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Organisation
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Organización
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para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

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Объединенных Наций по
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
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联合国教育、
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CONSOLIDATED REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION BY MEMBER STATES OF THE 1976 RECOMMENDATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION

OUTLINE

Background: In accordance with 177 EX/Decision 35 (I) and 34 C/Resolution 87, the Executive Board has monitored the implementation of the 1976 Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education (Nairobi Recommendation). Pursuant to 187 EX/Decision 20 Part VI, the Director-General hereby submits a consolidated report on the implementation by Member States of the Nairobi Recommendation. This report was examined by the Executive Board at its 187th session.

Purpose: This document provides an analysis of the implementation of the Nairobi Recommendation by Member States, based on the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) that was prepared for the 6th International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI, 2009) and summarizes 154 National Reports on the state of the art and development of adult education. The report also presents the comments of the Executive Board thereon.

Decision required: The General Conference is invited to adopt a resolution by which it decides to consider the review and updating of the Nairobi Recommendation in line with the contemporary educational, cultural, political, social and economic challenges set out in Belém Framework for Action.

BACKGROUND

1. Adopted by the 19th session of UNESCO's General Conference in 1976, the Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education (henceforth the Nairobi Recommendation) provides guiding principles and a global approach for promoting and developing adult education. Pursuant to 177 EX/Decision 35 (I) and 34 C/Resolution 87, UNESCO monitors the Nairobi Recommendation as a matter of priority.

2. In compliance with the timetable for 2009-2013 of the work of the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations of the Executive Board (CR) on the implementation of the standard-setting instruments for whose monitoring the Board is responsible (182 EX/Decision 31 and 184 EX/Decision 20), the implementation of this Recommendation was examined by the Executive Board at its 187th session and is now submitted to the General Conference.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT AND COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

3. The annexed document 187 EX/20 Part VI presents to the General Conference the consolidated report on the implementation by Member States of the Nairobi Recommendation. This report was prepared by the Secretariat, based on the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) prepared for the 6th International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI, 2009) that summarizes 154 National Reports on the state of the art and development of Adult Education, as well as on documents prepared for CONFINTEA VI.

4. The Executive Board examined the implementation by Member States of the Nairobi Recommendation at its 187th session (187 EX/20 Part VI). It discussed the importance of linking the monitoring of the CONFINTEA VI follow-up and the 1976 Recommendation, and drew attention to the fact that adult education and literacy are not synonymous.

5. After examining document 187 EX/20 Part II and the report of the CR Committee thereon contained in document 187 EX/50 (paras. 25 to 28), the Executive Board invited the Director-General to transmit to the General Conference, at its 36th session, the consolidated report on the implementation by Member States of this Recommendation, together with comments by the Board as presented above.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

6. In the light of the foregoing, the General Conference may wish to adopt the following resolution:

The General Conference,

1. Recalling that at its 19th session (Nairobi, 1976) it adopted the Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education,
2. Recalling that at its 27th session (Paris, 1993) it invited the Director-General to ensure the functioning of the permanent reporting system for its monitoring,
3. Recalling 34 C/Resolution 87, 177 EX/Decision 35, and document 184 EX/20,
4. Takes note of the mechanisms of the CONFINTEA process, especially the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education and the Belém Framework for Action, which help implement and monitor the Nairobi Recommendation;

