



RESULTS FOR
DEVELOPMENT

A Landscape Analysis of the Global Literacy Sector

By Results for Development Institute

Commissioned by Pearson for Project Literacy



PROJECT
LITERACY

May 2016

Results for Development Institute (R4D) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to unlock solutions to tough development challenges that prevent people in low- and middle-income countries from realizing their full potential. Using varied approaches in multiple sectors, including global education, global health, governance, and market dynamics, R4D supports the discovery and implementation of new ideas for reducing poverty and improving lives around the world.

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Introduction

While the international community has made great strides in promoting global literacy in the past 15 years, significant progress is still to be made. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 781 million adults (age 15 and over) globally lack basic reading and writing skills. While literacy rates have improved in almost every region of the world since 2000, these improvements have not been consistent. Women account for nearly two-thirds of adult illiterates, and this ratio has not changed between 1990 and 2015 (UNESCO 2014). Youth literacy statistics are not much more inspiring: approximately 126 million 15 to 24 year olds are still unable to read worldwide, accounting for 10.6% of the global youth population (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2014).

Project Literacy is a new coalition of global and local organizations dedicated to tackling the literacy gap by advancing best practice, innovating for new solutions, and energizing debate about literacy. Convened by Pearson in 2015, Project Literacy partners as of September of 2016 include Pearson, 28 Too Many, 826 National, Achievement for All, Action on Addiction, Asia Foundation, Book Aid International, Book Trust, Books Beyond Words, CENPEC, Doctors of the World UK, FCB INFERNO, Feed the Minds, Fight for Peace, First Book, GOOD Worldwide, Jumpstart, Lessons for Life Foundation, Microsoft, National Literacy Trust, NOW, Nutrition & Education International (NEI), Pencils of Promise, Pledgeling, Raising a Reader, Reach Out and Read, Read On. Get On., Reading is Fundamental (RIF), Reading Partners, Results for Development Institute, Room to Read, The Big Issue, The Hunger Project, The Institute for Strategic Dialogue, Too Small To Fail, UNESCO, Unreasonable Group, Veerni Project, War Child UK, Weber Shandwick, Womankind Worldwide, World Literacy Foundation, Worldreader, LitWorld, AFRIPads, Angaza, Edom, Edovo, Eduze, Guru-G, Guten, Insane Logic, Karadi Path, Kingo, LightSail, Livox, Robbie AI, SunCulture, ThinkCERCA, Ubongo, Breakthrough Collaborative, Bulverde Spring Branch Library Foundation (BSBL), IGAUPM, Lanka Jathika, Literacy Inc., Mary Ward Center, Minnesota Literacy Council, National Braille Press, Parent-Child Home Program, Tablab, The Dream Center, The Indigenous Literacy Foundation (ILF), The Literacy Lab, Un Millón de Niños Lectores, We Need Diverse Books (WNDB), Western Cape Primary Science Programme, Library For All, READ Alliance, EYElliance, Impact Network, ILA, Tales2go, Indy Reads, The Beat Within, Cradles to Crayons, The Reading Agency, and Reading Rescue.

As Pearson and its partners seek to lay the groundwork for Project Literacy, understanding the current landscape of the global literacy sector is critical to maximizing the likelihood of success. Pearson commissioned this landscape as initial effort of Project Literacy to understand and contribute to the global literacy sector.

It is with this goal in mind that Results for Development Institute (R4D) undertook a landscape of the global literacy sector. The report is organized into four sections:

Section I: **Background**

Highlights key statistics related to global literacy.

Section II: **Key stakeholders and initiatives in the literacy field**

Provides an overview of stakeholders and initiatives focused on literacy at the global, regional, and national levels (for Pearson’s priority countries); identifies common themes among these initiatives and analyzes current patterns of engagement to identify gaps where more attention could be given.

Section III: Key issues and best practices in the literacy field
Provides a high-level overview of key issues and best practices in the literacy field and highlights those where the evidence base is particularly strong.

Section IV: Recommendations for the global literacy sector
Synthesizes and analyzes the information obtained through the landscape to draw out recommendations for how to best support the global literacy sector moving forward.

Methodology

The methodology used for this landscape analysis included the following key components:

- Systematic online searches using key words to identify stakeholders and initiatives in the literacy field at the global, regional, and national levels.
- Detailed desk review of key global literacy initiatives using their websites and other available resources.
- Rapid desk review of regional and country literacy initiatives in priority countries, as well as corporate literacy initiatives.
- Review and synthesis of published and grey literature related to evidence-based practices in the literacy field.
- Key informant interviews with stakeholders engaged with global literacy initiatives. A total of ten stakeholders were interviewed representing eight different initiatives. The list of stakeholder interviews can be found in Annex I.

Executive Summary

A summary of key findings from the landscape analysis and recommendations for global literacy stakeholders is provided below.

Summary of key findings:

- The most common themes among global literacy initiatives in order of prevalence are: education technology; early-grade reading; teacher training and professional development; mother-tongue reading materials; family and community engagement; literacy assessment; adult literacy; literacy for children with disabilities; and social mobilization and behavior change strategies.
- Donor interest in funding literacy internationally is **more heavily skewed towards the early grades than towards adolescent or adult literacy**. Not only is global programming for adult literacy limited, funding to conduct advocacy for adult literacy globally is even more limited.

- Donors are **heavily prioritizing technology** in the current literacy landscape. However, several interviewed stakeholders noted that while education technology is attracting considerable interest and funding, **there is still a significant lack of evidence on what types of technology interventions actually work to improve literacy.**
- Literacy for **children with disabilities** remains an area where global literacy initiatives are currently not very active.
- A handful of organizations are leading the way on **parental and community engagement** in children’s literacy, but this is an area where more could be done, particularly given the growing evidence base supporting this approach.
- Since the termination of previous global campaigns for literacy such as the Global Campaign for Education’s *Literacy for All Campaign* and the United Nations Literacy Decade’s *Literacy Initiative for Empowerment* (LIFE), **there are no large-scale global advocacy campaigns on literacy that have taken their place.**
- **There are no corporate-driven campaigns or initiatives for literacy at the global level.** All literacy initiatives at the global level were driven by the non-profit sectors (NGOs or bilateral and multilateral agencies).
- Most of the global literacy initiatives do not have a particular geographic focus, but rather work across a wide number of countries. In many instances, this has been done intentionally.
- The landscape uncovered a few regional literacy initiatives, but in general, **there is less activity at the regional level than at the global and country levels.** This may be due to lack of donor interest in funding regional activities or barriers to coordination (distance, costs, etc.).
- Relatively strong evidence exists supporting the positive impact of mother-tongue instruction and targeted instruction on literacy and learning outcomes. Emerging evidence exists for parental/family engagement, mobile technology, technology and literacy, and the use of structured materials.

Recommendations:

These recommendations are derived from an analysis of key gaps in the global literacy landscape. They are intended for the global literacy community broadly, but are particularly relevant to funders and other stakeholders committed to supporting literacy. Complete recommendations are provided in [Section IV](#).

- **Provide increased support for identified gaps in the literacy sector, in particular for adult literacy**
One of the key takeaways from this landscape analysis is the gulf between programming and funding for child literacy and adult literacy. The majority of existing initiatives are focused on child literacy. Adult literacy, in particular maternal and women’s adult literacy, is extremely underfunded and in significant need of additional resources and attention.
- **If a new global literacy campaign is launched, it should be inclusive and have a clear and targeted focus.**

The majority of interviewed stakeholders saw value in a new global literacy campaign, provided it has a clear, narrow focus and objective.

- **Avoid duplication of effort, build on existing initiatives, and enhance information-sharing**
As existing initiatives in the literacy sector seek to expand their activities, or as new initiatives seek to enter the space, it is critically important to understand the scope of what has already been done in certain areas, and to build on these efforts where possible.
- **Enhance collaboration between “non-traditional” literacy stakeholders and “traditional” development and global literacy stakeholders**
This landscape analysis underscored the relatively fragmented nature of the literacy landscape and the divide between for-profit/corporate (“non-traditional”) and non-profit/public (“traditional”) initiatives. With an increasing number of non-traditional stakeholders interested in playing a meaningful role in supporting literacy, the field as a whole could stand to benefit from greater collaboration and engagement across sectors.
- **Continue to invest in robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning**
The global literacy sector should continue to invest heavily in rigorous monitoring, evaluation, and learning efforts, to increase our collective understanding of best practice for improving literacy outcomes in different contexts for different target groups. This is particularly true of newer literacy interventions currently gaining significant traction, such as education technology.

I. Background

The international community has made great strides in promoting global literacy in the last 15 years, but there is still significant progress to be made. The Education for All Global Monitoring Report estimates that there are currently about 781 million illiterate adults—considering possible measurement errors this number could well be upwards of 1 billion (UNESCO 2015). In short, the Education for All Goal to reduce adult illiteracy (especially among women) by 50% between 2000 and 2015 was not met: while adult illiteracy has fallen by 23% in this timeframe, this is far shy of the 50% goal (UNESCO 2015). Worse still, women account for nearly two-thirds of adult illiterates, and this ratio has not changed between 1990 and 2015 (UNESCO 2014). Female literacy represents a missed opportunity for enormous gains in overall welfare and growth in the developing world. A large body of evidence suggests that female literacy improves “women’s empowerment; family welfare, including child health and nutrition; fertility rates; agricultural productivity” along with “equity...and poverty reduction” (R4D 2011).

While illiteracy is a global issue, the challenge is particularly acute in low- and middle-income countries. In fact, in some regions illiteracy rates have actually gone up. In South and West Asia, the number of illiterate adults has increased by 2% since 1990, and in Sub-Saharan Africa it has risen 37% (UNESCO 2014). India’s 287 million illiterate adults accounts for over one-third of the global total, while Nigeria has gained 17 million illiterate adults since 1990 for a total increase of 71%. Additionally, if one looks at groups of adults born in a given year rather than the adult population as whole (to eliminate the effect of population growth on literacy rates), there have been virtually no real gains in adult literacy since 2000, as perceived improvements have mostly been due to older illiterate populations dying out while younger, more literate populations grow to dominate national demographics (UNESCO 2015). Further, youth literacy is also severely wanting, with approximately 126 million 15- to 24-year-olds worldwide unable to read, accounting for 10.6% of the global youth population (UIS 2014). Citizen-led assessments across the world

from India to East Africa have reflected the dire nature of the learning crisis at the school-age level (ASER, Uwezo).

Many governments in the developing world have launched adult literacy campaigns since 2000, but they have rarely put any monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place, making it very difficult to estimate impact or learning outcomes (UNESCO 2015). Mobile technology shows promise for improving literacy outcomes, but definitive evidence of its impact is still lacking. To help the huge number of people around the world who lack basic reading skills, the international community needs to make a better funded, better organized, and more concerted effort. As the 2015 Global Monitoring Report states, in the years since 2000 “calls for action to focus on a more holistic view of literacy at the global level were not matched by a willingness to adequately fund programs at the national level.” There is therefore enormous demand worldwide for stakeholders to provide funding and support for literacy programs, particularly those that work toward eradicating adult and female illiteracy.

