracy rates in Islamic countries;
- persistence of school dropout before the end of compulsory schooling, which causes the number of illiterates to continue increasing;

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(6) UNESCO Global Monitoring Report on EFA 2015, p. 326.

- weak implementation of the gender approach in literacy programs, given that illiteracy affects in a distinct way the two dimensions of gender and place of residence.

- low level of communication and coordination between various stakeholders in terms of literacy, as well as the difficulty of working in a multi-departmental team;

- lack of a relevant information system, which provides information about all components of the literacy system (statistics data, qualitative information);

- limited involvement of central and local authorities in literacy programs, in terms of both vision and implementation;

- lack of funding due to the magnitude of this phenomenon. In spite of the scarcity of available data on literacy programs, in most Islamic countries, the elements available tend to be very weak, in terms of absolute value as well as in terms of priority in national and education budgets. In many countries, literacy programs account for just 1% of the national budget of education. This situation is more marked locally, where the lack of funding hinders the implementation of an effective and efficient devolution in terms of literacy.

- insufficiency, in quantity and qualification (training), of human resources available to the departments in charge of literacy at various levels (central, local);

- instability of instructors and difficulty of maintaining them in their positions, which generates a loss of effectiveness and financial funding for their training;

- absence of post-literacy programs which lie within the scope of lifelong learning, as well as the lack of possibilities of further education beyond basic levels and, in particular, the absence of links between literacy programs and the activities of development of many sectors which require local skills to assume new responsibilities and to initiate and manage new production activities and services in the community.

- absence of statutory texts, governing the bridges between literacy programs and formal education and/or professional training;

- socio-political instability, social conflicts, wars, and

- the low level of scientific research on literacy and adult education.

2. OBJECTIVES OF ISESCO'S NEW LITERACY VISION

Based on the analysis of the current situation of literacy in the Member States, ISESCO's new literacy vision aims at achieving the following goals:

- General objectives:

1. To conribute to the reduction of illiteracy in the Member States;

2. To define and develop the collective competencies necessary for the building of cooperative and cohesive societies founded on Islamic principles of justice, tolerance and diversity; and

3. To integrate the individual in society to be the driving force of human development, by empowering him to strengthen his capacities of innovation and creativity in various domains related to his daily life.

- Specific objectives:

- To extend literacy to all youth and allow access to basic skills in reading, writing, arithmetic and to basic life skills for a large proportion of adults in Member States and Muslim communities[7];

- To promote a human rights-based programming approach to ensure sustainable illiteracy reduction;

- To improve the quality of Member States' action in literacy;

- To reinforce the capacities of all literacy stakeholders in the Member States;

- To support the establishment of a legal framework for literacy in the countries where it is lacking;

- To facilitate the establishment of equivalency framework with a set of standardized competencies so as to allow the bridging from non-formal to formal education, including vocational and technical education.

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(7) This objective is part of Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action Education 2030.

- To contribute to the reduction of disparities between men and women in Member States; and

- To redress regional imbalances in terms of literacy access, focusing more on rural and remote areas.

3. ISESCO'S STRATEGIC LINES OF ACTION IN LITERACY

The lines of action foregrounded in ISESCO's new literacy vision are adopted by most member countries. However, their implementation method and expected results fall short of the real needs which exist in these countries to curb illiteracy. To redress this situation, the lines of action of the new vision focus on the following:

- Advocacy, social mobilization and sensitization at all levels in the decision-making channel;
- The provision of educational infrastructures, materials, logistics and equipments;
- Capacity building for both individuals and institutions at all levels, and community empowerment;
- Financial resources mobilization;
- Monitoring and assessment, including participative evaluation;
- Micro-planning as a strategic tool for effective and improved quality community participation.

All these lines of action should take into consideration the need to ensure quality in the implementation of literacy programs at two levels:

- The quality of intervention concerns the action areas relating to governance, partnership, cooperation, communication, stakeholders capacity-building, mobilization, funding, promotion of scientific research, monitoring and evaluation.
- The quality of literacy programs is determined by: i) the degree of satisfying the expectations and needs of the targeted population, based on the targeted participants and the balance between supply and demand in literacy, ii) the quality of the system, translated into the material conditions of literacy operations, logistics, educational approaches, didactical tools, etc.

Therefore, it is necessary to combine several parameters in order to ensure quality action in literacy, chief of which are the lines of action below:

3.1. Governance

Belém Framework for Action, adopted by the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) in December 2009, calls for good governance in education:

Good governance facilitates the implementation of adult learning and education policy in ways which are effective, transparent, accountable and equitable. Representation by and participation of all stakeholders are indispensable in order to guarantee responsiveness to the needs of all learners, in particular the most disadvantaged.

Indeed, good governance in literacy requires the fulfillment of several prerequisites involving a multitude of fields, including program management, institutional monitoring, decentralization and participation.

ISESCO's action in this matter consists of supporting Member States in the implementation of actions aimed at reinforcing good governance in literacy, including institutional framework, program management, as well as the decentralization of literacy policies and convergence of literacy programs with other development projects in Islamic countries. To put in place the necessary literacy arrangements in the Member States, ISESCO has established its vision on the following elements:

- *At the institutional level:* Setting up adequate and sustainable institutional frameworks allowing to grant priority to literacy and ensure the necessary technical, economic and social orientation in each country locally and regionally;

- *At the level of management:* Adopting a result-based management system for literacy programs by defining precise performance indicators in line with the sought objectives, according to a project management approach in terms of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This amounts to applying the principle of effectiveness and

efficiency while adopting appropriate methods as to conducting literacy management programs.

