The role of adult learning and education in lifelong learning: Key issues in implementing the Belém Framework for Action

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1. About adult learning and education

2. CONFINTEA: The international policy discourse

3. The Belém Framework for Action: Harnessing the power and potential of adult learning and education for a viable future

4. Implementing the Belém Framework: From rhetoric to action
1. About adult learning and education
About adult learning and education

Adults: defined in context + youth

Adult education = a right

Adult education → adult learning and education

Adult learning and education: formal, non-formal and informal

Adult learning and education → adult literacy

Adult learning and education ← lifelong learning.
About adult learning and education

Formal, non-formal and informal

Literacy

ALE

LLL
About adult learning and education

Role and purpose:

Responding to technological advances, globalization, development challenges, changing work contexts…

→ More equitable distribution of educational resources between different social groups

→ Facilitating political, social and cultural awareness and participation

→ Supporting democracy and justice

→ Helping men and women to gain control over their lives.
2. CONFINTEA:
The international policy discourse
CONFINTEA: The international policy discourse

CONFINTEA = Conférence internationale de l’Education des Adultes

→ 1949: Helsingor, Denmark
→ 1960: Montréal, Canada
→ 1972: Tokyo, Japan
→ 1985: Paris, France
→ 1997: Hamburg
→ 2009: Belém, Brazil.

- Based on CONFINTEA II and III

1997: *Hamburg Declaration and Agenda for the Future* (CONFINTEA V)

- Based on Nairobi and CONFINTEA IV

= conceptual, visionary and all-embracing outlook on adult learning and education as part of lifelong learning, based on the human right to education.
CONFINTEA: The international policy discourse

Nairobi and Hamburg:
• considered important reference texts
• shaping understanding and discourse in adult education, but

⇒ no wide-ranging policy and programme improvements as proposed (expected, hoped for…)
⇒ EFA I and II
⇒ MDGs
⇒ economic crisis, natural disasters, political instability.
3. The *Belém Framework for Action*: Harnessing the power and potential of adult learning and education for a viable future
The *BFA*: Harnessing the power and potential of ALE for a viable future

CONFINTÉA VI: Belém, Brazil, December 2009
(http://www.unesco.org/en/confintearvi/)

- How to make adult education an integral part of sector-wide lifelong learning policies and development agendas?
- 154 national reports
- 5 regional preparatory conferences → policy documents
- 1 *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)*.
The *BFA*: Harnessing the power and potential of ALE for a viable future

**GRALE:** (key results I)

- Conceptual confusion of lifelong learning and adult learning and education
- Policy discourse divide between lifelong learning and basic education, with economistic imbalance of lifelong learning
- Insufficient funding
- Under-professionalization
- Lack of coordination between ministries and lack of cooperation with all stakeholders.
The *BFA*: Harnessing the power and potential of ALE for a viable future

**GRALE: (key results II)**

- 126 national reports (82%) declared that adult education is covered directly or indirectly.
- 56 countries (36%) said they had introduced specific adult education policy since CONFINTEA V.
- Usually: adult learning and education departments within education ministries.
- Overall low rates of participation, with inequity (gender, geographical location, age, socio-economic status).
- Barriers (institutional, life contexts, personal).
The *BFA*: Harnessing the power and potential of ALE for a viable future

*Belém Framework for Action:*

- adopted by 144 governments in December 2010
- recommendations/commitment to develop adult learning and education as part of lifelong learning
- countries to assess and report on progress (regular monitoring mechanism, progress reports every 3 years)
- UNESCO to coordinate and support data collection and monitoring.
The BFA: Harnessing the power and potential of ALE for a viable future

Selected recommendations (I):

• **Policy**: develop and implement “fully-costed” policies, plans and legislation for adult literacy and adult learning, integrated within a sector-wide lifelong learning perspective

• **Adult literacy**: recognize literacy as a continuum, in surveys and data collection

• **Governance**: involve all stakeholders in the development, implementation and evaluation of adult learning and education programmes – public authorities, civil society, social partners, learners.
The BFA: Harnessing the power and potential of ALE for a viable future

Selected recommendations (II):

- **Financing**: pool existing funds and allocate new funds to adult education and "seek investment of at least 6% of GNP in education"
- **Participation**: promote more access to adult learning and education to disadvantaged groups
- **Quality**: improve training and professionalization of facilitators.
4. Implementing the *Belém Framework*: From rhetoric to action
Implementing the Belém Framework: From rhetoric to action

Approaches and principles:

- crucial role of advocacy
- regional approaches and strategies
- inter-ministerial and intra-ministerial cooperation
- involvement of all stakeholders
- integration of adult literacy and adult education with existing (lifelong learning) policies
- systematic data collection and monitoring.
Implementing the *Belém Framework:* From rhetoric to action

Concrete first steps in countries:

- translating the *Belém Framework for Action* into the national language (Mongolia, Thailand)
- organizing national round-tables (Czech Republic, Japan, Nicaragua, Switzerland, Thailand, Uzbekistan)
- setting up a national task force (Morocco, Uruguay).
Implementing the *Belém Framework*: From rhetoric to action

Concrete first steps at regional level:

- Brazil (December 2010): technical expert meeting to take stock of and further develop regional adult education indicators in Latin America and the Caribbean

- Mexico (May 2011): regional follow-up meeting to discuss and promote the implementation of the *Belém Framework* in Latin America and the Caribbean.
Implementing the *Belém Framework*: From rhetoric to action

Concrete first steps in international monitoring:

- Support tools: Overall Monitoring Strategy and Monitoring Matrix
- Online consultation forum
- International expert meeting

→ Development of core indicators.