II. Key stakeholders and initiatives in the literacy field

Given the fundamental importance of literacy to human and economic development, it is unsurprising that this landscape analysis has identified a large number of diverse initiatives and organizations actively engaged in the literacy field. These include those working at the global level as well as a number committed to working regionally and/or nationally. Focus areas and activities vary widely, from early grade reading to adult literacy and from advocacy campaigns to grant-making competitions. The most high-profile initiatives are driven predominantly by the non-profit sector (NGOs or bilateral agencies); however, a number of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives also focus on literacy.

This section provides an overview and analysis of key stakeholders and initiatives in the literacy field at the global, regional, and select national level, both from the non-profit and corporate sectors.¹ It should be noted that organizations whose work is limited to *implementing* literacy interventions were not comprehensively landscaped in this analysis.

Global level

Overview of existing global literacy initiatives

This landscape identified twelve initiatives and/or organizations explicitly focused on tackling literacy at a global level with a focus on low- and middle-income countries.² These include the following:

¹ Initiatives landscaped include those most relevant to Project Literacy (advocacy campaigns, research networks, communities of practice, grant-making competitions, etc.).

² Some of these initiatives also conduct extensive work in the United States, and are re-visited in the section on national initiatives.

[All Children Reading](#)
[Global Campaign for Education: Literacy for All](#)
[Global Learning XPRIZE](#)
[Global Literacy Collaborative](#)
[Global Reading Network](#)
[International Literacy Association \(ILA\)](#)
[International Literacy Institute](#)
[Library of Congress Literacy Awards](#)
[Mobiles for Education Alliance](#)
[ProLiteracy](#)
[UNESCO International Literacy Prizes](#)
[United Nations Literacy Decade](#)

Table I below provides an overview of these initiatives and their focus activities. It is significant to note that only two initiatives focus on adult literacy, one of which is no longer active (the United Nations Literacy Decade). The remaining initiatives all focus primarily on child literacy.

Table I: Overview of global literacy initiatives

Name of organization/ initiative	Type of initiative	Type of organization	Overview	Literacy priority areas	Priority countries
All Children Reading (U.S. AID)	Competition	Aid agencies (USAID, World Vision, DFAT)	All Children Reading was established by USAID in 2011 to identify solutions to improve children’s reading skills in the early grades. It is a \$25 million initiative that runs competitions to identify innovations leveraging the power of technology to promote literacy. Key partners also include World Vision and DFAT (formerly Australian Aid).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early grade reading - Education technology - Teaching and learning materials - Data accessibility - Children with disabilities - Mother-tongue instruction - Parental and community engagement 	Accept applications globally. Current Round 2 grantees are from Zambia (x2), Cambodia, Jordan, Mali (x2), Afghanistan, Mexico, India (x2) Lesotho, Morocco, Philippines, Georgia.
Global Campaign for Education: Literacy for All	Advocacy Campaign	Coalition of NGOs	The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) aims to strengthen the voice of civil society in the development of national education. GCE and its members run national, regional, and global campaigns related to the Education For All goals, including its Literacy for All Campaign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mother-tongue early grade materials - Teacher training 	Global
Global Learning XPRIZE	Competition	NGO/Foundation (XPRIZE Foundation)	The Global Learning XPRIZE aims to improve literacy outcomes among children in developing countries by awarding prize money to developers that create outstanding literacy software. It awards \$15 million in total prize money to teams of software developers that create an open source scalable program to help children in developing countries learn literacy and numeracy skills within an 18 month period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early grade reading - Education technology 	Applications sourced globally, field-testing will occur in Tanzania.
Global Literacy Collaborative*	Research network and Community of practice	Consortium of academic institutions and foundations	The Global Literacy Collaborative aims to initiate a global literacy movement based on education technology and foster a community of researchers, funders, and implementers around this goal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early grade reading - Education technology (tablets) - Independent reading 	Ethiopia

Global Reading Network	Research network and Community of practice	Aid agency (USAID)	The Global Reading Network is a network comprised of governments, practitioners, civil society organizations, teachers associations, academics, funders, UN agencies, and other stakeholders committed to improving reading outcomes for primary grade children across the globe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early grade reading - Social mobilization/ behavior change strategies 	Global, not yet specified
International Literacy Association (ILA)*	Advocacy organization; Research network; Community of Practice	NGO	ILA has three core areas of focus: (1) global operations (focused on developing countries and works to improve the professional development and institutional capacity of literacy educators while developing and implementing partnerships globally), (2) training and informing literacy educators through practical research journals, publications, professional development, conferences, and advocacy efforts, and (3) advocacy efforts with legislative and regulatory bodies. It has a network of affiliate organizations (local reading associations) in over 70 countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher training/ professional development 	ILA affiliates have been established in 76 countries
International Literacy Institute (ILI)*	Research organization	Intergovernmental organization, academic institution (UNESCO, University of Pennsylvania)	ILI conducts research on global literacy and educational development, especially in the developing world and provides online tools to help adults and children develop literacy and professional skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education technology - Teacher training/professional development - Literacy assessment 	Global. ILI's flagship Bridges to the Future project is in India and South Africa

Library of Congress Literacy Awards*	Competition	Government organization (Library of Congress)	The Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program aims to encourage new methods of increasing literacy and the spread of best practices by rewarding organizations that have had a major impact on reducing illiteracy in the U.S. and the world. One of its three prizes, the International Prize, awards \$50,000 to an exceptional literacy program abroad. The program also publishes an annual “Best Practices” report.	- Themes from previous “best practices” reports include: facilitating access to print; cultivating diverse partnerships; leveraging community resources; assessing cultural relevance; using technology; developing writing skills; reading aloud and storytelling; fostering early intervention and family engagement; addressing social barriers to literacy; increasing motivation to read and write; ensuring quality of instruction; increasing awareness of the problem of illiteracy; promoting gender equity and maternal literacy.	Global, not specified
Mobiles for Education Alliance	Community of practice	Alliance of aid agencies, foundations, NGOs, and intergovernmental organizations; led by USAID	The Mobiles for Education Alliance (MEducation Alliance) aims to identify mobile technologies that can improve global education issues such as “literacy, appropriate educational content development and dissemination, system strengthening (such as education data for decision making), accessibility for learners with disabilities, professional development for educators, and workforce development.”	- Education technology	Global, not specified

ProLiteracy*	Advocacy organization; Supporter of literacy organizations	NGO (ProLiteracy)	ProLiteracy is a non-profit organization that develops and supports adult literacy learning, content, and programs and advocates for improved adult literacy worldwide. Through its international work, ProLiteracy supports grassroots organizations to establish or strengthen an existing adult literacy program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adult literacy - Social mobilization/behavior change strategies - Family and community engagement 	Global
UNESCO International Literacy Prizes	Competition	Intergovernmental organization (UNESCO)	The UNESCO International Literacy Prizes reward innovative literacy programs around the world with one of two monetary prizes annually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mother-tongue literacy - Out-of-school children - Female literacy - Rural populations 	Global
United Nations Literacy Decade	Advocacy campaign	Intergovernmental organization (UN)	The United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) was a UN initiative that ran from 2003-2012 aimed at working toward achieving the six Education for All (EFA) goals and advancing global literacy. Encompassed both child and adult literacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early grade reading - Adult literacy 	Global, not specified

*Indicates initiatives/organizations also engaged in U.S domestic work

Themes emerging from landscape of global initiatives

The following section identifies common themes among the global initiatives described above in terms of their focus areas, the main approaches or strategies used, the sector driving these initiatives forward (non-profit vs. corporate), and their geographic focus.

Topic focus of global initiatives

The twelve initiatives landscaped above focus on a wide range of sub-topic areas in the literacy field. The themes that were most common include: education technology; early-grade reading; teacher training and professional development; mother-tongue reading materials; family and community engagement; literacy assessment; adult literacy; literacy for children with disabilities; and social mobilization and behavior change strategies. These are ordered by prevalence.

a) Education technology

The most commonly recurring topic of focus is education technology, a focus of five of the twelve initiatives (All Children Reading, Global Learning XPRIZE, Global Literacy Collaborative, International Literacy Institute, mEducation Alliance). This topic is tackled through competitions, research projects, and communities of practice. For example, the All Children Reading Grand Challenge competition is explicitly focused on identifying low-cost and scalable technology-driven solutions to address literacy barriers. The Global Learning XPRIZE is a competition that seeks to challenge teams of developers worldwide to develop an open source scalable software solution to enable children in low and middle-income countries to teach themselves basic reading, writing, and arithmetic within an 18-month field-testing period. **The scale of both competitions (All Children Reading is a \$25 million initiative and Global Learning XPRIZE is a \$15 million competition) reflects the heavy prioritization of technology in the current literacy landscape and the extent of donor interest in the topic.**

Some initiatives are agnostic in terms of the type of technology they focus on. For example, All Children Reading and Global Learning XPRIZE are non-prescriptive in the technology solutions they seek to identify, with the goal of being open to the most effective tool as opposed to being focused on one specific type of solution. Other initiatives, however, have developed more of a niche around a particular type of technology. The mEducation Alliance, as its name suggests, focuses its efforts on researching mobile technologies for education, including literacy. The Global Literacy Collaborative is even narrower in its focus – a research project dedicated to developing a tablet-based application to improve literacy and comprehension outcomes. The International Literacy Institute’s flagship project, The Bridges to the Future Initiative, similarly has narrowed its focus to the use of tablets and PCs to support mother-tongue and second language literacy in India and South Africa.

Similarly, some initiatives focus on the use of technology to address literacy broadly, while others narrow their focus more explicitly. All Children Reading has selected children with disabilities, mother-tongue instruction, and parental and community engagement as three specific themes of focus in its second round. These were selected as focus areas because they were identified as gaps in the literacy sector and are areas where technology was thought to be able to make the most impact (stakeholder interview).

b) Early-grade reading

Several of the global literacy initiatives focus exclusively on early-grade reading, namely All Children Reading, The Global Reading Network, The Global Literacy Collaborative, and Global Learning XPRIZE. Several more focus on early grade reading in addition to other levels. **Donor interest in funding literacy internationally is more heavily skewed towards the early grades than towards adolescent or adult literacy.** USAID’s commitment to early grade reading is demonstrated not only through its All Children Reading competition, but similarly through its extensive work to develop assessment materials at those levels (the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)). The

International Literacy Association, even though it does not have an explicit focus on early grade reading, notes that the majority of its global affiliates (local reading associations) tend to focus their activities on these levels (stakeholder interview).

c) Teacher training and professional development

Three of the global initiatives have done work explicitly centered on the issue of teacher training and professional development for literacy professionals (International Literacy Association, Global Campaign for Education: Literacy for All, and the International Literacy Institute), however, only one initiative was identified as having teacher training at the core of its global work (International Literacy Association).

