

confintea VI

Follow-up Bulletin No. 12

September - December 2015



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



confintea VI



UNESCO Institute
for Lifelong Learning

Foreword

The new *UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education* (2015) entails a systematic approach to ALE for UNESCO Member States by defining three key domains of learning and skills, i.e. literacy and basic skills, continuing education and vocational skills, and liberal/popular/community education and citizenship skills, together with six transversal areas of action. The areas of action are those already introduced to the international community by the *Belém Framework for Action (BFA)*, allowing for a smooth linkage to the targets of the Education 2030 Framework for Action within the UN *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit (New York, September 2015). Member States are asked to continuously implement the *BFA* while reinforcing international cooperation. By the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference in 2019, the Member States will be asked to report on their status of implementation of the new Recommendation and how they have integrated it to their national education policies and strategies. The CONFINTEA process with its regular reporting towards the *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)* will be instrumental to that end.

The cycle of the regional follow-up meetings of CONFINTEA VI has been concluded with the meeting for the Arab States in Alexandria, Egypt (October 2015) where education experts and government officers were gathered in order to assess the implementation of the *BFA* and generate concrete action plans for further advancing adult learning and education in the region. As for all the regions UIL will continue to support follow up with monitoring implementation of the respective regional plans, with a view to the upcoming CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review in late 2016.

In the context of launching the third edition of the *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE III)* in spring 2016, UIL is planning a series of regional launches in the same perspective towards the CONFINTEA Mid-term Review, when the implementation level of all regional action plans will be reviewed.

I am confident that 2016 will be a fruitful year to re-position adult learning and education as an indispensable element for sustainable development in all regions.

Best wishes,

Arne Carlsen
Director, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

The new UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (2015)

The 2015 UNESCO General Conference adopted a new Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education, to replace the *1976 Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education*. At the previous CONFINTEA V (Hamburg, 1997) and CONFINTEA VI (Belém, 2009) conferences, and the UNESCO General Conference (Paris, 2013) the international community requested a revision of the 1976 Recommendation to 'reflect current educational, cultural, political, social and economic challenges'.

Defining adult learning and education in detail

The new *Recommendation* provides an elaborated definition of adult learning and education (ALE), which distinguishes three core areas of skills and learning: (a) to equip adults with literacy and basic skills; (b) to provide continuing training and professional development, and (c) to promote active citizenship, through what is variously known as community, popular or liberal education. The *Recommendation* calls upon Member States to take action in the areas already defined by the *Belém Framework for Action (BFA)* like policy, governance, finance, participation, inclusion and equity, and quality, while adding the concern for enhanced international cooperation. One way in which the Recommendation can be monitored, is through the established mechanisms of the CONFINTEA process, especially by the triennial *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)*, which tracks the progress of implementing the *BFA* in UNESCO Member States.

The *Recommendation* refers directly to the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and highlights that the ‘aim of adult learning and education is to equip people with the necessary capabilities to exercise and realize their rights and take control of their destinies. It promotes personal and professional development, thereby supporting more active engagement by adults with their societies, communities and environments. It fosters sustainable and inclusive economic growth and decent work prospects of individuals. It is therefore a crucial tool in alleviating poverty, improving health and well-being and contributing to sustainable learning societies’.

The full text of the Recommendation will be available online soon.

Regional cooperation in adult learning and education



The *Belém Framework for Action (BFA)* included guidelines and a range of commitments concerning the further development of adult learning and education (ALE) on international, regional and national levels. To acknowledge regional differences in the most effective ways of implementing the *BFA* and to promote regional cooperation to that end, a series of regional meetings has been held in all regions (Latin America and the Caribbean, 2011; Africa, 2012; Asia and the Pacific, 2013; Europa and North America, 2013; Arab States, 2015). These meetings brought together key stakeholders from Member States, including ministers responsible for ALE or national directors of adult education/literacy in order to contextualize the global follow-up by identifying priority activities concerning further implementation of the *BFA* in the region.

To re-position ALE in the perspective of the *Education 2030 Framework for Action*, and in view of the CONFINTEA Mid-term Review 2016, UIL will further support Member States’ efforts to improve learning conditions for adult learners in continuation of the priority activities initiated by the regional meetings. This will include disseminating information on the potential of the new UNESCO *Recommendation on ALE (2015)*, disseminating the findings of GRALE III on benefits of ALE for health, employment and social and community development, and focused support to policy development and implementation in specific countries through technical support and through the CONFINTEA Fellowship Programme at UIL.