- *At the level of decentralization:* Adopting a proximity policy, which requires constantly listening to the real needs of the population concerned regionally and locally in order to establish literacy programs that meet their specific needs and expectations. Thus, countries should decentralize literacy policies and practices by identifying the roles and responsibilities for the various stakeholders, who will intervene therein, and by granting them sufficient funding and human resources allowing them to plan, implement and monitor local literacy actions.

- *At the level of participation:* Involving the population in the development and implementation of literacy strategies by setting up a framework for dialog and consultation with civil society, the private sector, the political and trade-union bodies, etc. Similarly, it is important to adopt a gender-parity approach and to encourage the participation of women in literacy programs at all levels, by taking account of their own priorities and point of view in the choice of the means and goals of their learning,

- *At the level of convergence and synergy:* Encouraging development stakeholders, whether they are public, private or civil society, to integrate literacy in social development programs, particularly those of the fight against poverty. Literacy should become a major focus of development and a vector which can bring together the contributions of all these stakeholders. Hence, it would be necessary to set up links between literacy programs and developmental activities of many other sectors which require local skills to take on new responsibilities and manage new production and service activities within the community. Similarly, literacy programs should be designed and implemented in compliance with formal education, by targeting the entire family (household), through an elementary education for school-age children and literacy for their parents. In fact, literacy should not be detached from the education system, but rather an integral part thereof.

3.2. Partnership and cooperation

With respect to the implementation of literacy programs, a single institution, whatever its nature, cannot alone assume the ensuing moral responsibility. It is rather a common obligation for all stakeholders, including the State and its international development partners, civil society, local communities and individuals. The body in charge of this mission is responsible for developing the public policy for literacy and coordinating the action of all stakeholders to achieve the expected goals. For this reason, a rewarding partnership and constructive cooperation are needed to adequately implement the literacy vision, presumably prepared within a concerted framework.

3.2.1. Partnership

Emphasis should be given to coordination mechanisms both horizontally and vertically. To institutionalize partnership as a mechanism and maximize its benefits, it is essential to establish some criteria for the selection of potential partners at the national level. The promotion of this type of partnership could be achieved by establishing synergies among various stakeholders, including the public sector, the private sector, civil society and community literacy service providers.

Several stakeholders would be involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of literacy. Sponsorship is another type of intervention that makes it possible to reinforce solidarity among the various components of society. It consists of directly bearing the financial costs of literacy operations or funding literacy projects, by moral or physical persons. Moreover, it may consist of a donation in materials or even a voluntary action of supervision and teaching of one or several learners.

The key actors of literacy partnership at the national level are:
- civil society;
- private sector;
- public stakeholders;
- local authorities.

a) Partnership with civil society

Literacy programs implemented by civil society are very dynamic in many countries. In addition to relevance, flexibility and innovation, civil society programs are characterized by:

- partnership in the design, implementation and evaluation of literacy programs;
- remarkable capacity of attraction, proximity to beneficiaries, the creation of anti-poverty activities, diversity of literacy approaches, and the introduction of qualifying programs leading to income-generating activities;
- Flexibility of management and ability to establish integrated projects aiming at linking literacy to other development projects locally.

However, several constraints impede NGOs' action in the field of literacy, chief of which are:

- lack of sufficient funds for program design and implementation;
- delay in granting subsidies to NGOs and their trainers, which makes it difficult to conduct rigorous monitoring and objective evaluation of the actions performed;
- insufficient capacity-building opportunities for civil society stakeholders (financial, pedagogical, organizational, etc).

b) Partnership with the private sector

The private sector should have the responsibility to undertake literacy in the local community. It should support literacy in the following ways:

- Organizing onsite literacy through on-the-job skills training;
- Ensuring corporate social responsibility (CSR) in promoting literacy in local communities.

In this respect, utmost priority should be devoted to the training of human resources, being the main wealth of national economies. Indeed, the dynamism

and performance of companies heavily depend on the aptitude and competence of their human capital. However, much of their workforce shows a low level of literacy, which hinders efforts to improve the skills of private sector human resources. Therefore, the need for quality response cannot be compromised.

The intervention of the private sector in literacy should consist in financing literacy activities in their area of specialization, either directly through agreements with the government or indirectly by sponsoring national literacy programs.

c) Partnership within the public sector

Social welfare ministries should partner themselves with the ministries in charge of literacy in undertaking literacy and poverty-alleviation activities. Moreover, training institutions can play a very significant role in promoting literacy by providing capacity-building training to literacy professionals. Partnership also includes in-service literacy activities for the purpose of staff professional development.

The department in charge of vocational training is one potential stakeholder of the vision of literacy and development of basic skills for the population. It plays a crucial role in all fields, particularly with regard to the practical operation of the designed vision. However, the involvement and coordination of this department and the institutions in charge of literacy remain very insufficient. The department of vocational training recognizes neither the literacy diplomas nor the reading ability as an alternative way to empower the population to benefit from the formal professional training system.

