



**ProLiteracy®**



# Basic Skills for Community-Oriented Development

A Resource Book for Educators and Other Partners

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BY PAUL JURMO

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Photo provided by ProLiteracy.

Women at a literacy training organized by Proyecto Laubach de Alfabetización en México, A.C., (PLAMAC) in Irapuato, Mexico.

## Introduction

### Why and for Whom this Resource Book Was Written

*Basic Skills for Community-Oriented Development* was written for those who are already supporting basic skills development for adults and out-of-school youth in developing countries or those interested in doing so.

These audiences include

- current or potential providers of basic education services for adults and out-of-school youth;
- other stakeholders who currently or might partner with basic education providers; and
- current or potential funders and policymakers who can support basic education services for adults and out-of-school youth.

We are especially aiming this document at

- smaller, community-based organizations, because such organizations often lack access to the kinds of information provided here, and because they have great potential to take important leadership roles in providing basic skills services in their communities; and
- programs that normally serve adults and out-of-school youth but might
  - benefit from learning about valuable work being done in basic skills efforts for children; and
  - be open to also providing literacy supports to school-age children in their communities. (These supports could include providing after-school literacy activities for children enrolled in school or to children who are not enrolled in school but who want to nonetheless get a basic education.)

The document is intended to help these audiences to build their understanding of

- the evolving ways that “basic skills” have been defined;
- why basic skills are important for adults, youth, and children and for their families, communities, and nations;
- diverse ways that education providers and other stakeholders can collaborate to help various learner populations develop useful basic skills;

- supports that basic skills efforts require to be effective;
- actions that educators and partners might take to start a new basic skills program or strengthen an existing one; and
- resources (e.g., documents, organizations, videos, audio recordings) that might be of help to those doing this work.

We hope that this document will help readers better understand what they might do to support basic skills development in their communities and nations—and be inspired to do so.

### How this Document Was Written

*Basic Skills for Community-Oriented Development* was written by Paul Jurmo, Ed.D. ([www.pauljurmo.info](http://www.pauljurmo.info)), with the help of a team of educators at the field level, representatives of international education organizations, and staff at ProLiteracy's headquarters in Syracuse, New York. This collaboration built on the author's prior and more recent work, as broken down in two phases:

- Phase I: Background Research
  - Early field work and research by the author (mid-1970s through 2017), including extensive work designing, implementing, documenting, and supporting contextualized basic skills programs in developing countries and the U.S.
  - Informal research (2018 and 2019) through observations and interviews in how basic skills are used and supported in five African countries
  - Writing of first draft of *Basic Skills for Community-Oriented Development* based on above-described Background Research (2018)
  - Writing of 22 basic skills-related articles and guidebooks (2017 to early 2021) that also informed the contents of this document
- Phase II: Collaboration with ProLiteracy and Other Partners: 2020-2021
  - Initial planning with ProLiteracy staff
  - Review of responses to a survey sent to ProLiteracy partners in Africa and Asia
  - Review of online reports from international education organizations and email exchanges with representatives of those organizations
  - Ongoing feedback from ProLiteracy's International Division to a series of drafts of this document
  - Feedback about near-final drafts from selected ProLiteracy partners and other subject matter experts
  - Editing and formatting of final version by ProLiteracy staff

## Limitations

While this document is based on the previously described research, it is not intended as a formal research document. Instead, we see this as a substantive, relevant, and user-friendly introduction to a range of perspectives, models, and information sources related to basic skills education in developing countries. It is aimed at audiences who might use it to expand and deepen their understanding of options they might adapt to their respective situations.

We recognize that those doing this work might benefit from more in-depth information (e.g., about research in this field, practices they might use to plan and implement particular activities for specific learner populations, etc.). We have provided links to a sampling of resources on such subjects in the References section and Appendices.

## Glossary

Please see Appendix C for a glossary of terms used in this document.

## About the Organizations and Web Addresses Referred to in this Document

This document contains links to organizations that might be of interest to readers. However, by including them, we are not formally endorsing them. Also, we cannot guarantee that all of the web addresses (i.e., URLs or links) provided here will be active when the reader clicks on them. We recommend that, if that is the case, readers either (a) cut and paste the link into their own browsers or (b) copy the name of the organization, program, or document of interest and paste it into their browser to conduct a search for that item.

## Acknowledgments

The author salutes and thanks the many educators, learners, and others who have directly and indirectly provided information and inspiration for this document. These include the colleagues he has worked with in basic skills programs in developing countries, Canada, and the U.S. Special thanks go to ProLiteracy representatives for their support, including Michele Diecuch and Peter Waite (who championed this as a ProLiteracy publication), Alesha Anderson and Christelle Marpaud (who thoughtfully shaped the content), Sarah Howell (who provided administrative guidance), and Laura McLoughlin and the editing team (for transforming the text into an accessible and engaging presentation). And, last but not last, thanks to my family and friends for their years of encouragement and support.



Photo provided by ProLiteracy and Proyecto Laubach de Alfabetización en México, A.C., (PLAMAC). Women in San Miguelito are improving their lives through literacy classes organized by PLAMAC.

## PART 1

# Basic Skills Education in Developing Countries: From Colonial Times to the 1980s

### SUMMARY

Part 1 provides a brief history of basic skills education in developing countries from the colonial period to the 1980s. Readers can use this to broaden their understanding of models they might adapt—or avoid—in their own work. Readers might also deepen their appreciation of—and be inspired by—the work that others have done in the past, often in difficult circumstances. (See the References section toward the end of this document for details of the sources cited here.)

## Basic Education in the Colonial Period

From the time of early colonialization by European powers (early 1500s) until about the 1960s, many of the countries that are referred to as “developing nations” approached basic education in similar ways:<sup>1</sup>

- Formal primary and secondary education for a minority of individuals: This education typically was an adaptation of the standardized curricula used in the colonizing country (i.e., basic reading, writing, speaking, listening, mathematics—commonly presented in the colonizing nation’s language) and teaching methods commonly used in those curricula (e.g., emphasis on rote memorization and mastery of discrete components of basic skills; less focus on mastery of skills through practice of authentic, real-life applications of those skills relevant to learners)

<sup>1</sup> (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/education/Education-in-British-colonies-and-former-colonies>)

- Education to prepare selected populations (i.e., the “educated” classes) to perform functional tasks for governmental and nongovernmental institutions and to maintain the social order in a colonial society
- Some nonformal education for individuals who did not participate or succeed in the formal education system
- Active involvement of religious institutions as providers of basic education: In some cases, this was done for both the functional purposes described above and to support the growth of those religions. In other cases, the focus was primarily religious in nature.

## Basic Education for Democratic Social Change

In some countries in the later 1950s and 1960s, there was a sudden growth in integrating nonformal basic education (typically carried out outside formal educational institutions) with efforts to transform governmental and social structures from a colonial model to one that emphasized democratic participation, social justice, and a redistribution of wealth. Variations of this “social change” model were implemented by political activists and faith-based groups in Latin America (e.g., Cuba [Prieto, 1981], Nicaragua [Baracco, 2004; Cardenal & Miller, 1981],<sup>2</sup> Brazil, Chile [Kirkendall, 2010], and Guinea Bissau [Freire, 1978]). Elements of this approach were also adopted in adult literacy programs in industrialized countries (Jurmo, 2021; Auerbach, 1992; Merrifield, White, & Bingman, 1994; Wrigley & Guth, 1992; Sarmiento & Kay, 1990; Añorve, 1989; Auerbach & Wallerstein, 1987; Jurmo, 1987; Shor, 1980; Adams & Horton, 1975).

Emphasis was placed on integrating the mastery of basic reading and writing skills with critical thinking and other skills required for identifying and solving problems faced by adult learners and their communities. These skills were seen as essential for an actively engaged, democratic citizenry. Such an approach was especially targeted at youth and adults to help them engage in the restructuring of social and political systems (Timson, 1988; Freire, 1970).

## Functional Literacy Integrated with Other Development Initiatives

In the 1960s and 1970s, UNESCO’s Experimental World Literacy Programme (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 1976) promoted a functional literacy approach to basic skills education for adults. Education agencies would work with service providers from diverse fields (e.g., public health, economic, and workforce development) to develop and field test programs in which learners developed the

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<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicaraguan\\_Literacy\\_Campaign](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicaraguan_Literacy_Campaign)

particular basic skills (especially reading and numeracy) needed to understand new technologies, work procedures, or health practices. This type of contextualized basic education provided a foundation for many subsequent adult basic education efforts in developing countries, including the more recent forms of basic education described next (Anzalone & McLaughlin, 1983).

## Early Growth of Student-Centered Education

As stated earlier, during colonial years, formal education systems tended to follow an approach that emphasized rote memorization of pre-packaged curricula to support mastery of discrete components of language and other basic skills. However, as nations began to become independent from the European powers, new—more participatory—forms of basic education began to emerge. These participatory approaches were found in both the “education for democratic social change” efforts previously described and in what might be called the “student-centered,” or “learner-centered,” basic education efforts that began in the 1960s and 1970s.

One of the best-known advocates for an alternative, more “student-centered” approach to instruction was New Zealand’s Sylvia Ashton-Warner. As described in *Teacher*, about her years as a teacher of Maori children (Gunter, Hoxeng, & Tasiguano, 1972; Ashton-Warner, 1963), Ashton-Warner promoted organic learning in which learning must start from a person’s experience and be related to the world. This approach, she argued, facilitates learner motivation, learning, and confidence. Learners would identify words meaningful (important) to them and use them to create phrases, a personal written word list, and art projects.

This method was similar to the approach being developed by psycholinguists in the U.S. in the 1970s and 1980s in which learners read and wrote about topics of interest to them with emphasis on creating and conveying meaning rather than perfecting the forms of written language (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984; Goodman & Niles, 1981; Graves, 1981; Watson, 1981; Smith, 1978).

**Ashton-Warner promoted organic learning in which learning must start from a person’s experience and be related to the world.**



Projects in Latin America and Asia helped adults develop literacy skills through the use of games (Burke, Gunter & Smith, 1972), community newspapers (Diltz & Fikih, 1990), *fotonovelas* and other forms of photo literature (Barriga & Villacis, 1988; Cain & Comings, 1977), letter dice (Gunter, Hoxeng, & Borja, 1988), number bingo (Gunter, Barriga, & Hoxeng, 1987), and other activities that prioritized active student involvement and uses of familiar, meaningful language, concepts, and uses of basic skills.

## The Roles of Religious Education

As stated, many of the schools established during the colonial period were run by western religious organizations. These schools had a dual practical and religious purpose—preparing workers and citizens while also building religious congregations and preparing learners to lead religious lives.

Parallel to the educational systems run by western religious institutions were the Koranic schools that used Arabic script to teach the use of Islamic religious texts and more generally build the membership of Islamic congregations. Koranic schools often had the additional outcome of enabling learners to use Arabic script for nonreligious purposes. These religious schools presented models of education, texts, and other foundations (e.g., Arabic mathematics) that have, in many cases, been integrated into more modern education systems.<sup>3</sup>



Students help each other practice literacy skills by writing on slates.



Photos provided by Anne Thomas.

Teachers and tutors learn how to use computers to develop new culturally-relevant literacy materials in Kavet for the Bilingual Literacy Program.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329173592\\_Islamic\\_education\\_in\\_Africa\\_writing\\_boards\\_and\\_blackboards](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329173592_Islamic_education_in_Africa_writing_boards_and_blackboards)



Photo provided by Paul Jurmo.  
Tongan primary school children use guided reading activities with locally-produced sight word books.

## PART 2

# 21st Century Perspectives on Why and How to Expand and Strengthen Basic Education

### SUMMARY

Part 2 describes how, in the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there have been

- a growing recognition of the importance of basic education, especially for school-age children;
- increased recognition that traditional approaches to basic education have not been effective in terms of the numbers of individuals served or the quality of those services; and
- development of guidelines for effective basic skills services geared to diverse learner populations and learning needs.

Though much of this interest and discussion has focused on school-age children, some of it is directly or indirectly related to basic skills development for out-of-school youth and adults. For example, the critiques of traditional types of basic skills education and the proposed new strategies for basic education for children can also be useful for those who want to improve literacy development opportunities for youth and adults. Conversely, the recent increased focus on integrating children's basic education with other academic and real-life subjects is consistent with the functional literacy and literacy for democratic social change models developed for adults and out-of-school youth.

## Increased Recognition of the Importance of Basic Skills Development for Children, Youth, and Adults

Since at least 2000, international development organizations have argued that basic education—for children, youth, and adults—should be seen as providing a foundation for other development efforts.

For example, UNESCO’s Global Alliance for Literacy<sup>4</sup> says that

*Literacy is an integral part of the right to education and the foundation of lifelong learning as well as a driver for sustainable development. It empowers individuals, improves livelihoods, enables greater participation in society and the labour market, benefits child and family health and nutrition, and reduces poverty.*

*An estimated 773 million adults worldwide still lack basic literacy and numeracy skills—two-thirds of whom are women. Southern Asia is home to almost one-half of this global youth and adult population with no basic literacy and numeracy, while 27 percent live in sub-Saharan Africa. The other 10 percent are in East and Southeast Asia, 9 percent in Northern Africa and Western Asia, while about 4 percent live in Latin America and the Caribbean.*

(See what UNESCO says about its Sustainable Development Goal 4, “Ensure Quality Education for All,” at <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education2030-sdg4>.)

The International Rescue Committee<sup>5</sup> points out

*... over 62 million children in countries affected by war and displacement remain out of school, while many others receive only a poor quality education. Despite this great need, education has received less than three percent of all humanitarian aid in recent years.*

## Limitations of Commonly-Used Models of Basic Skills Education

Despite the above kinds of declarations and decades-long investments in education, basic education remains inadequate—in terms of both quality (i.e., relevance of content and effectiveness of instruction) and quantity (i.e., accessibility and intensity)—for many children, youth, and adults. International organizations have identified the following limitations:

<sup>4</sup> <https://uil.unesco.org/literacy/global-alliance>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.rescue.org/outcome/education>

### CRITIQUES OF BASIC EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

Advocates for new approaches to basic education for children argue that, while more children now have access to primary education, the quality and intensity of that education are limited for many children. Key critiques include:

- Basic skills curricula are often irrelevant to student abilities, cultures, and interests.
- Teachers are often not well trained and rely on ineffective teaching methods.
- Language of instruction is often not one that students understand.
- Students' families and communities often do not provide adequate support to children's basic education.
- Education budgets are often inadequate to provide the amount and quality of education that children need.
- Many children face significant social and material challenges that reduce their abilities to participate, persist, succeed, and advance in their education.