CONFINTEA VI regional follow-up meeting for the Arab States



Increasing equitable participation in youth and adult education to enhance peace and sustainable development in the Arab States

Insufficient literacy skills, low educational attainments and low participation in youth and adult education continue to challenge development in many Arab States. It is currently estimated that more than 50 million adults, 60% of whom are women, lack basic literacy skills. Millions of young people are neither in school nor in training and are therefore missing out on opportunities to acquire useful and lasting skills for work and life. This means that these young people are unable to realize their full potential.

The need to increase equitable participation in youth and adult education was at the centre of discussions at the CONFINTEA VI Regional Follow-up Meeting for the Arab States, which took place from 26 to 28 October 2015 in Alexandria, Egypt. The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), in cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Office in Beirut and ISESCO (the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), planned and coordinated the meeting, which aimed to assess developments in adult learning and education in the Arab States since 2009.

Adult learning and education for peace and sustainable development

At the meeting, which was entitled ‘Six years after Belém: Assessing Adult Learning and Education for Peace and Sustainable Development’, participants gathered evidence on the progress of literacy and adult learning and education (ALE). In addition, participants assessed the vital role played by literacy and ALE in achieving the Arab States’ education goals, and they generated a concrete regional action plan for monitoring and implementing the recommendations of the *Belém Framework for Action (BFA)* at national and regional levels. The meeting brought together around sixty participants – comprising government officials and representatives from international and regional governmental and non-governmental organizations – from twelve Arab States.

Arne Carlsen, Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), shared the Institute's perspective in a presentation on the new Education 2030 Framework for Action, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, the *BFA* (which has been translated into Arabic), the new *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (2015)* and the preliminary results for the Arab States that have been gathered for the third *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE III)*.

The aim of UIL's contribution was to situate the meeting's discussions within the context of recent international and regional developments in ALE and to set the stage for regional follow-up projects.

Next steps: Implementing a regional action plan

The meeting led to the adoption of a regional action plan. This plan specifies projects based on the themes of the *BFA* at regional and sub-regional levels as well as responsible entities and tentative dates for each project. UIL, in cooperation with the regional UNESCO Office in Beirut and the UNESCO Office in Cairo, will support the development of the Regional UNESCO Category II Resource Centre (Sirs-el-Layyan) near Cairo. This centre will support national capacity-building activities by serving as a regional base and repository of good ALE practices and context-sensitive learning materials. It will also provide a regional exchange platform for Arab States by disseminating relevant research reports and information about good practice. Follow-up activities across the Arab States will also include creating a regional ALE glossary and translate and provide access to documents in Arabic so that Arab States benefit from global research and best practice and participate in international discussions. In addition, UIL will promote the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) in the Arab States by awarding prizes for learning villages in the Arab States and establishing equivalency frameworks to further the recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA) of all forms of learning across the region.

The *BFA* emphasizes that we need an inclusive, informed, literate and active citizenry to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. Youth and adult education are an integral part of lifelong learning and an indispensable foundation for creating peace and sustaining personal, social and economic well-being.

Literacy and sustainable societies

Translating the '2030 Vision of Literacy' into action in Latin American and the Caribbean

Education experts from Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) gathered in Montevideo, Uruguay on 26 and 27 November, 2015 to monitor progress and identify



concrete areas for regional collaboration in achieving the literacy and adult education goals illustrated in the new Education 2030 Framework for Action adopted by UNESCO Member States this year. The meeting, organized by the Regional Bureau of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC), focused on developing concrete initiatives that could be used in countries of the region to develop youth and adult education with a lifelong learning perspective. A representative of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) joined the meeting to share the Institute's perspective on lifelong learning. The participants identified strategies for further action:

- Prepare a regional report on adult learning and education (ALE), based on the *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)*.
- Showcase the policies and strategies on literacy and adult learning and education through a LAC Observatory on ALE.
- Conduct exploratory research on the experience of the region on Recognition, Validation and Accreditation (RVA) of the learning outcomes of non-formal and informal learning.
- Develop tools to guide countries in conducting capacity building for trainers/facilitators in ALE.