It is a fact that literacy has more impact and is perennial when it is focused on the acquisition of professional competencies or when it is related to income-generating activities. However, it should be noted that, according to the analysis made, the department of vocational training favors a unilateral action and its involvement in this matter is rather weak. This suggests that the lack of common vision and coordination of the different departments deprives the system of good opportunities to be relevant and effective.

Thus, it would be necessary to adjust the conditions of access to learning in terms of age and schooling level, for several sectors considering learning as a mode of privileged training, such as the craft industry sector. In fact, many people wish to benefit from this training, but they are not eligible for age or school level considerations, which results in populations excluded on two scores: they are excluded from the education system and professional training system.

d) Partnership with local authorities

Considering their institutional, human and financial potentialities, the local authorities have a major role to play in literacy at the local level. Indeed, in addition to the fact that they have great capacity to mobilize local stakeholders, the local authorities have broad networks of interventions and means of implementing literacy programs, such as space and staff. However, these territorial entities which should be potential vectors of decentralization play a minor role in terms of literacy in the majority of Islamic countries. Therefore, ISESCO highlights the importance of establishing partnerships with local authorities, not only as an agency of literacy action implementation, but also as a main monitoring stakeholder of any local development action, including literacy programs.

3.2.2. Technical and financial cooperation

Technical and financial cooperation for the reinforcement of literacy programs occupies a major position, particularly in the developing countries, including Islamic countries. This type of cooperation, whether it is bilateral or multilateral, allows the following:

- Expanding and diversifying financial resources for literacy;
- Improving and consolidating, internationally and within the framework of bilateral or multilateral agreements, the exchange of experience and good practice with regard to literacy. In this connection, dynamic and productive partnerships between Member States for sharing promising best practices could be strengthened through existing ISESCO national clubs; and

- Promoting joint Islamic action for the exchange of experiences and transfer of techniques in literacy among Member States.

It is worth noting that, in addition to these aspects, technical and financial cooperation allows benefiting from the experience of different countries in the possibilities of generating financial resources for literacy programs as well as the promotion of appropriate funding mechanisms adapted to the various stakeholders. Furthermore, it is necessary to address the capacity of resources, at central and local levels, and to reinforce the capacities of stakeholders within the framework of technical collaboration.

Another type of cooperation to be reconsidered is the South-South cooperation, which could help to consolidate sub-regional and regional integration and mobilize and optimize the use of resources for the benefit of southern countries.

3.3. Advocacy, social mobilization and sensitisation

Communication in literacy consists in mobilizing all dynamic forces in the country to champion this cause. Communication and mobilization activities in this field relate to all components of society (target participants of the programs, different stakeholders, national and international NGOs, and international bodies). To achieve this, several communication activities should be planned and designed according to the specificities and intervention level of the different targeted categories: participants, stakeholders, international organizations, etc.

The objectives of the communication and mobilization activities in literacy are as follows:

- Promoting advocacy, social mobilization and sensitization at national and local levels for the purpose of ensuring the ownership of literacy programs, projects and activities by states, local governments and individual participants;

- Urging the target population to apply for literacy programs;

- Motivating participants to stay in literacy classes throughout the literacy cycle;

- Providing the best conditions to ensure the success of literacy programs and the socio-professional integration of their participants in the post-literacy phase, within the framework of lifelong learning; and

- Mobilizing the various partners to advocate literacy among civil society, the public and private sector, technical and financial partners, etc.

Aware that information, awareness-raising and mobilization of stakeholders, partners and participants are essential conditions for the promotion of literacy programs, ISESCO, in its new vision, aims at reinforcing communication and mobilization activities regarding this issue, by encouraging governments to work out and implement literacy communication and mobilization plans. These plans should necessarily involve the following actions:

- Decentralizing communication and mobilization activities, for the exploitation of local and regional communication potentialities, which are accessible to the target population and partners in this field;

- Conducting media awareness and mobilization campaigns through television, radio, newspapers and other available modern and traditional media;

- Producing written and audio-visual media materials (flyers, booklets, posters, films, videos, billboards, etc);

- Designing, enriching and periodically updating the Web sites, allowing to inform the different stakeholders about literacy projects, achievements, events and news in Islamic countries;

- Publishing newsletters linking the various stakeholders aiming at the exchange of experience and information;

- Organizing national, regional and local events, meetings, conferences and roundtables aiming at raising awareness to the literacy issue.

3.4. Capacity building

Improving the quality of literacy-oriented action depends first on the capacity and qualification of the various actors. ISESCO attaches major importance to the reinforcement of the capacity-building components of its intervention by

taking several actions in this direction. It recommends establishing a system which would make it possible to entrench this culture in Islamic countries.

The target population of ISESCO capacity building includes the following stakeholders:

- Relevant ministerial officials in charge of literacy programs;
- Officials in charge of literacy programs in implementation partner organizations; and
- Literacy facilitators (teachers) and their trainers.

a) Capacity-building areas

The capacity-building areas cover all the chain of intervention of the actors targeted by literacy programs:

- Planning, management, supervision and evaluation;
- Development of educational materials;
- Funding projects development;
- Teacher training;
- Training of trainers; and
- Community mobilization.

