

# 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI): National Report on the Development and State of the Art of Adult Learning and Education (ALE)



## A) Introduction

1. The 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) will be a UNESCO led inter-governmental conference (category II) for policy dialogue and policy assessment on adult learning and education, hosted by Brazil in May 2009. It will be preceded by Regional Preparatory Conferences to be carried out during 2008. On behalf of UNESCO and in close cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters and relevant UNESCO offices in the regions, and in partnership with various adult education stakeholders (UN agencies, NGOs/CSOs, Trade Unions, Corporate and Private providers), the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) is coordinating the preparatory process leading to CONFINTEA VI.

2. Since 1949, five International Conferences on Adult Education have been held by UNESCO. The last CONFINTEA, hosted by Germany in July 1997, led to the adoption of two documents: the *Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning* and the *Agenda for the Future*, which recognized adult learning and education as key tools to address current social and development challenges world-wide.

3. The aim of CONFINTEA VI is to renew international momentum for adult learning and education by highlighting the crucial role that they play in achieving the Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in building of knowledge economies and learning societies, as well as other major international policy frameworks in relation to education and development, in particular the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE), the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), and the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD).

“Adult education denotes the entire body of ongoing learning processes [...] whereby people regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, and improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction to meet their own needs and those of their society.” (*Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning*, adopted by CONFINTEA V, July 1997)

4. For this purpose, Member States are requested to prepare a national report on the developments in adult learning and education since 1997 (CONFINTEA V), on the current state of the art and future challenges of adult learning and education. The national reports will constitute a major input for the all-stakeholder International Conference and for the Regional Preparatory Conferences. They will also provide the basis for the CONFINTEA VI Working Document, and supply critical data for a Global Report on Adult Learning and Education.

5. Assessing the state of the art of adult learning and education in countries will also provide an excellent opportunity to assess the progress of the national EFA agendas, and will help to fill the information gaps, in particular with regard to goals 3 (ensuring the learning needs of all young people and adults through appropriate learning and life skills programmes), 4 (achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy), 5 (achieving gender equality in education) and 6 (improving the quality of education).
6. The national reports will furthermore generate information that can be used to extend the data base on policies, research findings and effective practices in literacy, non-formal education, adult and lifelong learning, which is currently developed by UIL. In addition, the full set of national reports will be made available on CD and on the web.
7. Given the dispersed nature of adult learning and education, consistent and comparable data of good quality are often lacking. An assessment of the overall situation, therefore, requires information and data from a range of different sources. When preparing your national reports, please take into account the full variety of sources in your country and form a concerted effort of governmental (including ministries of education, labour, health, agriculture, gender, culture, sports and leisure, social welfare, finance and economy, and foreign affairs), non-governmental, public and private actors, trade unions, social partners and bilateral and multilateral development agencies.
8. It is important to use this exercise to create a national dialogue involving all stakeholders (various ministries providing adult education, corporate and unions, NGOs and Civil Society Organizations, private providers, UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral development agencies etc.). We thus strongly encourage you to do this with the help of a national committee with representatives of all stakeholders, and have the findings validated through a national conference.
9. It would be appreciated if you could attach any documentation (produced since 1997) and essential background information on adult learning and education to the national report as an annex.
10. Should you have any questions please send them to [uil@unesco.org](mailto:uil@unesco.org). Please submit your report to the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning **by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008** with a copy to the relevant UNESCO Regional Bureau where applicable (Regional Bureau for Education in Africa: [dakar@unesco.org](mailto:dakar@unesco.org); Regional Bureau for the Arab States: [beirut@unesco.org](mailto:beirut@unesco.org); Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific: [bangkok@unesco.org](mailto:bangkok@unesco.org); Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean: [santiago@unesco.org](mailto:santiago@unesco.org)).

## **B) Guidelines for the Preparation of National Reports on the Situation of Adult Learning and Education (ALE)**

The following structure is proposed to assist countries in presenting their national situation:

### **I. General Overview**

Please provide brief contextual information on your country, including total number and percentage of the adult population in relation to the total population by qualification levels, gender, employment/self-employment situation, distribution between rural/urban areas, different language and ethnic groups, etc.

### **II. Please elaborate on the following sections on adult learning and education in detail:**

1. Policy, Legislation and Financing
  - 1.1. Legislative, policy and administrative frameworks of ALE;
  - 1.2. Financing of ALE;
2. Quality of Adult Learning and Education: Provision, Participation and Achievement
  - 2.1. Provision of ALE and institutional frameworks;
  - 2.2. Participation in ALE;
  - 2.3. Monitoring & evaluating programmes and assessing learning outcomes;
  - 2.4. Adult educators/facilitators' status and training;
3. Research, Innovation and Good Practices
  - 3.1. Research studies in the field of adult learning;
  - 3.2. Innovations and examples of good practice;
4. Adult Literacy
5. Expectations of CONFINTEA VI and Future Perspectives of ALE.

## **1. Policy, Legislation and Financing**

### **1.1. Legislative and policy frameworks of ALE**

This part should contain a concise description of the legislative and policy situation of ALE.

