

Report of the Second Meeting of the CONFINTEA Advisory Group Mexico City, 28 May 2011



The CONFINTEA Advisory Group was created in the beginning of 2010 as a mechanism to guide and support UNESCO in the follow-up process to the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI). The Advisory Group includes representatives of governments, international key stakeholder organizations, UNESCO Governing Bodies and UNESCO. Involvement in the CONFINTEA Advisory Group is meant to be long-term, both institutional as well as personal, with regular meetings to take stock of and give new impetus to the CONFINTEA VI follow-up process.¹

As a result of the first meeting of the Advisory Group, which took place at UIL in March 2010, Mexico offered to host the first Regional CONFINTEA Follow up Meeting as well as the second session of the CONFINTEA Advisory Group. Accordingly, the second meeting of the CONFINTEA Advisory Group was carried out on 28 May in Mexico City, immediately following the CONFINTEA Regional Follow-up Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean (25-27 May 2011).

Twenty-five representatives of governments, international stakeholder organisations (Association for the Development of Education in Africa/ADEA, Organization of Ibero-American States/OEI, International Council for Adult Education/ICAE, dvv international, and Global Learners' Network) and UNESCO (Headquarters, Regional and Field Offices and Institutes) participated in the second meeting of the Advisory Group.² All of them had also embraced the opportunity to attend the preceding Regional Meeting. The Advisory Group (1) shared information on activities undertaken in their respective countries, regions or organizations in following up the CONFINTEA agenda and (2) reviewed the Regional Meeting. As a major outcome of the meeting, the Advisory Group (3) gave advice on the draft questionnaire prepared by UIL for the first national post-CONFINTEA progress reporting. In conclusion, the Advisory Group (4) proposed steps and elements for the way ahead. A copy of the (5) updated CONFINTEA Road Map (as of September 2011) has been added to the report.

1) Initiatives Undertaken in the Follow-up to CONFINTEA

Overall, two main initiatives have been undertaken by members of the Advisory Group in the follow-up to CONFINTEA: firstly, the *Belém Framework for Action* has been translated into diverse national languages, and/or has been disseminated to national and regional stakeholders and policy makers, e.g. in Brazil, Kenya, Morocco, Republic of Korea and by the Global Learners' Network. Moreover, Mexico sent a message to all countries in the region encouraging them to present the *Belém Framework* to their parliaments. Particular initiatives at national level

¹ See: Terms of Reference of the CONFINTEA Advisory Group

http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/INSTITUTES/UIL/confintea/pdf/News/confinteavi_Advisory%20Group_TOR.pdf

² See: List of Participants of the Second Meeting of the CONFINTEA Advisory Group

http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/INSTITUTES/UIL/confintea/pdf/News/confinteavi_Advisory%20Group_Participants.pdf

include the preparation of an executive summary of the *Belém Framework* which was submitted to Parliamentarians and Senators in Brazil.

Secondly, national and cross-national meetings have been organized to present and discuss the *Belém Framework* with stakeholders. A sub-regional meeting between Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia adopted resolutions for specific CONFINTEA follow-up activities and agreed to make the future meetings a regular monitoring mechanism for the *Belém Framework*. ICAE has made the follow-up to CONFINTEA as one of the central themes in their World Assembly (June 2011). The Global Learners Network is currently discussing an action plan. In the same context, learners in 23 countries were mobilized to undertake awareness-raising activities on the CONFINTEA VI process.

The Advisory Group underlined that joint and coordinated follow-up activities between partners at regional level are of particular importance. This also includes streamlining the follow-up of CONFINTEA with monitoring other policy agendas, notably Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The CONFINTEA follow-up is going to be included as a programme topic in the upcoming Asia/Pacific meeting on EFA (July/August 2011). In Africa, the UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar, which has recently included the CONFINTEA follow-up as a priority item, and ADEA have teamed up to develop a number of activities in line with the *Belém Framework* recommendations. The question of key competences for lifelong learning will be addressed in the next ADEA triennial, involving the private sector and a youth forum.