The Global Campaign for Education's (GCE) Literacy for All Campaign focused on teacher training as one of its two core issues. It released a report entitled "Closing the Trained Teacher Gap" in 2012 and led GCE's 2013 Global Action Week to advocate for improved teacher training. The International Literacy Institute ran the Summer Literacy Training Program in Philadelphia for a decade until 2000, and was for professionals working to improve literacy in developing countries to learn about literacy policy, family literacy development, literacy innovations and technology, and other related topics.

The International Literacy Association (ILA), however, focuses the core of its international work on implementing donor-funded teacher training programs in addition to curating its network of local affiliate literacy organizations. One of its flagship teacher training programs was the Global Literacy Professional Development Network which was piloted in Indonesia and Bangladesh.

d) Mother-tongue reading materials

As will be discussed in Section III, **there is strong evidence that mother-tongue instruction has a positive effect on literacy outcomes.** Enhancing mother-tongue instruction, both through increasing access to mother-tongue reading materials and increasing teachers' capacity to teach in mother-tongue is a key focus of two global initiatives (one current and one no longer active). It is one of the three themes for All Children Reading's second round competition, and is one of USAID's literacy priorities (stakeholder interview). Grantees include the following:

All Children Reading: Round 2 Grantees for mother-tongue instruction (USAID 2015)

- ❖ **Agora Center, the University of Jyväskylä - Zambia**
Introduces GraphoGame, a science-based eLearning environment for literacy and teacher training.
- ❖ **Creative Associates International - Zambia**
Develops a community-based, scalable model for using mobile technology to create and disseminate mother tongue reading materials to families with early grade children.
- ❖ **Kampuchean Action for Primary Education - Cambodia**
Develops mother tongue instruction and reading materials, with electronic readers having interactive features for Grades 2 and 3 readers.
- ❖ **Little Thinking Minds - Jordan**
Builds a child-centered ICT-based Arabic literacy program consisting of e-books and associated mobile applications that can supplement traditional school-based learning at home or in the classroom.
- ❖ **Réseau d'Acteurs pour le Renouveau de l'Éducation - Mali**
Uses mobile technology to improve the teaching and learning of reading and writing in bilingual curriculum schools.

Mother-tongue early grade reading materials were also one of the focus areas of the Global Campaign for Education's Literacy for All Campaign. The campaign released a policy briefing on mother-tongue education in 2013 and worked with its member coalitions to produce resources and tools to advocate for more mother-tongue

materials. One of UNESCO's International Literacy Prizes is also dedicated to rewarding exceptional programs in mother-tongue literacy education and training.

e) Family and community engagement

Another theme common to two global initiatives is that of family and community engagement. All Children Reading has included this as one of its three focus areas in the second round of its competition. Selected grantees in this category include:

All Children Reading: Round 2 Grantees for parental and community engagement

- ❖ **ChildFund International - Afghanistan**
Transmits radio messages and stories to families of struggling readers, using solar-charged mobile phones.
- ❖ **Oeuvre Malienne d'Aide à l'Enfance du Sahel - Mali**
Uses Stepping Stone, a low-cost mobile lesson creation tool, to determine how access to interactive digital audio and texts might enhance pre-reading and reading skills.
- ❖ **Qué Funciona para el Desarrollo A.C. - Mexico**
Introduces MATCH, a technology-based platform that provides children and their parents with a selection of Spanish-written books that are tailored to the child's reading level and coincide with his/her topics of interest.
- ❖ **Sesame Workshop India Trust - India**
Strengthens family and community engagement in promoting mother tongue reading skills among early primary grade children.

As will be discussed in Section III, **there is growing evidence that parental engagement in their children's reading has a positive effect on literacy outcomes. Aside from All Children Reading, the only other global organization currently exploring this topic is ProLiteracy.** ProLiteracy approaches this issue from a unique angle given its focus on adult literacy. Its model involves developing reading and learning content for adult learners around particular thematic or issue areas identified as being high priority within the community. In other words, it seeks to teach literacy as a solution to other problems or challenges facing the community. The specific issue area therefore varies depending on the context. ProLiteracy's six action areas include: health, human rights, conflict resolution, environment, parents as leaders in education, and economic empowerment (stakeholder interview). ProLiteracy develops "literacy solutions manuals" around various topics within these action areas.

As part of its "parents as leaders in education" action area, ProLiteracy has led a lot of work around family literacy. One of its solutions manuals is on the topic of "parents as teachers," supporting parents to apply what they are learning in their literacy classes in the home by reading with their children. ProLiteracy has also run several projects which have supported trainings for mothers to incorporate education in the home, and collaborates with the Oprah Angel Network to provide books to mothers to read with their children. Most recently, ProLiteracy is set to pilot a program with Worldreader in Kenya. The program will deploy e-readers pre-loaded with e-books for parents to read with their children.

f) Literacy assessments

Only one of the global literacy initiatives landscaped has done work focused on literacy assessments in developing country contexts (the International Literacy Institute). The Institute and in particular its founder, have conducted extensive research on the topic of literacy assessments, promoting methods of "smaller, quicker, cheaper" assessments.³ Outside of the landscaped global literacy initiatives, a significant amount of research and

³ See Daniel A. Wagner, "Smaller, Quicker, Cheaper: Improving Learning Assessments for Developing Countries," 2011, Paris, UNESCO: International Institute of Education Planning.

implementation has been conducted on issues related to assessing literacy skills, in particular for early grades. USAID is a key stakeholder in this sector, having developed the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) framework which has been applied in over sixty five countries (stakeholder interview).⁴ Another approach that has gained visibility and traction over the past decade is the citizen-led assessment movement, which leverages volunteers to conduct national-level household surveys of children’s learning outcomes (literacy and numeracy).⁵ The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) in India and Uwezo in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda are two prominent examples.⁶

g) Adult literacy

Only ProLiteracy focuses explicitly and exclusively on adult literacy. As described above, ProLiteracy’s model involves developing adult literacy content designed to teach learners about a particular problem or challenge in their communities (stakeholder interview). ProLiteracy’s model supports grassroots NGOs in low- and middle-income countries that are working in the adult literacy field or in other community work. ProLiteracy supports them to start adult literacy programs or to strengthen existing programming.

h) Literacy for children with disabilities

Only one global initiative reviewed had an explicit focus on literacy for children with disabilities: All Children Reading’s second round competition includes this as one of its key focus areas. According to a key stakeholder interview, this topic is of particular interest to the Australian aid agency, The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), one of the three partners engaged in All Children Reading. Round 2 grantees selected in this category include:

All Children Reading: Round 2 Grantees for children with disabilities	
❖	Benetech - India Creates texts in local languages by developing accessible audio books paired with the most current braille-focused reading methods.
❖	Catholic Relief Services - Lesotho Improves the reading outcomes of visually impaired children through the use of the Mountbatten Pro Braille (MB Pro) and the Jot-a-Dot portable Braille.
❖	Institute for Disabilities Research and Training, Inc. - Morocco Develops computer software that enables educators to efficiently create instructional materials with Moroccan Sign Language graphics.
❖	Resources for the Blind, Inc. - Philippines Develops technology to create and upload accessible versions of supplementary reading materials, and provides equipment needed by visually impaired students to access the materials.
❖	Studio ADC - Georgia Develops and tests electronic versions of books and learning materials for hearing impaired children.

i) Social mobilization and behavior change strategies

One of the global literacy initiatives, the Global Reading Network has identified this as a key topic of interest. While specific activities are currently undefined, **the Global Reading Network anticipates that part of its work will be to identify social mobilization and behavior change strategies to help parents/caregivers, households, communities, and governments to support young readers at home and in school.**

⁴ USAID: <https://www.eddataglobal.org/>

⁵ See Results for Development Institute (2015), [“Bringing Learning to Light: The Role of Citizen-led Assessments in Shifting the Education Agenda”](#) for an overview and evaluation of the citizen-led assessment model.

⁶ See <http://www.asercentre.org/> and <http://www.uwezo.net/> for more information.

Activities of global initiatives

The global literacy initiatives and organizations identified through this landscape undertake a number of different activities to promote literacy. Initiative types include competitions, research networks, campaigns, and communities of practice, and their activities include grant-making, publicizing resources, conducting advocacy, organizing working groups, and more. This section provides an overview of these activity areas.

a) Grant-making

All Children Reading and Global Learning XPRIZE provide grant funding to literacy implementers and teams of developers for developing literacy software respectively. Other organizations such as International Literacy Association and ProLiteracy implement literacy programming internationally, but do so on a project-by-project donor-funded basis. The annual Library of Congress Literacy Awards provides a \$50,000 financial reward to one exceptional literacy program abroad through its International Prize (its other two prizes are awarded to U.S. - based literacy programs). While not an exclusively literacy-focused initiative, the WISE Awards funded by the Qatar Foundation also recognizes and funds six innovative education programs each year that are addressing key education challenges.⁷

b) Conducting and/or synthesizing research

Several initiatives are focused on either producing original research or synthesizing existing research and contributing to the evidence base on global literacy. The Global Literacy Collaborative is a consortium of academics seeking to test and develop new tablet-based technology to improve literacy outcomes. The Library of Congress Literacy Awards publishes an annual “Best Practices” report to spread information on effective models for promoting literacy. It highlights evidence-based practices and provides examples of organizations concretely implementing such practices (based on both U.S. and global programs and research).⁸ The mEducation Alliance funds landscape analyses and reviews of the mobile education sector, including a landscape review that was conducted on Mobiles for Reading, funded by USAID.⁹ The Global Reading Network’s evidence group hopes to identify evidence gaps in the literacy sector and to set an agenda around those (stakeholder interview). As described in the national section below, conducting research is a key activity of many of the initiatives also engaged in literacy work at the country level.

c) Disseminating and translating research

Disseminating existing research both online and in person is another common activity among the global literacy initiatives. The Global Reading Network plans for this to be one of its core activities, and it currently has plans to build an evidence library of existing research on best practices in early grade reading. Similarly, both the Global Reading Network and the Library of Congress Literacy Awards seek to disseminate research and information on literacy through webinars. The mEducation Alliance conducts a number of in-person research dissemination activities, including seminar series, research roundtables, workshops, and conferences. The Global Reading Network hopes to go one step further than disseminating existing research in its current form: its best practices working group seeks to consolidate existing evidence and turn it into actionable tools and processes that are easy for practitioners to understand (stakeholder interview).

d) Working groups

Both the Global Reading Network and the mEducation Alliance use working groups, whereby a core steering council oversees work by a number of sub-working groups around a particular thematic area. For the Global Reading Network, these include three working groups on evidence, advocacy, and practice. Each working group

⁷ See <http://www.wise-qatar.org/wise-awards> for more information.

⁸ See <http://www.read.gov/literacyawards/> for the 2013 and 2014 Best Practices report.

