INTERNATIONAL LITERACY CHALLENGES
WHAT CAN BE THE ROLE OF LITERACY ORGANIZATIONS?

Renate Valtin

Riga, January 2018

STRUCTURE OF MY PRESENTATION

- 5 Literacy challenges
- 3 Literacy Policy Fields
- ILA 2018 Report: What is hot in literacy?
- What is the role of literacy associations?
  - 4 perspectives for the role of literacy associations
  - An ambitious vision and 11 conditions for realization

5 Literacy challenges

The importance of literacy in the 21st century

For the society:

- essential for a strong democratic society, wealth and economical competition
- fundamental to social and cultural participation

For the individual:

- indispensable to human development and education
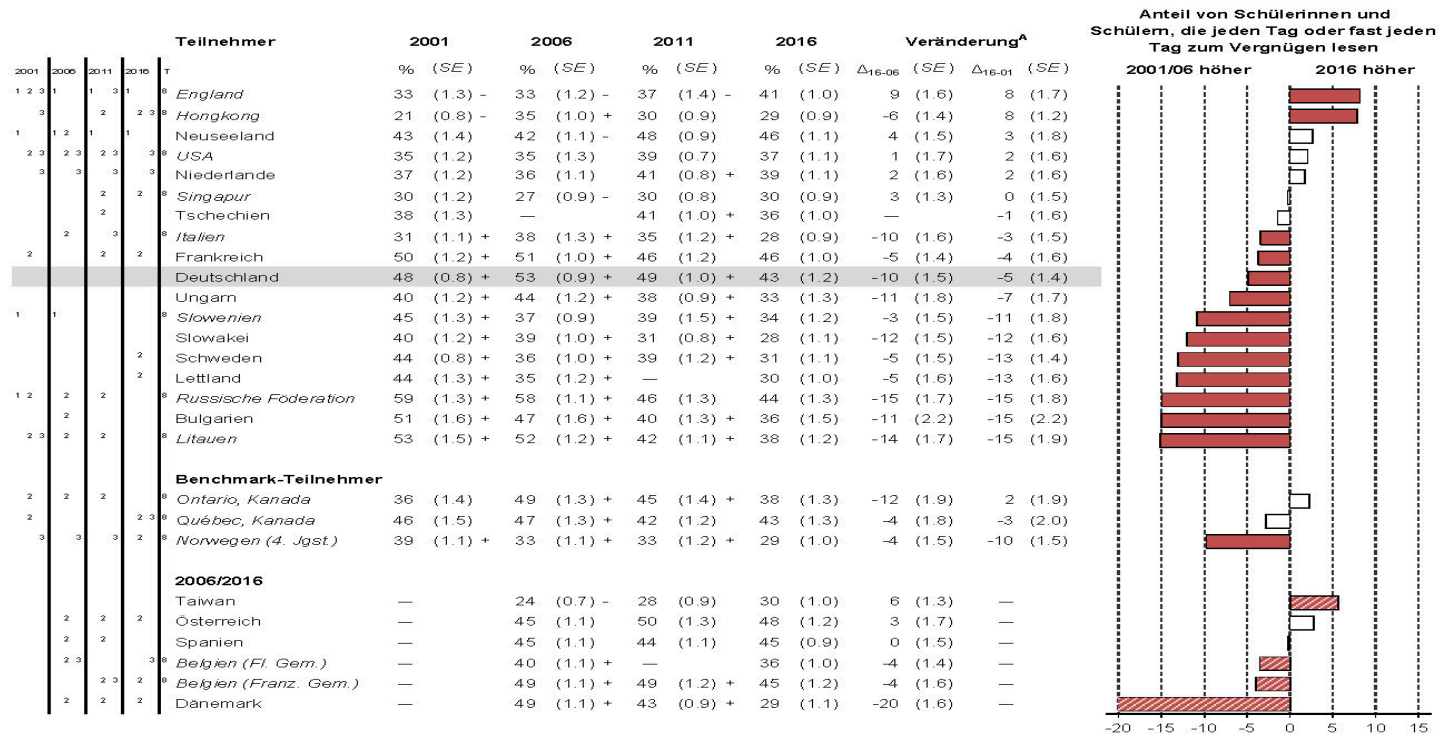- enables people to live full and meaningful lives

Low reading competence increases the risk of poverty and social exclusion and limits numerous opportunities for cultural participation, lifelong learning and personal growth.

