

# CONFINTEA VI

## MID-TERM REVIEW 2017

# The status of adult learning and education in Latin America and the Caribbean

 REGIONAL REPORT



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Prepared by the Advocacy Group on Education Policy of the Council of Popular Education of Latin America and the Caribbean (CEAAL), coordinated by Nélide Elcira Céspedes Rossel



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## INTRODUCTION

Recognition of adult learning and education (ALE) as an essential element of the right to education is one of the fundamental commitments of the Belém Framework for Action (BFA), to which countries from Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) are signatories. The challenge for LAC countries is to advance from initial literacy to higher levels of learning and build coherent lifelong learning systems. At the same time, the lifelong learning paradigm has not been fully embraced in the region and continues to be associated only with adults. Although mentioned in policies and legal instruments, lifelong learning remains an unfamiliar concept, associated with the Global North and lacking relevance and contextualisation in the Global South (Torres, 2009). There is an urgent need to respond to the learning needs of young people and adults, and to support their personal, social and cognitive development.

Youth and adult learning and education (YALE) continues to be the most representative conceptual classification covering what is principally second-chance or compensatory schooling, including literacy. The diverse socio-economic, ethnic and cultural contexts of the region pose a broad set of obstacles to YALE. These include unemployment, social exclusion, migration, violence and the disparities between men and women, all of which are broadly linked to structural poverty. Seen through the lens of the Belém Framework for Action, adult learning and education faces a series of challenges with regard to access, quality and participation.

Throughout the twentieth century, the countries in the region experienced demographic change, with reduced mortality rates and high birth rates resulting in a younger population. By the end of the millennium, however, a reduction in the birth rate, driven by changes in the roles of women in society and the family, combined with an increase in life expectancy, had reversed this trend and resulted in an ageing population in the region.

This changing age profile, and the new social position of women, has important repercussions for the configuration of families, the labour market and the demand for social services such as health, social security and education.

Another socio-demographic phenomenon with major impact on social policies in general, and on educational policies in particular, was the extraordinary exodus from

the countryside to cities observed in the second half of the twentieth century, which led to a concentration of the population in the large metropolises of the region. As the rural population diminished, the provision of both formal and non-formal education programmes continued to grow in urban and peri-urban areas, thus maintaining and even deepening the urban-rural educational divide.

The education systems in Latin American and Caribbean countries responded to these socio-demographic changes by expanding public and free elementary education in a significant way, with a trend towards universal access to general education for children and adolescents, mainly in urban areas. There has also been a reduction in disparities between genders when it comes to access to education, so much so that differences between generations in terms of access to educational opportunities have increased, putting adults and older people at a disadvantage vis-à-vis younger generations.

The expansion of public education systems and strategies for non-formal and informal learning took place in social structures marked by pronounced cultural heterogeneity and deep economic inequality in the context of restricted public investment. This led to selective and anachronistic teaching models that had a negative impact on learning outcomes, meaning that a significant proportion of the region's disadvantaged young people had the course of their education interrupted and did not complete compulsory education.

In this context, adult learning and education has fulfilled four main functions. First, it has provided a welcoming environment for rural immigrants (many of whom are of indigenous origin and whose mother tongue is not dominant). These individuals need to reassess their knowledge and ways of life, redefine their social and cultural identity, and learn new behaviours, languages and cultural codes in order to become part of urban society. They also need to overcome the prejudices that prevent them from enjoying their rights and that marginalize them when it comes to access to the labour market and to social and political institutions.

Second, one of the traditional tasks of YALE has been to raise the educational level of the adult population who did not have the same opportunities as younger generations

by developing their vocational or professional competences and providing them with the academic credentials required for the competitive and selective labour market.

Third, YALE provides an environment in which social problems and sociocultural diversity are welcomed; it opens a channel for reintroducing adolescents, young people and adults to educational processes from which they were excluded at an earlier age.

Finally, given the prominence of knowledge and information in increasingly global societies, and the increase in life expectancy, youth and adult education is also responsible for providing opportunities for updating knowledge, obtaining additional qualifications and enjoying culture throughout life, regardless of the level of education achieved by individuals and communities.

The shape of YALE in Latin America and the Caribbean has also been influenced by the contribution made by the popular education movement to pedagogic thinking, as well as to the recent political history of the region. This has been marked by resistance to authoritarian regimes and by a transition to democracy and national reconstruction following armed conflicts, where civil society's capacity for self-organization and mobilization played a prominent role. Although the profile and actions of social movements and organizations were substantially modified at the end of the twentieth century, the popular education paradigm continues to be the main reference point for forming democratic citizenship and defending rights, particularly when those practices are promoted by civil society organizations.

## MONITORING THE BELÉM FRAMEWORK

The 2009 Belém Framework for Action provided a set of recommendations for ALE in UNESCO Member States. Between 2011 and 2016, regional meetings following up the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) were held in order to develop regional action plans. Latin America and the Caribbean was the first region to organize a regional follow-up conference, in Mexico City in May 2011. In June 2016, ministers of education, representatives of related ministries, education specialists and civil society representatives from 17 countries came together in Montego Bay, Jamaica, for a major sub-regional meeting on YALE. This was the first meeting of Caribbean States to take place as part of the follow-up to CONFINTEA VI.

In 2015, UNESCO adopted the *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education*, which complements the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its counterpart, the Education 2030 Framework for Action. This current report contributes to the global analysis of progress in implementing the BFA at the CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review, in October 2017 in Suwon, Republic of Korea.

Within the frame of reference set out in the BFA, the role of lifelong learning is critical in addressing global educational issues and challenges and in shifting the focus of policy from sectors and programmes to learning. Lifelong learning takes place before, during and after formal schooling, in different settings, and at any age. It includes literacy and numeracy as well as generic competences such as communication skills, problem-solving skills, the ability to work in teams, ICT skills and learning to learn. This broader concept of lifelong learning enshrined in the BFA is now widely promoted by other international and regional agencies, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Commission and the World Bank.

As a background for monitoring the BFA, the Council of Popular Education of Latin America and the Caribbean (CEAAL) produced a report entitled *At a Slow Pace*, presenting a review of progress in Latin America and the Caribbean since CONFINTEA VI. It was based on national reports submitted by 24 countries to the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC) in Santiago de Chile.

As a sequel to that document, CEAAL, with the support of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), presents this report as a mid-term review of progress in the region since CONFINTEA VI that will complement the findings of the third *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE III)*.