- 1.1.1. What is the legislative and policy environment of ALE in your country? Indicate which policies and laws related to ALE have been established since 1997 (CONFINTEA V).
- 1.1.2. What are the priority goals for ALE in your country?
- 1.1.3. How is ALE organized within the government? What ministry/s are in charge or involved? Is ALE centralized/decentralized? How?
- 1.1.4. How are the policy and implementation strategies aligned, for example, with:
  - policies in other sectors (health, economy, labour, rural development, etc.);
  - other goals, such as gender equality, social cohesion, active citizenship, cultural and linguistic diversity;
  - the creation of knowledge economies and/or the building of learning societies;
  - national development plans and strategies; or in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers;
- 1.1.5. What are the main development challenges in your country? How are the ALE goals defined in relation to these challenges?
- 1.1.6. Are there other policies in place that have an impact on ALE?

## 1.2. Financing of ALE

Financing is often provided through a variety of channels. For a comprehensive picture, please give recent data on the following sections and describe trends that have emerged since 1997 (CONFINTEA V):

### 1.2.1. Public investment in ALE:

- a) Share of the budget allocated to adult education within the education sector (indicate measures, activities, responsible bodies);
- b) Share of the budget allocated to adult education from other sectors, made either directly or indirectly within their policies (indicate responsible ministries, describe activities);
- c) ALE in decentralized/local budgets (local governments and authorities, municipalities, communities);
- d) Other investment, e.g. from regional funds, trans-national organisations, etc.

### 1.2.2. Foreign bilateral/multilateral donor investment in ALE:

- list annual amounts and key areas/activities.

### 1.2.3. Support to ALE from private/corporate sector:

- provide data on annual expenditure from corporate sector; provide relations to e.g. overall national budget, overall expenditure from selected national and multinational enterprises.

### 1.2.4. Civil society support to ALE (e.g. religious institutions, unions, NGOs).

### 1.2.5. Learners'/individuals' contributions to ALE.

### 1.2.6. Are there specific direct or indirect financial incentives in support of ALE e.g. learning vouchers, scholarships, paid educational leave, special funds and funding schemes etc.? Are these specific to some programmes or general schemes?

Please elaborate.

### 1.2.7. Are benchmarks (targets) in relation to financing of ALE in place? In your context, what would be realistic benchmarks related to financing of ALE?

## 2. Quality of Adult Learning and Education: Provision, Participation and Achievement

### 2.1. Provision of ALE and institutional frameworks

This section should describe the provision of ALE in terms of organization, coordination, management and available infrastructure. Major trends that have emerged since 1997 (CONFINTEA V) should be highlighted, and evidence provided through good practices.

2.1.1. Which institutions are responsible for managing and co-ordinating ALE at national level?

2.1.2. Please use Table 1 below to list and describe briefly the ALE programmes in your country, including the following items:

- a) Different types of providers (governmental, non-governmental, corporate/private; incl. institutions of higher education) of ALE.
- b) Areas of learning they address.
- c) Target groups of the programmes (provide, if possible age, gender, employment situation).
- d) Please give annual cost of programmes, and
- e) Indicate funding source

Table 1

Programme (name and brief description)	a) Provider (please choose the appropriate one from below):			b) Area of learning (please choose the appropriate one/s from below):			c) Target group/s	d) Programme cost	e) Funding source
	Public/ State	CSO/ NGO	Private	General competencies	Technical skills	Knowledge generation, innovation			

2.1.3. What linkages exist between formal and non-formal approaches? Please describe.

2.1.4. Does ALE lead to certification and national awards? If yes, provide examples.

## **2.2. Participation in ALE**

This section is concerned with participation rates, access to programmes, and the motivation and profile of target groups/learners. Please provide up-to date information on participation in ALE activities and indicate trends since 1997 (CONFINTEA V) in the following areas:

- 2.2.1. Statistical data on participation:
  - a) Provide an overall participation rate (% of population participating in an adult education activity) and difference compared to previous survey(s). Please disaggregate according to gender, educational background and age;
  - b) Show participation, in specific programmes (possible examples for programmes: literacy/numeracy programmes; health (including HIV prevention) programmes; income generating skills training; programmes addressing special learning needs (e.g. prisoners, migrants, disabled); technical skill training (including ICTs)). Please provide information, if available, on total numbers of participants, disaggregated according to age and gender.
- 2.2.2. What existing surveys/studies have been undertaken on non-participation and groups that are difficult to reach? Please give main results in terms of who the excluded are, why they are being excluded and what kind of support can be given.
- 2.2.3. What existing surveys/studies have been undertaken on learner motivation?
- 2.2.4. Which measures have been undertaken to mobilize learners and to increase participation?
- 2.2.5. Are specific groups targeted by ALE provision? Which ones?
- 2.2.6. Are there benchmarks in relation to participation in place? If yes, which ones? If not, what would be realistic benchmarks for participation in your context?