⁹ USAID and mEducation Alliance, “[Mobiles for Reading: A Landscape Research Review](#),” 2014.

is made up of key stakeholders in those fields, and the agenda and work-streams are defined and owned by the members of the group. The mEducation Alliance has a working group on mobiles for reading which seeks to facilitate ongoing knowledge exchange and serve as a vehicle to connect relevant programs with each other and with the broader mEducation community (stakeholder interview).

e) Advocacy

A few global initiatives conduct advocacy activities on literacy worldwide, however as discussed above, many of the twelve global initiatives that do advocacy work focus their efforts more heavily on the U.S. domestic sector. However, the United Nations Literacy Decade did focus on advocacy for global literacy as one of its core activities. It created the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE), a global strategic framework for literacy advocacy. Similarly, the Global Campaign for Education's Literacy for All Campaign had the same focus. Both initiatives are no longer active, and **there does not seem to be a large-scale global advocacy campaign on literacy that has taken their place. The Global Reading Network may fill this gap; one of its three working groups focuses on advocacy and seeks to disseminate information on the importance of literacy and identify methods for holding governments accountable for improving literacy outcomes.** However, its specific activities are not yet defined and it is still at the early stage of identifying how it will go about this objective (stakeholder interview). The focus of any advocacy campaign promoted by the Global Reading Network will be on early grade reading, at least initially (stakeholder interview).

f) Annual conferences

Two global initiatives hold conferences as a way of bringing together key stakeholders to discuss research and possibilities for collaboration and coordination. The mEducation Alliance hosts an annual symposium on mobiles for education, bringing together key stakeholders from diverse backgrounds (NGOs, policymakers, researchers, donors, etc.) with the goal of identifying opportunities for collaboration in the mEducation sector. The International Literacy Institute also hosts various conferences related to global literacy. Annual conferences are even more common within the U.S domestic literacy sector.

g) Monitoring global literacy progress

The United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) was a UN initiative that ran from 2003-2012 aimed at working toward achieving the six Education for All (EFA) goals and advancing global literacy. One of its activities involved monitoring global literacy progress. While UNESCO attempted to drive forward a follow-up to the UNLD known as the Global Coalition for Literacy, the movement never really got off the ground (stakeholder interview). The annual Education for All Global Monitoring Report (EFA-GMR) published by UNESCO provides annual monitoring on the state of global education, including literacy rates, though it is not focused exclusively on literacy.¹⁰

h) Book distribution

While book distribution is more often the focus of large implementing NGOs or of national corporate campaigns than of global campaigns (see the case study on Scholastic's Open a World of Possible Campaign, for example, USAID in partnership with several other major bilaterals, multilaterals, and NGOs (UNICEF, Norad (Norwegian aid agency), DFID, Save the Children, and the Global Partnership for Education) plans to launch a Global Book Fund to put more reading materials in the hands of children where it is needed most.

¹⁰ See <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/> for more information.

i) Global literacy volunteering

The landscape did not identify any global initiative focused explicitly on promoting volunteerism related to literacy at the global level. Literacy volunteer opportunities exist through broader global volunteering networks (for example GoAbroad).

Sector of global initiatives: Non-profit vs. corporate initiatives

Interestingly, all of the landscaped global literacy initiatives are driven by the non-profit sector. The landscape analysis identified a number of corporate-led literacy initiatives and one major campaign, however all of these were focused domestically (primarily U.S.) or regionally (for example UNIQLO's literacy initiative in Asia).

Within the non-profit sector, some global initiatives are owned and funded by bilateral and multilateral agencies (key stakeholders in this category include USAID, DFAT Australia, UNESCO) and others are run through NGOs primarily funded through individual philanthropy or private foundations (e.g. ProLiteracy, XPRIZE, etc.).

Geographic focus of global initiatives

Most of the landscaped global literacy initiatives do not have a particular geographic focus, but rather work across a wide number of countries. In many instances, this has been done intentionally. All Children Reading sought geographic diversity in its final set of grantees, and this was built into the selection process (stakeholder interview). The International Literacy Association takes pride that it works globally across all regions.

Several stakeholders emphasized that in addition to geographic diversity, it is important to ensure diversity with regard to the types of literacy programs or organizations supported at the country level. All Children Reading received applications both from well-known, established organizations, as well as from small grassroots organizations that USAID had not heard of before (stakeholder interview). A balance of both types of organizations were selected to support. Similarly, ProLiteracy seeks to support both nationally-connected and smaller programs in equal measure (stakeholder interview).

There were a few countries that were highlighted by stakeholders as either priority countries or countries where the enabling environment for literacy programming and initiatives is particularly strong. For USAID, priority countries include India, the Philippines, and Ethiopia among others (stakeholder interview). All Children Reading similarly received a high number of applications from India (stakeholder interview).

Regional level

Overview of existing literacy-focused initiatives

The landscape uncovered a few regional literacy initiatives, but in general, there seemed to be less activity at the regional level than at the global and country levels. Table II provides an overview of regional literacy initiatives. All regional initiatives landscaped are driven once again by the non-profit sector, with the exception of UNIQLO's literacy corporate social responsibility program in the Asia region.

Table II: Overview of regional literacy initiatives

Region	Name of initiative	Type of initiative	Target audience/ focus area	Donors/partners	Focus area(s)/ activities
Asia	Literacy Initiative for Empowerment-Asia and the Pacific	Strategic Framework	Adult literacy, Out-of-school children	UNESCO	Regional strategic framework for implementing Education for All (EFA) goals as part of the UN Literacy Decade. Was led by UNESCO Bangkok office.
	Story Time in Asia	Campaign	Child literacy	The Asia Foundation, Scholastic, Abrams, Penguin, OOCL, Little, Brown and Company	Distributes over 120,000 books to 2 million students across 17 developing countries in Asia.
	UNIQLO	Corporate social responsibility initiative	Child literacy	UNIQLO, Shanti Volunteer Association.	This CSR initiative focuses on building libraries, distributing books, publishing picture books, and promoting the importance of libraries in Cambodia (in collaboration with Shanti Volunteer Association) to encourage child literacy. Specific activities include providing financial support for a project to build libraries in Asia (one of eight "innovative ideas" company is funding for its Clothes for Smiles program), where children of all backgrounds will have safe and welcoming space to read.
	Rotary South Asia Literacy Mission	Organization	Adult literacy, Child literacy	Rotary International	Created TEACH program in India to improve enrollment, teacher training, and school supplies.
Europe	European Literacy Policy Network (ELINET)	Research Network/Strategic Framework	All literacy stakeholders	European Commission	Conducts research on literacy programs in Europe, promotes best practices.
Latin America and Spain	Ibero-American Plan for Literacy and Basic Education of Youth and Adults (PIA)	Strategic Framework (Regional)	Policymakers, Adult literacy, Child literacy, Funders, Implementers	Spanish government, OEI, SEGIB	The PIA has pursued five specific objectives: a) development of national plans in the countries; b) establishment of a renewed and expanded concept of adult literacy and basic education in the region; c) secure, sufficient and stable funding for the PIA; d) promotion of cooperation; and e) linking the plan with strategies to prevent school failure and dropping out.
Latin America and the Caribbean	Latin America and Caribbean Reads Capacity Program	Research Network	Implementers, policymakers	USAID(donor), American Institutes for Research, Juárez & Associates (partners)	Develops knowledge resources for literacy stakeholders, provides technical assistance to policymakers in host country governments.
	Yo Sí Puedo	Strategic Framework/ Education Delivery	State governments	Cuban government, IPLAC, Venezuelan Government	The Latin American and Caribbean Pedagogical Institute (IPLAC) developed a system of video-classes to promote universal literacy in Latin America and the Caribbean

Middle East/North Africa	Literacy Initiative for Empowerment-Arab countries	Strategic Framework	Adult literacy, Out-of-school children	UNESCO	Regional strategic framework for implementing Education for All (EFA) goals as part of the UN Literary Decade. Was led by UNESCO Rabat and Beirut offices and the Institute for Lifelong Learning.
Sub-Saharan Africa	Africa Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA)	Advocacy/ Network	Policymakers, Civil Society Organization	Global Partnership for Education Fund	Creating a social movement to support the Education for All (EFA) goals, capacity building for civil society organizations, advocacy through lobbying and mass campaigns, advocacy research.
	Literacy Initiative for Empowerment-Africa (LIFE)	Strategic Framework	Adult literacy, Out-of-school children	UNESCO	Regional strategic framework for implementing Education for All (EFA) goals as part of the UN Literary Decade. Was led by UNESCO Dakar Office.
	African Library Project	Literacy Organization	Child Literacy, Adult Literacy	Botswana Ministry of Education, Michael Lapsley Foundation, Peace Corps Lesotho, Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training, DAPP Malawi, Wungwero Book Foundation, AYISE, Malawi Institute of Education, RISE Network, Fundza, Books for Africa, Microsoft Corporation, One World Children's Fund	Partners with books drives and local NGOs and governments in Sub-Saharan Africa to build libraries and donate books to them. Organizes conferences to share best practices among partners.

Themes emerging from landscape of regional initiatives

Approximately half of the regional initiatives are large-scale service delivery initiatives to promote literacy in a given region (through specific literacy programs), while **the other half are concerned with research, strategy and policy, networking, and/or advocacy**. Of those that seek to promote literacy, **some do so through book distribution** (for example Story Time in Asia and the Africa Library Project), and **others seek to tackle underlying challenges related to pedagogy and teacher readiness** (for example the Yo Sí Puedo program in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) developed a system of video-classes to promote universal literacy in the region and the Rotary South Asia Mission launched the TEACH program in India to improve enrollment, teacher training, and school supplies).

UNESCO created three regional strategic frameworks to promote literacy as part of the 2003-2012 UN Literacy decade that contributed to the creation of the recent national campaigns in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. These frameworks were created with the purpose of monitoring regional progress on the Education for All goals, and the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment frameworks focused on promoting adult literacy and literacy for out-of-school children in particular. **LAC has a notable, highly organized literacy framework**. The Ibero-American Plan for Literacy and Basic Education of Youth and Adults (PIA) is a regional strategic framework that pursues five specific objectives: a) development of national plans in the countries; b) establishment of a renewed and expanded concept of adult literacy and basic education in the region; c) secure, sufficient and stable funding for the PIA; d) promotion of cooperation; and e) linking the plan with strategies to prevent school failure and dropping out. Sub-Saharan Africa has a strong regional education framework, the Africa Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA), supported by the Global Partnership for Education (though it is not exclusively literacy-focused).

USAID is also running a regional literacy initiative in LAC – the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Reads Capacity Program. This program seeks to increase the impact, scale, and sustainability of early grade reading interventions in the LAC region. **It provides technical assistance to host country governments and other key stakeholders**.

