

The Power of Adult Learning: Vision 2030

25–27 October 2017, Suwon, Republic of Korea

Concept Note

1. INTRODUCTION: BUILDING A 2030 VISION FOR ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION

In 2009, representatives of 144 UNESCO Member States met in Brazil and made a firm commitment to promote adult learning and education (ALE) by adopting the Belém Framework for Action (BFA).

Eight years later, have Member States made progress? What challenges have they faced and what lessons can they share? What should their priorities be today and in the years to come, considering the supportive role of ALE in achieving both the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the targets of the Education 2030 Framework for Action for the implementation of SDG 4? All these questions will be addressed during the CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review (MTR), which will be organized at the end of this year in the Republic of Korea.

“... adult learning and education equip people with the necessary knowledge, capabilities, skills, competences and values to exercise and advance their rights and take control of their destinies. [They] are also an imperative for the achievement of equity and inclusion, for alleviating poverty and for building equitable, tolerant sustainable and knowledge-based societies.”

from **Belém Framework for Action**, 2009,
p. 6, § 9

At the MTR conference, leaders of the global ALE community will take stock of achievements and challenges since 2009. They will share experiences, identify good practice and explore the latest trends, research findings and policy recommendations, including the *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (2015) (RALE)*.

Participants will also consider how the global ALE policy landscape has changed since 2009. This will be the first global meeting on ALE since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the related Education 2030 Framework for Action, as well as *RALE*. Both agreements recognize that learning is *lifelong*, and that ALE can help deliver sustainable development.

For countries to fully harness the benefits of ALE, policymakers, practitioners and advocates will need effective strategies, stronger partnerships and robust monitoring frameworks. The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) invites the international ALE community to come together in the Republic of Korea and help build the 2030 Vision for Adult Learning and Education!

2. BACKGROUND: CONFINTEA VI AND MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 2009

UNESCO has promoted global dialogue and collective learning on ALE for decades. In 1949, it organized the first of a series of international conferences on adult education, known as CONFINTEA.¹ The latest of

¹ Comes from “Conférence Internationale sur l’Education des Adultes”.

these conferences – CONFINTEA VI – took place in Belém, Brazil, in 2009. Participating countries adopted the Belém Framework for Action (BFA), agreeing to make progress in five key areas of ALE: policy; governance; financing; participation, inclusion and equity; and quality.

Member States tasked the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning with monitoring progress in implementing the BFA. They also called for ongoing dialogue and learning on ALE at national, regional and global levels. A key component of this process is the Mid-Term Review, which will support the ALE community to promote action for further progress before it meets for CONFINTEA VII in 2021. It will also provide a platform to examine key developments in the world of ALE since 2009, including the following four areas.

UIL finds mixed progress in implementing the Belém Framework for Action

Its *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)* presents key findings on the state of ALE around the world. National reports and survey results are available at [www.UIL.unesco.org](http://www UIL.unesco.org).

A. Widespread adoption of the concept of lifelong learning

Most Member States have recognized the value of lifelong learning. They know that economies and societies can only thrive if all citizens have opportunities to continually develop their knowledge, skills and competences. Education cannot stop after school, and lifelong learning is seen as a key enabling factor for sustainable development and a tool to promote knowledge-based societies. Lifelong learning has become the guiding principle for educational strategies at international, regional and national levels.

B. A stronger global monitoring instrument for ALE

UIL monitors progress in ALE through its regular *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)*. Three reports, published in 2010, 2013 and 2016, have provided a clear picture of the state of ALE around the world. To monitor progress, they have combined the analysis of national progress reports, survey data, policies and case studies. They have also included policy recommendations and examples of good practice.

The Concept of Lifelong Learning

In essence, lifelong learning is rooted in the integration of learning and living, covering learning activities for people of all ages (children, young people, adults and elderly, girls and boys, women and men) in all life-wide contexts (family, school, community, workplace and so on) and through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal and informal) which together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands. Education systems which promote lifelong learning adopt a holistic and sector-wide approach involving all sub-sectors and levels to ensure the provision of learning opportunities for all individuals.

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning,
n.d. Technical Note: Lifelong Learning.

Lifelong learning in the Republic of Korea: A success story

Many Korean citizens are already engaged in lifelong learning, but the Republic of Korea seeks to increase participation even further. The National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE) and municipal governments are creating new support systems, and some metropolitan city governments are establishing lifelong education networks. Learn from Korea's experience at the Mid-Term Review!

