

# Literacy for All Seminar

## Overview of Report of High Level Group of Experts on Literacy

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# ***Final report HLG Literacy***



## EDUCATION & TRAINING

### LITERACY

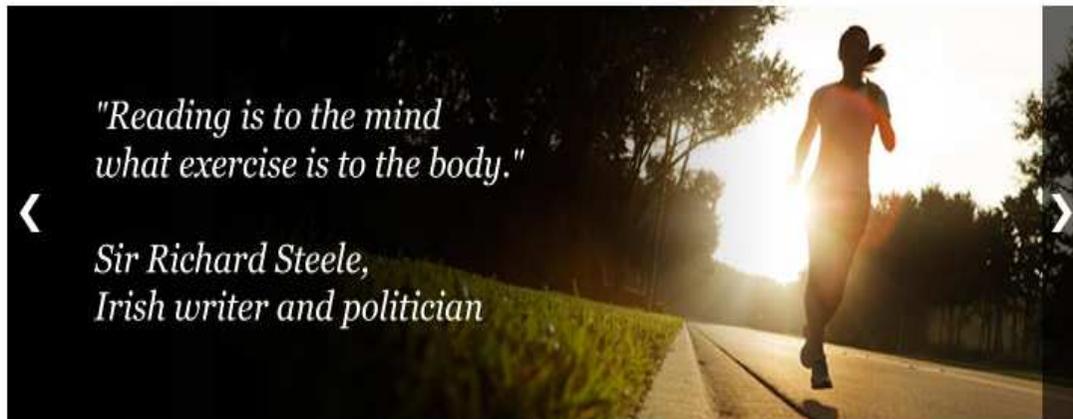
European Commission > Education & training > Literacy

HOME

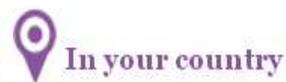
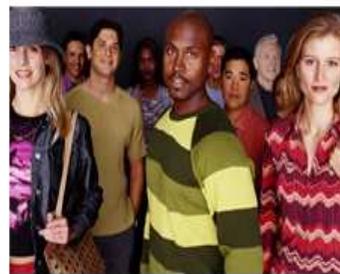
A,B,C OF LITERACY

LITERACY AND THE EU

RESOURCES



Download the Report



#### Latest Highlights

Europe Loves Reading: HRH Princess Mathilde and Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou visit Brussels school



“ to help kick-start an **ambitious, comprehensive and structural** approach within and across EU member states to **prevent and reduce** literacy problems”

# Overview

- The role of literacy
- the key areas of the HLG Report
- refer briefly to some examples of good practice
- recommendations of the HLG groups

# Literacy

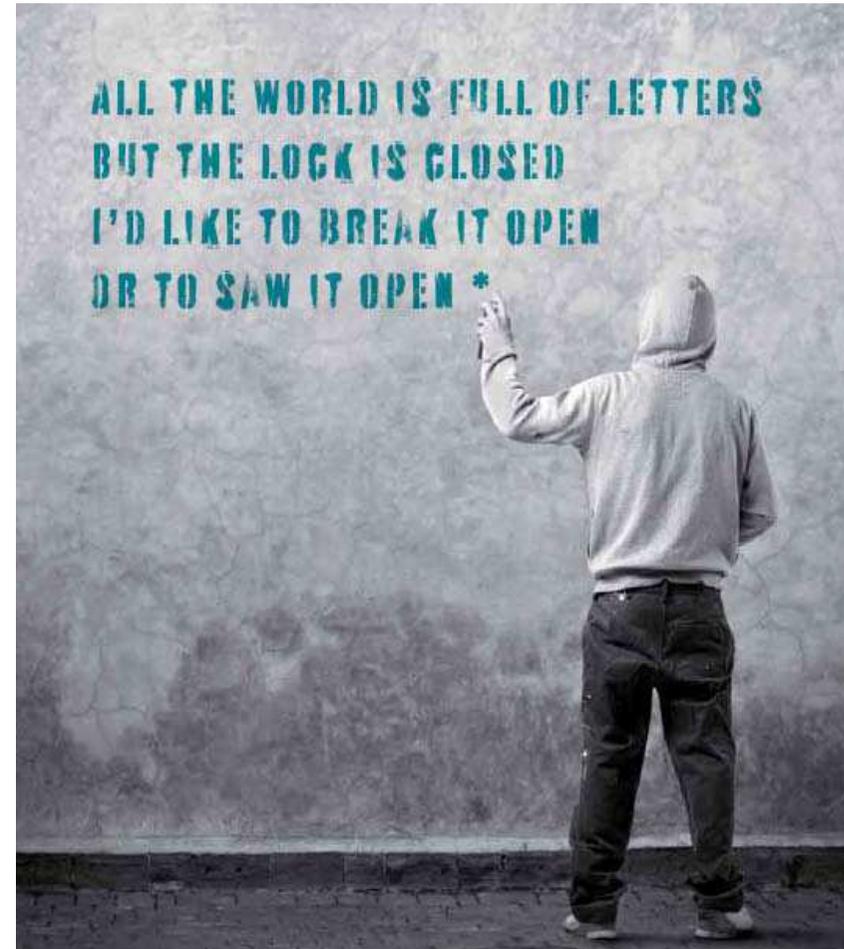
'Literacy is a bridge  
from misery to hope'

