



What should the International Adult Learners' Charter contain?

- **Policy Development**
- **Access and Participation**
- **Advice, Guidance and Support**
- **Resources**
- **Quality**
- **Innovation**
- **National Context**
- **International Co-operation**

International Adult Learners' Charter



Produced by
Scotland's Learning Partnership
on behalf of the
Global Learners' Network

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International Adult Learners' Charter

We, the delegates of the International Adult Learners' Conference held from 31 March - 4 April 2009 in Scotland,

Recalling the terms of Article 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights states that: "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace,"

Recalling the efforts to address the challenges of poverty and inequality through the Millennium Development Goals¹, Education for All², the United Nations Literacy Decade, the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment, the Decade for Education and Sustainable Development and the Treaty of Lisbon,

Recognising that during the past two decades, adult learning has undergone substantial changes and experienced enormous growth in scope and scale. In the knowledge-based societies that are emerging around the world, adult and continuing education have become an imperative in the community and at the workplace. New demands

¹ MDG's 1, 3, 6, 7 & 8 ² EFA goals 3, 4, 5, & 6

from society and working life raise expectations requiring each and every individual to continue renewing knowledge and skills throughout the whole of his or her life,

Believing that adult learning is more than a right; it is a key to the twenty-first century; it is both a result of active citizenship and a condition for full participation in society. It is a powerful concept for promoting democracy, justice, gender equity, social and economic development, and for building a world in which conflict is replaced by dialogue and tolerance,

Acknowledging that the aspiration to develop the voice of the learner has grown out of the adult learners' week movement and the development of learner associations during the past two decades,

Proclaims this international charter for the purpose of placing adult learners at the heart of promoting, developing and securing the future of adult and lifelong learning, and urging governments, learners, non-governmental organizations, educators, families and individuals to safeguard the rights of adult learners by putting into practice the articles and actions contained within.

Policy Development

Article 1: All adult learners have a right to participate in the policy development for adult and lifelong learning systems

- 1.1 Every adult has a fundamental right of access to education for the full development of human personality and potential, which are essential for human freedom and tolerance. Member States will develop a policy for adult learning which ensures that programmes effectively fulfil the needs and aspirations of their learners, with the freedom to develop personal and intellectual talents through learning, both formal and non-formal.
- 1.2 All adult learners have the right to be treated as equals in determining their own educational and learning needs and learners will have the right to demand a central role in the process of producing the policy.
- 1.3 Everyone must have full opportunity to participate in accordance with his or her own personal ability, therefore adult learners will be enabled and supported to actively and fully participate at all levels to determine the shape and content of the policy.
- 1.4 Policy development must be genuinely learner led with adult learners having the right to be involved at all levels and stages.

Access and Participation

Article 2: All adult learners have the right to access and participate in adult learning opportunities relevant to their needs and aspirations

- 2.1 Everyone has the right to learning opportunities throughout life, adult learning provision will be learner-centred and will support and tailored to the needs of the individual.
- 2.2 Every adult has the right to have their achievements recognised and Adult Learners' Week's must be developed in every country to highlight opportunities and showcase achievement and linked through a global network of festivals.
- 2.3 All adult learners' will be entitled to be equal participants in the decision-making processes at national and international levels through representation in major global debates on adult learning.
- 2.4 Every adult learner will have a voice at local, national and international level through the creation of a global adult learners' network, national learner forums, and regional and local learner groups.
- 2.5 Every member state will develop a learners' ambassador programme to ensure that learners are at the forefront of developments in access and participation.

Advice Guidance and Support

Article 3: Adult learners will have the right to receive high quality comprehensive, impartial, current information, advice and support to enable them to make informed choices about their learning at all stages.

- 3.1 Advice, Guidance and Support forms an essential element of all adult learning and lifelong learning systems and guidance will be available at all stages of their learning and be provided at no cost to the individual.
- 3.2 All adult guidance providers must be trained to the highest standards to ensure that best practice is maintained.
- 3.3 Every adult has a right to participate in adult and lifelong learning provision and must receive practical support to ensure that there are no barriers to participation.
- 3.4 Every adult learner will have the right to be supported to influence changes in adult education/lifelong learning provision, its quality as well as the provision of information and guidance.

Resources

Article 4: The resourcing of adult learning is essential to the development of sustainable adult and lifelong learning systems

- 4.1 It is essential that governments and public authorities at all levels ensure that adult learning is adequately and consistently funded to meet the full range of adult learners needs, including non-formal learning opportunities.
- 4.2 Adult learners have the right to learn using the best high quality teaching resources. New technologies will be used to create a learners web based network, to share ideas, experience and develop a bank of learning resources.
- 4.3 Adult learners' week should be adopted by every member state and a learning ambassador appointed to be responsible for maintaining each countries learners voice page on the CONFINTEA VI Web Site.

Quality

Article 5: All adult learners have a right to expect high quality adult learning programmes designed to meet their needs

- 5.1 It is incumbent on governments, public authorities, adult learners, non governmental organizations, and appropriate private agencies, at all levels, to join forces and plan together to shape and deliver effective quality assurance systems in member states.
- 5.2 It is essential that learners are partners in consistently monitoring the quality of adult learning provision, such as learner leaders or ambassadors, as part of national inspection regimes.
- 5.3 It is essential that learners will have information to help them recognise quality learning opportunities through internationally agreed quality standards. Designing and measuring quality will be based on the principle of continuous improvement.

Innovation

Article 6: Research and innovation are indispensable components of high quality adult learning systems

- 6.1 Investment in programmed research for adult learning will result in the dissemination of best practise and encourage change and innovation to help bring about improvement in adult learning. The adult and lifelong learning system will thereby benefit from innovations calculated to develop better methods and tools.
- 6.2 The collection, provision and dissemination of information and documentation on adult learning constitute a major - necessity. In particular, there is a need to circulate information on the results of research and evaluation studies concerning programmes, experiments and activities.
- 6.3 Adult learning can be innovative, creative, democratic and forward thinking and it is essential that governments, public authorities, adult learners, non-governmental organizations, and appropriate private agencies, encourage partnership development across the learning community.

National

Article 7: National organisations play a major role in supporting adult learners' democratic representation at local and national level

- 7.1 It is incumbent on all organisations responsible for supporting adult learners to promote a consistent, overall and decentralized plan of action in the framework of lifelong education so as to allow for continuity and coordination of local and national democratic learner forums and or networks.
- 7.2 It is essential that all public authorities at all levels and specialized non-governmental bodies encourage adult learners to participate in local and national democratic structures. Their action shall consist in enforcing legislation and regulations, providing material assistance, and adopting all other measures of encouragement, stimulation and guidance. The public authorities will also ensure that such fiscal measures are adopted as may encourage these activities.
- 7.3 It is essential that adult learners be supported and empowered to assist to national organisations in their endeavours regarding the development and promotion of adult education and learning.

International Co-operation

Article 8: International co-operation is a prerequisite for the universal and well-balanced promotion of adult learning and ensuring that the rights of adult learners are protected

- 8.1 It is essential that governments, public authorities, adult learners, non-governmental organizations, and appropriate private agencies, give adult learning greater prominence in international bilateral and multilateral co-operation.
- 8.2 International co-operation must be prompted by wholly disinterested motives in order to promote and stimulate organic development in this field.
- 8.3 Through co-operation and the pursuit of mutual interests in the universal language of adult learning, all peoples will contribute to the preservation of lasting peace, mutual respect and friendship and will thus create a propitious climate for solving international problems. Close collaboration between all interested national and international governmental and non-governmental agencies, based on respect for the specific competence of each, will necessarily encourage the development of adult learning throughout the world.