In addition to the initiatives listed, **the International Literacy Association also hosts regular regional literacy conferences, bringing together regional literacy professionals and practitioners to discuss and share information on leadership, advocacy, and literacy best practices**. For example, ILA hosts conferences across all regions. The organization has been running regional literacy conferences for 20 years, but notes that they have not heard of other organizations running similar initiatives at the regional level (stakeholder interview).

Overall, literacy-related activity at the regional level in the form of campaigns, initiatives, networks, etc. remains relatively limited. This may be due to lack of donor interest in funding regional activities or barriers to coordination (distance, costs, etc.).

National level (in Pearson priority markets: US, UK, South Africa, Brazil, China, India)

Overview of existing literacy-focused initiatives:

The national initiatives landscaped tend to focus on child literacy, adult literacy, and women's literacy. Many private national campaigns emphasize advocacy, awareness, and community outreach, while programs run by the government tend to prioritize providing literacy courses.

At the country-level, this landscape sought to identify large-scale literacy initiatives (led by the non-profit and corporate sectors) in Pearson's priority markets (United States, United Kingdom, South Africa, Brazil, China, and India). It also searched for literacy initiatives in the seven countries facing the most critical literacy challenges (as measured by having the lowest literacy rates globally).¹¹ These countries include Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Niger, Guinea, Mali, Benin, and Chad.¹² This section discusses initiatives in each of these geographies.

United States

Several of the global initiatives discussed above are also actively engaged in U.S. domestic literacy issues (Global Literacy Collaborative, International Literacy Association, International Literacy Institute, Library of Congress Literacy Awards, ProLiteracy). Considered together with initiatives working exclusively in the U.S., the following common activities emerge:

a) Advocacy with policymakers

Advocacy for literacy is much more common among U.S. domestic initiatives than it is among global initiatives working internationally in low- and middle-income countries abroad. Several U.S.-based initiatives advocate for increased attention to literacy challenges. ProLiteracy raises awareness of adult literacy issues by advocating through social media and a legislative action center that supports citizens to write to their representatives about literacy issues. ILA also conduct a number of advocacy efforts with legislative and regulatory bodies in the U.S.

b) Developing and sharing resources and research

Several U.S.-based literacy initiatives work to provide resources for teachers and other literacy stakeholders. The Scholastic Open a World of Possible Campaign, International Literacy Association, and International Literacy Institute all develop and make accessible resources and supporting materials for teachers teaching literacy. ILA publishes a series of journals related to research on literacy and evidence-based literacy practices for teachers.

c) Connecting adults with low-literacy rates with literacy opportunities

ProLiteracy connects low-literate adults to literacy providers in the U.S. through organizing a national directory of U.S. literacy providers. The ILI created a web-based platform to support low-literate adults learn about education and career options, accessible at <http://www.learning-connections.org/>.

¹¹ Literacy rates were identified using the [CIA World Factbook](#) and the [UNESCO Institute for Statistics](#).

¹² This landscape did not conduct a comprehensive search for implementing organizations, but rather broader literacy initiatives (e.g. campaigns, networks, etc.) as in the Global and Regional section.

d) Adult literacy

While adult literacy remains under-prioritized relative to child literacy in the U.S., there is still more activity focused on adult literacy in the U.S. than there is globally. ProLiteracy's work is overwhelmingly focused in the U.S., and the International Literacy Institute was initially founded as the first Adult Literacy Lab in the U.S. (stakeholder interview). XPRIZE is running a competition dedicated to adult literacy focused exclusively in the U.S.

Case Study: U.S. Adult Literacy XPRIZE

The Adult Literacy XPRIZE awards \$7 million in total prizes to teams of software developers, educators, engineers, and innovators that create the most effective adult mobile literacy learning applications over the course of 48 months. Finalists must show that their programs can help adults reading below a third grade level make major improvements in their literacy levels (measured by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System) within a 12-month period. The final five finalists test their software with 1,000 field participants from ages 18-64, divided into native English speakers and non-native English speakers. The five top competitors will disseminate their apps throughout U.S. cities and the city with the highest download rate among low-literate adults will win an additional prize.

e) Corporate initiatives

The landscape also identified several corporate social responsibility (CSR) campaigns focused on literacy in the U.S. Among these, the following themes were identified:

- Almost all focused on addressing illiteracy within the country where the company is based.
- **The majority of the corporate literacy campaigns focused on direct support to specific communities and schools (usually through donating books or encouraging employees to volunteer and read to children in underprivileged areas) as opposed to large-scale campaigns mobilizing support and raising awareness. One notable exception is Scholastic's Open a World of Possible Campaign** (see case study box adjacent).
- The majority are focused on increasing access to literacy opportunities rather than improving literacy outcomes and reading proficiency.

Case study of a corporate-led U.S. literacy campaign: *Scholastic Open a World of Possible Campaign*

Scholastic is a leading U.S. publisher and education and media company. Its Open a World of Possible campaign promotes social engagement around literacy and encourages participants to share ideas and advice on how to encourage independent reading among children. The campaign consists of four key components:

- 1) **Social media:** Advocates for improved literacy through its #sharepossible social media campaign.
- 2) **Book distribution:** Provides free book distribution through the Scholastic Possible Fund to its partner organizations, which has led to the donation of over 43 million books since 2000.
- 3) **Research:** publicizes research on issues related to children's literacy development, such as the importance of books in the home, reading volume, and reading aloud to children. The campaign also seeks to share information and research on independent reading among parents and teachers.
- 4) **Resources:** offers free literature-based lessons that primary school teachers can use.

The initiative has gained the support of celebrities like Taylor Swift and Usher to help publicize their campaigns and raise awareness on the importance of reading. Partners include Reach Out and Read, Save the Children, LitWorld, KIDS, Kids in Need Foundation, Toys for Tots, Room to Read, BookTrust, Pajama Program, and Too Small to Fail.

- A small number of initiatives focus on family and parental engagement in children’s reading and literacy (See Toyota’s CSR initiative in partnership with the National Center for Family Literacy and Macy’s Reading is Fundamental Multicultural Literacy Campaign for two examples).
- The CSR initiatives of other leading publishing companies (e.g. Houghton Mifflin U.S.) partner with a handful of literacy-focused nonprofits and provide some form of support (often financial); however do not lead large-scale campaign-type activities (the exception being Scholastic).

Name of initiative	Type of initiative	Target audience (if applicable)	Focus area(s)/activities
Scholastic <i>Open a World of Possible Literacy Campaign</i>	Campaign	Child literacy	Scholastic is a leading U.S. publisher and education and media company. Its <i>Open a World of Possible</i> campaign promotes social engagement around literacy and encourages participants to share ideas and advice on how to encourage independent reading among children.
Reading is Fundamental Multicultural Literacy Campaign	Campaign	African American, Hispanic, and American Indian communities	Parent and caregiver training materials and workshops, multicultural book collections for children, community partnerships, and public education campaigns.
The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading	Campaign	Child Literacy	Community engagement to promote children to reach grade-level reading through a Grade-Level Reading Communities Network; advocacy for state and federal initiatives to fund and prioritize grade-level reading.
General Mills	Campaign	Child Literacy	Runs a literacy campaign run through the Cheerios franchise to target children's lack of access to books. The campaign provides cereal box offers that consumers can trade in (with a small contribution) for classic children's books; monetary support for national literacy initiatives; "partners" with celebrities who read aloud to kids in hopes of inspiring interest in reading; provides information for parents on how to read aloud to kids and on the importance of child literacy.
The National Center for Literacy Education	Coalition	Education organization, policy analysts, researchers, foundations	Works to improve literacy learning across the U.S. by researching and sharing best practices in the literacy field and lobbies policymakers for improvements. Also provides the Literacy in Learning Exchange to provide learning resources and connect teams of educators.
National Center for Families Learning (Policy and Advocacy for Family Literacy)	Advocacy	Policymakers	NCFL provides support and strategies to a network of entities involved in advancing education and families learning together, including educators, schools, community based organizations, and libraries. The goal of NCFL’s Policy and Advocacy efforts is to design, assess, advocate and lobby for federal and state policies that sustain and expand family literacy services.
American Library Association	Advocacy/Outreach	Policymakers	Advocates for and supports organizations encouraging adult, youth, non-native speaker, and digital literacy.
Adult Literacy XPRIZE	Competition	Software developers, adult literacy	The Adult Literacy XPRIZE awards \$7 million in total prizes to teams of software developers, educators, engineers, and innovators that create the most effective adult mobile literacy learning applications over the course of 48 months. Finalists must show that their programs can help adults reading below

			a third grade level make major improvements in their literacy levels (measured by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System) within a 12-month period.
Sesame Street Every Day is a Reading and Writing Day	Multimedia program	Child Literacy, families, parents	Offers resources to support early childhood literacy development, with a particular emphasis on parental involvement and family engagement.
Financial Times	CSR initiative	Child Literacy	The Financial Times works closely with Pearson on projects that advance literacy and education projects; with an emphasis on sustainability and the environment.
Hachette	CSR initiative	Child Literacy	Supports organizations dedicated to promoting literacy and love of reading, with a focus on national illiteracy. The initiative donates books for fundraisers or to struggling school districts or libraries.
HarperCollins	CSR initiative	Child Literacy	Donates books to large charitable literacy organizations; supports organizations to promote literacy; collaborates with local organizations to host student events that foster education.
Houghton Mifflin	CSR initiative	Child Literacy	This initiative seeks to spread students' access to new ideas through the donation of textbooks, children's stories, and adult and reference titles. It partners with Children International and First Book. Houghton Mifflin donates books to two nonprofits, which distribute books to schools, nonprofits, and community initiatives.
JetBlue Soar with Reading	CSR initiative	Child Literacy	Soar with Reading provides early childhood literacy tools inflight and online; its interactive website has games, an activity booklet, and reading lists; donates books to low-income neighborhoods that lack age-appropriate books. Specific activities include: establishing vending machines at community gathering places in Anacostia region of DC through which children can receive age-appropriate books for free; SMS campaign with fun reading tips, information on guest appearances at vending machines, etc.
KPMG	CSR initiative	Child Literacy	KPMG's Family for Literacy initiative aims to combat childhood illiteracy. For its five-year anniversary, it established a collection of five classic children's books that were donated to address low-income communities' lack of access to books.
Target	CSR initiative	Child Literacy	Provides grants to nonprofits and schools to help them improve literacy and student achievement; sponsors a campaign for grade-level reading, which promotes literacy among children in low-income families. The program launched several pilot literacy programs in 12 schools in DC and LA, working with AIR to measure impact. In DC the program provided literacy coaches to schools, in LA it established literacy academies that group students by reading proficiency levels across grades.
Toyota			In partnership with National Center for Family Literacy, the initiative focused on Hispanic and other immigrant families. Through a 20-year partnership with an organization focused on family literacy, this initiative has established model literacy programs throughout the U.S. and provided advertising, planning, and management expertise.

United Kingdom

Several literacy campaigns and research efforts exist in the UK, including Read On. Get On., National Literacy Trust, Read Every Day, and the Just Read Campaign.