The report presents progress, critical nodes, experiences and recommendations regarding specific issues: policy, governance, financing, participation, inclusion, equity and quality. It is based on consultations with officials from the ministries of education of several countries, as well as those responsible for networks and experts on the rights of youth and adults to education in Latin America and the Caribbean, whose opinions have enriched the analysis.

# 1. RETHINKING ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION

The Belém Framework for Action is unequivocal when it affirms that ALE ‘embraces a learning continuum ranging from formal to non-formal to informal learning’ (UIL, 2009, p. 38). The objective of ALE is to strengthen essential features of educational processes, which can be found, for example, in the educational practices of indigenous peoples. It calls for a system that allows the learner to learn by all possible avenues rather than asking them to learn by repeating topics that they may or may not understand.

First, we must agree on what the emphasis and actions should be. It is crucial to avoid cultural deprivation and the impact this has on learning. Actions must be germinal and create synergies in order to consolidate autonomous learning along a spiral where there will be progress and setbacks, understandings and misunderstandings, successes and errors. The challenge concerns not only teaching contents, but also helping learners to develop an ability to establish relationships that break the cycle of cultural deprivation.

In its broadest terms, the lifelong learning approach set out in the BFA calls for a sweeping shift in policy orientation, from educational institutions and programmes to learners and learning. More than recurrent education or non-formal education and training for adults, lifelong learning is now widely understood to mean learning activities and engagement that encompass all types of learning throughout life. It is the focus on learning – its breadth, progression and continuity – that marks lifelong learning as a departure from more traditional policy orientations. Lifelong learning seeks to harness a wide range of learning activity – in schools, in enterprises and through individual initiative – for the development of necessary skills and competences. It directs attention towards foundation skills and knowledge (variously termed ‘basic skills’ or ‘personal competences’ to signify literacy and generic competences – the latter comprising communication skills, problem-solving skills, the ability to work in teams, and so on) as essential building blocks. Lifelong learning broadly addresses civic and personal interests as well as labour market demand (World Bank, 2003; Vargas, 2017).

Adult learning and education as a significant component of lifelong learning embraces the use of different

strategies to consolidate learner confidence and to encourage learners to engage with learning. This is important because, initially, educational relations are concerned with possibilities rather than with pre-established alternatives. The learner explores what *can be* rather than what *should be*. Later, the learner will have the opportunity – either individually or with others – to explore which of those possibilities are likely to materialize. Thus, the wide range of possibilities will be reduced to those that might take place if certain conditions are met. The learner will take their own experiences, analysis, teachers’ suggestions and literature on the subject as the starting point, and decide what can be done and what should not be discarded.



## 2. THE EVOLUTION OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN WITH REGARD TO THE BFA

### POLICY

#### THE APPROACH OF CONFINTEA VI

The Belém Framework for Action urged Member States to adopt measures that were inclusive, integrated and informed by an understanding of the centrality of lifelong learning as 'a conceptual framework and an organising principle of all forms of education' (UIL, 2010, p. 5), linking all dimensions of people's learning with defined plans that aligned with the targets of the development and education agendas of the period. The Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) have since been succeeded by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the complementary Education 2030 Framework for Action. Progress on the BFA commitments was to be monitored at regular intervals – hence the importance of the three *GRALE* reports, which improve our understanding of any progress that has been achieved, as well as the challenges that still need to be addressed.

#### THE CURRENT SITUATION

In terms of youth and adult learning and education (YALE), the concept still most commonly used in LAC countries, the region has made giant strides over the last three decades. Even before the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, which gave rise to the concept of basic learning needs, YALE policies had been leveraged by the *Proyecto Principal de Educación en América Latina y el Caribe* (PRELAC, 1980–2000) and the REDALF literacy network, created in 1985 as part of the PRELAC initiative. Nevertheless, analysis of the Jomtien call for an expanded concept of basic education reveals that many educational reforms carried out in the region responded to the call by concentrating on developing basic education for all: children, youth and adults.

However, more recently, inspired by the Education for All initiative and later the United Nations Literacy Decade, there has been an increase in international, regional and national plans, campaigns and policies for adult basic education that focus on literacy. In Latin America, the most influential of these was the Ibero-American Plan

for Literacy and Basic Education of Youth and Adults (PIA), which ran from 2007 to 2015 and was promoted by the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI) and approved in November 2006 during the XVI Ibero-American Summit held in Montevideo, Uruguay. PIA sought to articulate national plans and actions while offering, principally, technical support.

Literacy is an integral part of the learning continuum. It constitutes what the BFA calls the 'indispensable foundation' for all future learning. To this extent, it is a crosscutting theme that is present in every section of this report: policy, governance, funding, participation and quality. As outlined in the previous paragraph, literacy receives specific treatment in nearly all LAC countries; however, the nature of these programmes varies, as does their duration. Funding is also frequently separate from the main education budget.

Literacy is a field where government and civil society have worked side by side for many years. Literacy statistics are often used to assess development: until 2010, they were one of three indicators of the Human Development Index (HDI). This is no longer the case, however, since they represent a simplistic and unreliable approach to the measurement of literacy levels. Although part of the ALE spectrum, literacy is generally better documented than much of the more formal second-chance YALE.

In UNESCO's third *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE III)*, 98 per cent of young people in Latin America and the Caribbean were reported to be either in school or in possession of basic levels of education. This figure was higher than in other regions, including South and East Asia. However, according to data from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 9 per cent of the Latin American population have no literacy skills at all.

Aggregated literacy data tend to conceal as much as they reveal. Hence, in addition to the age variable, lack of reading and writing skills tends to affect particularly those on the lowest incomes, the rural population, people with disabilities, indigenous populations and women. The increase in literacy levels in recent years – especially

among younger people – is related to the progress made in democratizing access to primary education, the expansion of education systems and the establishment of legal frameworks that expand compulsory schooling (OREALC–UNESCO, 2013). However, according to *GRALE III*, despite an overall increase in access to primary education, a considerable number of children across the region did not complete basic schooling. The majority of these children were from Brazil and Mexico, the two most populous countries in the region. The countries that are furthest from guaranteeing the completion of primary education to all children are Haiti, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala.