Continued focus on literacy and adult education in Latin America and the Caribbean

This meeting complements the regional CONFITEA VI follow-up meeting for LAC that was jointly organised by UIL and OREALC and took place in Mexico in 2011, in which more than 250 participants adopted the regional Matrix for the Implementation and Monitoring of the *Belém Framework for Action (BFA)* in Latin America and the Caribbean. This regional Matrix informed discussions at the Montevideo meeting and continues to be an instrumental document in the implementation of ALE programmes.

Although the right to education is reflected in the legislation of all Member States in the region, and a variety of literacy and adult education programmes are available, critical challenges relating to many factors reflected in the regional Matrix remain.

The concrete points identified at the meeting will provide a solid background for countries in working towards achieving their education goals. 'The meeting contributed to building a joint roadmap post-2015 for the region, which will inform the new regional platform for the implementation of the *Education 2030 Framework for Action*,' said Jorge Sequeira, Director of OREALC.

Ghana: Towards a new non-formal education policy

Ghana is currently in the process of drafting a new non-formal education policy that, once implemented, will help provide literacy and basic skills training to the estimated 29% of its citizens aged 15 years and above who lack literacy skills. Ghana's current policy on literacy and non-formal education (NFE), the 'Mass Literacy and Social Change Programme' (MASSLIP), dates back to 1998. It is necessary to develop a new non-formal education policy that fits within the framework of lifelong learning. At the request of the Ghanaian Non-Formal Education Division (NFED), the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) is assisting with the development of this policy.

New policy advantages

The revision process started in May 2015 with a workshop organized by UIL, which ultimately led to the finalization of a draft non-formal education policy in October. The revision process has involved national consultations with all stakeholders from government to grass-roots levels. These stakeholders have provided relevant and practical input which will contribute to successful advocacy and implementation of the policy once it is adopted.

The primary goal of this non-formal education policy is to provide guidance to various education actors on effectively implementing NFE programmes within the framework of lifelong learning. Once implemented, the policy will enhance equitable access and improve the quality of learning opportunities for learners in all age groups, thereby facilitating the effective implementation of the right to 'Education For All', as enshrined in the Ghanaian constitution. UIL will continue supporting the ministry until the policy is finalized, adopted and implemented.



Germany sets a new ambitious goal for literacy

Germany aims to raise the literacy and numeracy skills of at least 5 million of its 7.5 million adults with low literacy levels within the next 15 years. At the same time, the country will promote guidance and counselling services, to help achieve its aim. This initiative is entailed in a [resolution adopted at the 75th General Assembly of the German Commission for UNESCO](#) in mid-September. This initiative is a big step towards achieving 'inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all' as stated in Goal 4 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The United Nations General Assembly adopted the SDGs in September, 2015 to guide the global development agenda for the next 15 years.

Additionally, the German resolution aims to promote the recognition schemes of non-formal and informal learning and to increase inclusive education in formal and non-formal settings.



GRALE III editorial team meeting

The Editorial Committee for the Third UNESCO *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE III)* hosted by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) held its third meeting in Hamburg. During its meeting, the editorial team discussed the quality and content of chapters to be included in the publication due to be released in 2016. GRALE III will focus on monitoring the benefits of adult learning and education for health and well-being, community and society,

and employment and labor market. The report is being produced by UIL in conjunction with international partners including the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).

About the Report

The UNESCO *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)* is produced every three years to monitor developments in adult learning and education in all regions of the world. GRALE is the key instrument for monitoring progress in policy, governance, financing, participation, and quality with regard to the recommendations adopted at the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI).

Supporting adult learning and education through the CONFINTEA fellowship programme

In 2015, six education specialists participated in the CONFINTEA fellowship programme offered by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). The one-month fellowships are given to governmental and non-governmental education specialists from UNESCO Member States and allow them to develop national policies for their countries in adult learning and education. The fellows are expected to pay particular attention to the action areas of policy, governance, finance, quality and participation. The fellowship programme falls within UIL's mandate to build capacities and advance inclusive and integrated adult learning education policies in Member States, as stipulated in the Belém Framework for Action.