- 1st Challenge: One in five 15-year-old Europeans, as well as nearly 55 million adults, lack basic reading and writing skills.

2 MOTIVATION CHALLENGE

- PIRLS 2016 trend: Percentage of students reading for pleasure outside school decreased from 2001 to 2016

Teilnehmer	2001 %	(SE)	2006 %	(SE)	2011 %	(SE)	2016 %	(SE)	Δ_{16-06}	(SE)	Δ_{16-01}	(SE)
England	33	(1.3) -	33	(1.2) -	37	(1.4) -	41	(1.0)	9	(1.6)	8	(1.7)
Hongkong	21	(0.8) -	35	(1.0) +	30	(0.9)	29	(0.9)	-6	(1.4)	8	(1.2)
Neuseeland	43	(1.4)	42	(1.1) -	48	(0.9)	46	(1.1)	4	(1.5)	3	(1.8)
USA	35	(1.2)	35	(1.3)	39	(0.7)	37	(1.1)	1	(1.7)	2	(1.6)
Niederlande	37	(1.2)	36	(1.1)	41	(0.8) +	39	(1.1)	2	(1.6)	2	(1.6)
Singapur	30	(1.2)	27	(0.9) -	30	(0.8)	30	(0.9)	3	(1.3)	0	(1.5)
Tschechien	38	(1.3)	—		41	(1.0) +	36	(1.0)	—		-1	(1.6)
Italien	31	(1.1) +	38	(1.3) +	35	(1.2) +	28	(0.9)	-10	(1.6)	-3	(1.5)
Frankreich	50	(1.2) +	51	(1.0) +	46	(1.2)	46	(1.0)	-5	(1.4)	-4	(1.6)
Deutschland	48	(0.8) +	53	(0.9) +	49	(1.0) +	43	(1.2)	-10	(1.5)	-5	(1.4)
Ungarn	40	(1.2) +	44	(1.2) +	38	(0.9) +	33	(1.3)	-11	(1.8)	-7	(1.7)
Slowenien	45	(1.3) +	37	(0.9)	39	(1.5) +	34	(1.2)	-3	(1.5)	-11	(1.8)
Slowakei	40	(1.2) +	39	(1.0) +	31	(0.8) +	28	(1.1)	-12	(1.5)	-12	(1.6)
Schweden	44	(0.8) +	36	(1.0) +	39	(1.2) +	31	(1.1)	-5	(1.5)	-13	(1.4)
Lettland	44	(1.3) +	35	(1.2) +	—		30	(1.0)	-5	(1.6)	-13	(1.6)
Russische Föderation	59	(1.3) +	58	(1.1) +	46	(1.3)	44	(1.3)	-15	(1.7)	-15	(1.8)
Bulgarien	51	(1.6) +	47	(1.6) +	40	(1.3) +	36	(1.5)	-11	(2.2)	-15	(2.2)
Litauen	53	(1.5) +	52	(1.2) +	42	(1.1) +	38	(1.2)	-14	(1.7)	-15	(1.9)
Benchmark-Teilnehmer												
Ontario, Kanada	36	(1.4)	49	(1.3) +	45	(1.4) +	38	(1.3)	-12	(1.9)	2	(1.9)
Québec, Kanada	46	(1.5)	47	(1.3) +	42	(1.2)	43	(1.3)	-4	(1.8)	-3	(2.0)
Norwegen (4. Jgst.)	39	(1.1) +	33	(1.1) +	33	(1.2) +	29	(1.0)	-4	(1.5)	-10	(1.5)
2006/2016												
Taiwan	—		24	(0.7) -	28	(0.9)	30	(1.0)	6	(1.3)	—	
Österreich	—		45	(1.1)	50	(1.3)	48	(1.2)	3	(1.7)	—	
Spanien	—		45	(1.1)	44	(1.1)	45	(0.9)	0	(1.5)	—	
Belgien (Fl. Gem.)	—		40	(1.1) +	—		36	(1.0)	-4	(1.4)	—	
Belgien (Franz. Gem.)	—		49	(1.1) +	49	(1.2) +	45	(1.2)	-4	(1.6)	—	
Dänemark	—		49	(1.1) +	43	(0.9) +	29	(1.1)	-20	(1.6)	—	

Veränderung[A]

Anteil von Schülerinnen und Schülern, die jeden Tag oder fast jeden Tag zum Vergnügen lesen
2001/06 höher — 2016 höher

Statistisch signifikante Veränderungen zwischen 2001 und 2016 ($p < .05$).
Statistisch signifikante Veränderungen zwischen 2006 und 2016 ($p < .05$).
Kursiv gesetzt sind die Teilnehmer, für die von einer eingeschränkten Vergleichbarkeit der Ergebnisse zwischen den Studienzyklen ausgegangen werden muss.
1 = Die nationale Zielpopulation entspricht nicht oder nicht ausschließlich der vierten Jahrgangsstufe.