## **2.3. Monitoring & evaluating programmes and assessing learning outcomes**

Assessing learning outcomes is crucial for any educational undertaking. Measuring the outcomes of adult education is, however, complex as outcomes relate to a wide range of aspects such as personal development, socio-economic and cultural factors and involves both competences and attitudes. For this reason this section should cover a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation perspective taking into account the programmatic and individual level.

- 2.3.1. Do you assess the learning outcomes of ALE programmes (national, regional and local community perspective/programme perspective) and learners' achievements (learner perspective)? If so, what methods do you use?
- 2.3.2. What tools and mechanisms are used to monitor and evaluate programmes to ensure good quality?
- 2.3.3. To what extent are the results used for a) legislation, b) policy formulation, and c) programme development?
- 2.3.4. Are benchmarks in relation to outcomes of ALE in place? In your context, what would be realistic benchmarks related to outcomes?

#### **2.4. Adult educators/facilitators' status and training**

This section should elaborate on the human resources available for ALE and describe key initiatives and changes in this regard since 1997 (CONFINTEA V).

- 2.4.1. What educational qualifications/training are required for adult educators/facilitators? What continuing/in-service training measures are in place?
- 2.4.2. Is adult education considered as a specific profession, and are there higher education institutions providing such qualifications?  
If yes, please elaborate.
- 2.4.3. Please indicate the proportion of adult educators/facilitators in relation to the overall number of teaching personnel in your country.
- 2.4.4. What are the terms of employment and remuneration in ALE?

### **3. Research, Innovation and Good Practice**

#### **3.1. Research studies in the field of adult learning**

This section should reflect the latest research developments in the field of ALE:

- 3.1.1. Which key studies in adult education have been undertaken in your country recently (within last five years)?
- 3.1.2. What were the major questions addressed and prompted by these studies?
- 3.1.3. What are the key findings?
- 3.1.4. To what extent did these findings inform policies and practice? How did they influence practice? Please, give examples.

#### **3.2. Innovations and examples of good practice**

Which innovations and/or exemplary programmes in ALE have been developed since 1997 (CONFINTEA V) that make a significant difference in your country and could be instructive for other countries, with regard to

- 3.2.1. Policy formulation, financing, teaching/learning methods?
- 3.2.2. Mobilization of learners, involvement of learners in programme design, emergence of learners as partners?
- 3.2.3. Why are the above listed examples considered as innovations in your country?

#### **4. Adult Literacy**

This section deals with the relevant changes and developments in one of the central areas of ALE: literacy. Adult Education is broader and subsumes literacy but literacy is the pre-requisite for other types of learning. It is crucial to the acquisition, by every child, youth and adult, of essential life skills that enable them to address the challenges they can face in life and represents an essential step in basic education, which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

##### **United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012)**

In December 2001, the United Nations General Assembly launched the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) under the slogan “Literacy as Freedom”. UNLD focuses on the needs of non-literate youth and adults, in particular women and girls, out of-school children and youth. It is based on a broad notion of literacy as the foundation for lifelong learning. This includes synergies between formal, non-formal and informal education and learning, and the creation of literate environments.

UNESCO’s Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) is a global strategic framework for the implementation of the UNLD. It was created when it became apparent that existing literacy efforts would not be sufficient to achieve a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015. LIFE targets 35 countries that have literacy rate less than 50% or population of more than 10 million who cannot read nor write.

- 4.1. How is literacy defined in your country? Have there been any changes since 1997 (CONFINTEA V)? Please explain.
- 4.2. Which new policies have been adopted and implemented?
- 4.3. Please give examples of effective practice and innovative literacy programmes.
- 4.4. Please illustrate how policies and programmes focus on gender. Describe the importance given to women and other target groups.
- 4.5. To what extent do policies and programmes aim at building literate environments? What progress could be achieved?

#### **5. Expectations of CONFINTEA VI and future perspectives for ALE**

This section should focus on your country’s principal expectations of CONFINTEA VI and on the main challenges that ALE has to address in your country in the future.

- 5.1. What outcomes do you expect from CONFINTEA VI?
- 5.2. Please list the main issues that adult education will have to address and describe future perspectives for the development of policies and practices in adult education and adult learning.

### C) Presentation of the report

Member States are asked to transmit the report to the UIL **by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008**, by electronic mail as an attachment (address: [uil@unesco.org](mailto:uil@unesco.org)) with a copy to the relevant UNESCO Regional Bureau where applicable (Africa: [dakar@unesco.org](mailto:dakar@unesco.org); the Arab States: [beirut@unesco.org](mailto:beirut@unesco.org); Asia and Pacific: [bangkok@unesco.org](mailto:bangkok@unesco.org); Latin America and the Caribbean: [santiago@unesco.org](mailto:santiago@unesco.org)).

In the event that the report is produced in a language other than English, French or Spanish, it would be appreciated if another version were presented in at least one of these three languages.

1. Bibliographic references used for the preparation of the report should include the individual or collective author, the title, place of publication, publishing house, date of publication and pagination. If the title of the document or publication is not in English, French or Spanish, a translation of the title into one of these languages would be useful.
2. In order to facilitate cataloguing, the cover page should be presented in the following way:

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National report of [your country] by
[the official author]
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