All these programs should be directed to the benefit of the following categories:

- Officials in charge of literacy programs in the relevant supervisory departments, at the central, regional and local levels: the reinforcement of the capacities of these actors should relate to fields concerning strategic planning and implementation, follow-up, evaluation and audit of programs and financial management, the development of curricula based on various approaches, the training of facilitators following these approaches, new information technologies, negotiation techniques, etc.;
- Officials in charge of literacy programs in implementation partners, especially project managers and supervisors: the capacities of this population category should be reinforced in the following fields: financial, organizational and pedagogical management, partnership agreements

with the supervisory department, follow-up and evaluation of agreements, supervision of implementation, training of trainers, etc.; and

● The implementation of capacity-building activities for these categories of actors could be done according to various options: the organization of attendance-based training or distance training seminars, exploiting the opportunities offered by ICT, training courses abroad, visits of good practice and experience sharing with other countries, workshops of exchanges between various experts, access to universities insofar as these conduct research in literacy, andragogy and adult education.

b) Literacy facilitators and their trainers

In order to improve the quality of educational outputs, it is necessary to enhance the training of literacy facilitators in adult education techniques. This element constitutes an essential component of the entire vision of literacy action. Indeed, teachers trained in andragogy according to a competency-based approach (CBA) can adapt to the various training situations and training tools. They are disciplined, motivated and aware of the importance of their mission, which helps them easily discharge their mission.

The success of the educational programs requires the existence of intermediaries capable of transposing such programs from the conceptual dimension to the execution in specific educational situations of the target populations. Undoubtedly, the role and competence of literacy instructors constitute a crucial factor in the system's quality and motivation of participants.

UNESCO found that "*The success of literacy programmes largely depends on the facilitators and their efficiency depends on the training and regular supervision they are given. However, literacy facilitators are one of the least supported groups of educators worldwide. They receive little if any regular remuneration, lack job security, and receive few training opportunities and little ongoing professional support. This is a poor basis for major improvements in adult literacy.*"[8]

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(8) UNESCO report "The Global Literacy Challenge: A profile of youth and adult literacy at the mid-point of the United Nations Literacy Decade 2003-2012 (p. 60).

Moreover, we believe that a major concern is the absence of an organized framework and well-established career path for the professional development of literacy facilitators. This issue may be addressed as a strategically important issue.

These literacy instructors must be motivated and well trained to adequately achieve their mission. Indeed, the improvement of the quality of literacy programs requires a serious professional-track of literacy trainers. The success of these programs could be possible only if facilitators are motivated, respected, supported and supervised, and benefit from continuous training.

However, most literacy reports describe facilitators as discouraged by the delays in the payment of their wages as well as the insufficiency, in quantity and quality, of the training they receive. This lack of motivation may threaten their stability and negatively affect their activity and performance.

In its new vision, ISESCO highlights the need to give priority to the capacity-building of facilitators, by offering them a status equivalent to that of primary school teachers, in order to ensure their stability and motivation for a better output. In the same way, they should receive substantial training (in terms of duration, adequacy of topics and frequency) leading to a certificate recognizing their competencies. They should also benefit from regular follow-up and supervision, as well as continuing education allowing them to update their skills. Retraining and involving selected formal education teachers in the planning, implementation and evaluation of literacy programs could enhance the quality of literacy service provision.

3.5. Quality literacy

The demand from literacy programs reflects the motivation which is unique to each individual. However, "the quality of the system" is the only means to retain participants and motivate them to stay in the program until they achieve their goal.

The quality of literacy programs and the needs of participants are mainly captured through the following four criteria: i) the level of targeting participants, ii) the balance between supply and demand, iii) educational conditions, including curricula, educational means, content, timetable and post-literacy programs, iv) logistics (reception capacity, supervision ratios, classrooms and equipment, etc.).

a) The needs of participants

Islamic countries have made significant efforts to adapt literacy content to the real needs of participants. However, these efforts seem insufficient. Indeed, analysis indicates that literacy programs are not sufficiently diversified and adapted to the specific needs and specificities of different populations, according to the criteria of age, geographical location, gender, business activity, etc. Also, these programs are not adequately associated to local development projects (major construction projects for neighboring populations, tourism, etc.), or income-generating activities (microcredit, trade, services, etc.). Notable exceptions do exist however, where literacy programs deliver the desirable results.

Targeting and "prioritizing" populations are among the most important commitments of ISESCO's new literacy vision. These categories of people include:

- Workers in the production sectors (industry, agriculture, tourism, fishing, mining, etc.).
- Adults with no regular and stable job, especially women and populations of rural areas and suburbs;
- Participants of various age groups;

To better target the participants in literacy programs and before developing programs specific to each population category, the competent authorities must have sources of information or conduct specific studies to have an accurate description of the characteristics of targeted populations (age, types of professional activities, place of residence, socioeconomic environment, etc.).

These elements allow better targeting of beneficiary categories of literacy programs by providing appropriate programs that could qualify them to integrate other systems of training, relating to employability or education, especially for young people aged 15 to 25 years.

b) Balance between supply and demand

The assessment of literacy systems in most Islamic countries reveals that their conception is based on supply, not on demand. This explains their inability to reduce the number of illiterates, still increasing, and their failure to attract larger populations for literacy programs, still very low.

Despite the efforts made and the strong commitment undertaken to achieve the objectives set, analysts consider that literacy systems remain fragile because they have been unable to match demand and supply.