An issue of continuous importance mentioned by the Advisory Group is research, in particular evidence-based studies on the social and economic impact of adult learning. OEI is envisioning undertaking a study on the costs of improving literacy rates, in cooperation with countries in Latin America. In preparation of the Regional Implementation and Monitoring Matrix, the UNESCO Regional Office in Santiago collected information on the follow-up to CONFINTEA in the countries of the region. Several attempts are undertaken to design indicators and/or enrich already existing ones. ADEA has begun working on the development of indicators for non-formal youth and adult literacy and education in Africa. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics produced a pilot module on adult education in Latin American and the Caribbean, to be added to UIS's regular data collection activities. Brazil has embarked on developing indicators to track the implementation of the *Belém Framework* in the region, to which OEI has associated itself.

2) Lessons Drawn from the Regional Follow-up Meeting

Regarding the main result of the First Regional CONFINTEA Follow-up Meeting, the Advisory Group acknowledged that the [Regional Implementation and Monitoring Matrix](#) with concrete action points represents a constructive and tangible move towards a more coordinated implementation of the *Belém Framework for Action*. Given the importance of concerted regional approaches and the contextualization of the CONFINTEA follow-up within the realities of the different regions, it was considered useful to develop specific regional matrixes also for the follow-up in the other regions.

However, in light of the confusion which emerged in the Regional Meeting around the different monitoring activities and tools developed by UNESCO, it was deemed critical to be very careful when presenting them and describing their nature and inter-connectivity, namely: [The Global Monitoring Matrix](#) is the original master template from which the regional matrixes and other monitoring tools are further developed. Both UNESCO offices and Member States or other partners are invited to use the global master template and to adapt it for their purposes.

With a view to the procedures of the Regional Meeting, the Advisory Group members, several of whom had been part of plenary Roundtables themselves, critically assessed the imbalance of too many general country case presentations, as opposed to sharing concrete examples of CONFINTEA follow-up and contributing to the thematic discussions. The need for conceptual clarification and to also address emerging trends and challenges was stressed. It was strongly argued that more attention must be made for all actors involved in other monitoring meetings (and related activities) to be focused and precise.

Apart from the stakeholders already involved in the regional Meeting, it was suggested to include in forthcoming meetings Ministers or representatives of other sectors, such as health and finances, in order to get the message across the boundaries of education. Long-term alliances with regional organizations should be forged. The other stakeholders to be better involved include learner “ambassadors” or representatives, the private sector, and those actors who can contribute innovative experiences. One possibility to cater to these demands is the organization of technical pre-conferences in future regional meetings.

Overall, the importance of (continuous) communication was mentioned, echoing a strong point already made by the Advisory Group in its first meeting in March 2010.

3) Advice on the Draft Questionnaire for the post-CONFINTEA Reporting

The draft questionnaire developed by UIL in cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters, UIS and external stakeholders was appreciated by the Advisory Group as being a useful instrument which will allow UNESCO to fulfill its monitoring mandate, while at the same time allowing countries to obtain a picture of their own situation in adult education. The definitions provided in the questionnaire will help countries to gain more clarification on the concepts in adult education and lifelong learning. It was particularly acknowledged that the post-CONFINTEA reporting is combined with assessing the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD).

Regarding the strategies for dissemination and support to countries for filling in the questionnaire, the following concrete suggestions were made by the Advisory Group:

- To keep in mind that reporting has a double purpose: obtaining information and mobilizing;
- To encourage countries to set up a national committee and undertake a participatory process with all stakeholders (including learners) in order to prepare a comprehensive response to the questionnaire;

- To encourage countries to also share/provide studies and evaluative reports to complement the information gathered through the questionnaire;
- To use the data from UIS for literacy rates;
- To make sure that definitions are well explained, in particular of lifelong learning;
- To include more open questions; and
- To use a systematic communication approach and organize an official “launch” of the questionnaire in order to create visibility.

The importance of regional partners in mobilizing and supporting countries in their processes to answer the questionnaire was strongly underlined. OEI announced its readiness to use their regular communication channels (with the Directors of Adult Education in the countries of Latin America) to remind and help countries. OREALC offered to use the meeting “UNESCO’S role and challenges in Latin America/Caribbean” with Education Ministers and Ministers of Social Development in August 2011 in Mexico to mobilize for the preparation of the national progress reports.