Name of initiative	Type of initiative	Target audience (if applicable)	Focus area(s)/activities
Read On. Get On.	Network/ Campaign	Child literacy	Network of organizations and businesses that aims to have every child in the UK reading well by age 11 through lobbying government, spreading tips to parents, encouraging volunteers to read to children, and supporting community engagement. Campaign within larger Skills for Life government initiative.
National Literacy Trust	Research/ Education Program/ Advocacy Campaign	Policymakers, Child literacy	Conducts research on literacy in the UK, runs community literacy and engagement projects, campaigns for family literacy, lobbies the UK government to support literacy initiatives, promotes best practices, provides support and resources for schools.
Read Every Day	Campaign	Youth literacy, parents, teachers	Conducted research on effects of reading habits; Encourages parents and teachers to promote reading through activities like book clubs or book fairs.
Just Read Campaign	Advocacy	Policymakers	The Just Read Campaign aims to make every child in the UK a reader by lobbying the government to promote teacher education and school policies that encourage children to read.
Skills for Life	National Campaign/ Education Program	Adult literacy	Provides free literacy, language, and numeracy training to all adults without a Level 2 qualification.
Kumon UK	CSR initiative	Child literacy	In 2014, Kumon UK partnered with National Literacy Trust to “share the love of reading with disadvantaged children across the UK to break the cycle of poverty and help children reach their full potential.” The initiative is focused on encouraging children to read for pleasure.
Random House	CSR initiative	Adult literacy	Supports charities and initiatives that promote literacy and love of reading. It is a founding member of the Quick Reads initiative, an annual series of entertaining books written in pared-down style with the aim of reaching out to adults in the UK with reading difficulties. The initiative also encourages employees to volunteer for literacy initiatives.

South Africa

South Africa similarly has a vibrant landscape when it comes to national literacy initiatives, both related to child literacy and adult literacy. Its commitment to adult literacy is notable. The national Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign run through the Department of Education had the goal of enabling more than 4 million South Africans to read in one of 11 official languages by 2012 (launched in 2008). The accompanying Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Programme is a government-run program that funds adult learning centers and distance learning programs to provide free literacy education.

Name of initiative	Type of initiative	Target audience	Focus area(s)/ activities
Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign	Campaign	Adult literacy	Goal of enabling more than 4 million South Africans to read in one of 11 official languages by 2012 (launched in 2008); courses in homes, churches, schools available at no cost to adults with little or no education.
Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Programme	Education Program	Adult literacy	Institutionalized counterpart of Kha Ri Gude; offers adult learning centers and distance learning programs to provide free literacy education.
Nal'ibali Reading-for-Enjoyment Campaign	Campaign	Child literacy	The Nal'ibali Reading-for-Enjoyment Campaign combines a national mass media and awareness campaign with a face-to-face mentoring and support program to establish reading clubs and encourage increased and improved literacy in six provinces across South Africa.
Story Power	Campaign	Youth literacy	Billboard campaign to generate awareness and discussion about the importance of storytelling and reading for children's reading.
Adult Literacy and Skills Training Programme (ALSTP)	Education Program	Adult literacy	Using an integrated approach to literacy skills training and community development, the program offers mother-tongue literacy, English as a second language, numeracy and theme-based training in livelihood development: income generation, food production/security and preservation; health education: HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, childcare, home-based care for the sick, reproductive health, nutrition and sanitation; civic/life skills education: human rights, gender relations, conflict management and resolution; and sustainable environmental conservation.
Reading and Writing for Pleasure	Outreach	Youth literacy	The specific aim of the program is to inspire young people to read and to grow a culture of reading and writing. To promote literacy among South African youth, FundZa focuses on the power of reading for pleasure, rather than on curriculum-based academic support.

Brazil

Only a moderate number of literacy campaigns and initiatives were identified in Brazil.

Name of initiative	Type of initiative	Target audience	Focus area(s)/ activities
Literate Brazil Program (Programa Brasil Alfabetizado-PBA)	Project/Campaign	Illiterate youth/adults; teachers; local governments	The primary aim of LBP is to create literacy learning opportunities for all youth and adults who had no access to or who failed to complete basic primary education (i.e. the first 8 years of schooling). The program objectives are to: combat illiteracy by setting up literacy courses for youth, adults and the elderly; provide initial and ongoing training for literacy teachers; support literacy programs through the provision of pedagogical materials, literature and stipends for literacy teachers; strengthen literacy as a priority public policy at the state and municipal levels; promote the continuation of learning by establishing links between Brazil Alfabetizado, youth and adult learning, and basic education; advance education as a means of achieving the goals laid down in the Federal Government's social policies; and empower socially disadvantaged people and promote their inclusion in mainstream society through literacy training.
Alfabetização Solidária	Education Program	Youth and adult literacy	AlfaSol concentrates on the poorest rural and urban communities with the highest illiteracy rates. It has mobilized an efficient network of partners, consisting of international organizations including NGOs, universities, private enterprises, government institutions and private citizens. This network of partners contributes to the sustainability of the program through generous financial and technical contributions as well as a capacity to mobilize youth and adult learners. As a result, AlfaSol is now a well-established organization and has managed to reach out to over five million youth and adult learners around the country since its inception.
Tweet for a Read	Education technology/Social Media campaign	Adult literacy	Distributes electric bookmark that tweets readers a reminder when they haven't read their book in the style of the author of the book.

China

Only one national literacy campaign was identified in China (though the dearth of results may be in part due to the language barrier encountered during our search).

Name of initiative	Type of initiative	Target audience	Focus area(s)/ activities
Guidance Opinion on Further Enhancing Literacy	National Campaign/Education Program	Adult, minority, and women's literacy	Aims to improve literacy among adult illiterates, minority populations, and women by providing literacy and basic education classes through local government, increasing funding for literacy initiatives, and conducting research and training for literacy in rural areas.

India

Only one national literacy campaign was identified in India (though literacy programming in India appears to be strong).

Name of initiative	Type of initiative	Target audience	Focus area(s)/ activities
Saakshar Bharat Mission	National Campaign/ Education Program	Women's literacy, rural education, youth literacy	The mission aims to promote and strengthen adult learning, reaching out to those who missed the opportunity to access or complete formal education. As well as basic literacy/basic education, it covers vocational education and skill development, applied science, and sports. Saakshar Bharat is described as a 'people's program', with the government acting as facilitator and resource provider, but working closely with local communities to tailor the program to their needs. There has been a nation-wide drive to publicize this program, most notably in the recent promotional video which features national celebrities performing a song about the Mission with a Bollywood theme.

High-need literacy countries

Despite these countries facing the most critical literacy challenges, there were few literacy campaigns and/or national initiatives in the countries with the highest illiteracy rates (perhaps unsurprisingly as these countries have lower government capacity and/or commitment to improving literacy). No national literacy campaigns were identified in Benin, Mali, or Chad, though Mali is home to a citizen-led assessment known as Beekunko.¹³ While these countries may lack national literacy initiatives, this does not necessarily mean they lack literacy-related programming. Several INGOs focus a lot of their work in some of these countries (Afghanistan, for example).

Name of initiative	Type of initiative	Target audience	Country	Focus area(s)/ activities
National Literacy Action Plan (NLAP)	National Campaign/ Education Program	Adult, rural, minority, and women's literacy	Afghanistan	Aims to accomplish Education for All goals through LIFE framework as a strategic framework for government, donors, and NGOs. Develops training and literacy courses to be implemented on a national level and conducts monitoring, evaluation, and coordination of literacy initiatives throughout the country.
Programme nationale d'accélération de l'alphabétisation (PRONAA)	National Campaign/ Education Program	Adult and youth literacy	Burkina Faso	National campaign to improve literacy rate in Burkina Faso.
Burkinabé Response to Improve Girls' Chances to Succeed (BRIGHT) I & II Program	National Education Program	Girl's literacy	Burkina Faso	Improved girl's literacy by constructing girl's schools, promoting community engagement, adult literacy training, and capacity building for local literacy partners.
Women's Functional Literacy Programme	National Education Program	Women's Literacy	Niger	Contributes to curriculum development, literacy initiatives, and legislation which improve levels of youth and adult literacy. It supervises the implementation of adult education programs, organizes literacy awareness-raising campaigns and supports the promotion of national languages. It is under this directorate that the Women's Functional Literacy Programme has been developed and implemented.
Women's Struggle Against Poverty Through Learning How To Read	Campaign/ National Education Program	Women's Literacy	Guinea	Campaign to promote culture, literacy, and job training over three years for over 30,000 women in Guinea

¹³ See <http://www.omaes.org/> for more information.

Gaps in the literacy landscape

Having identified literacy initiatives at the global, regional, and national level, this section analyzes information gathered through the landscape analysis and insights shared during key informant interview to highlight gaps within the literacy landscape.

Global level

There are a number of topic areas and activities that could benefit from increased attention and resources from global literacy initiatives:

Topic areas with little attention at the global level

- **The landscape revealed only one initiative dedicated to promoting adult literacy at the global level (ProLiteracy).** The interviewed stakeholder from ProLiteracy noted that this is a key gap in many countries: *“the majority of funding, especially from governments and ministries of education, tends to be focused on child literacy. There is so much research that shows that a mother’s level of education has a direct impact on the level of education for her children. I’d like to see more emphasis on this, and more of a focus on women’s and mothers’ literacy and adult literacy. Women and parents will determine whether their children go to school. There is very little talk in the MDGs and SDGs on mothers’ education, parents’ education, and adult education in general”* (stakeholder interview). Not only is global programming for adult literacy limited, funding to conduct **advocacy for adult literacy globally** is even more limited (stakeholder interview).
- All Children Reading and ProLiteracy are leading the way in terms of focusing on **parental and community engagement** in children’s literacy, but this is similarly an area where more could be done (it is not the sole focus of either organization, rather one aspect of their activities), particularly given the growing evidence base supporting this approach (see Section III).
- While the landscape identified All Children Reading as one initiative focused on literacy for **children with disabilities**, this remains an area where global literacy initiatives are currently not very active.
- Initiatives focused on **behavior change strategies** as related to literacy are limited at the global level (though several national initiatives exist on this topic).
- Initiatives focused on **teacher training** relating to literacy are limited at the global level. Additionally, while significant attention has been giving to developing mother-tongue resources for students, little attention has been given to providing **language-appropriate resources for teachers** to allow them to continue their professional development on an ongoing basis (stakeholder interview).
- One key stakeholder heavily engaged in the global literacy sector highlighted a number of additional topic areas where more research and resources are needed:
 - **Second and third language acquisition**, which remains a critically important issue in countries where children are taught in multiple languages (i.e. where the national language differs from mother-tongue languages): *“there is not a lot of know-how about how second and third language learning is best done. It will probably take a concerted*

informational campaign to help governments get their heads around ways in which this can be done” (stakeholder interview).