The fellowship programme that took place in October, brought together specialists from Ethiopia, Togo, Tunisia, Uruguay, Egypt and Indonesia. Together with adult education specialists at the Institute and educationist Kjell Rubenson, professor of Education at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver, Canada), the fellows worked on areas of education that present a challenge in their countries. These areas include:

- Expansion of the resource learning centers in Ethiopia (**Yoseph Abera**, Senior Expert, Adult and Non Formal Education, Ministry of Education)
- Improvement of the quality of literacy programmes with appropriate funding schemes in Togo (**Catherine Djayouri Noulo-Kmey**, Coordonnatrice/Programme National d'Appui à l'Alphabétisation Fonctionnelle des Femmes, Ministère de l'Action Sociale, de la Promotion de la Femme et de l'Alphabétisation)
- Certification of non-formal education in the Tunisian National Qualifications Framework (**Mohamed Ben Youchâa**, Director of Literacy and Adult Education, Ministry of Social Affairs)



- Development of family education initiatives in support of vulnerable children in Uruguay (**Patricia Banchemo Corbo**, National Directorate of Education, Ministry of Education and Culture)
- Integration of quality factors for sustainable development within adult learning and education in Egypt (**Nadia Salama Hashem Hassan**, Planning and Research Principal, Adult Education Authority, Ministry of Education)
- Development of a new curriculum framework for community learning centres in Indonesia (**Yohan Rubiyantoro**, Ministry of Education and Culture)

Launched in 2011, the CONFINTEA fellowship programme is funded by UIL and targets education professionals from UNESCO Member States to help initiate and build on research that benefits adult education and lifelong learning in their countries.

CONFINTEA research scholarships 2015

Four education professionals were granted one-month CONFINTEA research scholarships by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) in September 2015. These scholarships are funded by private donations and offer researchers and education professionals from UNESCO Member States an opportunity to conduct in-depth research in the field of lifelong learning, focusing on various aspects of adult and continuing education, literacy and non-formal basic education. The scholars spend a month at UIL, where they have access to the UIL Library and can consult and share knowledge with UIL staff working in various fields. The research conducted by the scholars helps their countries improve the quality of adult education based on a lifelong learning perspective. CONFINTEA research scholarships support knowledge exchange for educational change



Dr Ali Ziyaeemehr (Director of the Strategic Research Department, Supreme Council of Education, Ministry of Education, Islamic Republic of Iran) began work on a research project entitled ‘A Framework for Expansion of the Vision for Literacy and Basic Education in the Islamic Republic of Iran from a Lifelong Learning Perspective’. Now back in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr Ziyaeemehr is continuing to work on the project. He has already given two presentations on the topic to policymakers and will continue to discuss global and national literacy and basic education challenges with his colleagues at the Ministry of Education and with the UNESCO National Commission in Tehran.

Ms Thi Bao Ngoc Nguyen (Specialist, Ministry of Education and Training, Viet Nam) worked on a handbook entitled The Sustainability of Community Learning Centres (CLCs) in Viet Nam. During her time at UIL, Ms Nguyen had access to global research on CLCs and lifelong learning which will help her to complete the handbook. The handbook will be used from 2016 onwards to train managers and education staff working in community learning centres in Viet Nam. It is hoped that other countries will also benefit from the outcomes of this training.

Mr Timothy Ireland (Associate Professor and the UNESCO Chair of Youth and Adult Education at the Federal University of Paraíba, Brazil) conducted research on ‘The Post-2015 Agenda on Education and Development: What Does it Mean for the Future of Adult Education?’ Upon his return to Brazil, Mr Ireland will write a journal article on this timely global topic. In addition, he will share his insights in a special issue of the *International Review of Education – Journal of Lifelong Learning* on the post-2015 process. Mr Ireland’s work fills an important gap in academic research, as the existing material in this field is minimal. His contribution will be an important advocacy tool for adult education worldwide.

Ms Olena Vasylenko (Senior Scientific Researcher, Andragogy Department, Institute of Pedagogical and Adult Education, National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, Ukraine) carried out her research on ‘Non-formal Adult Education Development in the Ukraine Based on Global Experiences’. Ms Vasylenko will continue to conduct research in this field and to share her results in Ukraine and other parts of the world. She has already shared the insights she developed at UIL with her colleagues and started to strengthen cooperation with UIL by adding her institute to the global ALADIN (Adult Learning Documentation and Information) network.

The call for applications for the 2016 CONFITEA research scholarships will be posted in March next year. Launched in 2012, CONFITEA scholarships are offered to education professionals from UNESCO Member States to help initiate and build on research that benefits adult education and lifelong learning in their countries.

The scholarships are mainly based on private donations from the British educationalist Peter Jarvis and his publisher Taylor & Francis and the Nomura Centre for Lifelong Integrated Education in Japan.