*The U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education: Fiscal Years 2019 –2023* (United States Agency for International Development, September 2018) identifies some of the social and material problems that block many children's success in school:

... a lack of nurturing care (for children), including malnutrition, poor health, or a lack of parental or caregiver involvement and safe environments, among other issues. There are chronic shortages of trained and qualified teachers and instructors; often they are simply absent. Many students either lack books and other materials entirely, or are required to share them extensively with others. Where students do have books, most are poor quality, and often they are written in languages they do not understand. Moreover, millions of youth and adults are left unemployed or under-employed, lacking skills to meet the demands of a modern economy because they do not have basic literacy, numeracy, soft, and technical skills (page 7).

Other challenges include war and civil unrest, which results in closed schools; children forced to focus on basic survival or to engage in violence; growth in youth populations, which is currently the largest in history for many countries; gender roles that discourage education for girls; and a lack of resources and poor coordination of those resources that do exist. These problems exist despite evidence that education can reduce violent extremism, improve public health and social stability, and strengthen the workforce and economic development (pages 7–9).

### CRITIQUES OF BASIC EDUCATION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH AND ADULTS

The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning states that “adult learning and education (ALE) can help tackle pressing economic, social and environmental challenges. Yet, too many adults still lack adequate learning opportunities.” *Its 2019 fourth Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE 4)* says<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> <https://uil.unesco.org/adult-education/global-report/fourth-global-report-adult-learning-and-education>

*In almost one-third of countries, fewer than 5 percent of adults aged 15 and above participate in education and learning programmes . . . Adults with disabilities, older adults, refugees and migrants, minority groups and other disadvantaged segments of society are particularly under-represented in adult education programmes and find themselves deprived of crucial access to lifelong learning opportunities.*

*GRALE 4 monitors the extent to which UNESCO Member States put their international commitments regarding adult learning and education (ALE) into practice and reflects data submitted by 159 countries. It calls for a major change in the approach to ALE, backed by adequate investment to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access and benefit from ALE and that its contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is fully realized.*

*Progress in participation in adult learning and education is generally insufficient, the report finds. The data show persistent and deep inequalities in participation and that key target groups, such as adults with disabilities, older adults, minority groups and adults living in conflict-affected countries, are not being reached.*

*The publication stresses the need to increase national investment in ALE, reduce participation costs, raise awareness of its benefits, and improve data collection and monitoring, particularly for disadvantaged groups.*

## **Calls for a New, Holistic Approach to Providing More Learners with Better-Quality Basic Skills Supports**

In response to the critiques, international education agencies<sup>7</sup> have called for not just increased *access* to basic education for children, youth, and adults, but an increase in the *quality* of educational opportunities. They argue for a new, holistic approach to basic skills development that

- Broadens the definition of basic skills from reading (and perhaps writing and numeracy) to other fundamental skills such as digital literacy, problem-solving, and others needed for a variety of life roles.
- Increases access to quality basic education for more learners (including children, youth, and adults), especially those from vulnerable populations<sup>8</sup>;

<sup>7</sup> In addition to USAID and UNESCO (cited above under "Limitations of Commonly-Used Models of Basic Skills Education"), Germany's international development agency, GIZ has issued such a statement at <https://www.giz.de/expertise/html/60054.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Vulnerable populations might include girls (who in many societies have historically been denied access to education while also being at greater risk of unemployment, exploitation, abuse, and unwanted pregnancy); children with disabilities; 0-to-6 year-old children in critical early development stage; and children, youth, and adults in conflict, natural disaster, and other high-stress situations (e.g., refugees, child laborers, children at risk of exploitation, hunger, abuse, disease, homelessness, discrimination).

- Strengthens the quality of basic education by targeting (i.e., contextualizing or customizing) services to the practical (e.g., work, family, civic), academic, and socio-emotional needs, strengths, and contexts of diverse learner populations; and
- Improves the efficiency, sustainability, and transparency of basic skills development systems through:
  - Coordination and integration with other governmental and non-governmental development supports (e.g., for health, economic and workforce development, democratization, environmental sustainability, and peace).
  - Ongoing evaluation and research to document and inform efforts.
  - Professional development for educators and other stakeholders.
  - Development and use of relevant, engaging curricula.
  - Upgrading of facilities (i.e., both schools and other venues for learning) and uses of technologies for learning and other purposes (e.g., professional development and administrative functions).
  - Innovative funding strategies (e.g., to draw on resources from multiple sources); and
  - Increasing and strengthening parental and community support for basic skills development, both at school and in home and community contexts.



Juana, María, and Margarita share a moment together at a literacy workshop in San Miguelito.



Photos provided by ProLiteracy/Lancôme Mexico.

PLAMAC staff distribute literacy materials and supplies for learners and their families.



Photo provided by Anne Thomas, NonTimber Forest Products, Cambodia. Newly trained teachers and learners proudly display soap and health literacy materials after a workshop.

## How Basic Education Partnerships Have Been Responding to Recent Policy and Funding Guidelines

## PART 3

### SUMMARY

Part 3 describes how basic education programs have been adapting the guidelines described in Part 2, to create collaborative models of basic education customized to diverse learner populations and development needs.

### Principles and Practices Adaptable to Diverse Learners, Needs, and Contexts

Since at least the early 2000s (and, in some cases, before that), governmental and nongovernmental organizations have been field-testing the visions and strategies described in Part 2. They have created basic education projects at national and local levels around the world. The following project profiles represent a mix of learner populations (adults, youth, and children from diverse backgrounds), learning needs, goals, service models, and partnerships. They include both small-scale projects and nation-wide initiatives. While most of these projects are relatively recent, a few are from as far back as the 1970s and 1980s. (For additional models, see the References section and the Appendices at the end of this document.)

Readers might learn from, be inspired by, and adapt these models for their own work in basic education. These models might be particularly useful for those who want to create “community-oriented” basic education,<sup>9</sup> which uses effective strategies to:

<sup>9</sup> This term “community-oriented” is adapted from Hanna Arlene Fingeret and others described in Jurmo, 2021.

- involve communities in identifying needs, setting goals, recruiting learners, implementing activities, and otherwise supporting the program;
- integrate education with other services relevant to the community;
- thereby not only help participating learners but build the capacities of local groups and institutions to use education to create stronger families and communities;
- serve adults, out-of-school youth, and possibly children (who might not be enrolled in formal schools or who are enrolled in formal schools but need extra help with their basic skills).

## Programs for Adults

### BILINGUAL LITERACY FOR COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT IN REMOTE FORESTS

- **Nation:** Cambodia
- **Partners:** Non-Timber Forest Products with support from ProLiteracy; Rotary Club of Kingston-North Kitsap, WA; DVV International; Child's Dream; New Life Literature; the MDG Fund of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia; and other small donors
- **Learners:** villagers from minority ethnic groups living in remote forest communities
- **Purposes:** help adults develop basic literacy skills in their own minority language and in the national language, so they can improve the well-being of themselves, families, the environment, and their communities
- **Basic skills content:** basic literacy and numeracy in Kavet and Khmer languages
- **Functional content:** health and hygiene, agriculture, community-based forest management, income generation, and selling of produce
- **Other features:** high involvement of villagers in program teaching, learning, and management; community libraries are stocked with stories written by students and teachers in their mother tongue and in the national language
- **For more information:** email Anne Thomas at [annescanteam@yahoo.com](mailto:annescanteam@yahoo.com)

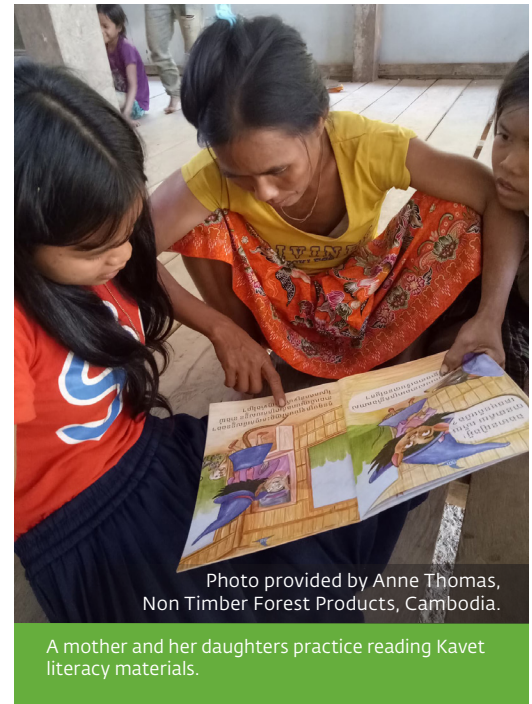


Photo provided by Anne Thomas, Non Timber Forest Products, Cambodia.

A mother and her daughters practice reading Kavet literacy materials.

Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) is a Cambodian-based nongovernmental organization serving indigenous ethnic minority communities in remote highland forests. Since the early 2000s, NTFP has supported a bilingual literacy program in the local Kavet and



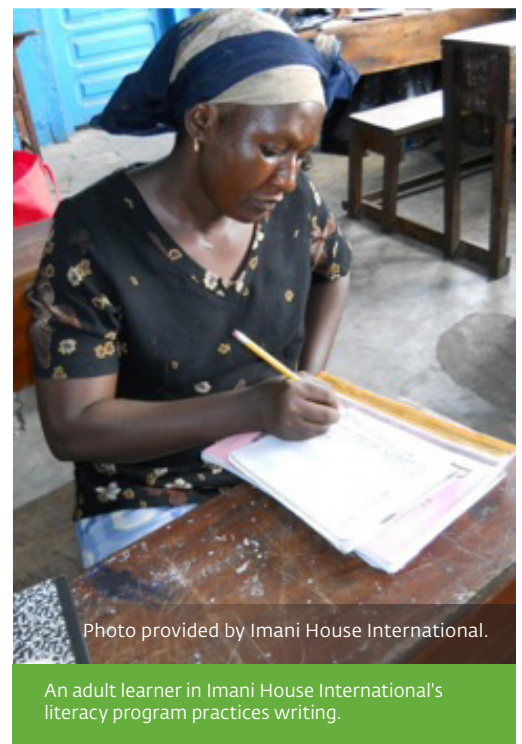
national Khmer languages. With the guidance of linguists and educators, staff developed a new literacy curriculum, and instruction is offered by volunteer villagers who are trained to be teachers. The program provides basic supplies and equipment, and villagers provide in-kind support.

When the project started, no one in these linguistically and geographically isolated villages could read their own language, and just a minority could read the national language. The program has grown in popularity, with classes composed of about 20 percent of the Kavet village population. Many participating children and youth transition to government schools; some are now attending university. Teenagers move to training programs for health, teaching, forestry, and other jobs or they become village or sub-district leaders. Additionally, young teachers have an opportunity to build job skills. Prior to the program, the community didn't have access to reading materials. As a result of the writing workshops, writers were able to develop materials for village libraries. The Kavet and Khmer language booklets contain stories written by students and offer the dual benefits of providing authentic, engaging reading materials while reinforcing learners' cultural identity. Practical materials also focus on relevant health or agricultural information.

Kavet communities are now becoming less vulnerable. Literacy has empowered the community with solid skills to develop commercial activities based on a fair-trade system. And learners have a better understanding about community health strategies.

### **FAMILY LITERACY FOR PARENTS AND OTHER CAREGIVERS AND THEIR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN**

- **Nation:** Liberia
- **Partners:** Friends of Liberia, HIPPY International, and the We-Care Foundation
- **Learners:** preschool children and their parents and other caregivers
- **Purposes:** enable parents or other caregivers to provide prereading and school preparation supports to their preschool children
- **Basic skills content:** skills needed by parents/caregivers to help children use books and other written materials to increase their reading readiness; basic skills (e.g., reading, writing, numeracy) needed by adults to perform everyday tasks like buying and selling in the marketplace
- **Functional content:** preschool children's reading materials and adults' everyday uses of literacy (e.g., in shopping)



- **Other features:** adult literacy component uses an assessment developed for Liberia by staff of U.S.-based Education Development Center
- **For more information:** visit <https://fol.org/programs/literacy-initiative/> or email Kristen Grauer-Gray at [grauergk@gmail.com](mailto:grauergk@gmail.com), Eddie Socker at [ghostskier@gmail.com](mailto:ghostskier@gmail.com), or David J. Rosen at [djrosen123@gmail.com](mailto:djrosen123@gmail.com)

Friends of Liberia, HIPPY International, and the We-Care Foundation collaborate to operate an adult literacy program as one of two components of a larger family literacy initiative in Liberia. The second component is HIPPY, the Home Instruction for Parents and Preschool Youngsters, a well-respected international early childhood preschool readiness program in which trained home visitors meet one-on-one with parents and other caregivers each week to review the lessons they will use with their preschool child(ren) in the coming week. HIPPY initially focused on helping parents/caregivers read internationally-acclaimed children's books with their children, but increasingly the program is adding Liberian writers' books as well.

The adult literacy component was created at the request of more than half of the parent/caregivers. Partners developed the first year of a two-year combined HIPPY- adult literacy curriculum that incorporates both elements of the HIPPY curriculum and functional literacy and numeracy skills requested by the participants, who are all women, most of whom work in the market for their livelihood. This adult literacy program is a good example of a Liberian-contextualized adult basic literacy program. The first-year curriculum has been completed and field tested. An independent evaluator will pre- and post-test the adult learners using an adult literacy assessment created for Liberia by representatives of the U.S.-based Education Development Center.

### **ACCELERATED LEARNING FOR HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE CAREERS FOR RURAL WOMEN**

- **Nation:** Afghanistan
- **Partners:** Center for International Education at University of Massachusetts, in collaboration with Afghanistan's Management Sciences for Health
- **Learners:** young rural women and men
- **Purposes:** strengthen young women's and men's basic skills and health strategies and help them qualify for health care employment and better care for their families
- **Basic skills content:** reading, writing, speaking, listening, and basic mathematics
- **Functional content:** knowledge and skills for personal and family health and for health care employment training (e.g., community health workers, midwives, etc.)
- **Other features:** uses accelerated strategies to help learners build skills more efficiently and quickly, nonformal pedagogies, and a gender-sensitive approach respectful of cultural gender roles.

- **For more information:** visit <https://www.umass.edu/cie/our-work/cie-begins-new-health-education-project-afghanistan> or email Professor Ian Barron at [cie@umass.edu](mailto:cie@umass.edu).

A new project in Afghanistan is piloting an accelerated literacy program for women in collaboration with Management Sciences for Health. (The project builds on an earlier Literacy for Life [Lfl] program carried out in the early 2000s, from which materials are available at [https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cie\\_learningforlife/](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cie_learningforlife/)). The new integrated literacy and health program aims to improve rural women's health and that of their families and communities, while also developing a pipeline of women seeking community health worker and other health-based employment training.

The health literacy program will lead to improvements in women's personal hygiene, health knowledge, self-confidence, and respect within their families, as well as their ability to advise others on health issues. This will lead to an increase in women and men seeking services from community health workers and at health facilities. The program also aims to enhance midwives' health knowledge and skills, and increase men's knowledge about and support for women's health by improving women's access to health services.