5. Recognizes and welcomes the progress made in the implementation of certain items of the Nairobi Recommendation, in particular the adoption of comprehensive adult education policies and legislation, but regrets that many factors, especially the non-availability of funds and insufficient provision and quality of learning opportunities, still impede the development of adult education within a lifelong learning framework;
6. Invites all Member States to strengthen their efforts to ensure the full and comprehensive implementation of the items of the Nairobi Recommendation, and to recognize the key role of adult literacy and adult education for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for All (EFA) and the United Nations agenda for sustainable human, social, economic, cultural and environmental development;
7. Encourages all Member States to mobilize all stakeholders to undertake a national monitoring process for the preparation of a triennial progress report on the implementation of the Belém Framework for Action to provide necessary information to monitor the implementation of the Nairobi Recommendation;
8. Invites the Director-General to:
 - (a) approach the other United Nations Specialized Agencies to initiate an interagency and intersectoral approach and include adult literacy and adult education as key components of the United Nations interventions, such as within the delivering-as-one initiative;
 - (b) provide technical support to Member States in need in their implementation of the Nairobi Recommendation as well as the Belém Framework for Action;
 - (c) take into account and disseminate best practices implemented in the Members States in the area of literacy and adult education;
 - (d) take necessary steps to ensure that the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education is prepared on the basis of national progress reports every three years as the appropriate and effective means to monitor the implementation of the Nairobi Recommendation; and
 - (e) consider the review and updating of the Nairobi Recommendation in reflection of contemporary educational, cultural, political, social and economic challenges as set out in Belém Framework for Action, and submit a plan of action for the review to the 189th session of the Executive Board (spring 2012).



United Nations
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Executive Board
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187 EX/20
Part VI

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IMPLEMENTATION OF STANDARD-SETTING INSTRUMENTS

PART VI

**APPLICATION OF THE 1976 RECOMMENDATION
ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION**

SUMMARY

In accordance with 34 C/Resolution 87, 177 EX/Decision 35 and 184 EX/Decision 20, the Director-General presents a report on the monitoring of the 1976 Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education (Nairobi Recommendation).

This report on the implementation of the Nairobi Recommendation by the Member States is based on the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE), which was prepared for the 6th International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI, 2009) summarizing 154 National Reports on the state of the art and development of adult education. This report also takes into account the Belém Framework for Action adopted by 144 Member States at CONFINTEA VI.

Action expected of the Executive Board: Draft decision in paragraph 21.

Introduction

1. Adopted by the 19th session of UNESCO's General Conference in 1976, the Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education (henceforth the Nairobi Recommendation) provides guiding principles and a global approach for promoting and developing adult education.
2. UNESCO's International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA), held roughly every 12 years since 1949, has been pivotal in both the formation of the Nairobi Recommendation and its continuous monitoring.
3. The *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education* (GRALE)¹ prepared for the 6th International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI, 2009), summarizing 154 National Reports on the state of the art and development of Adult Education, and documents prepared for CONFINTEA VI, have been the primary sources of monitoring the implementation of the Nairobi Recommendation since its last report presented at the 141st session of the Executive Board in 1993 (141 EX/12).
4. This report is structured around five thematic areas – policy, governance, financing, participation and quality – recognized as most relevant from the CONFINTEA process, which also correspond to the key articles of the Nairobi Recommendation.

Implementation of the Nairobi Recommendation

Policy (Nairobi Recommendation Articles 1-8 and 61-67)

5. A growing number of Member States have specific legislation and policies in support of adult education (e.g. Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Central African Republic, Japan, France, Iran, Kuwait, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom, United States, United Republic of Tanzania and Venezuela). There have been instances of major policy reforms: the European Union introduced a Lifelong Learning Strategy in 2000 which stimulated further development of national policies in Member States. A policy shift towards a lifelong learning perspective which integrates adult education is occurring in some Member States in Asia (e.g. China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand). Many Member States have established or are in the process of establishing National Qualifications Frameworks and equivalency frameworks to ensure the recognition, validation and accreditation of all forms of learning in informal, non-formal or formal settings (e.g. Australia, Kenya, Montenegro, South Africa, Uzbekistan and Thailand).
6. However, adult education is rarely in the centre of national educational policy and reform. Moreover, there are wide gaps between adult education policy and its implementation.
7. Further action on needed: Member States which do not have comprehensive national policies for adult education are encouraged to introduce legislation and/or develop policies with fully-costed and well-targeted plans to provide literacy and education for adults and out-of-school youth. Member States are also encouraged to design specific and concrete action plans for adult education to be integrated into implementation of internationally-agreed goals such as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for All (EFA), the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) and the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), as well as within education and other national development plans.