The social phenomenon of low levels of education and literacy reflects the complex relationship between the educational and social contexts of Latin American and Caribbean countries. It is directly related to social and economic inequalities, to the prevalent economic model of development in LAC countries, to the political culture in the region, to broader historical processes, and to the quality of the education offered in LAC schools. The difficulties of accessing and completing educational processes are related to patterns of unequal power distribution. For this reason, the BFA emphasizes the potential of education to enable young people and adults to ‘cope with multiple social, economic and political crises, and climate change’ (UIL, 2009, p. 37).

The issue of inclusion is evident in the region, as it is in other regions of the globe. This has led to participation, inclusion and equity being highlighted in the recommendations of the BFA. Meeting the educational rights of indigenous and Afro-descendant communities is critical. While almost all ministries of education in the region recognize the right of indigenous children to receive an education in their mother tongue, coverage of bilingual primary education is limited, even in countries with a large monolingual indigenous population. This aspect influences the levels of literacy in the young and adult population, especially when it is also recognized that Afro-descendants and indigenous people enter school late and tend, for work reasons or because of early motherhood in the case of women, to leave early, before completing their basic education.

The multiple forms of possible discrimination – in relation to race, ethnicity, class, geographic location, sexual orientation, disability, migration and imprisonment – clearly identified in the BFA, intersect with gender,

producing and intensifying various situations of exclusion. Gender stereotypes are still present in YALE policies and programmes, and are generally not discussed, questioned or analysed. In several countries, gender stereotyping is not only an issue for women but also affects men adversely, as indicated in a report by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2013): men leave school early to take up paid work while women tend to stay longer in the education system. However, in general, despite these cases, discrimination continues to adversely affect women more than men.

From the information provided by Member States, the following developments can be identified:

- **Literacy levels:** According to ECLAC (Martinez, Trucco and Palma, 2015), more than 90 per cent of the young population of the Latin American and Caribbean region were reported to have attained basic literacy by 2015; however, 9 per cent of the Latin American population lacked literacy skills.
- **Literacy concept:** The concept of literacy has evolved. In academic and social spheres in LAC, it is now accepted that literacy goes beyond being able to read, write and calculate and includes also the ability to communicate, socially connect and improve working life (Infante and Letelier, 2013). According to the BFA, literacy must be understood as a continuum rather than as a simple bipolar concept because it is associated with the structural conditions of society.
- **The contribution of ‘popular education’:** Paulo Freire says many times in his writings that literacy should be understood in the context of broader educational processes, including adult basic education, and be part of a lifelong learning approach. This definition has imbued literacy with specific social purposes, such as participation and the exercise of citizenship (Vargas, 2014). This requires a substantive civil society contribution aimed at carrying out education policies and processes from the perspective of popular education, which seeks to achieve the empowerment of social actors, whether adults, youth or children, and contribute to a just society without discrimination. Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Cuba, Bolivia, Venezuela and Brazil declare that they adopt the popular education approach in their education policies. Guaranteeing that all citizens have access to literate cultures and to relevant learning experiences involves complex, long-term and inter-sectoral strategies. It requires solid investment and

determined political will. It is this vision that is at stake and that must be explicitly spelled out if we are to see change in the full implementation of the right of adults to education.

## POLICY OPTIONS FOR YALE

The BFA stresses the importance of policies being comprehensive, inclusive and integrated as well as based on sector-wide and inter-sectoral approaches. To this end, there are certain important trends in the adult learning and education field:

- The existence of a global policy framework (the Sustainable Development Goals and the Education 2030 Framework of Action, among others) in which the implementation of lifelong learning is premised on education as a human right.
- Demands from civil society to advance new, inclusive education policies.
- The recognition that education systems must meet the requirements posed by diversity, with curriculum flexibility, relevant teaching materials and teachers trained for these new ways of structuring public education services.
- The existence of programmes and good practices of inclusion and participation of adult populations in comprehensive learning processes (regular studies, job training, citizen participation, cultural self-expression) implemented and supported by state and civil-society organizations, popular education centres and self-organized networks of community schools, with innovative work methodologies and trained teachers.

## CRITICAL NODES

While the right to education is affirmed in the constitutions of all LAC countries, there is still a gap between the legal right and its practical implementation. National reports prepared for *GRALE III* point to some significant problematic areas:

- The paradigm of lifelong learning has not been established as the organizing principle of national

educational systems; the result being that YALE remains an isolated modality within such systems without strategic coordination within other areas of government.

- Investment levels have not undergone significant changes to reverse the financial lag between YALE and other fields of education policy.
- Many countries have been unable to provide the data necessary for analysing the results of their YALE policies.
- The countries' sociocultural realities are undergoing intense transformation, particularly in relation to the impact of globalizing economic dynamics and the demands they make on education in terms of new skills – particularly digital and technological skills.
- Education policies have failed to prevent learners from dropping out and school systems' retention rates are not promising. However, for young people, YALE is a modality that can satisfy their training expectations. This creates a situation of uncertainty among teachers, who face, in a short span of time, students bringing with them cultural codes, expectations and social problems that were not present in traditional adult education.
- The devaluation of material conditions and professional resources for YALE's public services.
- The challenge of a population of adults many of whom have not mastered the basic competences of literacy and numeracy and have not concluded basic education. This is a problem to which the public education system needs to respond. There are concerns that the instructional and compensatory functions of YALE are not sufficient to take care of what multilateral agencies call 'twenty-first century skills'. There is also a growing belief that the adult population's rights are at grave risk of infringement, limiting the development of communities' cultural capital and conscious and active participation in political and economic life.<sup>1</sup>

New policies in the area of lifelong learning should seek to break through traditional boundaries to stimulate creative initiative, to respond better to demand, and to leverage private investment and initiative – both by enterprises

<sup>1</sup> See CEAAL (2013) and the 2015 *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education* (UNESCO and UIL, 2016), adopted during the 38th UNESCO General Conference in November 2015.

and by individual learners. On a positive note, during an LAC regional meeting of ministers of education held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in January 2017, participants agreed on a common vision for education with reference to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, recognizing:

the importance behind the education targets outlined in SDG 4, which consider education and lifelong learning, from early childhood to higher and adult education, in conjunction with the cross-cutting issues of the Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly those directly related to education. (E2030)

This consensus was summarized in the Buenos Aires Declaration, *E2030: Education and Skills for the 21st Century*.