### MICRO-ENTERPRISE EDUCATION FOR RURAL WOMEN

- **Nation:** Niger
- **Partners:** Microcredit in Africa, Inc. (MICA, Inc.) with support from ProLiteracy, USAID, and other international development agencies
- **Learners:** rural women who operate small businesses; young women ages 12 to 25 who have not had the chance to attend school or who had to drop out
- **Purpose:** integrate literacy and other services to enable rural women to operate successful businesses



Women gather together for their literacy class in a rural village outside of Niamey, Niger.



Photos provided by Micro Credit in Africa (MICA).

Women practice counting money and keeping records in their financial literacy class organized by MICA.

- **Basic skills content:** basic literacy, numeracy, and digital skills required to operate a small business
- **Functional content:** gender empowerment, financial literacy, income generation, and knowledge and skills for running a small business (in such areas as sewing, embroidery, soap making, poultry farming, and processing of agricultural products)
- **Other features:** integration of basic skills with other supports (e.g., micro loans, small business advisers, access to mobile phones)
- **For more information:** email Ms. Haoua Diatta at [unnigerdc@aol.com](mailto:unnigerdc@aol.com) or visit: <https://www.proliteracy.org/What-We-Do/International/Niger>

Microcredit in Africa, Inc. (MICA, Inc.) is a micro-enterprise program for women in Niger, begun and supported by a Niger-born woman who—after years living and working with her husband abroad—created this innovative program with support from ProLiteracy’s International Division. MICA integrates basic education with other supports (e.g., micro loans, workforce and economic development, small-business development, and access to mobile phones, calculators, and solar chargers) for women who own small businesses in rural areas.

In one example of this integrated model, one women’s group learned how to use mobile phones and calculators to enable members to share information among themselves about market products and pricing. Some also used the phones to communicate with veterinary staff about sick animals. These digital communications reduced the need for the women or their family members to travel to distant locations to communicate face-to-face about such issues. This saved them time and taxi fares. The women—whose villages lacked electricity—also received solar chargers, which allowed them to charge their phones rather than travel into nearby towns to recharge batteries. The group has expanded its business to become the main supplier of crops to local wholesalers. Members use their phones to check the prices being paid for produce in other villages before settling on a price for their own crops. Group members have also shared their new knowledge about mobile phones with women from other villages.

In another village, women participated in a functional literacy program that integrates basic education with family health, children’s education, and workforce, economic, and small-business development. Participants say their self-esteem and awareness of new possibilities have increased, helping them organize themselves better and thereby contribute to the village’s development. Participants report they now have a better understanding of health strategies (e.g., prenatal exams, use of breastfeeding rather than infant formula, and



vaccinations), business-related topics (e.g., micro-finance and entrepreneurship), and how to participate in the village school committee.

### EDUCATION FOR FAMILIES, DOMESTIC WORKERS, AND COMMUNITY

- **Nation:** Colombia
- **Partners:** Fundación Bienestar Humano (FBH) with Mayor's Office in City of Medellin, Corporación Centro de Desarrollo Integrado Institución de Educación (CENDI), and ProLiteracy
- **Learners:** families, domestic workers, and underserved community members from the city of Medellin, Colombia
- **Purposes:** provide educational and other supports to families, domestic workers, and other community members and organizations
- **Basic skills content:** basic literacy and digital skills for family, work, and other purposes
- **Functional content:** family issues, financial literacy, workers' rights, and other themes relevant to learners' everyday lives
- **Other features:** FBH advocates for lifelong learning and literacy in older populations, indigenous communities, and women.
- **For more information:** visit <https://bienhumano.org>

Fundación Bienestar Humano (FBH) focuses on family literacy, providing educational supports that help mothers, fathers, and children deal with relevant social, emotional, and psychological issues. FBH specializes in three areas of literacy: basic literacy, advanced literacy, and functional literacy. FBH has also recently developed a literacy program for domestic workers that helps women access information about laws and rights they have as domestic workers while simultaneously strengthening their literacy skills. In 2019, FBH implemented programs focused on literacy and basic education impacting approximately 1,700 adults.

### A UNIVERSITY RESPONDS TO THE BASIC SKILLS NEEDS OF THE LOCAL WORKFORCE

- **Nation:** Nigeria
- **Partners:** Department of Adult Education at University of Ibadan, with the University Village Association
- **Learners:** farmers, auto mechanics, and small business owners in communities near the university
- **Purposes:** strengthen the occupational skills of selected segments of the workforce; strengthen abilities to read the Quran
- **Basic skills content:** basic reading, writing, oral communications, numeracy, and digital (mobile phone) skills

- **Functional content:** technical knowledge needed by farmers, auto mechanics, and small business owners; understanding of the Quran
- **Other features:** uses a Real Literacy Materials approach to focus instruction on texts and other uses of literacy relevant to learners; provides opportunities for outstanding students to become teachers (facilitators) of literacy classes
- **For more information:** email Professor Rashid Aderinoye at [ashid.aderinoye@yahoo.com](mailto:ashid.aderinoye@yahoo.com)

To better connect with and serve surrounding communities, the Department of Adult Education at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria conducted a mapping of common life activities performed by residents that involved the use of literacy, numeracy, and other basic skills. The research identified buying and selling, farming, and various other vocational activities as potential focal points for literacy education.

Farmers: Representatives of the University Village Association initially focused on developing literacy activities geared to farmers, who represent a major share of the area's workforce. Activities were organized around farming-related themes (e.g., farming seasons, implements, different crops and how to grow them, relevant chemicals and how to apply them), as well as on the benefits of being a member of a literate community. To actively engage the community and program participants, organizers approached activities by training them to teach their peers. The participant who emerged as the strongest learner after six months was trained to serve as facilitator of the class.

Auto mechanics: In a Literacy for Auto Mechanic Engineers course, auto mechanics who lacked basic literacy, but had the technical knowledge of auto engine repair, developed literacy skills to read and write the names of automotive tools and parts. The course also strengthened participants' driving skills and mastery of road signs and traffic rules. Participants also developed customer service skills, which included writing of receipts and using mobile phones to communicate with customers through text messages (SMS) rather through more-expensive phone calls.

Small business owners: Another customized program was provided in a literacy workshop for petty traders (small business owners) in a popular market in Ibadan. Learners developed relevant numeracy and literacy skills related to traditional (and fairly complex) ways of counting items like yam tubers, garden eggs, and grains. Students learned to transform the local ways of doing things to the formal basic literacy taught in modern schools.

**The research identified buying and selling, farming, and various other vocational activities as potential focal points for literacy education.**

Quranic literacy: A special program was developed for learners wishing to learn how to read the Muslim holy book, the Quran. This was for individuals who could already recite chapters of the Quran from memory but not be able to read or write those same passages.

These are all examples of the Real Literacy Materials (RLM) approach used in the program. The RLM approach uses real (authentic) materials familiar to learners as teaching tools. Currency notes of different denominations are examples of such materials. Learners learn the names of numbers and how to read and write them. Learners create their own lists of words and phrases. This process of creating learner-generated materials helps learners connect to real-life, relevant uses of oral and written language in their everyday environments.

### HEALTH, OCCUPATIONAL, AND DIGITAL LITERACY FOR A GROWING CITY

- **Nation:** Liberia
- **Partners:** Imani House (nongovernmental organization in Monrovia) with support from ProLiteracy, health care agencies, community schools, and US-Africa Children's Fellowship Program
- **Learners:** women and youth in Monrovia, Liberia
- **Purposes:** building women's literacy skills and self-reliance
- **Basic skills content:** basic literacy and numeracy integrated with other topics
- **Functional content:** health literacy, financial literacy, digital literacy
- **Other features:** long commitment to helping community (especially women) to be literate, healthy, and financially self-reliant; piloting use of a hand-held digital library
- **For more information:** visit [www.imanihouse.org](http://www.imanihouse.org) or email Ms. Bisi Ideraabdullah at [imani@imanihouse.org](mailto:imani@imanihouse.org)



Participants at a health literacy workshop organized by Imani house International in Liberia.



Photos provided by Imani House international.

A mother and her baby at an Imani House International workshop about health literacy.

The population of Monrovia, Liberia, has grown due to the residual effects of war and infrastructure degradation of the early 2000s. For over 36 years, the nongovernmental organization Imani House has continued providing a variety of services to the city's huge population, which is impacted by high rates of illiteracy (between 47 and 57 percent), infant mortality, lack of access to health care, and extreme poverty. Services include

- free adult literacy classes—especially for market women—focusing heavily on health and financial literacy;
- health education for adults related to COVID-19, diabetes, and other conditions; direct health care services for mothers and children; immunizations for the community; and free health benefits for Imani House staff;
- use of The Liberian Women's Health Manual, which was developed by staff in partnership with ProLiteracy and helps families understand the causes of diseases and how to ensure health, sanitation, nutrition, human rights and more; when used in the literacy program, the manual reinforces vocabulary and reading skills
- training of high school students to serve as teen peer health educators;
- vocational training for women in income-generating trades such as soap-making, sewing, tie-dyeing, and sustainable urban farming and soybean production; and
- field-testing of a hand-held digital library which stores health, literacy, and other materials that can be uploaded onto smart phones and other digital devices for use by individuals and in health and literacy classes.

Imani House staff also serve as advocates for improved health and literacy services in Liberia. They argue that literacy and health care are human rights.

### WOMEN COLLABORATE FOR LEARNING AND ACTION

- **Nation:** Mexico
- **Partners:** PLAMAC with ProLiteracy, state and national government agencies of Mexico, Choice Humanitarian
- **Learners:** youth and adults in vulnerable rural and urban communities in the state of Guanajuato, Mexico
- **Purposes:** strengthen basic educational skills needed for grassroots problem solving
- **Basic skills content:** reading, writing, numeracy, and basic digital literacy
- **Functional content:** financial literacy, enterprise development, gender empowerment/human rights, and community problem solving





- **Other features:** participants play active roles in the design and implementation of the educational program; a small number of professionals assist communities in establishing local, small-group literacy classes and identifying and devising grassroots solutions to their problems; staff members provide on-site training related to teaching and program organization and management; participants recruit learners, organize classes, define goals related to curriculum, and carry out community-action projects
- **For more information:** visit <https://www.proliteracy.org/What-We-Do/International/Mexico>

Proyectos Laubach de Alfabetización en México (PLAMAC) was founded in 1991 as a nonprofit organization to provide education and literacy supports for youth and adults who live in vulnerable conditions in the state of Guanajuato, Mexico. PLAMAC primarily serves women ages 15 to 65, as most men migrate to the U.S. in search of jobs. PLAMAC was one of ProLiteracy's first literacy partners in Latin America and a pioneer in translating the *Laubach Way to Reading* methodology and curriculum into Spanish.

In addition to instruction in basic literacy, PLAMAC has developed a model to teach financial literacy and income generation. All of the communities where PLAMAC works have women's savings clubs, in which women individually save small amounts of money in a communal chest or savings box. Literacy instruction is based in part on the weekly meetings of women coming together to deposit money into the savings box and includes record-keeping and numeracy skills. Over time, the women begin to develop business plans for the use of the savings. Income-generating projects include livestock cooperatives, bakeries, and small stores. In 2019, PLAMAC offered literacy instruction to approximately 600 adult learners.



Photo provided by Lancôme Mexico/PLAMAC.

Manuela, an adult learner in PLAMAC's literacy program, studies alongside her son.



Photo provided by ProLiteracy.

Margarita opens the savings box for a learner to deposit money into her savings bag. PLAMAC's financial literacy program incorporates a group savings program where participants can make weekly deposits and also lend to other members of the group.

### LOCAL LANGUAGE, VILLAGE FACILITATORS, AND TRADITIONAL STORIES IN A COMMUNITY-ORIENTED ADULT LITERACY PILOT PROJECT

- **Nation:** The Gambia
- **Partners:** National Cultural Archives, other Gambian government agencies, and U.S. Peace Corps with funding from the U.N. Development Program
- **Learners:** adults (and some youth and children) in rural farming villages
- **Purposes:** develop a model of basic literacy education in the local language (Mandinka) which would serve as a foundation for other development activities; field-test the model to inform a new national adult literacy program
- **Basic skills content:** reading and writing skills needed to read traditional stories written in the local language
- **Functional content:** traditional stories (in literacy materials); development topics covered through income-generating projects and visits by agricultural extension agents
- **Other features:** facilitators recruited and trained from participating villages, integration with income-generating and other activities, scheduling of classes to fit learners' availability, active involvement of other governmental agencies in a National Literacy Advisory Committee
- **For more information:** email Paul Jurmo at [pjurmo@comcast.net](mailto:pjurmo@comcast.net)

As an example of an early community-oriented adult literacy program, a National Literacy Advisory Committee was formed in 1976 in The Gambia to plan and implement a new national adult literacy pilot program. It was based at the National Cultural Archives, with staff and other in-kind supports provided by the Gambian Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Peace Corps, and other Gambian governmental agencies (e.g., Department of Cooperatives). It was funded under an Integrated Rural Development project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Project staff implemented an intensive three years of activities in which they planned, launched, supported, and learned from local-language (Mandinka) adult literacy classes. They started in six villages and within three years were operating in some 20 villages. The project had these features:

- Local-language reading materials were used because (a) few villagers understood the official European language, English (though many hoped to learn English because it was associated with social and economic success) or (b) used the Roman script taught in formal schools.
- It used popular traditional stories as a theme for initial reading materials to—again—build on learners' prior knowledge and heighten learner interest in coming to classes.

- Young, school-educated community members acted as village facilitators to build community ownership of the program and to serve as a communication link between villagers and the program's central office in the capital. A small source of income in the form of rice donated by a foreign aid organization was provided to the facilitators.
- Activities like income-generating projects and agriculture extension workshops were integrated with the literacy classes.
- Classes were scheduled to fit target learners' schedules (e.g., classes at night and/or in periods when farmers might not be working in the fields or traveling to urban areas to find work or visit relatives).
- Experienced school teachers, who themselves came from village backgrounds, were used as trainers and mentors of the village facilitators.
- Other stakeholders (e.g., representatives of agriculture, health, and other development agencies) were involved in decision-making and supporting the project through a National Literacy Advisory Committee that met monthly.
- It provided learning opportunities for girls, dropout youth, and others who otherwise had limited encouragement or opportunity to go to formal schools.
- Community elders were involved in decision-making at the local level.
- Reliable support was provided by external agencies and funders (e.g., UNDP).

After three years and a positive evaluation by United Nations experts, the Gambian Ministry of Education created a nonformal education department, assumed control of this adult literacy pilot project.

### STRENGTHENING EMPLOYEE BASIC SKILLS AT THE WORKPLACE

- **Nation:** South Africa
- **Partners:** Huhtamaki (manufacturer of packaging materials) and Triple E Training (commercial workplace training provider)
- **Learners:** workers on shop floor and in warehouse of a manufacturing company
- **Purposes:** strengthen the basic English and numeracy skills required for workplace operations
- **Basic skills content:** literacy and numeracy
- **Functional content:** knowledge needed by manufacturing workers (e.g., how to operate sophisticated equipment) and warehouse workers
- **Other features:** company pays training provider to operate the program on company facilities
- **For more information:** visit Triple EEE Training at <https://eee.co.za>

In “industrialized” nations, employers have to varying degrees complained that their employees lack the basic skills required for their jobs. In a number of countries, employers, labor unions, and governmental agencies have sponsored workplace education programs that focus on filling perceived gaps in employee basic skills. But such programs are not as common in non-industrialized countries.