- Understanding and supporting best practices related to literacy **in non-roman alphabet languages.**
- **Ensuring comprehension, not just literacy:** many researchers and stakeholders in the literacy field remain concerned that an over-emphasis is placed on literacy but not enough on comprehension, a common viewpoint being, “so what if children can de-code if they do not understand what they are reading” (stakeholder interview).
- **Influencing policy to foster improved literacy:** some researchers argue that the evidence base is quite robust in terms of knowing what it takes to teach children to read, but what is not well-understood is how to create the policies to enable this.
- **Understanding how to foster a bottom-up approach to literacy:** Global initiatives are “fairly good at setting goals and outcomes at national levels. But we don’t know a lot about how to set goals at a classroom and community level that will get us to the national goals we set” (stakeholder interview).

Activities that are lacking at the global level

- **The landscape revealed that there is currently a lack of global advocacy campaigns for literacy.** The majority of global initiatives are focused on more specific activities (e.g. grant-making through competitions, fostering a community of practice among existing stakeholders, conducting and disseminating research), and global advocacy campaigns that have focused on literacy have since ended (e.g. United Nations Literacy Decade and Global Campaign for Education’s Literacy for All Campaign). While Scholastic runs a large-scale social media campaign in the U.S., **there does not appear to be a similar global social media campaign for literacy.** One key stakeholder went as far as to say that literacy was a “hot topic” for campaigns in the 1990s, but has recently attracted less public attention (stakeholder interview).
- **There are no corporate-driven campaigns or initiatives for literacy at the global level.** All literacy initiatives at the global level were driven by the non-profit sectors (NGOs or bilateral and multilateral agencies).
- Prior to the development of the new Global Reading Network, there was **no initiative dedicated to consolidating and disseminating research on literacy in general from one centralized location, even though there were many initiatives to conduct research.** It seems likely that the Global Reading Network will fill this gap.
- **Evidence is still seen to be generally lacking across the global literacy field (see Section III for more information). Several interviewed stakeholders spoke of the need for more robust monitoring and evaluation.** This is the reason why All Children Reading significantly reduced its number of grantees in the second round, to be able to provide them with more capacity building support particularly around monitoring and evaluation (stakeholder interview).
- Several interviewed stakeholders noted that while education technology is attracting considerable interest and funding, **there is still a significant lack of evidence on what types of technology interventions actually work to improve literacy.**

- Two interviewed stakeholders also mentioned the **need for further funding and support to scale-up successful innovations**. While there are endless “initiations” of literacy models, the percentage of those which successfully scale remains limited. This was particularly emphasized in the case of mobile technology literacy interventions (stakeholder interview).
- No landscaped initiative focused on coordinating global **volunteer opportunities related to literacy**.

Regional level

This landscape analysis has found regional literacy initiatives to be limited in number. A general **gap exists at the regional level** when compared to activities and resources targeted at the global and country levels. One reason for this may be the cost implications of regional initiatives, particularly those that seek to convene key stakeholders. For example ILA, which does organize regional literacy conferences on a regular basis, noted that the costs of bringing together stakeholders from various countries in one region (Africa, for example) can be prohibitive both to participants and organizers, which may explain why there are not more such initiatives.

National level

A few critical gaps at the national level were also identified:

- Among Pearson’s priority markets, the **U.S. , UK, and South Africa appear to have a more active literacy landscape in terms of national initiatives** (campaigns, research networks, etc.); India and China slightly less-so (this does not apply to literacy interventions, where India’s landscape is vibrant).
- There is an overall **lack of national literacy initiatives in the countries where literacy needs are the most pressing**. Similarly, there appeared to be a **lack of literacy initiatives in fragile and/or conflict-affected states**. One stakeholder noted a **significant gap around literacy for refugee populations** (stakeholder interview).
- Several global initiatives working with partner literacy organizations in developing countries noted that there is a significant need for **organizational capacity building of grassroots literacy organizations** (stakeholder interview).
- In addition to general organizational capacity building, several interviewed stakeholders noted that **local literacy organizations also often lack the advocacy skills and expertise** to have a real voice in influencing local or national policy (stakeholder interview).

III. Key issues and best practices in the literacy field

This section provides a high level overview of key issues and best practices in the education and literacy sector. Many key issues related to literacy were raised in Section II; this section focuses on understanding what types of practices are shown to improve learning and literacy outcomes based on existing evidence. While the evidence base remains relatively weak overall, particularly in developing country contexts, several best practices are emerging as high-potential approaches to improving child literacy.¹⁴ This section highlights practices backed by strong evidence and those backed by emerging evidence, synthesizes takeaways from key literature or systematic reviews, and provides examples of education programs implementing the approach. Examples are drawn from the [Center for Education Innovations](#) (CEI) database, a global platform of over 700 innovative education programs in low- and middle-income countries. The following practices were selected for one of three reasons: (i) their relatively strong evidence base, (ii) their potential and emerging evidence, (iii) Pearson’s pre-existing interest in the area.

Relatively strong evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mother-tongue instruction ❖ Targeted instruction
Emerging evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Parental/family engagement* ❖ Mobile technology* ❖ Technology and literacy* ❖ Structured materials

*Indicates pre-existing interest of Pearson

A high-level, initial overview of the evidence on adult literacy is also provided.

Relatively strong evidence

Mother-tongue instruction

There is strong evidence to support the positive impact of mother-tongue instruction on learning and literacy outcomes.

- [Enhancing Learning of Children from Diverse Language Backgrounds](#) (UNESCO 2011) – Research reveals that children learn best in the mother tongue, before and in tandem with bilingual and multilingual education, and that their ability to learn a second language does not suffer when their mother tongue is the main language of instruction in primary school.
- [First Language First: Community-based Literacy Programmes for Minority Language Contexts in Asia](#) (UNESCO 2005) – While most of the research of mother tongue-based bilingual education comes from the developed world, a number of studies from developing countries have also confirmed that the practice has numerous benefits for early literacy and primary education and that it does not hinder students’ ability to learn to read (or learn generally) in a second language later on.
- [Mother Tongue Matters: Local Language as a Key to Effective Learning](#) (UNESCO 2008) - Based on a study of four mother-tongue instruction interventions that have been

Illustrative CEI programs implementing the approach

- ❖ [Mango Tree](#) (Uganda)
- ❖ [Mother Tongue Education project](#) (Uganda)
- ❖ [Uganda School Health and Reading Program](#) (Uganda)
- ❖ [Bibliodef Book Donation Program](#) (South Africa)

¹⁴ For the purposes of narrowing the scope, this section focuses primarily on a review of the literature for child literacy and learning, mainly in developing countries.

operating for more than a decade, students in the programs demonstrated greater academic achievement than those in a monolingual second-language school, acquired more linguistic skills in their mother tongue, and performed just as well as their monolingual-school counterparts in their second language.

- [Improving the Quality of Mother Tongue-based Literacy and Learning](#) (UNESCO 2008) – One of the main understandings from literature on language learning and cognitive development is that it is more effective to develop language and literacy skills in the mother tongue, as most of those skills will transfer to the second language more easily. For both children and adults, their strongest language should be used for literacy development.

Targeted instruction

Targeted instruction involves the practice of teaching to students’ actual learning levels rather than their grade level (which may not necessarily correlate with their skill-level). There is strong evidence to support the promise of this approach.

Illustrative CEI programs implementing the approach

- ❖ [Basic Concepts](#) (South Africa)
- ❖ [Wordworks Early Literacy Programme](#) (South Africa)
- ❖ [help2read](#) (South Africa)

- [Identifying Effective Education Interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa: A meta-analysis of rigorous impact evaluations](#) (Conn 2014) – From a meta-analysis of education interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa, pedagogical techniques that emphasize formative assessment and targeted instruction was found to be one of the most effective strategies in improving early grade literacy and numeracy outcomes.

- [The Challenge of Education and Learning in the Developing World](#) (Kremer et al. 2013) – A systematic review of dozens of interventions to improve learning outcomes in developing countries identifies pedagogical techniques that match students’ learning levels are very cost effective.

Emerging evidence

Parental/family engagement

There is strong evidence supporting the positive impact of parental and family engagement in children’s learning and literacy in developed country contexts, but less so in developing country contexts (though there is a lot of activity in this area).

- [Family Literacy: A Global Approach to Lifelong Learning](#) (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning 2008) – As parents are the first educators of children, involving them is crucial in helping children develop literacy skills. In a meeting of family literacy program implementers from about the world, participants identified teacher training and integrated research as the key components of effective family literacy programs. The key challenges many of these programs faced included involving fathers, effectively targeting older children such as secondary school students, and addressing the issue of multilingualism.

Illustrative CEI programs implementing the approach

- ❖ [Hoopoe Books](#) (Afghanistan and Pakistan)
- ❖ [Palavra de Crianca](#) (Brazil)
- ❖ [Literacy Boost](#) (Global)
- ❖ [Shine Literacy Programme](#) (South Africa)

- [Family Literacy: Experiences from Africa and Around the World](#) (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning 2008) – Family literacy programs (those that emphasize the importance of interaction between the education of both children and adults) both enhances literacy skills and effects other changes. For example, parents often become more involved in their children’s education at school and pursue further educational opportunities. While the practice of family literacy is known in Africa, it is not an issue on most policy agendas and has not seen a systematic uptake, and more resources and funds need to be invested in programs that target this field.
- [The Effect of Family Literacy Interventions on Children’s Acquisition of Reading: A Meta-Analytic Review](#) (RMC Research 2006) – In a study of 14 U.S. -based interventions that focus on parent-child activities promoting reading, reviewers found that parent involvement has a positive impact on children’s reading acquisition. The most effective type of intervention was having parents teach specific literacy skills to their children, which was two times more effective than having parents listen to their children read and six times more encouraging parents to read to their children.
- [Parental Involvement and Students’ Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analysis](#) (Fan 2011) – While parental involvement is often recommended as an effective means of improving student achievement, much of the literature on its actual effects is qualitative. Studies with quantitative elements show a moderate relationship between parental involvement and students’ academic achievement, with parental aspiration and expectation for children’s education having the strongest relationship. Parental home supervision has the weakest association.

Mobile technology

There is some emerging evidence that mobile technologies increase access to literacy opportunities, but less evidence on whether they actually improve literacy proficiency. However, there is fast-growing interest and activity in this area, as discussed in Section II.

- [Reading in the mobile era: A study of mobile reading in developing countries](#) (UNESCO 2014) – A great challenge in addressing the issue of illiteracy has been expanding access to books to those in the developing countries. Mobile phones, which are already in the hands of much of the population, can serve as a way of more evenly distributing access at a fraction of the price of print books. A survey on mobile reading in developing countries indicates that people read more, enjoy reading more, and read stories to children more when they do so on mobile devices. It is, however, important to note that access through mobile devices is not a solution on its own and that it should be integrated into systems that can teach people how to actually understand the texts.
- [Mobiles for Reading: A Landscape Research Review](#) (JBS International 2014) – While mobiles for reading interventions have been increasing in number, only a few of them have included rigorous research components that assess their impact. Based on a landscape of 44 such interventions, six main purposes have been identified for mobile reading: formal learning and instruction, informal learning, content, training, data collection, and communication and dissemination. The main challenges of these interventions is the lack of solid evidence on their effectiveness in improving literacy, their dependence on external funding, and the overuse of supply-side approaches in developing these interventions.