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### YALE in multilingual contexts

In **Paraguay**, which recognizes Guarani and Spanish as official languages, the Paraguay Reads and Writes programme promotes a strategy of comprehensive and bilingual intercultural literacy, with a focus on respect for the cultural identity of each group to which it is directed. Through the programme, the pleasure of learning is fostered as a value in itself, thus questioning the traditional 'learning for' paradigm ([http://www.oei.es/historico/noticias/spip.php?article9175&debut\\_5ultimasOEI=180](http://www.oei.es/historico/noticias/spip.php?article9175&debut_5ultimasOEI=180)).

Since 2006, **Peru** has developed an alternative basic education modality with a foundation level in literacy to continue with the first and second levels of primary and secondary education (<http://gead.minedu.gob.pe/ebadist/>).

**Ecuador** promotes the National Programme for Literacy and Basic Education, which offers alternatives for continuing studies in native languages and in Spanish.

**Bolivia** promotes Quechua–Spanish, a bi-literacy programme distinguished by the simultaneous teaching treatment of the two languages (<http://www.minedu.gob.bo/index.php/publicaciones/item/31-alfabetizacion-y-post-alfabetizacion>).

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Specific literacy policies are set out in the legislation of all the countries of the region. In most cases, it appears as an initial part of a comprehensive vision of education for youth and adults. Nevertheless:

- In many countries, policies are often not developed inter-institutionally, nor are they articulated with comprehensive social programmes, leading to potential duplication of human resources and effort.
- Not all countries link literacy to the development of citizenship, human rights and the relationship with society and the environment (SDG 4.7). In relation to work, an instrumental vision dominates, rather than a vision of dignified work.
- A short-term and narrow vision for treating literacy has not been overcome, a situation that will persist until quality education is accessible to everyone.
- Critical and transformative approaches such as popular education are often not visible in LAC policies, despite the importance of linking training with personal and social transformation.
- The formulation of the specific literacy target (4.6) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is vague: 'By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy' (United Nations, 2015, p. 17).

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### A literacy initiative

As part of a national poverty reduction plan in the **Dominican Republic**, Presidential Decree 546-12 (September 10, 2012) made literacy for youth and adults (15 years and over) a 'high national priority'. The national literacy plan, *Quisqueya Learns with You*, is guided by principles of inclusion and participation, and supports the integration of all sectors of Dominican society, providing literacy to those groups of the population traditionally excluded, and integrating the illiterate population aged 15 years and over as no previous plan had managed to.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. LAC Member States must embrace YALE as a strategic dimension of the fulfilment of education as a human right. This recognition should be reflected in the legal norms of national educational systems, adopting modalities that will enable citizens to exercise their right to make demands and monitor policies. Lifelong learning is the paradigm that compels countries to create the conditions for educational equality, justice and quality for their citizens.
2. Policies should be formulated that make YALE offerings more flexible; this, in turn, will create easier access to learning provisions and satisfy the learning needs of all. Countries should create and develop national systems of YALE that address all types of learning.
3. Countries adopting community and popular education methodologies should develop YALE policies based on participative and inclusive institutional processes in order to identify the educational needs in all their territories. In other words, policies should be relevant to local realities and to people's critical learning needs across all life stages.
4. YALE policies should be based on agreements made between different societal actors, institutions and networks so that the goals, priorities and investments reflect the common goals of state and civil society organizations. This will strengthen countries' capacities to respond to citizens' demands for accountability.
5. Countries should design and develop policies of initial and continued training for youth and adult educators that have been agreed upon by government entities, universities and civil society organizations, thereby creating national and local research capacities.

## GOVERNANCE

### THE APPROACH OF CONFINTEA VI

The BFA called on Member States to facilitate the implementation of adult learning and education policy in an effective, transparent, accountable and equitable manner. The representation and participation of all stakeholders are essential to ensure that governance is responsive to the needs of all learners, especially the most disadvantaged.

## THE CURRENT SITUATION

It is important to point out that promoting participation between different actors, and fostering inter-sectoral and inter-institutional cooperation in YALE policy-making and programmes, is defined as a priority action for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The main trends observed while conducting the governance analysis include:

- In most cases, learners have not participated in the discussion of national plans.
- Lack of coordination between the institutions involved, primarily in the implementation of programmes.
- Corruption.
- Spending on non-central aspects of educational processes.

The participation of several government actors in defining and implementing national education and adult literacy policies was also noted across the LAC region (on average, at least five government agencies participate in the processes of adult education and literacy in each country). At sub-national level, where there is a national approach with little regional adaptation, there is less participation among these actors.

At the same time, civil society, including NGOs and community organizations and the for-profit private sector, are active in the provision of YALE (with the exception of Cuba, where the government is the sole provider). In Chile, Paraguay and Suriname, the private sector is not included as a literacy provider, although it is engaged in education programmes for youth and adults in all areas devoted to skills training for labour, healthcare and the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are important providers of basic services and are vital for those who are harder to reach, especially where the state does not provide educational services or where the quality of said services is poor.

There is greater geographic balance between national and sub-national levels (50/50) with regard to NGO contributions, with at least 47 NGOs providing YALE services in the 14 countries for which this information was provided. There is also a greater proportion of NGOs providing ALE programmes (56.4 per cent) compared to literacy ones

(43.5 per cent). The contribution of civil society actors is important and includes social movements, collectives, networks, NGOs, universities, churches and federations, among others.

All countries report the existence of a governmental body coordinating adult education and literacy programmes; what varies is the level and status assigned to it: secretariat, coordination committee, department, etc. Only two countries report not coordinating actions; the remainder identify diverse coordination mechanisms, such as meetings, consultations, training, seminars, vocational training workshops, definition of agendas and plans, monitoring and follow-up plans, and even establishing advisory councils (Brazil) or forming a multi-stakeholder network and joint project implementation (Dominican Republic and Peru). Equally significant is the consideration of various actors and the recognition or valorization of civil society actors' knowledge and skills in their areas of action, which are incorporated into the programmes (in the case of Paraguay, with women and prisoners).

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### **Acción de tutela, a legal tool to claim one's right to adult education**

In **Colombia**, youth and adult education (including literacy) is regulated by Decree 3011 from 1977, which establishes that every Colombian aged 15 and older who is non-literate and could not finalize his or her basic or secondary school education is entitled to youth and adult education provision in any official public institution that offers this modality. This provision is financed by the national budget so long as the student is enrolled in an official educational institution.