One exception is a worker basic skills program sponsored by Huhtamaki, a manufacturer of food packaging materials in South Africa. Employees have the opportunity to develop their basic English and numeracy skills to enable them to more efficiently operate sophisticated machinery on the plant floor, more accurately monitor stock in the company warehouse, and better communicate with their supervisors. Employees have shown great enthusiasm for this opportunity and also report applying the skills they learn in the workplace to their lives outside work, as well. Huhtamaki has hired Triple E Training, a local accredited training provider, to design and operate this program.

## Programs for Youth

### EMPOWERMENT THROUGH AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES

- **Nations:** The Gambia
- **Partners:** NCBA/CLUSA with the Gambian Department of Cooperatives with funding from USAID
- **Learners:** members of farmer co-operatives
- **Purpose:** build farmer co-op members’ self-sufficiency and interest in ongoing education
- **Basic skills content:** numeracy and literacy
- **Functional content:** procedures for weighing and selling produce
- **Other features:** use of authentic materials used in crop sales as teaching aids
- **For more information:** email Paul Jurmo at [pjurmo@comcast.net](mailto:pjurmo@comcast.net); learn about NCBA/CLUSA at <https://ncbaclusa.coop>

In the early 1980s, NCBA/CLUSA operated an innovative education program for agricultural co-operative members in The Gambia in response to co-op member suspicions that they were being cheated by traders when they sold their produce at the end of the growing season. With technical assistance from NCBA/CLUSA and funding from USAID, the Gambian Department of Cooperatives established a member education program, which created customized numeracy classes as a central activity. With young, trained co-op department extension workers teaching village classes, farmer co-op members learned the basic numeracy skills required to read produce scales, record weights in writing, read a table showing how much they should charge for their produce, and read and sign the

receipt provided at the time of sale. (NCBA/CLUSA staff created mock versions of the produce scale and receipts as teaching aids.)

The classes were empowering for the farmers individually and collectively. Stronger students (typically younger ones who had had the advantage of at least a few years of formal schooling) often were asked to observe when other members' produce was weighed to confirm that their classmates were getting the correct price. The classes also generated interest in further education and other activities (e.g., income-generating projects) for the groups.



Photo provided by Paul Jurmo.

Gambian co-op members learning numeracy skills required to sell their crops.

For a more recent example of a NCBA/CLUSA program in Uganda that trains young farmers in entrepreneurship skills, visit <https://ncbaclusa.coop/project/uganda-youth-empowerment-through-agriculture-yeta-project-website-www-clusauganda-co-ug/>

### TRAINING YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

- **Nation:** Rwanda
- **Partners:** Education Development Center in collaboration with Rwandan organizations and with funding from U.S. Agency for International Development. (USAID).
- **Learners:** out-of-school youth (between 16 and 30)
- **Purpose:** build technical and work-readiness skills of youth to help them succeed economically
- **Basic skills content:** oral and written literacy and numeracy skills integrated with functional content
- **Functional content:** soft skills (e.g., interpersonal communication, problem solving, workplace behavior and attitudes); financial literacy; and technical skills in trades such as culinary arts.
- **Other features:** EDC's *Work Ready Now!* entrepreneurship training (including financial literacy) and coaching; partners with local businesses to offer internship opportunities for youth
- **For more information:** visit <https://www.edc.org/huguka-dukore#key-activities>

In Rwanda, 125,000 young people enter the workforce each year. The Educational Development Center's (EDC) Huguka Dukore youth improvement program provides out-of-school youth between the ages of 16 and 30 with technical and work readiness skills to succeed in Rwanda's growing economy. The centerpiece of the project is EDC's

[Work Ready Now!](#) curriculum, which covers a variety of soft skills, including interpersonal communication, problem solving, workplace behavior and attitudes, and financial literacy. Funded by USAID and implemented by Rwanda partner organizations, Huguka Dukore also offers entrepreneurship training and coaching and partners with local businesses to offer internship opportunities for youth. Program graduates report they have increased self-confidence, communication skills, and motivation.

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE SUPPORTS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

- **Nation:** Comoros
- **Partners:** University of Comoros' American Corner with U.S. Peace Corps
- **Learners:** university students enrolled in English courses
- **Purpose:** build practical English skills of university students while also promoting community service
- **Basic skills content:** oral and written English skills (including use of PowerPoint software and related computer hardware) needed for public presentations
- **Functional content:** planning, implementation, and reporting for community service projects
- **Other features:** based in university's American Corner, an American cultural center funded by the U.S. Embassy; innovative introduction of concept of service learning integrated with development of English and digital literacy skills
- **For more information:** visit <https://www.peacecorps.gov/comoros/> or email Peace Corps/Comoros at [comorospc@peacecorps.gov](mailto:comorospc@peacecorps.gov)



Photo provided by Paul Jurmo.

Students in the English language program at the University of Comoros present the results of their service-learning projects.

English courses for undergraduates at the national university in the Indian Ocean island nation of Comoros (where the national languages are Comorian, French, and Arabic) help students prepare for ongoing education and careers. In one course, taught by a Peace Corps Volunteer and based at the university's American Corner sponsored by the U.S. Embassy, students worked in groups to plan and implement service-learning activities in their communities. The groups then made end-of-course PowerPoint presentations in English in which they described the purposes and steps of their respective projects. Such project-based learning activities had multiple benefits for the students (e.g., practicing the use of authentic English, developing presentation skills, learning why and how they might plan service projects relevant to their communities, and building teamwork) and for their communities.

### VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH

- **Nation:** Senegal
- **Partners:** Educational Development Center (EDC) and Senegal's Ministry of Education and Ministry of Technical Vocational Education and Training (MoTVET), with funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development
- **Learners:** youth in need of employment opportunities
- **Purpose:** help youth prepare for self-employment and employment in local companies
- **Basic skills content:** communication and digital skills needed for self-employment and employment in local companies
- **Functional content:** career planning and job skills for various industries and for self-employment (e.g., in food preparation, sewing); financial literacy (to manage income earned)
- **Other features:** capacity building for
  - a. professional development for teachers,
  - b. administrative and financial management functions,
  - c. accelerated learning,
  - d. village-based schools for girls, and
  - e. adult literacy programs.
- **For more information:** visit EDC website at <https://www.edc.org/apte-senegal>

APTE-Senegal program (or *Projet de l'amélioration des performances de travail et d'entreprenariat*) helps young people develop the economic and life skills they need to earn an income on their own. The program was developed by the Educational Development Center (EDC) with funding from USAID and in collaboration with Senegal's Ministry of Education and Ministry of Technical Vocational Education and Training (MoTVET). The goal is to strengthen middle school and vocational training systems across the country. The program also works with the private sector to help students gain practical work experience through activities such as job shadowing or internships. Interns often end up employed by the companies that host the internship. Special emphasis is placed on fun activities such as after-school entrepreneurship clubs.

Participants learn how to generate their own income by making and selling goods, manage the money earned, and look beyond their short-term economic needs. They put those skills to use by starting their own businesses selling home-made food or sewing clothes, for example. Participants use the income to support themselves and their families. The program also helps participants change their outlook on life by setting goals and carrying out projects to meet those goals.

### A SOCCER ACADEMY AS A VENUE FOR ACADEMIC, HEALTH, AND OCCUPATIONAL SUCCESS

- **Nation:** Lesotho
- **Partners:** Kick4Life F.C. and local and international partners
- **Learners:** school-age youth and children in Lesotho’s capital city, Maseru
- **Purpose:** support the health, academic, and occupational well-being of urban children
- **Basic skills content:** basic academic skills
- **Functional content:** knowledge and skills related to health, sports (football), and academic success, including preparation for post-secondary education and career pathways in the hospitality industry
- **Other features:** uses a football club as a supportive environment for children’s well-being
- **For more information:** visit <https://www.kick4life.org>

Kick4Life Football Club is “a football club dedicated to social change.” A soccer academy located in Lesotho’s capital, Maseru, it uses football as a tool to link at-risk children to academic tutoring, physical fitness, nutrition, a career path, and post-secondary education. Boys and girls come to the academy to learn football skills, compete in intramural and league matches, enroll in academic enrichment activities, get job training and work experience for positions (e.g., culinary and customer service) in the hospitality industry, go on field trips to see soccer matches (including at the 2018 World Cup in Russia), and be considered for soccer scholarships in foreign universities. The development of basic skills for academic advancement and career opportunities is woven into these activities and seen as the most important goal of the program. Soccer is just a means to that end.

## Programs for Children

### COMPREHENSIVE STRENGTHENING OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND ADULTS

- **Nation:** Sudan
- **Partners:** Center for International Education at University of Massachusetts in partnership with Sudan-based partners and with funding from USAID
- **Learners:** children, youth, and adults
- **Purpose:** Strengthen capacities of schools and communities
- **Basic skills content:** accelerated learning on literacy, numeracy, and communication
- **Other features:** capacity building for professional development for teachers; administrative and financial management functions; accelerated learning; village-based schools for girls and adult literacy programs



- **For more information:** visit CIE website: <https://www.umass.edu/cie/our-work/sudan-basic-education-program-2002-2007> or email Professor Ian Barron at [ibarron@umass.edu](mailto:ibarron@umass.edu)

From 2003–2007, a consortium of U.S.- and Sudan-based partners implemented the Sudan Basic Education Program (SBEP). It aimed at building the capacities of local schools and communities in four regions of southern Sudan. With funding from USAID, the project focused on teacher development, increasing primary and secondary school capacities to deliver quality education (especially for girls), and improving nonformal education for out-of-school youth and adult learners. The consortium also partnered with education institutes from nearby Uganda and Kenya, to build a more unified and comprehensive teacher education curriculum, a common process for teacher certification, and more efficient administrative procedures.

For the nonformal education component, partners strengthened existing programs in accelerated learning that enabled learners to gain the equivalency of several years of formal education in one year. This capacity building was done through intensive facilitator training in program planning, implementation, and evaluation; and training of faculty at the Afghan University for Education who would continue providing facilitator support. The project also developed village-based schools for girls and offered literacy courses to community members. It was anticipated that as a result of such interventions greater numbers of women would enter the teaching profession.

### **INTEGRATING LITERACY AND HEALTH EDUCATION FOR SAFE AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS**

- **Nation:** Uganda
- **Partners:** Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International with Uganda's Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and with funding from USAID
- **Learners:** children enrolled in primary school grades 1–4
- **Purpose:** strengthen primary school literacy and health capacities
- **Basic skills content:** reading skills in local languages and English
- **Functional content:** school-related gender-based violence prevention; U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) programming, which provided a core package of HIV-prevention interventions to vulnerable girls
- **Other features:** emphasis on teacher training, use of local language reading materials
- **For more information:** visit RTI International at <https://www.rti.org/impact/supporting-child-literacy-and-health-uganda> or email [news@rti.org](mailto:news@rti.org)

Research Triangle Institute International's USAID-funded Uganda School Health and Reading Program (SHRP) has supported the government of Uganda to improve the reading skills of 3.1 million Ugandan children and provide HIV/AIDS prevention education for more

than 500,000 learners. Integrated into this multi-sectoral program is prevention of school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) and fostering inclusive education and improved learning outcomes for children with disabilities.

During the life of the project, approximately 18,902 teachers and head teachers were trained on effective reading instruction, 32,344 were trained on SRGBV, and 7,923 on human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) prevention education. More than 1.4 million learners at 3,479 schools were reached with reading interventions, while 1.7 million learners were reached at 2,869 schools with SRGBV interventions. There were 104,602 boys and girls who received targeted, layered support on HIV and AIDS and SRGBV prevention.

The project also revised 32 early grade reading (EGR) teacher guides and pupil books in three local languages and English and developed four Journeys Activity Handbooks: one for teachers, one for communities, and two for pupils. The Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (<https://www.rti.org/impact/providing-quality-inclusive-safe-education-uganda>) printed and distributed 3.6 million books to project-supported schools, including 347,027 supplementary reading books that were donated to school libraries.

### ACTIVE SCHOOLS TO ENGAGE STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND COMMUNITIES

- **Nation:** Peru
- **Partners:** FHI 360 Peru and Research Triangle Institute International (RTI), with funding from USAID
- **Learners:** children enrolled in the formal school system
- **Purpose:** build capacities of formal education system to introduce and sustain innovations (e.g., active school model combining student-centered learning in the classroom with parent and community participation in school management)
- **Basic skills content:** student-centered basic skills curriculum
- **Other features:** helping the Ministry of Education to improve teacher training in student-centered learning; improving teacher evaluation and school accountability strategies; and decentralizing school management and strengthening community involvement and partnerships with civil society institutions
- **For more information:** visit FHI 360 Peru at <https://www.fhi360.org/projects/peru-quality-basic-education-reform-support-project-suma> or email Kristin Brady at [kbrady@fhi360.org](mailto:kbrady@fhi360.org)

The Peru Quality Basic Education Reform Support project, implemented by FHI 360 and its partner, Research Triangle Institute International (RTI), continues work started under the Aprende Project. Funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, Aprende, introduced the active school methodology to more than 275 schools and developed new approaches to support education decentralization.

The active school methodology combines student-centered learning in the classroom with parent and community participation in school management. The current project, known in Peru as SUMA, helps introduce active schools in three of Peru's regions.

To encourage system-wide support for Peru's education policy reform, the project promotes policy dialogue between the government and civil society, enabling civil society organizations to better advocate for education. The project also helps build civil society oversight of the education system to ensure government accountability for progress in education reform.

SUMA supports education system decentralization by equipping the Ministry of Education and regional and local governments to design management structures and processes, develop systems to use data for decision making, and strengthen budgeting and project design.

The project works with the ministry to improve in-service teacher training programs and help regional governments design and implement their own systems for teacher professional development. SUMA strengthens the capacity of coaches to support teachers in the classroom. The project also is helping the Ministry of Education design a new teacher performance evaluation system.

SUMA supports public/private partnerships to implement innovative education methodologies and best practices through the creation of a Partnership Challenge Fund.

### ALTERNATIVE BASIC EDUCATION FOR ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN

- **Nation:** Zimbabwe
- **Partners:** World Education's Bantwana Initiative with Zimbabwe nongovernmental and governmental partners
- **Learners:** orphans and vulnerable children not enrolled in formal schools
- **Purpose:** ensure the general well-being of orphans and vulnerable children who face multiple challenges
- **Basic skills content:** basic skills required for academic success and overall well-being
- **Functional content:** content adapted from formal school curriculum
- **Other features:** network of local NGOs providing protection, health, education, and other services to local populations of orphans and vulnerable children
- **For more information:** visit <https://bantwana.org>



Photo provided by Paul Jurmo.

