



**Review of the International Standard Classification of
Education 1997
(ISCED 97)**

**The review of the definition of Non Formal Education in
ISCED**

UIS regional meetings 2009/2010

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Technical Advisory Panel

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Non-formal Education (NFE)

The TAP members recommend that work at this stage focuses on improving the current definition of NFE in the ISCED.

The classification of NFE programmes would be tackled at a later stage. It is necessary to wait for the results from the Adult Education Survey which uses the CLA (Classification of Learning Activities) launched in 2008 and 2009 in European countries.

Current definition of Non-formal education In ISCED 1997:

Non Formal Education is defined as “any organised and sustained educational activities that do not correspond exactly to the above definition of formal education. Non-formal education may therefore take place both within and outside educational institutions, and cater to persons of all ages. Depending on country contexts, it may cover educational programmes to impart adult literacy, basic education for out of school children, life-skills, work-skills, and general culture. Non formal education programmes do not necessarily follow the “ladder” system, and may have a differing duration.” (ISCED 97 glossary, page 41)

This is a ‘negative’ definition which needs to be made positive; it also would need to be universal and not country dependent.

It is suggested that the definition used in the CLA, developed and used by Eurostat to show how different types of education can be measured statistically, is used as a start. The definition is as follows:

By applying the National Framework Qualification criterion **formal education** refers to institutionalised learning activities that are designed to lead to a learning achievement (qualification or award) that can be positioned in a National Framework of Qualifications.

On the other hand **non-formal education** refers to institutionalised learning activities, which are not part of the NFQ. It includes structured programmes that cannot be positioned in the NFQ usually because the provider and/or the awarding organisation are not part of the NFQ.

This definition is to be updated to take into account developments in Europe regarding conceptual frameworks, such as the European Qualifications Framework and the National Qualifications Framework.

TAP members noted that this definition would be difficult to implement as not all countries in the world have a National Qualifications Framework.

The participants in the Regional Expert Meetings are invited to discuss the issues surrounding the improvement of the current international definition and the possibility of adopting the CLA definition.

The Classification of Learning Activities – from the CLA (page 23)

Allocation of learning activities

NFQ = national framework of qualifications: national context for defining formal education.