- (Kof Annan)

# *Is literacy a big deal?*

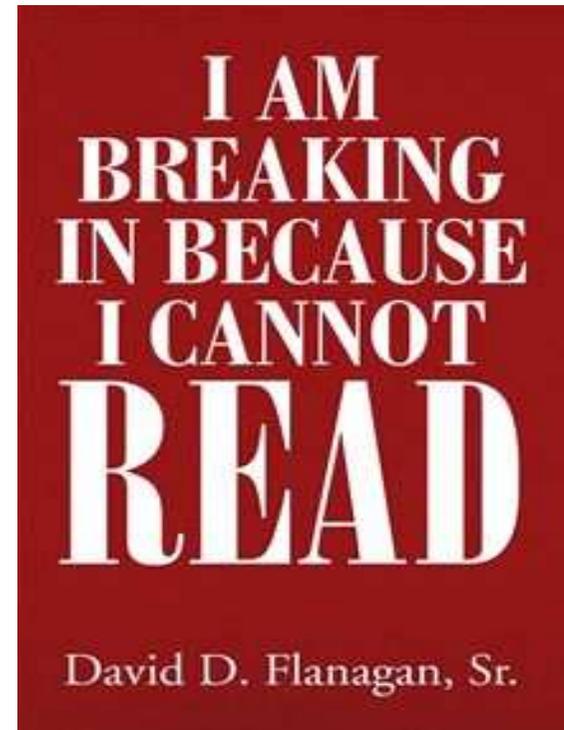
Youngsters who feel frustrated and humiliated - *cannot decode the 'graffiti' on the board.*

Youngsters - anxious they will not find any **respectable employment** and **fearful** they will be rejected once any employer 'discovers' their secret.



*Yes! Literacy is a Big Deal!*

- Youngsters who develop deviant behaviour
- Parents who might turn up for a meeting two month too late!
- The employee who has to wade through the dreaded sticky notes



“Literacy is not a luxury.  
Literacy is a right and responsibility.  
If our world is to meet the challenges of  
the twenty first century  
we must harness  
the energy and creativity of all our citizens.”

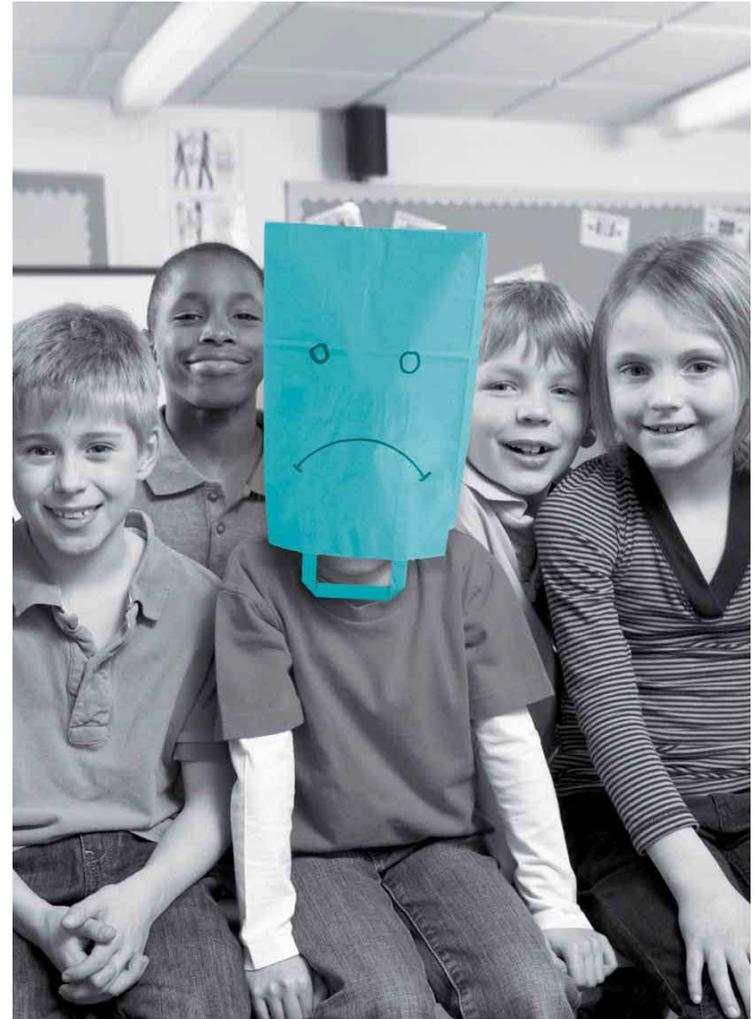
- Bill Clinton, Former President of the United States of America