Eager to provide answers in an alternative education program for vulnerable children in Zimbabwe.

World Education's Bantwana Initiative has developed innovative models of integrating basic education within larger systems of supports for orphans and vulnerable children in a number of African countries. In one of its early projects from 2008–2012 in Zimbabwe, Bantwana staff and a network of local nonprofit organizations provided protection, health, housing, and other supports to children and youth at a time when the nation was impacted by HIV/AIDS, civil unrest, the exodus of professional and technical workers, and a decline in its once-productive economic, agricultural, and educational systems.

It became clear that many of the children also wanted and needed access to basic education. Local schools were not able to accommodate them (in part because the children lacked school fees and uniforms), and the community groups trying to help them had limited relevant expertise and resources to provide education. Many of the children had either not attended school for years or never attended at all. The network brought in a basic education specialist who worked with local staff to conduct a needs assessment to determine the educational needs of various sub-populations (e.g., older and younger children, girls and boys, children with special needs, children in various parts of the country, rural and urban children) and the education resources available in their communities.

This assessment led to planning of an alternative basic education model that involved local schools and church-based and other kinds of community organizations that were already providing the above-described services to these vulnerable children. In some remote sites, many students walked long distances to get to the new learning centers (where classes were often run in the open air due to lack of facilities). There, they engaged in literacy and other learning activities, tended school vegetable and fruit gardens, learned about animal husbandry (e.g., poultry raising), played sports during break times, and made craft objects that were sold in local markets.

Bantwana staff have learned from such earlier educational efforts in Zimbabwe and other countries and have built a range of strategies that provide alternative education pathways while also addressing complex social norms and economic barriers that prevent vulnerable youth from either accessing, remaining in, or excelling in school. These strategies include:

- Accelerated learning or part-time education: <https://bantwana.org/project/zimbabwe-accelerated-learning-program/> and <https://bantwana.org/project/part-time-continuing-education/>



Photo provided by Paul Jurmo.

Vulnerable children typically walk long distances to participate in basic education activities at this rural church-based multi-service program in Zimbabwe.

- The African Youth Empowerment & Development Initiative in Uganda, focused on providing basic skills and helping youth advance along an education and employment opportunity pathway: <https://bantwana.org/project/ayedi/>
- The Let them Learn project, a recent project in Tanzania that focuses on supporting girls who have dropped out of school to get the foundational skills they need to improve their lives (i.e., addressing complex social norms and economic barriers) and to enter the job market: <https://bantwana.org/project/waache-wasome/>
- The Siyakha Girls Economic Empowerment project, a new model that reaches vulnerable adolescent girls with a package of economic and resiliency strengthening services, including basic or foundational skills required to enter the job market: <https://bantwana.org/project/siyakha-girls-economic-empowerment-initiative/>

Bantwana staff can customize these models to interested countries.

### SHIFTING TOWARD A STUDENT-CENTERED APPROACH

- **Nation:** Tonga
- **Partners:** Tonga Ministry of Education and Training and U.S. Peace Corps, with other Tongan and international partners
- **Learners:** children enrolled in primary and secondary schools
- **Purpose:** support children's English literacy development while transitioning education system to a more student-centered approach to basic skills development
- **Basic skills content:** basic written and oral English language skills
- **Functional content:** content from other primary and secondary school curricula and real-life topics, especially health and environment
- **Other features:** a project framework that spells out goals and objectives for this national literacy systems reform project. Goals included: capacity building for teachers, administrators, and community stakeholders; development of student-centered strategies and materials (including sight word books, curriculum guides, assessments, and school book collections); and active involvement of key stakeholders in a project advisory committee and in community-level activities to support schools and literacy.



- **For more information:** see Tonga resources in Appendix A or email Paul Jurmo at [pjurmo@comcast.net](mailto:pjurmo@comcast.net)

In 2012, in the South Pacific island nation of Tonga, the Ministry of Education partnered with the U.S. Peace Corps to introduce an English literacy project aimed at reforming how English was taught in primary and secondary schools. Working with teachers and principals at the school level, and with innovative host-country educational leaders at the national level, Peace Corps Volunteers worked in teams to develop and field-test a number of innovative tools, including:

- simple reading booklets (sight word books), written and illustrated by Tongan educators and artists and by Peace Corps Volunteers, that teachers used with guided reading activities to teach sight words and other aspects of English literacy;
- new ways to organize, use, and sustain school libraries;
- student-centered instructional methods (e.g., games, music, physical activity, art) that actively involve students;
- easy-to-use electronic technologies to teach literacy skills and train teachers;
- integration of literacy activities with other subject areas (e.g., health, environment); and
- inclusive education activities geared to children with special needs.

The project also facilitated parental and community involvement in literacy activities in the school and home, and provided literacy supports to older youth and adults. Within four years, these resources were being recognized, supported, adopted, and disseminated by the Ministry of Education and other partners.



Small group work in a student-centered literacy class in a Tongan primary school.



Photos provided by Peace Corps/Tonga.

After-school basketball program at a local church gives Tongan children a fun way to develop health literacy and English language skills.

### NONFORMAL—AND FUN—SUPPORTS FOR CHILDREN’S READING

- **Nation:** Jordan
- **Partners:** FHI 360 with Jordanian partners and with USAID funding
- **Learners:** children (ages 6–12) enrolled in formal schools
- **Purpose:** reinforce children’s literacy skills; improve children’s access to and use of reading materials; promote the love of reading and learning
- **Basic skills content:** literacy skills in Arabic and English
- **Other features:** use of bookmobiles, games, and other fun activities; dual language curriculum
- **For more information:** visit <https://www.fhi360.org/projects/jordan-drive-read-dtr> or email Naseem Akhtar at [nakhtar@fhi360.org](mailto:nakhtar@fhi360.org)

Each week, the Drive to Read Program (DTR) brought free educational, cultural and drama activities to about 720 children in Jordan’s East Amman and Zarqa neighborhoods. The three-year project from 2009–2012, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by FHI 360, promoted literacy and fostered a culture of reading for enjoyment.

DTR provided settings in which children were engaged in fun ways of learning while participating in positive, educational, and confidence-building activities. Two bookmobiles carrying 3,000 books in Arabic and English visited parks and community-based organizations in East Amman and Zarqa. Children in these neighborhoods were given free access to educational and cultural sessions. The project, which targeted children ages 6–12, also held community-wide events called Open Days that featured storytelling, games, face painting, crafts, and reading/writing contests where children won prizes such as bookshelves to start their own home libraries.

DTR supplemented and reinforced the school system’s curriculum and offered basic nonformal educational opportunities for children outside school settings.



Photo provided by ProLiteracy.  
Women hold up the 6P's of Business in a financial literacy workshop organized by PLAMAC in Irapuato, Mexico.

## PART 4

# Getting Started: General Guidelines for Designing and Launching a Community-Oriented Basic Skills Project

### SUMMARY

This section presents basic steps that educators and other partners might take to plan, pilot, and learn from a basic education initiative customized to particular learners, communities, development issues, and available resources.

## Thoughtful Planning and Collaboration Can Provide a Solid Foundation

As stated in the Introduction, this document is written for both relative newcomers to basic skills development and more-experienced individuals who are looking for ways to expand and strengthen what they have already been doing in this area.

Whether starting from scratch or building on previous work in basic education, it is important for stakeholders to recognize that providing high-quality basic skills-related supports is a complex endeavor. Such work requires juggling of many tasks and needs to be properly planned, staffed, supported, implemented, and continuously improved.

This is true for both those who are working at a local level in a single program and for those who want to implement or support basic skills services in multiple locations within, say, a city, region, or nation as a whole.



Outlined in this section are basic steps (organized in phases) that you might take to start a new basic skills initiative or expand and strengthen an existing one. This is presented to help well-intended readers avoid the problem of “just jumping in and starting a literacy program” without being prepared to do a good job. The iterative (step-by-step), reflective, and collaborative planning approach described here can help ensure that the resulting project is relevant to and supported by the community. It can also generate information that your team can use when communicating with funders and other potential partners outside the community. This will help you educate them about local needs and demonstrate that you have done your homework and are bringing significant strengths (e.g., expertise, commitment from local stakeholders) to this effort.

This section, however, is only an overview aimed at familiarizing or reminding readers about the steps they might need to take and resources they might tap into for more ideas. For more details on particular steps, readers might consult other sources, some of which are cited in the References section and in Appendices A and B at the end of this resource book.

## PHASE 1: Initial Planning to Clarify Options

### STEP 1.A: ASSESS YOUR OWN INTERESTS, EXPECTATIONS, AND STRENGTHS.

On your own and/or with colleagues who are considering getting involved in a basic skills effort, clarify for yourself what you hope to achieve and what you already know vis-à-vis basic skills education. Jot down answers to these questions:

- What kind of basic skills-related activity do you have in mind?
- What do you hope to achieve by getting involved in such an activity?
- Who are the learners and other stakeholders who might benefit from this activity?
- What informed and motivated you to get involved in a basic-skills-related activity?
- What do you think you will have to have in place for this activity to succeed?
- What questions do you need to answer before you go forward with this idea?

### STEP 1.B: EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT PREVIOUS MODELS OF BASIC SKILLS DEVELOPMENT.

Take the time to deepen and expand your expertise. Do some background research—through reading of the kinds of resources identified in this document and by talking with others:

- Learn what other nations have been doing related to basic skills development. Review this guide and other documents, videos, and websites referred to in this resource book. As you do so, jot down questions and ideas that emerge as you read about past and recent work in the field. Consider forming an informal study circle composed of others who have an interest in this topic. Each group member might

- investigate a particular document or website and report back to the larger group about key information in that resource and how it might apply to your current interests and situation. Get together periodically with members of that group to discuss questions and ideas that emerge from your study.
- Determine what has already been done in your own country—both recently and in the past—related to basic education for children, youth, and adults. Contact others in your country who have already been involved in basic skills-related projects and read any relevant reports that might exist. For each project, try to find out:
    - Who were the learners?
    - Where were the activities located?
    - When were they carried out? (That is, when did the project exist and what was the schedule of activities?)
    - What was the origin of the project? (Who was involved in the early planning and what steps did they go through to lay the groundwork for the program? What was their motivation for setting up the project?)
    - Who provided the basic skills-related services? (That is, who managed and supported the project? Who were the instructors?)
    - What were the content and goals of the curricula used?
    - What, if any, other supports were provided to participants? (e.g., Was the basic skills project connected to an occupational training or health initiative?)
    - Who provided funding and in-kind supports for the project?
    - What are key take-aways (lessons learned) that emerged from the project?
    - Might those involved in that project be interested in partnering with you in some way (e.g., as advisors, to share curricula and other tools, as instructors, as funders)?

### **STEP 1.C: FORM A PLANNING TEAM TO DIG DEEPER TO CLARIFY OPTIONS.**

Now that you have done your own background research, create a new planning team—or work with an existing group of individuals who are interested in expanding basic skills development opportunities—to do more in-depth exploration of whether and how to get involved in a basic skills-related activity. This collaborative approach will help ensure that the project is relevant to—and understood and supported by—important stakeholders in the community.

Tell the team members what you have already learned in the investigations you did in Steps 1.A and 1.B. Ask for their feedback about the ideas, information, and questions you have developed so far.

Work with the planning team to develop answers to these questions:

1. What is/are the population(s) you might serve in a basic-skills related activity—both initially and perhaps over a longer term? Are you focusing on adults, youth (teens through mid-20s), children, or a mix of these age groups? Where do the proposed learners live and work? Do you want to focus on specific groups who face particular challenges? For example, might you focus on helping
  - teenage girls and young women who have lacked opportunities to complete their basic education or who have particular health needs (e.g., related to reproductive health);
  - out-of-school youth who have limited opportunities for family-sustaining employment and/or for further education and training;
  - parents of school-age children who want to be able to help their children succeed in school and stay healthy;
  - refugees or other populations who have been displaced or have experienced other kinds of trauma;
  - linguistic and cultural minorities who have difficulty integrating into the larger society;
  - individuals with criminal records who face multiple challenges in terms of successful integration into productive roles in society;
  - people from communities impacted by health issues (e.g., COVID-19, HIV/AIDS, and noncommunicable diseases like high blood pressure or diabetes) or environmental problems (e.g., irregular rainfall, contaminated water, flooding, deforestation, urban pollution, etc.)
  - individuals who have—or want to perform—particular roles in the economy (e.g., small business owners, workers in particular jobs and industries such as agriculture, transportation, construction, etc.) who need stronger basic skills to perform those roles.
2. What do you hope to help those learners to achieve?
  - a. What basic skills might you focus on most (e.g., reading, writing, speaking and listening, numeracy, digital skills, problem-solving, teamwork, or others)?
  - b. Are there particular development-related needs that you might pay special attention to (e.g., employment, running a small business, health, managing personal finances, or community-building)?
3. What information sources might you tap into to better understand how to answer questions 1 and 2? Are there written reports or “subject-matter-experts” you might consult?
4. Where might instructional and other related activities be carried out (i.e., in which communities and in what kinds of facilities)?

5. Who might lead the program and provide the instructional and other services to learners? How will you recruit, prepare, and support instructors and other staff, who might include both paid and unpaid individuals?
6. Will you work with other agencies or organizations as partners? If so, what types of collaborations will you create? Might you form a project advisory committee to provide input for program planning and specific tasks (e.g., fundraising, curriculum development, staff training, securing appropriate facilities, providing special services for learners)? Might you work with governmental and nongovernmental agencies that specialize in agriculture, economic development, youth leadership, public health, sports and recreation, or refugee services? How will you work with community leaders from traditional social structures (e.g., village elders, religious organizations, women's groups)?
7. How will you recruit, enroll, and assess learners?
8. How will you obtain, manage, and account for the financial and other resources you'll use?
9. How will you develop the curriculum and assessment tools you'll use? Will you purchase and use existing tools? Will you create new ones?
10. How will you monitor the project, evaluate it, and report results?
11. What will be your short- and longer-term timeline for providing services? Might you carry out an initial pilot activity, monitor results, and then decide whether and how to proceed further?
12. What other resources and information will you need to get started?