Concerns were raised with regard to two issues: first, the reliability of data and information obtained through the questionnaire, and secondly the question of how the involvement of diverse ministries, programme staff and multi-sectoral responses can be encouraged.

4) Steps and Elements for the Way Forward

Regarding next steps in monitoring the *Belém Framework for Action*, possibilities for regional follow-up meetings in other regions were discussed. Concrete proposals were mentioned for the Arab States (CONFINTEA and LIFE Assessment Meeting planned in July), Africa (joint planning between ADEA and UNESCO Dakar of a two-step process beginning with sub-regional meetings in the next six months) and Asia/Pacific (a regional CONFINTEA Follow-up Meeting hosted by the Republic of Korea in September 2012). It will be explored whether the third meeting of the Advisory Group could be organized back to back with the Asia/Pacific meeting.

The outcomes of the Advisory Group meeting include the proposal for joint action such as the establishment of a regional observatory of communication and cooperation to implement and monitor the *Belém Framework for Action* in Latin America and the Caribbean, coordinated by UNESCO Santiago on the basis of the Regional Implementation and Monitoring Matrix, which will be sent to all countries in the region asking them to indicate their own specific concrete activities related to the proposed Action Points. Another concrete proposal for a joint activity was the elaboration of a glossary on non-formal adult education for Latin America/Caribbean, under the coordination of OEI and UIL. Upcoming regional and international events were mentioned which could be used as a reminder and sounding board for the CONFINTEA follow-up, such as the Ibero-American Conference on Education (OEI) in September 2011 and the ASEM Forum on Lifelong Learning in Denmark in May 2012.

Suggestions were made with regard to providing platforms for the voice of the learners by, for example, requesting each Member State to nominate a “Learners’ Ambassador”, and to

creating a network of universities which focus on lifelong learning (on the basis of the “UNESCO Chairs”).

The feedback obtained from the Advisory Group on the draft questionnaire for the first post-CONFINTEA follow-up will be used by UIL to enrich the draft questionnaire, which will be presented and discussed in the forthcoming meeting the Editorial Board of the post-CONFINTEA *Global Report of Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)*.

5) The Updated CONFINTEA Road Map

(As of October 2011)

Timeframe	Activities implemented in 2011 until September:
25 – 27 Jan 2011	International Expert Meeting on Monitoring the <i>Belém Framework for Action</i> (focus on the Overall Monitoring Strategy and Global Monitoring Matrix) at UIL
25 – 27 May 2011	First Regional CONFINTEA Follow-up Meeting in Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico
28 May 2011	Second meeting of the CONFINTEA Advisory Group, Mexico
10 – 12 July 2011	Regional Consultation Meeting on EFA, Basic Education and Adult Education, United Arab Emirates
21 – 22 July 2011	Meeting of Editorial Board of the post-CONFINTEA Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)
September 2011	Questionnaire for the first post-CONFINTEA national progress reports finalized by UIL/UIS and submitted to UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Approval
13 – 14 October	Expert Meeting to Prepare Guidelines on the Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of Learning at UIL
	Foreseen Schedule:
October 2011	Distribution of questionnaire for the first post-CONFINTEA national progress reporting to countries (deadline for submission to UNESCO: January 2012)
October 2011	Presentation of proposals to UNESCO's General Conference for the review of the "Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education" (adopted by the General Conference in Nairobi in 1976)
December 2011	Technical Meeting to Strategize for the Regional Follow-up of CONFINTEA in Africa
January of 2012	Submission of national progress reports to UNESCO
2012	First post-CONFINTEA VI issue of the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education, linking with reporting process on UNLD
September 2012	Regional CONFINTEA Follow-up Meeting in Asia/Pacific, Republic of Korea
Autumn 2012	Third meeting of the CONFINTEA Advisory Group
2015	Countries to prepare and submit second post-CONFINTEA progress report, linking with reporting process on EFA and MDGs
2015	Second post-CONFINTEA VI issue of the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education, linking with reporting process on EFA and MDGs