# *The PISA Shock!*

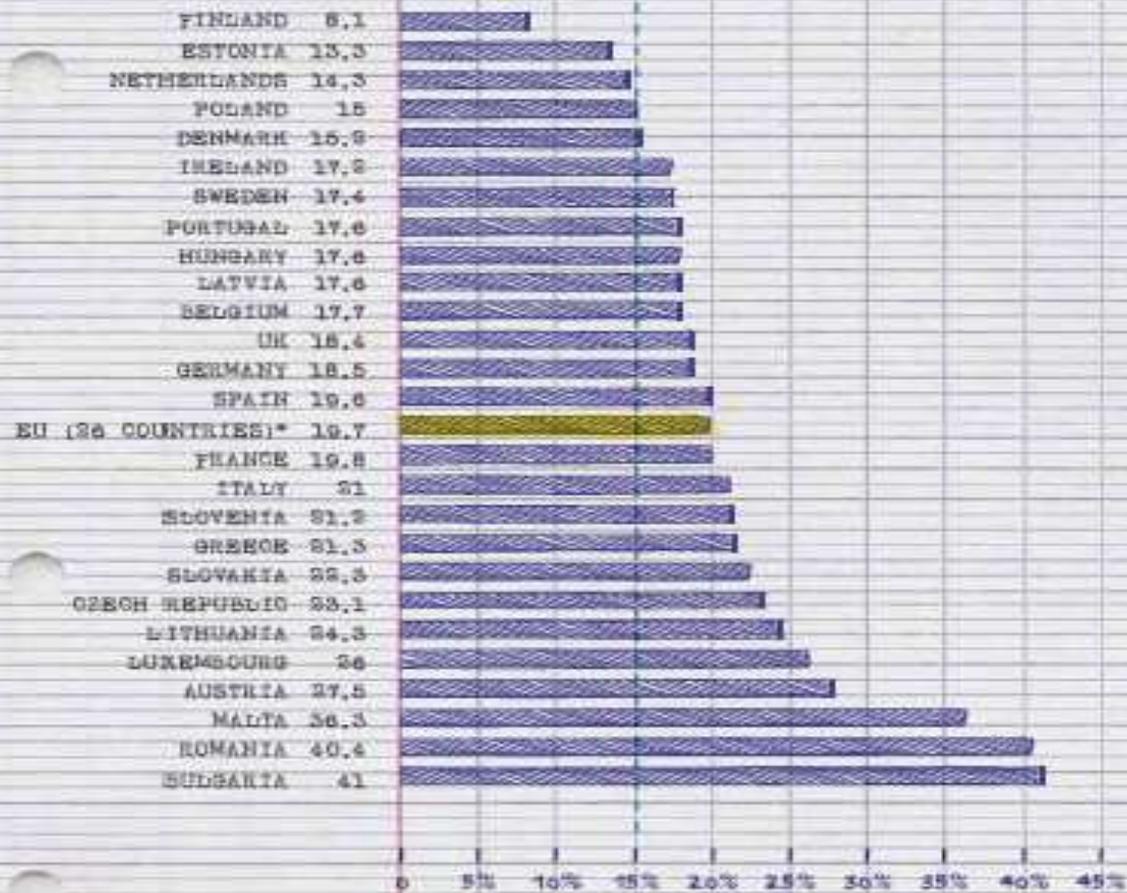
Programme for International Assessment

Outcomes of Pisa study revealed that one in five 15-year-olds in the E.U. cannot read and write.

This Report emanates from what is now referred to as the PISA SHOCK!



Percentage of low achievers in reading literacy  
**PISA 2009**



Share of 15-year-olds scoring at or below Level 2  
 in PISA 2009

# Aftermath of shock!

- Commissioner Vassiliou established an independent HIGH LEVEL Group of Experts on Literacy in February 2011
- **‘to examine the most effective and efficient ways to improve reading skills in Europe’** (p.9)
- and to contribute to reducing the percentage of low achievers to less than 15%.