However, sometimes the local governments (governorates and municipalities) claim they do not have the resources to provide the service to those students. For example, in 2011, the governorate of the department of Nariño and the Ministry of Education suspended adult education in that area, arguing that they lacked the resources. In reaction to this, several students placed an *acción de tutela* demand before a judge, asserting that the state was violating their right to education.

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The *acción de tutela* is a measure introduced in the Colombian Constitution of 1991, which allows citizens to take action in order to protect their fundamental constitutional rights. It is a means by which any person may directly – without the need of a lawyer – file an application with any judge to protect his or her fundamental constitutional rights. Judges are obliged to give priority to *acciones de tutela*, which are decided within 10 days.

In the above-mentioned example, the initial judgement was made against Nariño students; however, the case moved for revision to the constitutional court and its judgment established that youth and adult education is a fundamental right and that the state could not plead lack of resources to stop providing the service. This set a precedent: every Colombian denied the right to adult education can now go to court and submit an *acción de tutela* demand invoking the judgement of the constitutional court. Spreading this information among potential users of adult education services distributes a powerful tool to put pressure on local government authorities to deliver the service.

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Source: Hanemann, 2017

Regarding capacity development, three countries did not identify actions to develop adult education and literacy, and two countries did not report on this area. The main capacity-building actions developed by the countries involved defining priorities, agendas and plans, and implementing training, coordination and spaces for dialogue. Some countries acknowledged their limitations or weaknesses and identified actions that required strengthening or were non-existent, as in the case of the Dominican Republic, which reported the need for greater institutionalization of YALE programmes, greater continuity in state policies, and greater participation and positioning of civil society in YALE. In the case of Mexico, issues identified included the inadequate accountability mechanisms of programmes and the need for a more efficient approach in dealing with grassroots organizations.

On the issue of participation, five countries reported that local community groups were not involved in YALE programming. Individual cases that stand out to the contrary and which could inspire other countries include

the Dominican Republic, where there is significant YALE development compared to other countries in the region; Colombia, where local authorities plan, finance, implement and evaluate programmes; and El Salvador and the Dominican Republic, where local involvement is seen as necessary for the adaptation of public policies.

Meanwhile, the importance of programme monitoring and follow-up, and alignment to macro plans and objectives agreed upon at the international level, can be seen in Paraguay, where programmes are also tailored for specific groups such as prisoners and women. In literacy, greater links with and support to social organizations in the implementation of programmes and the evaluation of results is reported by the Dominican Republic, while, in Peru, training strategies are implemented for teachers and instructors, and agreements are signed for literacy intervention with municipalities.

We need to recall that governance facilitates policy implementation to the extent that it is effective, transparent, accountable and equitable, and that involvement of stakeholders responds to the needs of all recipients, especially those with the least power. The national reports describe major mechanisms for the involvement of public authorities from various bodies (promoting inter-sectoral and inter-departmental cooperation), as well as of civil society organizations, in the development, implementation and evaluation of YALE policies and programmes.

The need to strengthen strategies and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating policies and programmes, as well as mechanisms allowing for greater accountability and transparency (in Latin America, the term most commonly used is 'social control') continues to be pressing. Reports from some countries (14 out of 24) mention that, even for processes where governments are committed to reporting, it does not always happen, which affects follow-up on plans and goals.

The governance of adult education and literacy programmes has become more decentralized in recent years, which means that decisions regarding programmes and their implementation are being made at the local level. This raises certain challenges, such as the need for different levels of government to strengthen the capacities of local teams to ensure proper assessment of learning needs and adequate provision to meet them.

The efforts of LAC Member States to encourage participation are noteworthy and should be intensified and regularized. Actions reported from different countries in the region give a sense of concrete progress:

- In **Bolivia**, partnerships between state and civil society organizations have been created to provide basic alternative and special education for adults.
- In **Paraguay**, a Directorate of Continuing Education has been established to promote ALE programmes that have been developed collaboratively by different institutions.
- In **Guatemala**, representatives from departmental coordination and central units were invited by CONALFA, the Guatemalan National Commission for Literacy, to participate in the development of a 2009–2015 strategic plan.

Agreements were signed between **Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia** as part of the South-South Cooperation platform.

It is important to highlight the important role played by CEAAL, the Council of Popular Education of Latin America and the Caribbean, and CLADE, the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education. The latter is a network of civil society organizations that, at the core of its political agenda, promotes education as a human right and supports active and participatory democracy in the countries of the region. It has active national forums that publicly advocate for the right to education in 16 LAC countries, as well as regional forums and strategic alliances that support a board range of activities.

CEAAL is a popular education movement that operates in 21 countries in the LAC region, working with young people and adults in formal and informal education settings. It is involved in capacity-building, political advocacy, systematization and materials production. A member of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), CEAAL is engaged in processes of educational, social, political, cultural and economic transformation in Latin American and Caribbean societies, in local, national and regional settings, in dialogue with the world. In this respect, it is important for CEAAL to identify and present a summary of experiences developed in the region in order to foster good governance according to priority objectives and actions.

## CRITICAL NODES

- Many countries have yet to facilitate the participation of learners in the discussion of ALE policies and plans. This reflects an absence of mechanisms for social participation.
- Governments must promote a shared social responsibility in adult education without undermining their own role as guarantor of the right to education for all. This implies a strong political will to create mechanisms for participation at all levels of design, implementation and evaluation of public policies.
- Government cooperation with civil society, academia, the private sector, etc., is often incipient or, in some countries, non-existent. This is a vital matter that needs to be addressed considering the growing demand for transparency, participation and respect for social diversity, and for the recognition of civil societies' knowledge and input on specific issues. Successful experiences could be converted into public policy.
- Coordination between the central and regional governments when planning and implementing education initiatives also remains a challenge. Regionally adapted curricula that consider local realities and diverse population groups require coordination at national and regional levels.
- The design and monitoring of indicators to weigh progress and/or setbacks regarding the right to education requires special attention to address structural, process and outcome dimensions.

In general, our findings reveal that many countries have yet to implement the recommendations set out in the BFA with regard to governance (UIL, 2009, p. 39).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Greater involvement of civil society, social and popular movements with adult learners – particular those from groups with special learning needs (Afro-descendants, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, prisoners, etc.) – in the formulation, execution and evaluation of YALE policies and programmes, as well as in the collection and use of information on key actions including factors related to governance in YALE.
2. Effective, transparent and responsible governance, with mechanisms of social control (accountability) in all programmes and at all levels, as well as strategies and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating YALE

programmes, should be guaranteed. This will involve the documentation and promotion of successful experiences of good governance, active participation by distinct actors, and inter-sectoral and inter-institutional articulation in YALE programmes.