ISESCO's vision, in terms of striking a balance between supply and demand in the field of literacy, aims at shifting the status of the beneficiary from someone to whom literacy services are supplied to someone who seeks literacy, by motivating him to attend regularly, to stay in the program and to success. This can only be possible through the following actions:

- Establishing mechanisms conducive to the emergence of demand for literacy, which will make an illiterate person, young or old, feel the need for literacy and demand literacy by soft obligation actions. The point is not to force the target population into literacy, but to link access to certain community services to the acquisition of reading and writing skills, such as granting the driving license, obtaining certain administrative documents, etc.

- Integrating literacy projects in anti-poverty projects;

- Supporting literacy programs intended for income-generating activities, small business learning and skill training;

- Adapting content and programs to the real needs of participants;

- Delivering recognized literacy certificates conducive to other systems of training and formal education;

- Awarding prizes to outstanding participants, and providing material and school support to the children of certain participants, etc.

However, this would not be sufficient in the absence of a literate environment where participants can acquire basic skills in reading and writing necessary for society's development.

c) Pedagogical conditions

The importance of pedagogical conditions for the motivation of participants is quite obvious. Indeed, the quality of these conditions and the adaptation of adult learning with the needs of participants are of paramount importance in the attractiveness of programs. In this sense, ISESCO's new vision insists on the fact that programs, approaches, methods, facilities, etc. should match the needs and conditions of participants. Pedagogical conditions in literacy mainly concern the approaches adopted, the content of curricula, teaching materials, timetables and lifelong education perspectives.

First: The approaches adopted in literacy

The fact that there are different ways to learn and acquire basic skills in literacy necessarily implies the existence of diversity in approaches and methods. The adoption of one approach or another depends on the circumstances and context in which training takes place. This means that the approach should be adapted to the local context of participants.

Moreover, the approach should be designed according to the following principles:

- Adult education principles: andragogy is a training process which takes into account the characteristics of the adult learner. Indeed, the progress and content of training must be built within a framework of cooperation between the instructor and learners. Meaningful learning for an adult is reflected through three learning outcomes:

- Expertise related to the knowledge, concepts and information acquired by adults;
- Know-how, linked to the skills, talents and capacities of participants;
- Interpersonal skills, concerning attitudes, values and beliefs of the adult learner.

● Principle of innovation and skill development for participants that should be used in their everyday lives, as well as qualifying them for a social and professional integration in post-literacy and lifelong learning.

Second: Training of literacy facilitators

Whatever the adopted approach is, literacy efforts cannot bear fruit unless they are accompanied by a serious training of facilitators. The approach must be innovative and designed within a participatory and interactive learner-centered framework.

Third: Content

Various methods and diversified approaches need different contents adapted to specific populations, based on the targeting principle adopted in the new vision. This content should be based on knowledge and experience in national languages as well as specific cultural conditions and context. Such content should tackle various aspects of learners' life and may concern various aspects of their environment, such as health, environment and agriculture.

The features of curricula content are central to the acquisition of skills in literacy. Therefore, program content should be adapted to learning conditions, based on an analysis of the working situation or living conditions of the target group and its needs. This content should be built on the basis of a predetermined competency framework. Such repository should be designed based on studies highlighting the roles played by adults in their communities and consequently develop skills inventory for literacy participants in order to operate adequately in their society.

Fourth: The question of language

The language used in literacy programs plays a central role in the motivation of participants. Indeed, literacy systems in most countries use national languages. The language issue is usually a central issue for the country where the language of instruction does not correspond to the language spoken in everyday life.

Indeed, the gap between the classical Arabic used in literacy programs and local language varieties is significant. This gap is largely responsible for poor school performance and low levels of adult literacy in the Arab region[9]. To develop effective literacy programs in a multilingual environment, it is important to consider the learners' language in the program development. Mother-tongue literacy is essential, and hence a necessary pathway. Nonetheless, the use of the official language is indispensable in literacy programs, particularly in African countries, as it facilitates communication between learners and the governmental departments responsible for those programs.

In addition to taking into account learners' mother tongue and other cultural specificities, close attention should be given to the use of the standardized Quranic script for writing the languages of Muslim peoples in literacy programs of Islamic non-Arabic speaking countries. This will give strong impetus to literacy programs and enhance their attractiveness in view of the great moral significance of the Quranic Arabic script for Islamic non-Arabic speaking people.

Fifth: Teaching means

We distinguish here learning tools and assessment tools of learning. The teaching means used by facilitators in literacy classes are also important and varied. They range from a simple manual of literacy, with a table and chalk to the teacher, to new information technologies. There are also many tools, with varying degrees of adaptation and use. Today, information and communication technology

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(9) Daniel A. Wagner, Literacy and Adult Education. Coordinated by UNESCO. Dakar World Education Forum- Education for All 2000Assessment.

(ICT) is now one of the most relevant tools that should ensure the development of literacy activities in the Islamic world. It can be used as a tool to improve the quality and relevance of learning and also as a mechanism to increase equal access to literacy.

In its **"Strategy for ICTs Development in the Islamic World"**, ISESCO stresses that "*Literacy remains a prerequisite for the use of ICTs and that it should be generalized through national literacy campaigns*"[10]. It is true that literacy is a prerequisite for the use of ICT, but technology must also be at the service of literacy. In this sense, the institutions in charge of literacy should develop multimedia tools of literacy (TV and radio programs, mobile phone, CD ROM, website) to promote both attendance-based training and distance learning of participants. It should be emphasized that many promising experiences were conducted in this regard, but were not accompanied by the necessary monitoring and enough logistics to ensure wide accessibility for the target populations.