3 DIGITAL CHALLENGE

- The rise and spread of digital technologies have significantly altered what it means to be literate in the 21st-century. We still do not know enough how the digital revolution changed and will change the world (globalization, mass culture, big data, Google), s. Yuval Noah Harari: *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*

- Overcoming the digital divide

- What kind of digital competences are needed and how are they acquired/taught?

  (F.i. critical evaluation of sources, fake news)

4 EQUITY CHALLENGE
GAPS IN EU (PIRLS 2016)

In all countries we find literacy performance gaps between different groups

- High and low performers
- Parental occupation (SES): 55
- Cultural capital of the family (books): 39
- Migrant background: n.a.
- Family language not language of the school: 32
- Sex: 6

PERFORMACNCE GAPS
SES, MIGRANT, LANGUAGE, GENDER

Performance gaps

Performance Gaps - Parental Education, Language Spoken at Home and Gender - Germany & EU-24 (PIRLS 2011)

Performance Gaps - Socio-economic Status (SES), Migration, Language Spoken at Home and Gender - Germany & EU Average (PISA 2009, 2012)
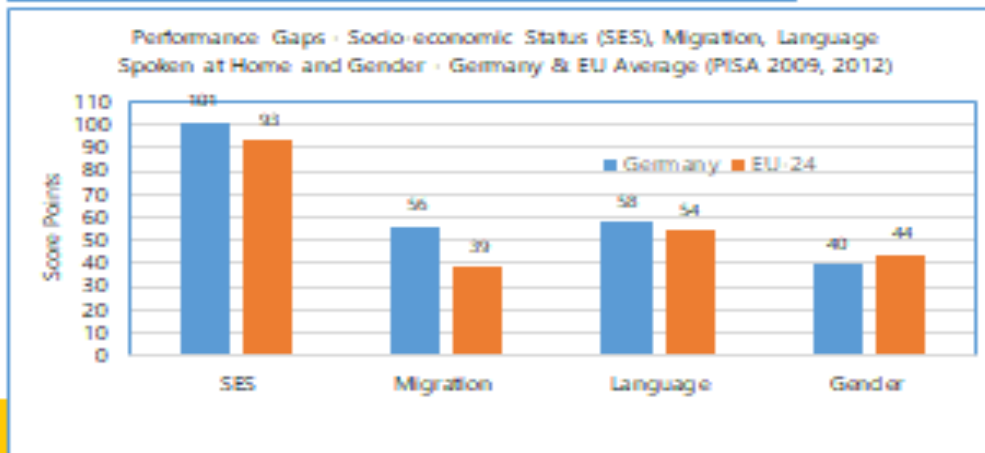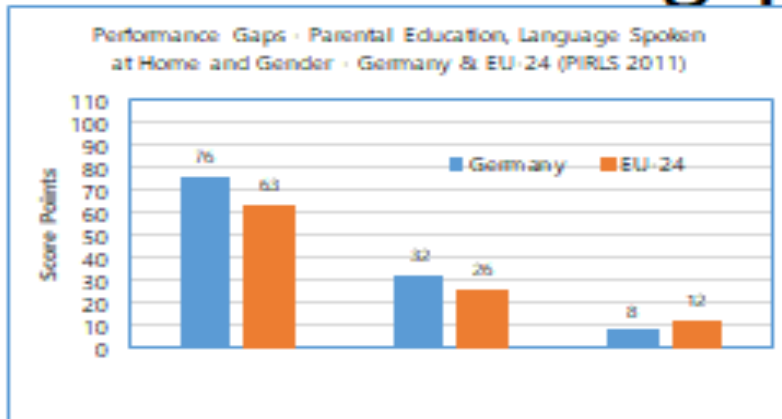
5 KNOWLEDGE - ACTION - DISCREPANCY CHALLENGE

We have a vast body of research about literacy learning and teaching. Literacy is a cumulative process, dependent on a variety of interrelated factors – sometimes resulting in vicious circles