## FINANCING

The financing of ALE is an area in which intentions are frequently stronger than concrete actions. Data and information on the proportions of educational budgets dedicated to adult literacy and basic continuing education generally exist but are not always reliable, while those on non-formal education and educational and learning programmes promoted by popular and social movements tend to be non-existent. Signatories to the Buenos Aires Declaration, as the most recent public expression of intent on the part of ministers of education from Latin America and the Caribbean, promised to:

maintain, optimize, and, progressively increase funding for education in our countries, in accordance with the national context, and in keeping with the economic, social and cultural rights of our citizens. (UNESCO, 2017, p. 13)

No specific reference is made to YALE, however, and the promise to 'maintain, optimize, and, progressively increase funding for education' is open to interpretation. This is perhaps a prime example of the difficulty of obtaining clear information on governmental funding for the SDGs and for SDG 4 in particular.

Within the specific field of YALE, *The Bonn Declaration on Financing Adult Education for Development* (DVV International, 2009), adopted during the International Conference on Financing Adult Education for Development held prior to CONFINTEA VI, is important. It is dedicated specifically to the financing of YALE and, while it does not comment on Latin America and the Caribbean specifically, some of its recommendations, when taken together with those of the BFA, offer broad orientations for the need for governments and civil society to increase investment in YALE.



## THE APPROACH OF CONFINTEA VI

Recognizing YALE as a valuable investment, certain funding commitments were adopted in the BFA. They call on Member States to:

- seek investment of at least 6 per cent of gross national product (GNP) in education, and work towards increased investment in adult learning and education;
- increase existing educational resources and budgets across all government departments;
- consider new, and open up existing, transnational funding programmes for literacy and adult education;
- create incentives to promote new sources of funding;
- prioritize investment in lifelong learning for women, rural populations and people with disabilities.

## THE CURRENT SITUATION

Public funding of education remains one of the critical issues in the LAC region, even more so for YALE, which traditionally receives the lowest percentage of budget allocation. This, in turn, hampers opportunities for youth and adults to receive educational attention and to broaden and deepen their learning through related programmes. Often, programmes for youth and adults focus on the first stages of literacy and very little on continuity and succeeding levels.

In Latin America, youth and adult programmes do not receive a sufficient share of the education budget.

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Until 2008, the complete budget for YALE in the **Dominican Republic** was the equivalent of US \$7.5 million. This included investment in all youth and adult education programmes. In 2014, when the national literacy plan *Quisqueya Learns with You* came into operation, public investment increased dramatically. That first year alone, the literacy plan reported a budget of US \$44 million (Dirección General de Programas Especiales, 2014), a figure which reflects the prioritization of adult literacy.

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With specific reference to funding for adult education, the following findings concerning the evolution of financing for YALE in Latin America and the Caribbean after CONFINTEA VI should be noted:

- According to *GRALE III*, in Latin America and the Caribbean only 26 per cent of countries have made investments in education reaching 6 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). These countries are Aruba, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Honduras, Jamaica and Venezuela. This implies that most have not made an adequate investment, which means that all their educational activities are underfunded. There is no evidence that YALE allocations are better in real terms, relative to increased education budgets.
- Unfortunately, no data are available on the percentage of the education budget spent on YALE in general and on adult literacy programmes in particular. Therefore, it is not possible to monitor progress with regard to the above-mentioned BFA commitment.
- According to information reported by governments in the region, most of them fund YALE from their own resources – only 36 per cent reported external financing for YALE. In these cases, funding comes from the European Union (EU), the Organization of American States (OAS), UNESCO, and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) through the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI). In the case of the Ibero-American Plan for Literacy and Basic Education of Youth and Adults (PIA) initiative fostered by the OEI, official reports do not declare, except in one case, the receipt of financial support by PIA to advance their goals. Hence, international cooperation in this area – with only one-third of countries receiving external financial cooperation – is limited.
- In addition, no government reported having received financial contributions from private companies. This does not necessarily mean that companies, especially large companies, are not investing in their own YALE activities, but it does confirm that where this happens, private companies prefer to invest directly or through their own structures rather than delivering funds to government institutions (for example, via tax mechanisms).
- Regarding alternative financing mechanisms for YALE, Colombia and Brazil created new mechanisms following CONFINTEA VI. Both countries allocated 'royalties' from oil exploitation to finance education. Other countries did not report the creation of new mechanisms for financing. In many cases, public investment funds came from investment by central and/or federal government, and other sub-national or municipal governments. In any case, these are public funds invested in various ways.

- Several countries are giving priority access to women and rural populations. However, current efforts are still unable to solve the problem of inequality.
- The financing of education between 2000 and 2012 improved in relation to GNP in Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), in 2010 average investment in education in Latin America and the Caribbean was 5.2 per cent relative to GDP (UIL, 2013).

## CRITICAL NODES

It is evident that public investment in education in the region has not increased at the necessary pace. In consequence, one can assume that YALE financing has not improved substantially in real terms. The very diversity of provision, without coordination, complicates efforts to identify the budgets dedicated to adult education. In many cases, budgets that serve adult education are not in explicitly designated ALE budget lines. Some ministries other than the education ministry (e.g. labour, agriculture or health) implement adult or non-formal education activities. This expenditure is not declared as adult education. Moreover, government and non-government organizations are frequently reluctant to reveal detailed financial information. Add to this the fact that the few lines dedicated to education by the third International Conference on Financing for Development in 2015 do not mention ALE in any way, confirming its low place on the political agenda.