<u>Sixth</u>: *Timetable of literacy training*

The contents should be administered in a definite period and according to a specific number of hours and adapted to the constraints and availability of adult participants who have social concerns and professional commitments (respect for farming seasons, for example).

d) Tools for monitoring and assessing learning skills

The evaluation of the learning process is one of the most important actions that allow different actors to have a real judgment on the quality of literacy programs. Indeed, the actual performance of programs is measured through assessment tools administered at different stages of training:

- *At the beginning:* diagnostic evaluation for placement of participants, in order to "standardize" as much as possible literacy classes according to their initial literacy skills, as well as gender and age.

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(10) **"Strategy for ICTs Development in the Islamic world"**, ISESCO-2009, adopted by the 5th Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers - Tripoli, 21-23 November 2007. p. 53.

- *At mid-term:* formative evaluation. This assessment checks the development of participants' learning during the training course in order to introduce the necessary remedial adjustments to the program, content and methods.

- *At the end of the program:* final evaluation / certification. This is done at the end of the program and ensures obtaining a judgment about the skills acquired by the participants during the training in order to grant them certificates leading to other formal learning systems or certain professional occupations.

Within this approach, the competent authorities should develop learning assessment arrangements in a decentralized manner, with databases to ensure the reliability of assessment. These tools should normally be prepared in conformity with the objectives of the literacy skills framework which constitutes a reference framework for assessing these skills. Besides, it is important to maintain learners' profile and benchmark data for any conclusion regarding their progress. Indeed, there is a need for a quality control model in which the following aspects (among others) should be taken into consideration: learning achievements, gender disparity, out-of-reach learners, appropriate literacy policy, literacy planning bodies, curriculum development, educational materials, teacher training and professional development, and financial resources.

e) Post-literacy and lifelong learning

Considering that literacy is not an end in itself but rather a means to multiple ends including lifelong learning, the integration of the neo-literates in the socio-economic and political life becomes an ultimate goal for all literacy programs. Indeed, it is essential to have a strategic vision of post-literacy as part of any ISESCO literacy program. Based on this approach, the establishment of a dynamic and creative learning environment is a cornerstone of the overall ISESCO literacy vision.

The development of post-literacy activities shall not only prevent neo-literates from slipping back into illiteracy but it is a life-long empowerment for them. To achieve that, the following actions should be undertaken:

- *Developing a learning environment for neo-literates:* An environment rich in writing materials maintains the skills acquired by people regardless of the situation or context in which they have acquired them (literacy classes, school, self-learning, workplace, etc.);

- *Introducing the concept of community-based library and initiating activities* around the libraries can promote the idea of literate environment. Thus, access to a writing-based environment conducive to learning requires resources of development, duplication and publication of any material of immediate interest to the neo-literate, namely books, pamphlets, newspapers, magazines, journals, messages, thematic booklets on topics of interest to people (health, agriculture, farming, community life and associations, etc.); and

- *Integrating neo-literates* by allowing learners to acquire basic skills so as to improve their socio-economic conditions through sustainable income-generating activities, such as developing and managing micro-businesses, accessing the labor market, etc.

f) Logistics

The material conditions in which literacy takes place are of particular sensitivity and contribute to the program's overall 'quality'. Some of these conditions are:

Supporting institutional capacity development of literacy and adult learning in the following fields:

- Curriculum and material development;
- Planning and management;
- Monitoring, supervision and evaluation of literacy programs; and
- Promoting community engagement.

Accommodation conditions: literacy sites, classes, equipment, etc.

Several stakeholders and various studies strongly emphasized the importance played by the nature of the premises and sites where literacy courses take

place for the "motivation" of participants and, consequently, for the programs "quality". Indeed, the participants in literacy programmes naturally want to be hosted in suitable places and adequate premises that preserve their dignity and ensure a minimum degree of comfort and hygiene.

These reception conditions, if they are not favorable and comfortable, can easily mitigate learners' motivation and encourage absenteeism and dropout.

In general, most stakeholders considered that the classrooms in primary schools would not constitute "very motivating" spaces for learners for several reasons, mainly the inadequacy of class context for adults' needs. However, mosques, youth clubs, women's centers, training centers, etc., would be better accepted by the participants, and the reception conditions in these places are better than in schools where the facilities are physically and psychologically suitable for children rather than adults. In particular, mosques offer the largest network of potential sites for literacy in Islamic countries.

To restore the educational function of mosques in Islam, they should be well-equipped to host literacy classes and to play an active role in this respect. The use of mosques as a site for literacy and adult education is an instance of good practice that should be replicated in ISESCO Member States.

As a part of the diversification of literacy training supply, it is also important to involve the institutions of Arab-Islamic teaching, such as Quranic schools widely scattered in village communities, in the Islamic environment. Well-trained masters of Quranic schools and trainers from other Arab-Islamic educational institutions (madrasahs) could serve as a link in the effective implementation of literacy activities.

The number of learners per class

The number of learners of literacy classes is also a parameter contributing to the program "quality". Studies show that some literacy classes can average more than 40 people. It goes without saying that the high student numbers makes the task difficult for trainers and consequently trigger lack of motivation and dropout.