- Individual (sex, language, motivation, self-concept)
- Home background (parental role models, cultural capital…)
- Importance of elementary education for emergent literacy
- School factors (resources, teachers knowledge, beliefs and support, availability of specialists for slow learners)
- Out of school activities (reading for pleasure, tv, digital media, peers)

THREE KEY ISSUES FOR LITERACY POLICIES (EU- HIGH LEVEL GROUP OF EXPERTS ON LITERACY, 2012)

- **Creating a literate environment** for children and adolescents, at home, in school, digital environment, libraries

- **Improving the quality of teaching**: quality of preschool, literacy curricula, reading instruction, identification of and support for struggling literacy learners, initial teacher education and continuous professional development

- **Increasing participation, inclusion and equity**: supporting groups at risk (SES, migrants, pupils with special educational needs, boys)

Conclusion

- Fostering literacy is not only an educational task but an issue in different political and societal fields, addressing multiple stake-holders: parents and grandparents, teachers in kindergarten and schools, teacher trainers at universities, researchers, librarians, social workers, psychologists, medical doctors, authors, editors, philologists, sociologists, politicians.

WHAT'S HOT IN LITERACY?

ILA 2018 REPORT - KEY FINDINGS

Survey with 2,097 total respondents from literacy experts from 91 countries: What is hot? – what is important?

What is important?(more than 80%)

- EARLY LITERACY
- ACCESS TO BOOKS AND CONTENT
- STRATEGIES FOR DIFFERENTIATING INSTRUCTION
- TEACHER PREPARATION
- EQUITY IN LITERACY EDUCATION

What is hot? (between 55 and 65%)

- DIGITAL LITERACY
- EARLY LITERACY
- SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS
- FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS
- STRATEGIES FOR DIFFERENTIATING INSTRUCTION

WHAT'S HOT IN LITERACY? ILA 2018 REPORT - KEY FINDINGS
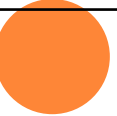
Comparing hot and important topics. What should be addressed?

- **Equity in Literacy Education** ranks **No. 8** among hot topics but **No. 2** in importance.

- **Teacher Preparation** ranks **No. 12** among hot topics but **No. 3** in importance.

- **Access to Books and Content** ranks **No. 11** among hot topics but **No. 5** in importance.

- **Digital Literacy** and **Summative Assessments** rank high among hot topics but significantly lower in importance.

THE ROLE OF LITERACY ASSOCIATIONS -4 PERSPECTIVES
(INSPIRED BY ESTELA D´ANGELO AND VERONIKA ROT GABROVEC)

1. About our Association: **Who are we?** How do we see ourselves, our vision?	**IDENTITY**
2. What do we DO? How do we identify our actions?	**ACTS DECISIONS ACTIONS**
3. What do we SAY outside? How do we communicate outside our literacy work?	**COMMUNICATION**
4. How are we PERCEIVED by others? How do others see us?	**IMAGE**

A BROAD VISION

Literacy as a human right.

- Everyone has the right to acquire literacy, regardless of age, social class, religion, ethnicity and gender, and is provided with the necessary resources and opportunities to develop sufficient and sustainable literacy skills and knowledge in order to effectively understand and use written communication in print and digital media.

11 CONDITIONS REQUIRED TO PUT THE RIGHT TO BASIC LITERACY INTO PRACTICE

1. **Young children** are encouraged at home in their literacy acquisition.

2. **Parents** receive support in helping their children's language and literacy acquisition.

3. **Affordable high-quality preschool or kindergarten** fosters children's language and emergent literacy development.

4. **High-quality literacy instruction** for children, adolescents and adults is regarded as a core task of all educational institutions.

5. **All teachers receive effective initial teacher education and professional development in literacy teaching** in order to be well prepared for their demanding tasks.

11 CONDITIONS REQUIRED TO PUT THE RIGHT TO BASIC LITERACY INTO PRACTICE

6. **Digital competence** is promoted across all age groups.

7. **Reading for pleasure** is actively promoted and encouraged.

8. **Libraries** are accessible and well resourced.

9. **Children and young people who struggle with literacy** receive appropriate specialist support.

10. **Adults are supported** to develop the literacy skills necessary for them to participate fully in society.

11. **Policy-makers, professionals, parents and communities** work together to ensure equal access to literacy by closing the gaps in social and educational levels.

Role of literacy organizations: What do we DO?

- Networking, bringing people together
- Information about research, position statements
- Awareness raising
- Providing good practice examples
- ??

Thank you for your attention!