Latin America and the Caribbean are moving towards a situation of greater disadvantage compared to some other regions in the world with regard to financing of YALE, and this limits the opportunities for its population to enjoy their basic human right to education, which is necessary for a dignified life.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. State responsibility for financing YALE. National, regional and local governments should establish their own financial goals for YALE by using projections of potential demand, making sure that they are consistent with their commitments and annual programmatic obligations, in order to reach a larger population of youth and adults and improve quality of service. This should be done with an inter-sectoral focus to share the financial responsibility among a number of ministries and state entities to maintain the perspective of public, free education.
2. It is urgently necessary to establish fiscal mechanisms that allow the collection and attribution of the necessary resources to YALE, in conditions of equality, guaranteeing availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability for all youth and adults.
3. The continuity of international cooperation in order to guarantee the right to education of young people and adults must be ensured. Sustained cooperation implies:
  - promoting activities that are adapted to the particular circumstances of each country;
  - creating a favourable climate for international cooperation;
  - ensuring that international cooperation is not limited to the transfer of structures, study plans, methods and techniques;
  - encouraging and supporting South–South, North–South and triangular cooperation;
  - giving priority to those countries most in need, following the conclusions of international reports and investigations;
  - focusing on data production on learning and education, with the support of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning;
  - stimulating governments and agencies of cooperation for development to contribute to developments at local and regional levels;
  - networking by the actors involved.

## PARTICIPATION, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

### THE APPROACH OF CONFITEA VI

The BFA asserts that:

inclusive education is fundamental to the achievement of human, social and economic development. Equipping all individuals to develop their potential contributes significantly to encouraging them to live together in harmony and with dignity. There can be no exclusion arising from age, gender, ethnicity, migrant status, language, religion, disability, rurality, sexual identity or orientation, poverty, displacement or imprisonment. Combating the cumulative effects of multiple disadvantage is of particular importance. Measures should be taken to enhance motivation and access for all. (UIL, 2010, p. 8)

To achieve these purposes, participants at CONFITEA VI committed to:

- promote and facilitate more equitable access to, and participation in, adult learning and education by eliminating barriers and through well-designed and targeted guidance and information;
- anticipate and respond to identifiable groups entering trajectories of multiple disadvantage, and remedy this situation;
- create multi-purpose community learning spaces and centres and take into consideration the particular requirements of women's specific life-cycle;
- support the development of literacy in the various indigenous languages and value indigenous cultures' knowledge and methodologies.
- With regard to barriers to participation, equity and inclusion, it is important to mention socio-economic and political factors such as poverty, conflict, gender, migration/mobility, stigma, health and physical status of participants, as well as programme-related factors such as lack of appropriate infrastructure, poor quality of learning, legal and policy barriers or a limited number of YALE opportunities. In this respect, it is important to remember that Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the most unequal regions in the world.

## THE CURRENT SITUATION

Access to high-quality adult learning plays a decisive role in developing skills and competences that contribute to employability and the overall competitiveness of LAC economies. At the same time, learning brings equally important benefits for adults' social inclusion and personal development and well-being. Participation in learning helps people to secure a constructive and active role in their local communities and in society.

The following findings concern the evolution of participation, equity and inclusion in YALE based on the CONFINTEA VI country reports:

- In order to catch up with the developments in modern knowledge societies, people need to constantly advance their knowledge and skills. This refers especially to low-educated people. Equity is an indispensable dimension of the widening of access to adult education.
- An analysis of the progress reports from 14 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>2</sup> shows that most countries emphasize technical training related to income generation, frequently offered by the private sector. While there is an emphasis on human rights and civic education, very few countries mention learning purposes for personal, cultural and artistic growth, nor history or social sciences, as priority subjects.
- Although there is an increasing diversity of adult learning and education programmes, currently in most countries of the region the principal focus is on vocational education and training. More comprehensive adult learning and education approaches are needed, to address development in all its dimensions.
- Making the content of educational programmes more relevant to the life experiences of learners is a major challenge.
- There has been progress related to urban-rural and ethnic parity in access to education. However, equity is far from being achieved, and the quality of the implementation of public policies presents great disparities in countries with cultural diversity. This is due to the difficulties that indigenous peoples encounter in completing primary education, and to problems concerning access and non-completion of secondary and tertiary education.
- It is positive to note the joint efforts of different literacy and other YALE programme providers to coordinate with local or regional development policies. However, this coordination and the implemented programmes are not always the result of tri-sectoral agreements (government, private sector and civil society), but rather the expression of centralized political definitions and, therefore, do not always connect with projects of local stakeholders.
- In the last decade, the countries of the region have made an effort to incorporate ICT in education, with most countries reporting having incorporated ICT both in literacy and in YALE. Here, the initiatives of international cooperation agencies and the private sector have contributed. However, progress is uneven and heterogeneous.

<sup>2</sup> Argentina, Brazil, Belize, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, Paraguay and Suriname.

Língua Brasileira de Sinais (LIBRAS), a visual and spatial language articulated through the hands, facial expressions and body, is a sign language used by deaf communities in **Brazil**, which is recognized by law as a means of communication and expression. In addition, it is included as an integral part of the curriculum in the training of speech therapists. There are also specific strategies for people with motor and cognitive impairments in the country.

The National Institute for Adult Education (INEA) in **Mexico** received the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize in 2011 for its bilingual indigenous literacy programme, which is offered in 45 indigenous languages.

In **Guatemala**, literacy programmes are offered in 15 indigenous languages. A law promoting indigenous languages was established in 1986.

**Bolivia** fosters the Quechua-Spanish Bi-Literacy Project, which offers learning instruction in two languages.

The Dolores Cacuango Project in **Ecuador** promotes literacy for the indigenous population of Kichwa speakers.

**Paraguay**, which recognizes Guarani and Spanish as official languages, promotes a strategy of comprehensive and bilingual intercultural literacy. In 2011, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Fe y Alegría Association signed a cooperation agreement with the country's ministry of finance to promote intercultural bilingual education by radio.