## PHASE 2: More-Specific Planning of an Initial Round of Activities

Once you and your planning team have developed working answers to the questions in Phase 1, you will need to decide who will carry out specific tasks to prepare for the launch of your initial round of activities and then carry them out. Here are some of those key tasks:

### STEP 2.A: DEVELOP TOOLS FOR ASSESSING LEARNER INTERESTS, ABILITIES, AND NEEDS.

These tools might include:

- An interview guide (i.e., a list of questions to ask potential partners such as agricultural or health service providers in an individual interview or group interview) to identify
  - the learner populations who might benefit from participating in a basic skills program;

- in what ways basic skills are a challenge for that population; that is, what basic skills are a problem and in what situations are those skills a challenge (e.g., for work, to help their families stay healthy, to help their children with school work, to advance in their education); and
- whether the person/people being interviewed might in some way support a basic skills effort (with funding, technical assistance, materials, equipment, transportation, etc.).
- An interview guide to use when talking with representatives of the learner populations you hope to serve. Ask them
  - whether they might be interested in participating in a basic skills program and, if so, why they might want to get involved;
  - what types of basic skills they might want to focus on;
  - why/how they need to use these skills in their lives (e.g., for work, to help their families stay healthy, to help their children with school work, to advance in their education, to run a small business);
  - what specific aspects of those basic skills they need help with (e.g., If they need to improve their math or digital skills to operate a small business, which particular uses of math or uses of digital technologies do they want to focus on?);
  - when they might be available to participate in an education program; and
  - what supports (e.g., childcare, transportation, learning materials, etc.) they might need if they are to participate regularly.
- A brief baseline test (oral or written) to gauge potential participants' abilities to use the basic skills they want to develop.

### **STEP 2.B: DEVELOP APPROPRIATE CURRICULA BASED ON THAT ASSESSMENT.**

Will you adapt an existing curriculum in some way? Will you develop new curricula customized specifically to the targeted learners? (Developing customized curricula requires knowledge of how to plan learning activities and materials that are relevant and engaging.) Or will you use both existing curricula to start and then develop new curricula customized to learner needs as you get to know the learners?

### **STEP 2.C: RECRUIT, TRAIN, AND SUPPORT STAFF.**

Develop job descriptions for instructors and other staff that identify particular duties they will need to carry out, skills and knowledge they need to perform those tasks, and supports (e.g., supervision, training, teaching materials, financial or in-kind compensation) they will receive to do that work. Then recruit, train, and support those staff.

**STEP 2.D: DEVELOP STRATEGIES FOR HOW YOU WILL WORK WITH OTHER PARTNERS.**

What other stakeholders will you work with and what roles might they play in those collaborations? Will you have a project advisory committee to oversee the project and/or technical work groups who help with specific tasks like curriculum development, assessment and evaluation, teacher training, fundraising, public awareness, recruitment of learners, transportation, equipping of facilities, and evaluation and reporting?

**STEP 2.E: SECURE AND PREPARE FACILITIES.**

For the various activities you want to carry out, what facilities (e.g., buildings, equipment, utilities, etc.) will you need for instruction, administration, community meetings, teacher training, and other tasks?

**STEP 2.F: PREPARE SCHEDULES.**

Create flexible schedules (by months, weeks, and days) for your proposed activities that are in sync with availability of learners, staff, and the facilities to be used.

**STEP 2.G: DEVELOP A PROGRAM BUDGET AND THEN SECURE, MANAGE, AND REPORT ON FINANCIAL AND IN-KIND RESOURCES.**

What resources—both financial and in-kind—will you require to support your proposed activities, facilities, and staffing? How will you secure, manage, and report on those resources? What staff and advisors will you need to carry out these important budget-related tasks?

## **PHASE 3: Implementing and Learning from a Pilot Project**

**STEP 3.A. MONITOR AND EVALUATE THE PILOT.**

Your project team should then use the plans, partnerships, and tools you've assembled to implement an initial round of activities for an agreed-upon time. As you do so, monitoring and evaluation should be a responsibility of all involved. Using a program log, you should document basic information such as the

- names and numbers of learners served each day;
- number of staff involved;
- activities carried out;
- initial assessment scores for learners, followed by interim and end-of-semester scores; and

- feedback collected through discussions with learners, test scores, discussions with teachers, and observations by designated staff, visitors, and teachers.

Depending on the length of your initial semester (pilot project) of activities, you might carry out initial, mid-term, and end-of-term quizzes, observations, reviews of students' written work, and interviews of students and staff.

### **STEP 3.B. CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE THE MODEL.**

Note that it is important for you to give enough time to allow this pilot phase to produce results for learners and lessons for staff and supporters of the project. You might organize pilot activities in incremental time periods of, say, six or eight weeks. Then pause and debrief:

- What was achieved?
- What worked?
- What about the curriculum, teaching activities, facilities, recruitment strategies, and schedule needs to be improved?

Make needed adjustments and then continue, learning and improving as you go.

### **STEP 3.C. INVOLVE PARTNERS IN LEARNING FROM THE PILOT.**

As you collect this information, one or more staff can organize it; review it; identify achievements, gaps, and lessons learned; and share the findings internally (with students and staff) and externally (with partners who participate in your project advisory committee and/or provide funding). Use the findings to inform decisions about "where we go from here."

## **PHASE 4: Deciding Where to Go from Here**

Using information generated in the pilot phase, your project team and advisory committee can make decisions about:

- Do we continue with some version of the original pilot project? If so, do we keep and expand the original model or improve it in some way? Do we:
  - Serve a different learner population? Continue with the original group of learners? Or do both?
  - Improve the curriculum in some way?
  - Improve how we recruit and support learners?
  - Improve how we recruit and support instructors and other staff?
  - Improve how we set up and schedule learning facilities?
  - Improve how we generate and use resources?
  - Improve how we monitor and improve the program?

- Do we begin a new project with different learners, objectives, curricula, locations, etc.?
- However we move forward, what partners and funders might we work with and how will we develop and manage those partnerships?
- Are there other questions and ideas we might build on?

This is a quick run-through of steps that a project team might take to plan, implement, document, and learn from an initial set of basic skills-related activities. For more ideas and tools to adapt, see the References and Appendices.





Photo by Anne Thomas.

Kavet children and tutors assembled in the village community classroom and ready for literacy class.

## A Few More Thoughts

This is a time when humanity faces both significant challenges and opportunities. Basic education can help equip adults, youth, and children to respond to those realities and create a better world.

But developing quality basic skills projects requires individuals who are well organized and guided by an informed vision and positive spirit. Leaders and partners also need to be creative, resourceful, resilient, and perseverant.

This resource book provides some models, strategies, and other resources already developed by outstanding innovators in our field. Please adapt the contents to your situation and share what you learn with others.

***Thank you for doing this important work.***



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Photo provided by ProLiteracy.

Nigerian women participate in a discussion during UNIVA's adult literacy class.

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## Appendices

Photo by Paul Jurmo.

Learning syllable sounds in a safe space in East Africa.

### APPENDIX A

#### OTHER USEFUL DOCUMENTS

This Appendix presents a sampling of documents not included in the References or in Appendix B. These additional documents provide guidance on various aspects of the work described in this resource book. Though some of them were created for basic skills educators in the United States and New Zealand, these resources might be adapted for programs in developing countries.

#### GENERAL BASIC SKILLS PROGRAM PLANNING GUIDES

- *Nonformal Education Manual*. (Peace Corps, 2011) <https://files.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/library/Moo42.pdf>
- *Peace Corps Literacy Handbook: Appropriate Technologies for Development*. (Comings, J., & Kahler, D., Peace Corps, 1984) <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED251696.pdf>
- *Basic Education and Literacy Project Strategies*. (Rotary International) <https://my.rotary.org/document/basic-education-and-literacy-project-strategies>
- *The Building Blocks of Literacy: A Literacy Resource Manual for Peace Corps Volunteers*. (Peace Corps, 2015) <https://pclive.peacecorps.gov/pclive/index.php/pclive-resources/resource-library/1647-mo107-the-building-blocks-of-literacy/file>

- *Equipped for the Future Content Standards: What Adults Need to Know and Be Able to Do in the 21st Century*. (National Institute for Literacy, 2000) <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED437557.pdf>
- *Life Skills Manual*. (Peace Corps, 2011) <https://files.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/library/Moo63.pdf>
- *Rethinking English Literacy Development in Tonga: A Case Study, 2012–2017*. (Jurmo, P., UNESCO, 2017) <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/4b259097-f77f-4c70-813c-4cff11dc6161/downloads/UNESCO%20Tonga%20Case%20Study%20by%20Jurmo%20C%20March%202018.pdf?ver=1619737954074> (available at [link.springer.com](http://link.springer.com).)

### **PARTICIPATORY STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ACTIVE LEARNING**

- *Making Meaning, Making Change: Participatory Curriculum Development for Adult ESL Literacy*. (Auerbach, 1992) [https://archive.org/details/ERIC\\_ED356688/page/n3/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/ERIC_ED356688/page/n3/mode/2up)
- *Teaching the Skills that Matter in Adult Education*. (U.S. Department of Education, 2020) <https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/teaching-skills-matter-adult-education>

### **INTEGRATING BASIC EDUCATION WITH OTHER DEVELOPMENT THEMES**

#### **Workforce Development**

- *Making Literacy Work: The Specific Literacy Approach*. (Anzalone & McLaughlin, 1983) [https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cie\\_literacy/2/](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cie_literacy/2/)

#### **Family Literacy**

- *Increasing Parent Engagement in Children's Literacy: A Needs Assessment to Inform the Design of Parent Engagement Efforts*. (Center for Education Innovations) <https://assets.hakeema.com/cei/post/files/bd89921c922c4ba8a6b663a43dfc95d1-6990d28699824e30aeb684b9d7eae10b.pdf>
- *Atakai 'o e Ako: Family, Village, and School as Partners for Learning and Literacy*. (Peace Corps/Tonga, 2017): [https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/4b259097-f77f-4c70-813c-4cff11dc6161/downloads/Atakai%20\\_o%20e%20Ako%206-12-17.pdf?ver=1619737954278](https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/4b259097-f77f-4c70-813c-4cff11dc6161/downloads/Atakai%20_o%20e%20Ako%206-12-17.pdf?ver=1619737954278)

#### **Health and Environmental Sustainability**

- *Where There Is No Doctor*. (Hesperian Health Guides) <https://hesperian.org>
- Health Literacy Resources from New Zealand. (Health Literacy NZ) <https://www.healthliteracy.co.nz>
- *Teaching in the Whole Garden*. (Peace Corps, 1987) <https://pclive.peacecorps.gov/pclive/index.php/pclive-resources/resource-library/221-roo85-teaching-in-the-whole-garden/file>

- *Strengthening Public Health and the Healthcare Workforce: What U.S. Health Partners and Adult Basic Skills Programs Can Do Together.* (Open Door Collective, 2019) <https://www.dropbox.com/s/kjzrvif4rc38v47/ODC%20Health%20Partners%20Can-Do%20Guide%209-30-19.pdf?dl=0>
- *Greening U.S. Adult Basic Skills Efforts: What Eco-Partners and Adult Educators Can Do Together.* (Open Door Collective, 2019): <https://www.dropbox.com/s/3mwjwse7ar9v455/ODC%20Eco-Partners%20Can-Do%20Guide%209-30-19.pdf?dl=0>
- Environmental projects in Tongan schools. (Peace Corps/Tonga, 2017) <https://www.peacecorps.gov/tonga/stories/using-free-resources-ie-gravity-and-rainwater-volunteers-help-tongan-communities-respond-unpredictable-weather/> and <https://www.peacecorps.gov/tonga/stories/vavau-village-cleaning/>
- *RPCV Health Crusade Resource Library.* (RPCV Health Crusade) <https://rpcvhealthcrusade.org/resource-library/>

### Digital Technologies

- *Tech Tools for Literacy in Tonga.* (Peace Corps/Tonga: 2017) <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/4b259097-f77f-4c70-813c-4cff11dc6161/downloads/Tonga%20Tech%20Tools%207-14-17.pdf?ver=1619737954166>

### Child Protection and Civil Rights

- *Protecting Ourselves and Each Other: A Child Rights and Protection Resource.* (World Education, 2010) [https://www.worlded.org/WElInternet/inc/common/\\_download\\_pub.cfm?id=13651&lid=3](https://www.worlded.org/WElInternet/inc/common/_download_pub.cfm?id=13651&lid=3)

### Democracy and Social Justice

- *A Different Way: Reorienting Adult Education Toward Democracy and Social Justice.* (Jurmo, ProLiteracy, 2021) <https://www.proliteracy.org/Portals/o/pdf/Research/White%20Papers/ProLiteracy-WhitePaper-ADifferentWay-AdultEducationandSocialJustice.pdf?ver=2021-04-19-104122-943&timestamp=1618843488481>
- *The Change Agent: An Adult Education Magazine for Social Justice.* (World Education) <https://changeagent.nelrc.org>
- *Civic Participation and Community Action Resource Book: A Resource for Adult Educators.* (Nash, New England Literacy Resource Center/World Education, 2003) <http://nelrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/CPCAS.pdf>

### CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

- Links to research and resources on licensing, policy, creation, and use of high-quality children's materials in the global South. (Early Literacy Network) <http://www.earlyliteracynetwork.org>

- *Student-Centered Active Learning and Teaching (SCALT) Method in Jordan*. (World Education, 2013) [https://www.worlded.org/WEInternet/resources/publication/display\\_fm?txt-GeoArea=INTL&thisSection=resources&thisSectionTitle=Resources&thisPage=publications&id=13306](https://www.worlded.org/WEInternet/resources/publication/display_fm?txt-GeoArea=INTL&thisSection=resources&thisSectionTitle=Resources&thisPage=publications&id=13306)
- Sight word book project in Tonga. (Peace Corps/Tonga, 2017) <https://www.peacecorps.gov/tonga/stories/creating-print-resources-support-english-literacy-education/>
- *What to Teach and How to Teach It in the Tonga English Literacy Project*. (Peace Corps/Tonga, 2017): <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/4b259097-f77f-4c70-813c-4cff11dc6161/downloads/Tonga%20What%20%26%20How%20Teach%207-8-17.pdf?ver=1619737954234>
- *Contextualizing Adult Education: Learning from Six Decades of Experience and Research*. (ProLiteracy, 2020): <https://www.proliteracy.org/Blogs/Article/600/Contextualizing-Adult-Education-Learning-from-Six-Decades-of-Experience-and-Res>
- *Talk Time Handbook: Conversation Sessions for Volunteer Facilitators and Limited English Speaking Participants*. (Tacoma Community House, 1995) <http://www.tacomacommunityhouse.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Talk-Time-Handbook.pdf>

## LITERACY ASSESSMENT

- *Adventures in Assessment: Learner-Centered Approaches to Assessment and Evaluation*. (State Adult Basic Education System, Massachusetts, early 2000s). Do an internet search for “Adventures in Assessment” to see editions of this series in which adult educators describe assessment strategies they developed in their programs. To see the Spring 2004 edition, visit: [https://abspd.appstate.edu/sites/abspd.appstate.edu/files/inst\\_pics/Adventuresinassessment.pdf](https://abspd.appstate.edu/sites/abspd.appstate.edu/files/inst_pics/Adventuresinassessment.pdf)
- Data on world literacy rates. (Center for Education Innovations): <http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/literacy>

## PROGRAM/PROJECT DESIGN, MANAGEMENT, AND EVALUATION

- *Program Design and Development Resources*. (United Way Worldwide, 2016): <https://www.unitedwaygt.org/document.doc?id=538>
- *Evaluation in Nonformal Education: The Need for Practitioner Evaluation*. (Kinsey, David, Center for International Education, University of Massachusetts, 1978): [https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=cie\\_nonformaleducation](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=cie_nonformaleducation)

## APPENDIX B

### SAMPLE ORGANIZATIONS

Appendix B presents links to a sampling of two dozen governmental and nongovernmental agencies involved in basic education in developing countries. The websites typically contain information about the organizations' educational approach, projects, funders, partners, and other topics of interest to those involved in basic education.