3.6. Monitoring and evaluation

Follow-up and evaluation are important dimensions which constitute a kernel element of any process of quality. However, they are the weakest links of the chain of literacy in the majority of Islamic countries. Thus, ISESCO's new literacy vision considers follow-up and evaluation as essential components. Indeed, important actions will be programmed to encourage Islamic countries to establish a system of follow-up and evaluation. Several actions are possible in this regard:

Monitoring all programs, whether public, private or community-based, whether benefiting from government subsidy or not, is the responsibility of literacy agencies, which must ensure that literacy meets specific "standards" and specifications (in terms of reception conditions or educational requirements), that the competency framework is respected, to prevent exploiting the candidates' literacy vulnerability for purposes not agreed-upon.

Indeed, the assessment of acquired skills through the literacy program and the formal and objective certification of the achieved levels, with effective and standardized tools constitute one of the main factors of quality assurance. Today, such tools are not available to systems. Currently the evaluation is generally conducted by a "review" prepared by the trainer himself, in the absence of any competency framework or "standardized tests."

Also, generally, the degrees awarded at the end of a literacy course are formally and officially recognized by neither the educational system nor the vocational training system.

Ultimately, at the level of ISESCO Member States, the "recognition" of "certification" should find its obvious corollary in the establishment of a bridge-system with the educational and training system. The evaluation of each program should also be regularly conducted by these agencies to ensure the quality of the action, to highlight the strengths transferable to other programs and the weaknesses to address. The results of these evaluations would allow a debate on the successes of the system as well as success stories.

The setting up of a system for the evaluation, audit and control of literacy actions is intended to verify the achievements in the field and at the same time the support of all partners for readjustment, and to help them overcome the constraints they may encounter. The system is based on the pivotal role of central and decentralized departments, through internal monitoring and the recruitment of specialized consulting firms for monitoring and external evaluation of the programs conducted by the various actors in this field. To enhance the assessment's efficiency, ISESCO's new vision proposes the following assessment arrangements:

- Appointing officials of the department in charge of literacy programs at the national level to compile related statistics;

- Providing the necessary means for the collection of statistics, including questionnaires, guides and training of the staff concerned;

- Creating a section on ISESCO's website for the networking and updating of statistics in order to use them in the development and review of relevant national plans and ISESCO's strategies.

3.7. Promotion of scientific research

Studies undertaken in recent years on education have generally focused only on basic education. These research works have not sufficiently tackled the issue of literacy, although it is a field which deserves, from the point of view of multiplicity and complexity of the actors, a more detailed scientific attention to better understand its operation, and reflect upon the various choices involved therein. This deficiency, as regards research in literacy, is all the more noted in the aspects related to quality, which still suffers from shortage of data and constitutes an impediment to its improvement.

According to ISESCO's new vision, it is imperative to attach paramount importance to scientific research on literacy, by encouraging the creation of special courses in andragogy in higher education institutions and scientific research centers, and conduct studies to diagnose the phenomenon of illiteracy and understand the mechanisms of improving quality at various levels. In this

respect, research should focus on (i) the roles of higher education institutions, professional bodies and research institutions in the capacity development of staff working in adult literacy and educational subsystems, (ii) capacity development in human resources development planning, and (iii) the role of literacy in improving poor peoples' living conditions and contributing to national comprehensive development.

3.8. Financing literacy

The efforts made by Islamic countries as regards the funding of education are essentially devoted to formal education. This negatively impacts the budget allocated to adult education and literacy, which do not benefit from adequate attention. In fact, the lack of financial support for literacy reduces the chances of reaching both the objectives enunciated in the Incheon Declaration Education 2030, and the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Available statistics show that the budget allocated to literacy in most Islamic countries does not exceed 1% of the overall education budget; whereas it is recommended that a budget largely higher than this should be devoted to literacy and adult education so as to achieve Incheon Declaration Education 2030.

Several sources contribute to the financing of literacy programs, including the government budget, continuing education funds, donations of some NGOs, state-owned organizations and private companies, external funding in the form of donations or loans within the framework of bilateral or multilateral cooperation, tax revenues, etc.

However, these funding contributions remain very modest compared with the financing requirements of literacy and the overall budget earmarked to formal education.

ISESCO Member States' expenditure on literacy programs is broadly low compared with international standards. As a comparison, international statistics on literacy expenditure in a sample of 29 countries show that every learner

receives on average 30 U.S. dollars in Central Asia and 47 dollars in Sub-Saharan Africa, to 61 dollars in Latin America[11]. These costs become even lower when the reasoning is made on the basis of registered persons having succeeded.

In order to change this situation, achieve the set goals and implement the relevant strategies, it is imperative to increase literacy budgets at least threefold. It is also necessary for all stakeholders in the field of literacy and adult education to adopt good governance practices in managing resources available and using them rationally for better results.

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(11) UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report -2006: Literacy for life, p. 234

4. MEANS OF IMPLEMENTING ISESCO'S NEW LITERACY VISION

The implementation of ISESCO's new literacy vision requires a comprehensive approach with the mobilization of all stakeholders. The application of the vision should be approved through regional and national dialogue and coordination between all these actors. It also requires the availability of the necessary material, technical, logistic and institutional means at the national and inter-regional level.