Each *GRALE* also has a special focus. *GRALE I* (2010) provided a stocktake of the state of the art of ALE in the world, as the basis for the discussions and outcomes of CONFINTEA VI. *GRALE II* (2013) focused on rethinking literacy. *GRALE III* (2016) examined the relevance of an inter-sectoral perspective on ALE for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and analysed the impact of ALE on three important areas: health and well-being; employment and the labour market; and social, civic and community life.

Preparations for *GRALE IV* are underway. It will focus on indicators for measuring and providing data on participation

in non-formal ALE to monitor ALE within a framework of lifelong learning and provide evidence for more effective ALE policies and practices.

C. Deeper policy dialogue and guidance at global and regional levels

Between 2011 and 2015, five regional follow-up conferences to CONFINTEA VI have helped countries to identify joint actions to put the BFA into practice in their respective regions. These took place in Latin America and the Caribbean (2011); Africa (2012); Asia and the Pacific (2012); Europe and North America (2013); and the Arab States (2015). A Sub-Regional Follow-Up Conference for the Caribbean (2016) completed the cycle. In late 2016 and early 2017, a series of regional *GRALE III* launch events has helped take stock of progress on ALE in each region.

Meanwhile, at the global level, UNESCO Member States have adopted the *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (2015)*. The recommendation confirms the BFA's five areas of action and defines three key domains of learning and skills: literacy and basic skills; continuing education and professional development; and liberal, popular and community education and citizenship skills.

D. A changing global policy landscape

In 2015, global leaders adopted the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The agenda stresses the need for holistic approaches that combine and connect different sectors, stakeholders and policy areas. The agenda's 17 Sustainable Development Goals include a global goal for education (SDG 4).

In SDG 4, countries commit to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Meanwhile, many of the other goals include targets that relate directly to learning and education (e.g. gender equality; health; economic growth and employment; sustainable consumption and production; and climate change).

The case for ALE in the broader policy agenda

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 for individuals. It is therefore a crucial tool in alleviating poverty, improving health and well-being and contributing to sustainable learning societies.

***Recommendation on
Adult Learning and Education (2015)***

Concomitantly, the global education community adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including its Goal 4 "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all", and the Incheon Declaration, committing to the Education 2030 Framework for Action. The framework provides deeper guidance on the implementation of commitments and priorities for education until 2030. Countries have invited UNESCO to act as a leader and global focal point for the implementation of the new agenda.

3. PURPOSE OF THE MID-TERM REVIEW OF CONFINTEA VI

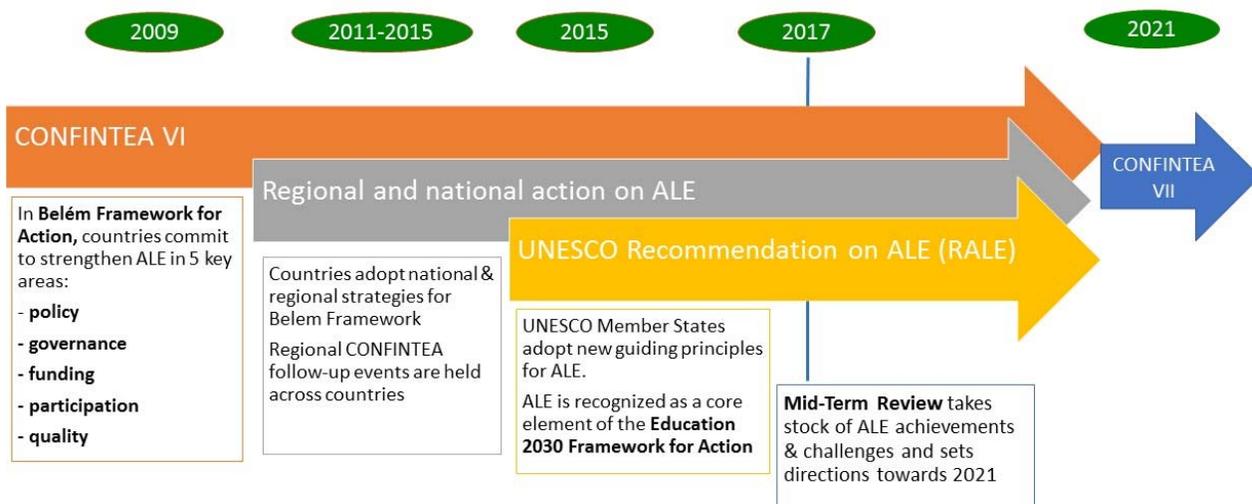
The MTR is a unique opportunity for the global ALE community. Apart from the CONFINTEA meetings themselves, the MTR is the most inclusive and expert global forum on ALE. The 2017 MTR will bridge policy and practice, bringing together decision-makers from government, civil society, academia and the private sector.