Illustrative CEI programs implementing the approach

- ❖ [Worldreader](#) (Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Rwanda)
- ❖ [1001 Stories](#) (India, Uganda, South Africa, El Salvador, Tanzania, South Korea, Jordan, Mexico, U.S. , Zambia)
- ❖ [FunDza Growing Communities of Readers Programme](#) (South Africa)

- [What is the Potential Impact of Using Mobile Devices in Education?](#) (Goundar 2011) – Mobile devices’ portability, simplicity, and affordability make them a natural fit for where PCs and internet connectivity are scarce and are a means of increasing access to educational opportunities, especially for those who live in remote locations.
- [Using Mobile Phones to Improve Educational Outcomes: An Analysis of Evidence from Asia](#) (Valk et al. 2010) – An analysis of six mobile phone-based interventions to improve learning outcomes in developing countries found that mobile phones have helped to increase students’ access to learning, especially for those who cannot pursue formal educational opportunities due to time constraints. It also serves as a way to expand access without developing costly infrastructure. On the other hand, there are still many issues and challenges to ensuring improved access, such as technical difficulties or language barriers. In addition, there is much less evidence in terms of how they promote new learning processes and instructional methods.
- [Good intentions to read on mobiles are not good enough: reducing barriers to m-reading is crucial](#) (Chew et al. 2015) - Drawing on the analysis of 4330 surveys on mobile reading in seven developing countries, this study found that the discrepancy between intentions to read on mobiles and actual reading can be attributed to barriers such as problematic mobile connectivity and inadequate relevant reading material. The policy implication of this research finding is clear - reducing barriers specific to mobile reading (m-reading) will improve program effectiveness. This study applied the technological acceptance model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) to the growing adoption of mobile reading in developing countries and partially verified key constructs of the theories. Findings suggest that the two models provide viable theoretical frameworks for future m-reading programs. This study is one of two companion papers to the 2014 UNESCO report on Reading in the Mobile Era. The other focuses on gender differences in m-reading.

Technology and literacy

This refers to non-mobile technologies used to promote access to literacy materials or quality of literacy instruction.

- [Technology and literacy in early childhood education settings: a review of research](#) (Burnett 2010) - Technology to facilitate literacy development usually serves as one of the following: deliverer of literacy materials, a site for interaction around texts, and a medium for meaning-making. The reviewers find a dearth of extensive research that evaluate the effects of digital texts on children, especially in educational settings.
- [The Impact of ebooks on the Reading Motivation and Reading Skills of Children and Young People: A Rapid Literature Review](#) (National Literacy Trust 2014) – With technology playing an increasingly central role in people’s daily lives, both children and adults (in the U.S.) in 2012 reported reading more on computers and electronic devices than in print. However, studies have shown mixed results about the impact of young people reading on screens on their reading skills. Regardless of whether the reading is done on screen or in print, students who simply read more were more likely to be proficient at reading.
- [Using ICT to Develop Literacy](#) (UNESCO 2006) – ICT can support literacy development by enhancing learning, broadening access to literacy education, creating local content, aiding in the professional development of teachers, and cultivating a literacy-conducive environment.

Illustrative CEI programs implementing the approach

- ❖ [Library for All](#) (Haiti and Democratic Republic of the Congo)
- ❖ [Ghana Reads](#) (Ghana)
- ❖ [Reading Eggs](#) (South Africa)

- [Improving Learning in Primary Schools of Developing Countries: A Meta-Analysis of Randomized Experiments](#) (McEwan 2014) – A systematic review of interventions to improve learning outcomes in developing countries found that treatments with computers or instructional technology have some of the largest mean effect sizes. This effect, however, is smaller when the distribution of technology is unaccompanied by student or teacher training, or when the treatment does not actually incorporate consistent strategies for improving learning.
- [Improving Educational Outcomes in Developing Countries: Lessons from Rigorous Evaluations](#) (National Bureau of Economic Research 2014) – Based on rigorous evaluations of interventions to improve learning outcomes in developing countries, this systematic review finds computers have mixed results on raising outcomes. The actual quality of the software and the details of the particular implementation are important in ensuring success— when done right, computer-assisted learning can benefit students greatly, but the sole delivery of computers to classrooms is not effective.
- [Leveraging technology to improve literacy](#) (Allen 2008) – Current literature in developed world has shown that technology used to improve literacy produces lackluster results. Despite the lack of solid evidence, however, teachers have reported that technology helps to address certain students’ specific learning needs, especially for those who have learning disabilities.

Structured materials

Emerging evidence suggests that allowing students to learn materials (literacy and numeracy) in a structured, sequenced manner is more effective.

Illustrative CEI programs implementing the approach

- ❖ [Primary Math and Reading Program](#) (Kenya)

➤ [Learning to Improve Learning](#) (Hewlett Foundation 2014) – Based on 11 interventions that utilize various methods to improve early-grade learning outcomes, one of the most effective was the provision of structured materials for both students and teachers that allows students to learn content “in a meaningful sequence.”

Best Practices in adult literacy

It should be noted that practices for improving child literacy and adult literacy differ. This section provides an initial overview of some of the evidence on adult literacy practices.

- [Reducing Illiteracy: Review of Effective Practices in Adult Literacy Programs](#) (Solorzano 1993) - From literature based in the U.S., the paper offers several considerations for implementing an effective adult literacy program: identifying adults’ strengths and weaknesses, which will not only help their learning of literacy but also encourage them to stay in literacy programs; identify their initial literacy levels in their native language, as those skills can be transferred to another language; provide appropriate materials based on their interests and goals. It is also important to recognize that the pedagogical methods used to teach children to read should not be assumed to be effective for delivering adult literacy instruction.
- [Library of Congress Literacy Awards: Best Practices](#) (Library of Congress 2013) - While there are different “best practices” for targeting child literacy and adult literacy, some of the strategies that are common to both include increasing access to print materials, reading aloud and storytelling, taking cultural relevance into account, and taking advantage of community resources.
- [Adult Literacy Programs: Design, Implementation, and Evaluation](#) (USAID 1995) – The cost of high-quality literacy programs in developing countries is relatively low compared to the cost of formal education. Successful programs should take the following factors into consideration:

timing and duration of instruction, instructional materials, teacher recruitment and training, participant motivation, supervision and monitoring, connection to other development activities, government/NGO collaboration, and post-literacy activities.

- [Education for All Global Monitoring Report](#) (UNESCO 2006) – Compared to the literature on child literacy, there is not a lot of research that has focused on adult literacy programs. The existing evidence shows such programs improve adults' self-esteem and empowerment and are relatively cost-effective.

IV. Recommendations for the global literacy sector

This section draws out implications for stakeholders committed to supporting the global literacy sector based on the landscape of global, regional, and national literacy initiatives, as well as a review of key issues and best practices. It offers a selection of recommendations for consideration as the field moves forward, taking into account the gaps in the current landscape identified through this report.

- **Provide increased support for identified gaps in the literacy sector, in particular for adult literacy**
One of the key takeaways from this landscape analysis is the gulf between programming and funding for child literacy and adult literacy. The majority of existing initiatives are focused on child literacy. Adult literacy, in particular maternal and women's adult literacy, is extremely underfunded and in significant need of additional resources and attention. New and existing stakeholders in the literacy sector should increasingly prioritize this area. Other critical issues currently under-supported by existing initiatives include:

- Literacy in emergencies (fragile states; refugee populations)
- Advocacy for literacy at the grassroots level
- Capacity building for national literacy organizations

Important literacy issues with some initial support, but where more could be done include:

- Literacy for children with disabilities
- Parental engagement strategies for improving children's literacy

- **If a new global literacy campaign is launched, it should be inclusive and have a clear and targeted focus.**

One of the questions this landscape set out to answer was whether there is demand for a new global literacy campaign, and if so, how such a campaign could have the greatest impact and value. We asked interviewed stakeholders whether they thought there was appetite for a new global literacy initiative, as given the number of existing global literacy initiatives, we sought to determine whether "fatigue" around literacy and literacy campaigns was a concern. The majority noted that they see value in a new global literacy campaign, provided it met certain criteria.

Ensuring the inclusion of stakeholders at all levels was emphasized. One interviewed stakeholder also raised concern that too often global campaigns are focused on global actors and organizations in developed countries, with insufficient representation or inclusion of grassroots stakeholders. Several stakeholders emphasized the importance of identifying a clear, narrow focus and objective for any new global literacy initiative, as well as the need to focus on action and implementation. The importance of credible leadership was also underscored.

- **Avoid duplication of effort, build on existing initiatives, and enhance information-sharing**
As reflected in this landscape analysis, many players are already engaged in supporting literacy in a number of ways at the global, regional, and country level. As existing initiatives in the literacy sector seek to expand their activities, or as new initiatives seek to enter the space, it is critically important to understand the scope of what has already been done in certain areas, and to build on these efforts where possible. Doing so will enable greater impact and a more effective allocation of resources. This also requires existing initiatives to actively share information on their activities with each other, to learn from what others are doing, and to seek opportunities for collaboration.

- **Enhance collaboration between “non-traditional” literacy stakeholders and “traditional” development and global literacy stakeholders**

This landscape analysis underscored the relatively fragmented nature of the literacy landscape and the divide between for-profit/corporate (“non-traditional”) and non-profit/public (“traditional”) initiatives. As one stakeholder noted, “too often it’s such a competitive field. We don’t talk about gaps with each other because we don’t want to acknowledge them.” All of the current global literacy initiatives are led by the non-profit sector and aid agencies, both by longstanding development stakeholders and newer NGOs. With an increasing number of non-traditional stakeholders interested in playing a meaningful role in supporting literacy, the field as a whole could stand to benefit from greater collaboration and engagement across sectors.

- **Continue to invest in robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning**

While the evidence base for interventions seeking to improve literacy outcomes is growing, significant gaps remain. The global literacy sector should continue to invest heavily in rigorous monitoring, evaluation, and learning efforts, to increase our collective understanding of best practice for improving literacy outcomes in different contexts for different target groups. This is particularly true of newer literacy interventions currently gaining significant traction, such as education technology.

Annex I: List of stakeholder interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted with representatives from the following organizations/initiatives:

- All Children Reading
- Global Reading Network
- International Literacy Association
- International Literacy Institute
- Library of Congress Literacy Awards
- mEducation Alliance
- ProLiteracy
- XPRIZE: Global Learning and Adult Literacy

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