#### **Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG):**

<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/accelerated-education-working-group.html>

*AEWG is made up of education partners working in the field of accelerated education. The Group is currently led by UNHCR (the United Nations Human Rights Agency) with representation from UNICEF, UNESCO, USAID, NRC, Plan, IRC, Save the Children, Education Conflict and Crisis Network, and War Child Holland. The group's goal is to strengthen the quality of accelerated education programming through a more harmonized, standardized approach.*

*Accelerated education programs (AEPs) are flexible, age-appropriate programs, run in an accelerated timeframe. They aim to provide access to education for disadvantaged, over-age, out-of-school children and youth—particularly those who missed out on, or had their education interrupted due to poverty, marginalization, conflict, and crisis.*

#### **Action Aid:** <https://actionaid.org>

Action Aid is an international nongovernmental organization which describes itself as follows:

*We want to see a just, fair, and sustainable world, in which everybody enjoys the right to a life of dignity and freedom from poverty and oppression. So we work to achieve social justice and gender equality and to eradicate poverty.*

*Our strategy is to build international momentum for social, economic, and environmental justice driven by people living in poverty and exclusion. In practice, this means working closely with people living in poverty and exclusion, civil society organisations, social movements, and supporters. Together, we deliver grassroots programmes, provide emergency relief, and campaign for things such as women's economic rights, tax justice, and climate justice.*

*Our work falls into four broad areas: women, politics and economics, land and climate, and emergencies. We have a particular focus on women's rights; it's a thread that runs through all our work.*

*ActionAid was founded as a charity in 1972. In the 1990s, we adopted a human rights-based approach to development. In 2003, we established the ActionAid International federation. Our head office is in Johannesburg, South Africa. We also have hubs in Asia, the Americas, and Europe.*



For information about Action Aid’s work in education, visit <https://actionaid.org/education>. This work includes responding to COVID-19’s impact on girls’ access to quality education and advocating for a worldwide effort to expand and improve educational opportunities in developing countries.

**American Institutes for Research:** <https://www.air.org/topic/international>

Learn about AIR’s work in education, health, and workforce development, spanning “early childhood to later in life”:

*AIR conducts and applies rigorous [research and evaluation](#) to provide governments and international aid agencies with the tools, expertise and information they need to measure the effectiveness of programs, initiatives, and institutions. Through our [policy, practice, and systems change](#) work, we help leaders, policymakers, and organizations develop, pilot, and implement field-based activities in developing countries.*

The AIR website also provides links to specific research reports, webinars/blogs, and other resources.

**Basic Education Coalition:** <https://www.basiced.org/>

*The Basic Education Coalition (BEC) is a group of leading U.S.-based organizations and academic institutions working together to promote global peace and prosperity through education. By leveraging our collective technical expertise and combining advocacy efforts, BEC members raise a unified voice to ensure U.S. policymakers support and strengthen education for the developing world.*

**Catholic Relief Services (CRS):**

<https://www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/program-areas/education>

*Education is at the heart of CRS’ mission. We support communities, local partners, and governments in their efforts to ensure that all children—including the most vulnerable and marginalized—have the right to a quality education. Recognizing that education can be a force for either inclusion and acceptance or exclusion and conflict, CRS engages a wide variety of people to ensure that schools play a positive role in building a culture of peace.*

*Our education projects encompass a range of activities, including early childhood development, school feeding programs, and primary, secondary, and higher education in both formal and nonformal settings. CRS is able to have a broad and deep reach through its national and local networks of Catholic organizations and schools, as well as through public and private entities.*

CRS’s education program sub-sectors are: access and equity, quality, community engagement, and education for a culture of peace.

**CEAAL:** <http://ceaal.org/v3/>

CEAAL is a social development and education network composed of 140 entities and individuals, including civil society organizations, networks, unions, universities, and popular educators operating in 21 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Emphasis is placed on social justice, democracy, and human rights.

*(Note that information on the CEAAL website is written in Spanish.)*

**Center for International Education (CIE) at the University of Massachusetts:**

<https://www.umass.edu/cie/>

The Center for International Education, established in 1969, offers professional development and training, a vibrant student community, and applied research opportunities in the areas of international development; nonformal education and literacy; community development and empowerment; education in fragile states; education policy, planning, and leadership; trauma-informed education and healing; and internationalizing U.S. education. CIE has over four decades of experience as an innovative leader in nonformal and adult education, community development and empowerment. Guided by a commitment to participatory and learner-centered approaches, CIE has been involved in projects to strengthen educational systems in over 42 countries. Recent activities include a project with the Global Alliance for Literacy, as part of UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning in Hamburg, to map literacy programs in 29 countries (<https://www.umass.edu/cie/our-work/cie-project-map-literacy-programs-29-countries-2018-2019>). Much of CIE's work is documented in CIE's ScholarWorks resource collections at <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cie/>.

**Creative Associates International:**

<https://www.creativeassociatesinternational.com/education/>

Creative Associates states that “every child deserves a quality education and the opportunity to reach their potential, whether they live in a stable community or a crisis-affected area.” Creative takes a “holistic whole child, whole teacher, whole school” approach “. . . at both the system and the student levels of education. It combines teacher professional development, curriculum improvement, policy development and school management support with wraparound services like psychosocial counselling and health services.”

The website provides an overview of Creative's overall approach and links to descriptions of

- Current education projects:  
<https://www.creativeassociatesinternational.com/category/projects/>
- Past projects:  
<https://www.creativeassociatesinternational.com/category/past-projects/>
- Special reports about innovative projects:  
<https://www.creativeassociatesinternational.com/category/special-reports/>

**DVV International:** <https://www.dvv-international.de/en/about-us/profile>

DVV is the international branch of the German Adult Education Association:

*We are a professional partner in dialogue with the local people. To achieve this, we cooperate with more than 200 civil society, government, and academic partners in more than 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Europe. Our country and regional offices build local and regional cooperation and ensure the quality and effectiveness of our action in our partner countries. Our work focuses on literacy and basic education, vocational training, global and intercultural learning, environmental education and sustainable development, migration and integration, refugee work, health education, conflict prevention, and democracy education.*

**Educational Development Center (EDC):** <https://www.edc.org>

Founded in 1958, EDC operates a range of projects relevant to basic skills education (<https://www.edc.org/our-work>). These include early childhood development and learning, elementary and secondary education, out-of-school learning, STEM, and youth and workforce development in regions around the world (<https://www.edc.org/global-reach>). Special focal points include equitable access to quality education, social and emotional learning, accelerated education, and interactive audio instruction (distance learning). (To learn about EDC's "English for Latin America" audio program, visit <https://www.edc.org/english-latin-america-ela>.) Resources from many of these projects can be downloaded from the EDC website.

**FHI 360:** <https://www.fhi360.org>

FHI 360 works with ministries, communities, schools, teachers, and families to create education systems in the U.S. and developing countries that respond to the complex, dynamic and diverse needs of the people they serve, FHI 360 also provides supports to other development initiatives (youth, health, crisis response, economic development, civic participation, and environment).

The organization's global education web page (<https://www.fhi360.org/education-global>) describes various kinds of international education programs it has implemented with partners. Examples include:

- *Guiding Principles for Building Soft Skills Among Adolescents and Young Adults*, a report prepared by FHI 360 for USAID's YouthPower2 program: <https://www.youthpower.org/resources/guiding-principles-building-soft-and-life-skills-among-adolescents-and-young-adults>
- An integrated youth development program, YouthPower Action for OVC (orphans and vulnerable children) youth in Mozambique, which includes literacy-related supports: <https://www.fhi360.org/projects/youthpower-action>

- A seven-year USAID Partnership for Education Project titled “Learning” that helps Ghanaian education agencies improve reading performance for students in public primary schools, using all 11 official Ghanaian languages of instruction: <https://www.fhi360.org/projects/usaid-partnership-education-learning>

**GIZ (German International Development Agency):**

<https://www.giz.de/en/html/index.html>

GIZ states (<https://www.giz.de/expertise/html/60054.html>):

*Education is a human right and the key to sustainable development. That is why GIZ supports the development of effective education systems in its partner countries. Social progress, social cohesion, economic growth, functioning democratic structures—education is an important basis for all of this.*

*Basic skills such as reading, writing, arithmetic, critical thinking, and problem-solving are fundamental prerequisites for ensuring a decent life. Far beyond the realization of individual life plans, high-quality and inclusive education has a decisive impact on the social development and economic strength of countries and regions.*

*In many developing countries, there are not enough good educational opportunities. The situation is particularly difficult for people living in war and crisis zones and refugees, who are often completely cut off from education. Children who grow up without attending school are at risk of becoming a “lost generation.” Education is therefore particularly important in regions affected by violence, conflict and instability. Here educational projects can reduce conflict, restore stability and support reconstruction.*

*Due to its great importance, education is a priority of GIZ’s work. On behalf of the German government and other public and private clients, GIZ supports partner countries in setting up functioning educational systems. It advises on developing education strategies and standards, and on effective and efficient education and school management. It promotes the initial and further training of teachers with good technical and pedagogical qualifications to become qualified both in their particular subject and in pedagogy, and advises on the production and use of high-quality teaching and learning materials as well as on developing practice-oriented curricula. The aim of all these measures is to provide high-quality and pedagogically demanding educational opportunities.*

*Youth promotion and the development of needs-based extracurricular learning opportunities also create additional participation opportunities for young women and men, and offer opportunities for adult education, supplementary education, or other forms of continuing education – particularly for people from marginalized population groups.*

**Global Partnership for Education (GPE):** <https://www.globalpartnership.org>

GPE is a global fund solely dedicated to transforming education in lower-income countries,

and a unique, multi-stakeholder partnership. Focus areas include gender equality, education in crisis, inclusive education, early education, learning assessments, teacher quality, and data systems.

**Grassroot Soccer:** <https://www.grassrootsoccer.org>

*Grassroot Soccer uses soccer (football) as tool for youth development and health. “Using soccer as the hook, we engage adolescents in making healthy decisions through our Three Cs: an adolescent-friendly and evidence-based health curriculum, the supportive influence of local mentor and role model coaches, and a fun, inclusive, and positive culture.”*

*Participants develop strategies for a healthy lifestyle, leadership and job skills, and positive relationships with fellow participants and role model coaches to become “agents of change.” It operates programs in 45 countries and its model of integrating sports with health, youth development, education, and other development needs can be adapted by basic education programs for children, youth, and adults.*

See a related example (Kick4Life, <https://www.kick4life.org>) in Part 3.

**Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies:** <https://inee.org>

This network’s goal is “to ensure quality, safe, and relevant education for all persons affected by emergencies. Among other things, it supports accelerated education programs and works with the Accelerated Education Working Group (<https://inee.org/collections/accelerated-education>).

**Inter-American Development Bank:** <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education>

The Inter-American Development Bank “supports education systems of Latin America and the Caribbean countries to reach five dimensions that will contribute to making them successful in promoting effective teaching and learning among all children and youth. The IDB’s private sector window also finances projects to expand educational opportunities for low-income students.”

**International Council for Adult Education:** <http://icae.global>

*The International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) is a global network with a specific mandate to advocate for youth and adult learning and education (ALE) as a universal human right. It was created in 1973 and has seven regional bodies (Africa, Arab Region, Asia, Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, and North America) representing more than 800 NGOs—regional, national and sectoral networks—in more than 75 countries.*

*ICAE’s mission is to promote learning and education for adults and young people in pursuit of social justice within the framework of human right in all its dimensions, to secure the healthy, sustainable, and democratic development of individuals, communities, and societies.*

### **International Rescue Committee (IRC):** <https://www.rescue.org>

Operating in more than 40 countries, IRC provides short- and long-term services to refugees and other individuals impacted by conflict and other crises. The organization focuses in particular on providing education-related services (<https://www.rescue.org/outcome/education>), recognizing that “during conflict and crisis, education protects children and sets them up for a better future. It provides a sense of hope and enables them to recover, learn, and thrive.”

Education supports include creating quality learning spaces in formal schools and informal education settings, accelerated learning programs for children who have missed years of schooling; providing teaching and learning materials so teachers and facilitators are equipped to teach meaningful lessons; and ensuring children are healthy and well-nourished in order to learn. IRC also “ensures that youth and adults have high levels of livelihood, literacy, numeracy and social-emotional skills.” Related supports include “providing learning opportunities that teach employment-related and trade-specific technical skills; supporting the development of social and emotional skills people need to control emotions, set goals, make decisions, persevere, and bounce back in the face of setbacks.”

The IRC’s Outcomes and Evidence Framework ([http://oef.rescue.org/#/?\\_k=6rmez7](http://oef.rescue.org/#/?_k=6rmez7)) delivers key information related to health, safety, education, economic wellbeing, and other outcomes. This information can be used by stakeholders to plan development efforts.

Among its many programs is the collaboration with the Sesame Workshop to provide culturally-appropriate education to Syrian children refugees. (See *60 Minutes* video at <https://www.rescue.org/video/60-minutes-educating-youngest-refugees>. For more information about IRC’s work in education for the most vulnerable, read: <https://www.rescue.org/report/beyond-lost-year-five-ways-improve-education-most-vulnerable-2021>

### **Microcredit in Africa, Incorporated (MICA, Inc.):** <https://mica-inc.org>; <https://www.proliteracy.org/What-We-Do/International/Niger>

MICA offers a mix of supports—micro-financing, small business training, literacy education, digital skills training (e.g., use of mobile phones and computers), leadership training, and health education—to rural, low-income women and girls in Niger. MICA partners with ProLiteracy’s International Division (<https://www.proliteracy.org/What-We-Do/International>) and other organizations like Expanding Lives ([www.expandinglives.org](http://www.expandinglives.org)) to help village women’s groups purchase ox carts to transport produce to market, use mobile phones to check current prices, and learn knitting, sewing, soap making, and other skills they can use to generate products their families can use and that they can sell. Girls learn how to remain safe and healthy—and to stay in school—in a region prone to extremist violence. To learn more about this innovative mix of activities, see the videos below:

- MICA Video: Entrepreneurship Training at Centre MICA [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vAgJEE2dF1u\\_zt9pWvOlxINS05TfwUZC/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vAgJEE2dF1u_zt9pWvOlxINS05TfwUZC/view?usp=sharing)

- MICA Videos: Young Girls' Conference [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gusYwQ2hbp\\_hflpz7uuZPf6lHKGAKzwBy/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gusYwQ2hbp_hflpz7uuZPf6lHKGAKzwBy/view?usp=sharing) and <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QFi9qqqz61BSRSztrzMZYrU7UleYutf/view?usp=sharing>

**National Cooperative Business Association/CLUSA International:**  
<https://ncbaclusa.coop>

For over 100 years, NCBA/CLUSA has worked . . .