Participants will share their experiences, learn from one another and discuss solutions to challenges at global, regional and national levels. They will:

- take stock of progress, activities and trends since 2009, sharing lessons and analysing the comprehensive findings and recommendations of the three *Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education*, specifically those of *GRALE III* ;
- evaluate the latest research on ALE, particularly on the inter-sectoral benefits of ALE, finding powerful new arguments to raise awareness about ALE and strengthen the case for greater investments;
- learn about innovations, good practices and successful examples on how to improve ALE, but also learn about what did not work, and the challenges faced, based on the progress in implementation of the regional action plans to follow up on CONFINTEA VI.
- strengthen existing partnerships and create new ones, at global, regional and national level, in order to develop joint actions for ALE up to CONFINTEA VII (in 2021) and beyond, based on new regional surveys of developments.
- explore the potential of stronger associations between ALE providers and users;
- return home with new ideas on how ALE can fit into broader policy reforms to promote lifelong learning (Education 2030 Framework for Action) and sustainable development (SDGs).

At the midpoint between CONFINTEAs VI and VII, the MTR will generate renewed momentum for ALE at global, regional and national levels. It will also provide the ALE community with valuable feedback on the overall impact that the BFA has had on ALE policies and practices. This will help identify ways in which international activities can support further reforms and improvements in the lead-up to CONFINTEA VII in 2021.

The CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review: Assessing progress achieved since 2009 and preparing the way for CONFINTEA VII



Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education monitor progress and recommend ways forward



4. OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The objectives of the MTR are to:

1. Establish a broad common understanding on the supportive contribution of adult learning and education to sustainable development.
2. Equip participants with solid arguments as to why investment in adult learning and education bears fruit in terms of equitable and inclusive learning societies.
3. Raise awareness among policymakers, practitioners and researchers of the findings and recommendations of *GRALE III*, and the concepts and guidance provided by the *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (2015)*
4. Identify strategies and measures to enhance full implementation and sound monitoring of the BFA towards CONFINTEA VII in 2021 and to increase advocacy for ALE across sectors.
5. Examine the implications of the Incheon Declaration, especially for how adult learning and education will contribute to achieving the SDG 4 commitments and related targets.

The expected outcomes are:

1. A fully motivated global ALE community, ready to address diverse challenges in support of sustainable development on global, regional, national and local/municipal levels.
2. Strengthened international expertise and awareness on the wider benefits of ALE across different sectors.
3. Well-equipped agents in ministries, ALE institutions, universities and research centres, civil society and private sector, keen to apply innovative instruments and mechanisms to improve conditions for youth and adult learners.
4. Practical strategies for further improving policy, governance, financing, participation, inclusion and equity, and quality of ALE in UNESCO Member States within and between sectors
5. A statement on the progress achieved, the challenges to meet and proposals for the way forward.

5. ORGANIZERS AND COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS

a) Co-organizers:

1. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Hamburg, Germany
2. Municipality of Suwon, Republic of Korea
3. Municipality of Osan, Republic of Korea

b) Collaborating partners:

1. Ministry of Education, Republic of Korea
2. Korean National Commission for UNESCO
3. National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE), Republic of Korea
4. UNESCO Bangkok
5. The International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)

6. PARTICIPANTS

The MTR is expected to bring together around 500 participants, including about 350 international participants, representing ALE policy, practice and research.

UNESCO Member States are invited to nominate experts, committed to promoting lifelong learning for all. Delegations should include directors/senior decision-makers responsible for ALE within ministries of education or other government institutions, practitioners from civil society, ALE providers and representatives from research institutions and the media.

7. DURATION AND FORMAT

Over the course of the three days, the programme will be organized in accordance with established patterns of international conferences. Day 1 will take stock of achievements. Day 2 give an overview on current developments with a focus on innovative practice. Day 3 will give the future perspective and conclude on next steps.

8. WORKING LANGUAGES

English, French, Spanish and Korean will be the official languages of the conference. Simultaneous interpreting will be provided.

9. COST-SHARING ARRANGEMENTS

UIL will not charge any fee for participants. The host country will provide local transportation, and meals for all participants during the conference.

UIL will be seeking support from its partners to cover costs of participants from the least developed and some developing countries.

10. REGISTRATION AND DEADLINE

Registration via the conference website is possible only through a code provided by organizers on request, according to invitations sent via national UNESCO commissions. The deadline for registration is 15 August 2017.

11. CONTACT INFORMATION

For further information about the Mid-Term Review Conference, please contact:

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