Governance (Nairobi Recommendation Articles 37-40 and 54-56)

8. Member States have increasingly recognized the importance of involving all stakeholders and establishing appropriate coordination mechanisms for the development of adult learning and education. Some education systems have adopted a decentralized adult education governance

¹ <http://www.unesco.org/en/confinteavi/grale/>.

structure (e.g. Czech Republic, Guinea, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Palestine, Philippines, Romania, Sudan and Sierra Leone), and some governments have outsourced responsibilities for implementing adult education programmes, mainly to civil society organizations (e.g. Burkina Faso, Mali, Morocco, Niger and Senegal).

9. However, the low visibility of adult education in government agendas is demonstrated by scant inter-ministerial cooperation, weak organizational structures and poor links between different forms of education (formal and non-formal) and other sectors. Furthermore, there is a growing tension between the trend towards greater organizational and financial autonomy on the one hand and, on the other, the increasing demand for more regulation and monitoring through national coordination mechanisms.

10. Further action on needed: All Member States are recommended to create and maintain systematic coordination mechanisms for the involvement of public authorities, civil society organizations, social partners, the private sector, and adult learners' and educators' organizations in developing, implementing and evaluating policies and programmes.

Financing (Nairobi Recommendation Articles 57-60)

11. In many Member States, governments remain the main source of funding: individual learners, the private sector, civil society organizations and international development agencies are also considerable contributors, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Countries such as Belgium (Flemish), Bhutan, Cambodia, Eritrea, Laos, Palestine, Republic of Korea and Viet Nam have indicated a consistent increase in adult education expenditures since CONFINTEA V in 1997.

12. However, low prioritization, public spending constraints and the unequal distribution of resources all contribute to inconsistent, unpredictable and inequitable funding patterns. As a result, there has not been enough far-sighted and adequate financial planning established to invest in adult education (under 1% of gross national product in virtually all Member States).

13. Further action needed: Member States should reinforce their commitment to increasing funding and investment while focusing on marginalized groups. International development partners are urged to allocate sufficient resources, in particular to achieve internationally-agreed goals on adult education; to include adult education in alternative financing mechanisms; and to integrate adult education into the EFA Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI).

Participation (Nairobi Recommendation Articles 9-23 and 46-53)

14. Globally, basic education (mainly adult literacy programmes) remains the most prevalent form of adult education, against the background of persistent illiteracy. The South shoulders a major share of this burden and so literacy programmes, rather than more holistic adult education programmes, predominate there. Many countries of the North have chosen to address literacy issues through adult literacy classes or basic skills programmes. Vocational and work-related education is the second major form of adult education. Employers in some sectors are increasingly investing in upgrading workers' skills to remain competitive in the global market. Some countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and the Nordic countries support active labour market policies which seek to get unemployed people back to work as quickly as possible through (re-)training and skills development.

15. However, in many Member States, the programmes are not sufficiently responsive to the most vulnerable and marginalized people. The diversity of learners, in terms of age, gender, cultural background, economic status, special needs – including disabilities – and language, is not amply reflected in programme content and practices.

16. Further action needed: In fulfilling the right to education for adults and young people, further measures should be taken by Member States to enhance provision and motivation and to ensure

that there is access to adult education for all – regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, migrant status, language, religion, disability, location (urban/rural), sexual identity or orientation, poverty, displacement or imprisonment.

Quality (Nairobi Recommendation Articles 24-36 and 41-45)

17. While assuring the quality of adult education has become a concern of public policy, Member States' experiences are quite diverse. In most countries, providers and practitioners often develop their own specific definitions and ways of assuring quality. There is an increasing interest in, and demand for, greater specification of the quality of the adult learning experience and learning outcomes. Some countries have developed promising ways to formulate quality criteria and standards in adult education, such as national quality assurance bodies to ensure shared objectives and standards between stakeholders and providers (e.g. Egypt, Bangladesh, Eritrea, Gambia, Kenya, Morocco, Sudan, Yemen and Zambia).