*to build a better world and a more inclusive economy that empowers people to contribute to shared prosperity and well-being for themselves and future generations. By leveraging the shared resources of the cooperative movement, we seek to engage, partner with and empower people from all walks of life—particularly those left behind by a shifting economy and facing the greatest economic and societal barriers. We achieve this vision through collaborative partnerships in development, advocacy, public awareness, and thought leadership . . .*

*. . . Our process facilitates self-directed change within the communities, governments, and systems where we work. We empower people to articulate, promote and manage sustainable, locally-generated solutions . . .*

*. . . Our resilience approach addresses critical points within a nation's socio-ecological system to bring about lasting positive change: strengthened governance capacity, improved land use management and farming practices, and better health and nutrition. This integrated approach helps vulnerable individuals, families and communities plan for, recover from and overcome shocks, including those caused by climate change.*

Basic skills-related activities (e.g., financial literacy, technical reading, and numeracy related to small business management and food production) have been a key part of many of these projects.

**Peace Corps:** <https://www.peacecorps.gov>

Launched by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, Peace Corps is an independent agency of the U.S. Government that sends Peace Corps Volunteers to work in development projects around the world. Education is the most common type of project carried out by Peace Corps Volunteers. For information about Peace Corps' education-related projects, go to <https://www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/what-volunteers-do/#education>.

Peace Corps posts often interact and collaborate with other governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Read about one such partnership with USAID here: <https://www.edu-links.org/learning/how-partnership-peace-corps-increased-education-outcomes>

**ProLiteracy International Division:** <https://www.proliteracy.org/What-We-Do/International>

As a global training and literacy specialist, ProLiteracy has decades of experience developing and implementing participatory methods and materials for community-based learning, organization, problem-solving, and action. Since 1980, these approaches have been implemented, tested, refined, and often integrated into local and regional settings in 65 countries throughout Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia.

Central to ProLiteracy’s international work is the belief that all people are endowed with innate human dignity and the potential to learn and create change. We believe that successful literacy instruction is based on mutual respect and supportive interactions between teachers and learners where learners are empowered with practices, information, and confidence to improve their lives. The ProLiteracy program examples in this publication were presented with permission from ProLiteracy’s partners from around the world.

Projects supported by ProLiteracy are generated with active input and participation by grassroots nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and focus on the needs and priorities of local learners. Local ownership of the projects enhances effectiveness and creates an atmosphere whereby the local NGO does not feel infringed upon by outside influence but supported by ProLiteracy.

Each project uses a learning process that enables participants to gain a permanent foundation of literacy skills, information, and insights to meet basic needs, solve problems, and make individual and community improvements. Literacy learning includes fundamental skills, critical thinking, cultural expression, and action relevant to participants’ needs and aspirations, which include, but often extend beyond, literacy. Literacy initiatives are developed within a broader context of participant-identified priorities such as health, human rights, nutrition, self-sufficiency, education, environment, and family and community relations.

**Research Triangle Institute International (RTI):** <https://www.rti.org/about-us>

U.S.-based RTI is “an independent, nonprofit research institute dedicated to improving the human condition.”

Education and international development are two of its services areas. RTI states:

*We use evidence-based approaches to strengthen education policy, management, and practice at every level—from classrooms to national ministries—to achieve measurable improvement in education quality and, ultimately, learning outcomes. Our team develops teaching and learning materials for early grade reading and mathematics, and designs and implements professional development programs for teachers and instructional coaches. We employ appropriate and cost-effective information and communication technologies and, building on our experience at the primary school level, we develop and pilot approaches for early childhood education.*



Recent education programs have included a Health and Reading Program and a Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity program in Uganda (<https://www.rti.org/focus-area/education-transforms-lives-uganda>). Find other information about literacy at <https://www.rti.org/search?keywords=literacy> and about social-emotional learning at <https://www.rti.org/brochures/social-and-emotional-learning-o>

**Rotary International (RI):** <https://www.rotary.org/en/our-causes/supporting-education>

Rotary International is a worldwide network of local and regional Rotary Clubs. Each club is composed of volunteers from the community who carry out community improvement projects which respond to local needs and build on the strengths of club members. Support for literacy development is one of Rotary International's priorities, and local clubs support literacy activities customized to community needs.

**Our goal is to strengthen the capacity of communities to support basic education and literacy, reduce gender disparity in education, and increase adult literacy. We support education for all children and literacy for children and adults.**

For more information, download RI's *Basic Education and Literacy Project Strategies* at <https://my.rotary.org/document/basic-education-and-literacy-project-strategies>

**Save the Children:** <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/education>

Save the Children's Global Education team works across five major areas:

- Early Child Care and Development: *focused on 0–6 year olds . . . (and) enable(ing) parents or caregivers to promote brain development, health and well-being as children prepare for school.*
- Basic Education: *. . . to . . . help school-age children develop vital skills to ensure their success both in school and out. Using proven approaches such as Literacy Boost and Numeracy Boost . . . (to) ensur(e) children acquire foundational literacy, math and socio-emotional skills . . . for a lifetime of learning.*
- School Health and Nutrition: *(to) help school-age children be healthy to learn and learn to be healthy. We use comprehensive approaches to overcome the effects of chronic malnutrition, illnesses, like malaria and zika, as well as working to improve oral and vision health, access to water and sanitation including menstrual hygiene and road safety.*
- Education Research: *(to) build the capacity of the organization to better understand what works for supporting all children's learning and development.*
- Education in Emergencies: *(to) ensure children return to learning as quickly as possible after the onset of a humanitarian crisis . . . provid(ing) . . . essential academic and socio-emotional skills to start to recover and resume some normalcy.*

Save the Children uses what it learns in its work to advocate for high-quality education services with policymakers and funders (e.g., UNESCO and UNICEF).

The organization says:

*We pursue a holistic view of learning as multidimensional, occurring both inside institutions (preschools, schools and nonformal settings) as well as in homes and communities. Our investigations explore the interconnections between these environments and outcomes to understand how parents, caregivers, teachers, school leaders, policymakers – and the norms they hold – best enable learning. We create an evidence base for common solutions to problems facing children as they are adapted and tested in new contexts . . . We support Save the Children country teams to explore these as well as related and new topics in close to 60 applied research projects per year.*

**Sesame Workshop:** <https://www.sesameworkshop.org>

The Sesame Workshop is a U.S.-based nonprofit organization that . . .

*helps kids grow smarter, stronger, and kinder. . . You'll find us on screens, in classrooms, in communities—everywhere families can use a trusted hand to help little ones reach their full potential. Our unforgettable characters bring joyful learning into children's lives . . . We have always focused on preschool-age children because research shows they have the greatest potential to learn . . .*

An offshoot of the well-known *Sesame Street* children's television show on the Public Broadcasting System in the U.S., Sesame Street Workshop develops educational programs (including both video-based and live performances) customized to various populations and social needs, while also conducting research and providing professional development for staff of the education and other stakeholders who use the programs. Among its many programs is its collaboration with the International Rescue Committee (see IRC profile) to provide culturally-appropriate education to Syrian children refugees. (See *60 Minutes* video at <https://www.rescue.org/video/60-minutes-educating-youngest-refugees>.)

**Solar Spell at Arizona State University:** <https://solarspell.org>

U.S.-based Arizona State University has field-tested a solar-powered, climate- and shock-resistant hard drive equipped with educational software and videos carefully chosen for educational and cultural appropriateness. Remote schools in the Pacific and Africa are using these SolarSpell devices as digital libraries to bring educational resources (for basic skills and other areas of education) to teachers, students, and communities that have limited access to electricity and the internet. One feature is a hot spot that people—including teachers and community members more generally—can connect their smartphones and laptops to and access the resources stored on the hard drive.

**UNESCO's Alliance for Global Literacy (at UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning):**

<https://uil.unesco.org/literacy/global-alliance>

UNESCO has a long history of supporting basic education for children, youth, and adults. In the area of youth and adults, UNESCO's Experimental World Literacy Programme developed models of functional literacy education in the 1960s and 1970s (<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000016574>). More recently, the Alliance for Global Literacy (GAL) at UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL, <https://uil.unesco.org/unesco-institute>) "engages a multiplicity of stakeholders to advocate for the importance of youth and adult literacy and to catalyse in an effective and coordinated manner efforts to improve it in the countries that need it the most." GAL focuses on improving stakeholder collaborations at global, regional, and national levels, strengthening political supports, and sharing effective policies and practices. To learn more about GAL's strategy for 2020–2025, visit <https://uil.unesco.org/literacy/global-alliance/global-alliance-literacy-strategy-2020-2025>. GAL also issues regular reports about adult education (<https://uil.unesco.org/adult-education/global-report>). As an example, see the recommendations that emerged from UNESCO's 2015 adult education report at <https://uil.unesco.org/adult-education/unesco-recommendation>.

A recent report on the "Impact of Distance Education on Adult Learning" (IDEAL) can be seen at <https://uil.unesco.org/adult-education/impact-distance-education-adult-learning-project-ideal>

To learn more about the strategic goals of UIL's work on ALE in the Medium-Term Strategy 2014–2021, contact the ALE team at [uil-ale@unesco.org](mailto:uil-ale@unesco.org). Other UNESCO resources include:

- Overview of what UNESCO does to support literacy as part of its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/literacy>
- Statistics on literacy and literacy efforts worldwide: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/literacy>

**U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID):** <https://www.usaid.gov/education>

USAID's education website presents the agency's education policy vision, implementation guidelines for education programs, and Education Links, a collection of resources related to youth education and inclusive and "catch up" education for children in crisis situations. Special resources for gender and girls' education, information and communications technology, reading and literacy, and youth workforce development are also provided.

USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse (<https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/home/Default.aspx>) provides reports from past development projects. Search for "basic education," "adult literacy," "inclusive education," and "nonformal education," among other topics related to basic education in developing countries.

*The U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education: Fiscal Years 2019—2023* ([https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/USG-Education-Strategy\\_FY2019-2023\\_Final\\_Web.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/USG-Education-Strategy_FY2019-2023_Final_Web.pdf)) presents why and how U.S. international development agencies might work together with each other and other stakeholders to integrate basic education with other development initiatives. It profiles education program models being implemented in Africa, the Middle East, North Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Examples are provided of projects related to women's economic empowerment; public health; and vulnerable and marginalized populations (including refugees and displaced persons) impacted by discrimination, violence, abuse, and labor exploitation.

**World Bank:** <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education>

World Bank says:

*The World Bank Group is the largest financier of education in the developing world. We work on education programs in more than 80 countries and are committed to helping countries reach SDG4 (the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goal 4), which calls for access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030.*

**World Education:** <https://www.worlded.org/WEIInternet/>

An outgrowth of early adult literacy work in India in the 1950s, World Education has since 1951 provided innovative supports and leadership to education and other development efforts around the world (including in the U.S.). These include international projects (<https://www.worlded.org/WEIInternet/international/index.cfm>) carried out by the organization's Africa and Asia Divisions, its EdTech Center (<https://edtech.worlded.org>), and its Bantwana Initiative programs (<https://bantwana.org>) serving vulnerable children and youth in east and southern Africa. Also, see the international publications in the Resources section of the World Education website <https://www.worlded.org/WEIInternet/resources/publications.cfm>.

## APPENDIX C

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

- **accelerated education or accelerated learning:** strategies to help learners develop particular skills or knowledge at a faster rate than is normally expected in traditional education
- **basic skills:** a mix of key abilities commonly required to carry out communication and problem-solving tasks that adults perform in relevant work, family, civic, and lifelong learning roles; can include: reading and writing, speaking and listening, numeracy (applied math), digital skills, problem-solving, teamwork, research, and planning (See how this was defined in the Equipped for the Future initiative of the National Institute for Literacy at <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED437557.pdf>.)
- **community-oriented development:** an approach to improving communities which emphasizes active participation by community members in assessing local needs and identifying goals to focus community improvement activities on; planning, implementing, and monitoring those activities; and making decisions about ongoing ways to further strengthen the community
- **contextualized instruction:** blends development of particular basic skills (e.g., numeracy) with the teaching of other areas of skills and knowledge (e.g., numeracy for shopping, managing a small business, or farming); can be a key component of an integrated program, as described under *integrated approach*
- **developing countries:** since the mid-1900s, the term used to describe non-western, non-industrialized countries has evolved, including such terms as *low-income* (aka poor), *Third World*, *non-industrialized*, and—more recently—*the Global South*
- **digital skills:** the ability to use basic features of computers, mobile phones, and other communications and problem-solving technologies to carry out relevant work, family, civic, or academic tasks
- **formal education:** typically uses standardized methods for recruiting, placing, and teaching students; scheduling activities; reporting results; and carrying out other program functions.
- **functional (or technical) skills:** skills (other than *basic skills*) required to perform a particular task for work, family, civic, or academic purposes (e.g., a cook or carpenter needs to know how to use particular equipment required for a specific task)
- **holistic approach:** typically refers to an educational strategy that attempts to respond to a range of inter-related learner needs (e.g., for health, academic advancement, workforce success) and provides related educational and other services

- **integrated approach:** uses various strategies to blend basic education with other activities relevant to learners; one example would be basic skills programs that work with public health agencies (which provide direct health care services to adult learners and their families); at the same time, the education program might use health-related reading materials to help learners not only build stronger basic skills but understand and deal with various health issues
- **learners served by basic skills programs**
  - adults: though the definition of *adult learner* can vary, in this document the term is used to refer to individuals approximately 25 years old and older
  - out-of-school youth: young people between approximately 14 and 25 years of age and who are not enrolled in a formal secondary or post-secondary school
  - children: young people under 14 years of age who may or may not be enrolled in a formal school
- **nonformal education:** is less structured, and more directly customized to learner needs and carried out on an as-needed basis than is typical in more "formal" education programs; short-term adult literacy programs focusing on skills needed for particular work functions (e.g., numeracy for farmers or small business owners) or family responsibilities (e.g., helping children with reading or homework tasks, ensuring the health of family members) are examples of nonformal education
- **socio-emotional learning:** affective education that focuses on helping learners effectively manage various kinds of stresses—including emotional trauma—they might encounter in social or other situations; acknowledges that the often-overlooked *affective (emotional)* domain (distinct from the *cognitive* domain) is an important component of an individual's ability to learn and to apply what they learn to lead a productive, rewarding life; can support learner development of self-efficacy belief (i.e., confidence that one can in fact achieve meaningful, rewarding results through effort)
- **stakeholders:** various segments of a society (sometimes referred to as "interest groups") who play particular roles, have particular motivations, and control various resources; are potential partners for basic skills programs to work with and serve





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