**ROF 1 NI 5  
SNAEPORUE,  
ETH DLROW  
SI DRAH  
OT DAER**

# *Wide-range of stakeholders*

## *Co-operative approach*

- Businesses
- Celebrities
- NGOs
- Youth workers
- Volunteers
- Media
- Publishers
- Politicians
- Policy Makers
- Parents
- Health professionals
- Ministries of Finance



# Tackling the Literacy Challenge

## Preconditions For Success

- Creating a Literate environment
- Improving the Quality of Teaching
- Ensuring Participation and Inclusion

# Creating a Literate Environment

- Cultivating a **culture** of reading
- Increasing the **availability** and **visibility** of reading materials :  
online and offline
- Increasing **motivation** by offering diverse reading materials :  
books, comics, magazines .....
- Increasing **family literacy** programmes :



# Improving the Quality of Teaching

- Report recommends that all teachers
  - (i) should have excellent, **in-depth knowledge** about the teaching of literacy
  - (ii) should be able to **detect and handle reading difficulties**
  - (iii) should be involved in **determining what to teach**, how to teach and what materials to use
  - (iv) teachers need an environment in which their **continuous learning** is stimulated,
  - (v) the best teachers 'are not just trained well, **they are trained often** throughout their career'

# A coherent literacy curriculum

- The report recommends that schools :
  - allow **adequate time** for reading activities
  - children should be encouraged to carry out **free reading**, thus gain experience in **choosing** their own reading materials

## Improving the Quality of Teaching (Cont.)

- "A quarter of 15-year-olds claim *that reading is a waste of time*, while 34% never read for pleasure".
- Secondary school teachers should also be teachers of reading and get involved to support '*school-wide literacy strategies*' (p.44).
- Literacy must be seen as essential **not just by literacy specialists** but by the entire school system.
- The digital environment needs to be further exploited to entice youngsters to read

# Participation and Inclusion

- *Socio-economic gap*

Children from poorer backgrounds tend to have more difficulties with literacy - hence Report suggests that schools need to provide all students with *similar opportunities* for learning.

- *The migrant gap*

Migrants students also appear to have lower reading levels - hence Report suggests that Member States need to provide *language and literacy screening* and provide the necessary individualised support.

## *Participation and Inclusion (cont.)*

- *The gender gap*

Differences between boys and girls are considerable and widen at secondary -

Only 13% of the girls have poor reading skills while 27% of boys. (Malta significant differences)

Member states are encouraged to think in terms of what can motivate and engage boys (p.48)

- *The digital gap*

Poorly educated, elderly and unemployed have much less opportunity to increase their digital skills.

- The Report does not advocate any ‘quick fixes’ but stresses the need to develop
- **‘a comprehensive vision on literacy that spans the entire life course’** (p.31)

# Recommendations: Literacy For All Ages

- Young children
- Primary school years
- Adolescents
- Adults

# Young children

- The Report considers the importance of the provision of high quality *early childhood education and care*.
- Encourages the development of *effective* ways of working with parents.



# Primary School Years

- Increase the number of **specialist reading teachers** and promote *higher qualifications* for all primary teachers.
- *Identify reading difficulties before they 'become entrenched'*
- *Inspire the motivation to read by providing reading materials which are attractive and challenging for all abilities, by using ICT.*

# Adolescents

- Make every teacher a literacy teacher
- **raise awareness** among teachers about the importance of literacy skills for all courses
- Provide the **right materials** to motivate all readers, especially boys.
- **Stimulate school-business** cooperation and promote awareness of 'the importance of literacy in the workplace'.

# Adults

- Adults need support to overcome their shame and ask for help
- They need to be enabled understand the **NEED** for literacy
- Strengthen the profession of adult literacy teachers
- Ensure broad and varied access to learning opportunities: offer adults appropriate courses at convenient times



What initiatives are being undertaken in the E.U. to support the development of literacy?

- *Poland: 'All Poland loves to Read'*
- U.K: 'Get London Reading Campaign'
- Italy: 'Nati per Leggere'
- Netherland 'Literacy chains'
- Portugal ' National Reading Plan'

# Conclusion

- The Report has served to accentuate Europe's concerns about extending literacy levels across the age groups and reducing or preventing illiteracy.
- It has underlined that literacy is not an issue *'just for the educational sector, nor a problem to be solved by policy makers alone....'*
- All players in society have important contributions
- The message is clear: whatever our role we should all....

**EU HIGH LEVEL GROUP OF EXPERTS ON LITERACY**

FINAL REPORT, SEPTEMBER 2012

**ACT NOW!**