18. However, teachers/facilitators and trainers, which constitute the single most important input for ensuring quality in adult education, are, in many cases, inappropriately trained, hold minimal qualifications, work under highly strenuous conditions and are under-paid. Specifically-designed programmes for adult educators are very rare and the sector is still heavily reliant on voluntary workers. Moreover, evidence-based policy-making in adult education remains weak.

19. Further action needed: Member States are encouraged to take effective measures to foster a culture of quality in adult literacy and adult education, which encompasses relevant content and modes of delivery. Appropriate policies and relevant programmes that provide pre-service and continuing capacity development to adult educators should be put in place. They are also encouraged to initiate and/or collaborate with different partners to undertake policy- and action-oriented research.

The way forward – Future monitoring of the Nairobi Recommendation

20. Member States have already committed through the Belém Framework for Action² adopted at the CONFINTEA VI to prepare a triennial progress report to be submitted to UNESCO and the next report is foreseen to be completed by the end of 2012. UNESCO will continue to use these reports as the primary sources of information for monitoring the implementation of the Nairobi Recommendation.

Action expected of the Executive Board

21. In light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to consider the following decision;

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 187 EX/20 Part VI and the report of the Committee of Conventions and Recommendations on this recommendation 187 EX/...,
2. Invites the Director-General to transmit document 187 EX/20 Part VI to the 36th session of the General Conference along with the comments of the Executive Board thereon;
3. Recommends that the General Conference adopt the following draft resolution,

² http://www.unesco.org/en/confinteavi/single-view/news/belem_framework_for_action_available_online_in_six_languages/back/5446/cHash/51289e14ec/

The General Conference,

1. Recalling that at its 19th session (Nairobi, 1976) it adopted the Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education,
2. Recalling that at its 27th session (Paris, 1993) it invited the Director-General to ensure the functioning of the permanent reporting system for its monitoring,
3. Recalling 34 C/Resolution 87, 177 EX/Decision 35, and 184 EX/20,
4. Takes note of the mechanisms of the CONFINTEA process, especially the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education and the Belém Framework for Action, which help implement and monitor the Nairobi Recommendation,
5. Recognizes and welcomes the progress made in the implementation of certain items of the Nairobi Recommendation, in particular the adoption of comprehensive adult education policies and legislation, but regrets that many factors, especially the non-availability of funds and insufficient provision and quality of learning opportunities, still impede the development of adult education within a lifelong learning framework;
6. Invites all Member States to strengthen their efforts to ensure the full and comprehensive implementation of the items of the Nairobi Recommendation, and to recognise the key role of adult literacy and adult education for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for All (EFA) and the UN agenda for sustainable human, social, economic, cultural and environmental development;
7. Encourages all Member States to mobilize all stakeholders to undertake a national monitoring process for the preparation of a triennial progress report on the implementation of the Belém Framework for Action to provide necessary information to monitor the implementation of the Nairobi Recommendation;
8. Invites the Director-General to:
 - (1) approach the other United Nations agencies to initiate an intersectoral approach and include adult literacy and adult education as key components of the United Nations interventions, such as within the delivering-as-one initiative;
 - (2) provide effective technical support to Member States in their implementation of the Nairobi Recommendation as well as the Belém Framework for Action;
 - (3) take necessary steps to ensure that the *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education* is prepared on the basis of national progress reports every three years as the appropriate and effective means to monitor the implementation of the Nairobi Recommendation; and
 - (4) consider the review and updating of the Nairobi Recommendation in reflection of contemporary educational, cultural, political, social and economic challenges as set out in Belém Framework for Action and submit a plan of action for the review to the 189th session of the Executive Board (spring 2012).