First: At the national level

1. Governance and decentralization mechanisms

- Providing a good educational system which ensures universal schooling and reduces dropout rates, thereby decreasing illiteracy rates;

- Promoting decentralization through the establishment of community learning centers (CLC), whose literacy programs are linked to the socio-economic environment of learners and include training in development-related trades, and the networking of these centers;

- Establishing central and local specialized institutional structures to plan, supervise, monitor and assess literacy programs;

- Creating a national consultative committee gathering representatives of all stakeholders: ministries concerned with literacy, economic partners (professional associations), and NGOs working in the field of literacy. This committee will be responsible for defining the national literacy vision, developing the annual action plan and monitoring and assessing the actions implemented;

- Creating local committees gathering all stakeholders at the local level. In addition to the tasks relating to local monitoring and evaluation of actions undertaken, the committee will propose action plans to the national

commission for validation and mobilization of necessary means for their achievement;

- Providing the necessary human and technical resources to reinforce the capacities of all stakeholders in the implementation of the new literacy vision, through training in the management, monitoring, control and evaluation of literacy programs. This should be done via regional centers for literacy staff training;

- Facilitating the access of literacy learners to all other vocational training facilities adapted to adult education, and developing logistics means and adequate reception in these structures;

- Developing realistic and time-bound action plans for the implementation of the vision, in accordance with the cultural and socio-economic situation of the countries concerned.

2. Legal and regulatory means

- Reviewing national legislation on literacy to foster demand for literacy programs and involve civil society organizations, the private sector and informal education institutions in the implementation of literacy programs;

- Establishing a legal framework to provide for educational bridges between literacy courses and formal education and basic education programs as well as between literacy programs and vocational training.

3. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

- Setting up national literacy observatories;

- Setting up information systems to monitor literacy programs and to have adequate information in real-time for decision making;

- Establishing a network of experts to analyze and examine literacy issues nationally and propose appropriate solutions;

- Developing national literacy action plans and constructing performance indicators and relevant monitoring and assessment mechanisms.

4. Financial resources

- Establishing a national literacy fund financed by government budget, technical and financial partners, charity donations, the private sector, Zakat and Islamic endowments in order to ensure sustainable financing of literacy programs.

Second: At the inter-regional level within ISESCO's fields of competence and joint Islamic action

- Continuing the execution of training programs for literacy supervisors and instructors and the dissemination of good practices through ISESCO's regional literacy centers;

- Enhancing ISESCO's support for the competent authorities to review national literacy policies, encouraging civil society organizations to adopt ISESCO's new literacy vision and awarding prizes in this respect;

- Mobilizing technical and financial partners for financing literacy in Islamic countries in accordance with ISESCO's new literacy vision;

- Coordinating joint Islamic action in the field of literacy in order to establish a network of literacy experts in the Islamic world;

- Giving priority in support programs to countries with low literacy rates, and promoting Islamic solidarity for this purpose.

Literacy rates in OIC Member States - 2015

Country	Female	Male	Total
Afghanistan	24,15	51,99	38,16
Albania	96,88	98,38	97,62
Algeria	73,13	87,17	80,20
Azerbaijan	99,75	99,89	99,82
Bahrain	93,46	96,92	95,70
Bangladesh	58,49	64,57	61,55
Benin	27,29	49,87	38,45
Brunei Darussalam	94,46	97,48	95,98
Burkina Faso	29,32	43,03	36,02
Cameroon	68,88	81,15	74,99
Chad	31,92	48,49	40,17
Comoros	73,72	81,81	77,76
Côte d'Ivoire	32,55	53,15	43,11
Djibouti			
Egypt	65,42	82,15	73,75
Gabon	81,02	85,32	83,18
The Gambia	47,62	63,91	55,55
Guinea	22,77	38,08	30,41
Guinea-Bissau	48,28	71,78	59,91
Guyana	89,80	87,20	88,50
Indonesia	91,52	96,26	93,88
Iran	82,51	91,19	86,85
Iraq	73,73	85,65	79,69
Jordan	92,92	97,74	95,37
Kazakhstan	99,78	99,80	99,79
Kuwait	95,84	96,53	96,27
Kyrgyz Republic	99,41	99,64	99,52
Lebanon	91,85	95,97	93,94

Libya	85,59	96,72	91,02
Malaysia	93,21	96,18	94,64
Maldives	98,84	99,78	99,31
Mali	29,22	48,21	38,70
Mauritania	41,57	62,60	52,10
Morocco	58,83	78,60	68,49
Mozambique	45,37	73,26	58,77
Niger	11,04	27,29	19,13
Nigeria	49,68	69,19	59,57
Oman	85,63	93,58	91,14
Pakistan	45,81	69,54	57,94
Palestine	94,55	98,41	96,50
Qatar	96,79	97,43	97,30
Saudi Arabia	91,06	97,00	94,65
Senegal	46,57	69,72	57,67
Sierra Leone	37,65	58,74	48,09
Somalia			
Sudan	68,61	83,26	75,90
Suriname	95,01	96,14	95,57
Syria	80,98	91,72	86,43
Tajikistan	99,72	99,83	99,77
Togo	55,30	78,31	66,55
Tunisia	74,24	89,62	81,78
Turkey	91,83	98,39	95,01
Turkmenistan	99,63	99,76	99,69
Uganda	71,47	85,31	78,39
United Arab Emirates	95,76	93,13	93,84
Uzbekistan	99,47	99,72	99,59
Yemen	55,02	85,13	70,07

Source: www.sesrtcic.org