## CRITICAL NODES

- Country reports prepared for the *GRALE III* process do not permit one to assess the degree to which CONFINTEA VI commitments have been fully implemented with regard to participation, nor whether youth and adult education's central concerns are taking into account learners' cultures, languages, gender, age, geographic location, prior knowledge and educational needs. Several systemic factors – for example, the legal situation, segregation, funding for education and linguistics policy – affect access to formal and non-formal education (UNESCO, 2015).
- The coverage of YALE programmes offered by local and national governments continue to be very limited in relation to potential demand. A study based on household and population surveys in 17 Latin American countries showed that the governmental offer of formal and non-formal youth education for those who never went to school or dropped out is very limited. Despite being a priority age group, less than 10 per cent of those in the 20 to 29 age group who have not completed secondary education attend an educational programme.
- Adult learning and education programmes are rarely responsive to indigenous and rural populations, the disabled, prisoners or migrants. This reflects the general situation of widespread inequality that affects indigenous peoples in many societies. Insufficient attention is also paid to other groups with special learning needs such as disabled people, migrants and prisoners, despite the fact that the use of traditional and modern technologies has facilitated this task, especially with the disabled and with the migrant population. Prison education has been enhanced since 2006 in the framework of the EUROsocial Programme of the European Commission. Initiatives aimed at blind or visually challenged persons and those with hearing impairments have been developed in recent years in many countries.
- From a gender perspective, initiatives to generate greater equality between women and men have not always led to more appropriate programmes nor to greater participation of women. Gender discrimination is evident in the field of YALE when we find that women are the majority in literacy programmes and centres, whereas men predominate in higher levels of education, in technical and vocational training, in training linked to the use of ICTs, and in non-formal educational opportunities that go beyond simple tasks and the domestic world (Infante, 2009).
- Public educational offerings and the expectations of emerging YALE users (for example, youth, women, people who are jobless, graduates with no employment prospects requiring reskilling) do not always coincide. Therefore, we can observe that policies and investment in YALE set new incentives for educational participation, such as the requirement to continue studies or to join training programmes as a condition for social subsidies, funding by the private sector where governments outsource educational

services, and relying on the private sector's ability to develop successful marketing of educational opportunities. The private sector, in turn, chooses to develop its own training agencies linked to direct business needs or conceptions.

- The diversity of the participants in terms of age, sex, cultural background, economic status, special needs (including disabilities) and language is often not reflected in the content of programmes. Few countries consistently use the appropriate language in education policies promoting multilingual approaches, though they are often essential to create a literate environment, especially for indigenous and/or minority languages.
- Teaching materials are generally developed by central governments, with very few countries reporting decentralization in their preparation.
- In the case of technical and vocational skills, companies tend to offer adult education to employed people more than to unemployed or underemployed people. Employers and other providers of continuing and adult education do not provide information on the number of participants or results of those programmes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increase participation. An inter-sectoral approach is necessary in order to overcome the obstacles to participation, equity and inclusion that are related to socio-economic and political factors. An integrated approach to education and training opportunities should be used for disadvantaged groups such as immigrants, refugees and prisoners that promotes political, economic and social participation and which increases their competences and cultural stock.
2. From the gender and generational perspective, it is necessary to overcome patriarchal visions of YALE and to cater for the learning needs of ageing populations living in societies in transition.
3. Policies of participation and inclusion need to focus on a multidimensional and integral perspective of the life of young people and adults, covering the areas of education, employment, healthcare, culture and political participation.
4. A new generation of YALE programmes is needed to advance the equality agenda vis-à-vis the model of 'neoliberal modernization', which involves the creation of political conditions for inclusion and democratic participation.

## QUALITY

### THE APPROACH OF CONFINTEA VI

Quality is a polysemic term when applied to learning and education. According to the BFA:

Quality in learning and education is a holistic, multidimensional concept and practice that demands constant attention and continuous development. Fostering a culture of quality in adult learning requires relevant content and modes of delivery, learner-centred needs assessment, the acquisition of multiple competences and knowledge, the professionalization of educators, the enrichment of learning environments and the empowerment of individuals and communities. (UIL, 2010, pp. 8–9)

The commitments set out in the BFA continue to be relevant for the search for quality in YALE in the LAC region. These include:

- developing quality criteria for curricula, learning materials and teaching methodologies in adult education programmes;
- recognizing the diversity and plurality of providers;
- improving training, capacity-building, employment conditions and the professionalization of adult educators;
- elaborating criteria to assess the learning outcomes of adults at various levels;
- putting in place precise quality indicators;
- lending greater support to 'systematic interdisciplinary research in adult learning and education, complemented by knowledge management systems for the collection, analysis and dissemination of data and good practice'. (UIL, 2010)

### THE CURRENT SITUATION

The following findings concern the development of quality-related issues:

- Precisely 50 per cent (seven of the 14 national reports consulted) of LAC countries reported having quality criteria in the curriculum and/or evaluating learning results.
- Only 43 per cent reported having criteria for the production of teaching materials, training of instructors, and methods of teaching and learning.

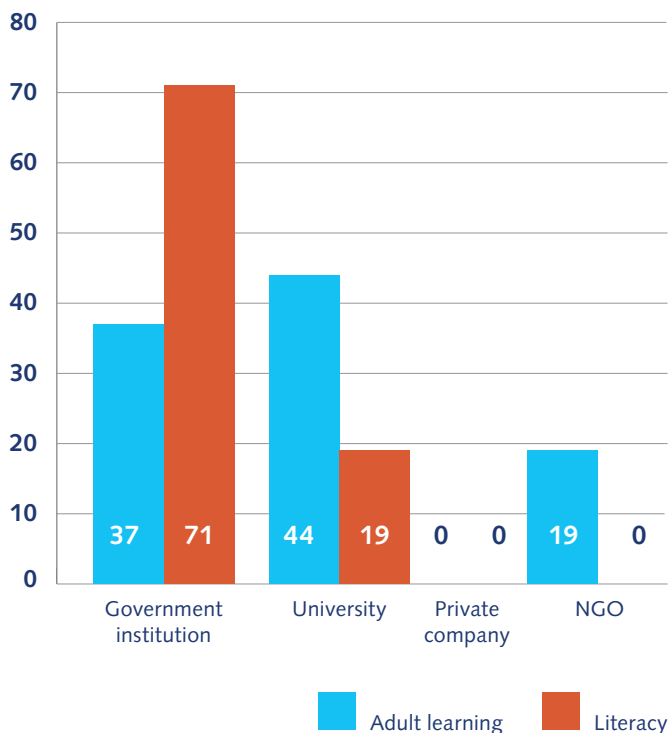
- In both cases, the absence of quality criteria in 50 per cent or more of the countries is an indicator of the limited importance given to quality in YALE.
- One of the key contributors to quality is the formation of educators. In this respect, at least half of the governments reported that they were developing training processes. The lack of training or capacity-building is a critical issue. More than half of governments report no efforts in this regard.

Figure 1 shows that the initial training of literacy teachers is largely carried out by government institutions. Universities have a smaller share, and private sector and NGOs none. Universities lead in the initial training of educators for YALE, but do not consider literacy.

As shown in Figure 2, the greater part of in-service training for youth and adult educators is again carried out by government institutions, with some contributions from universities and NGOs.

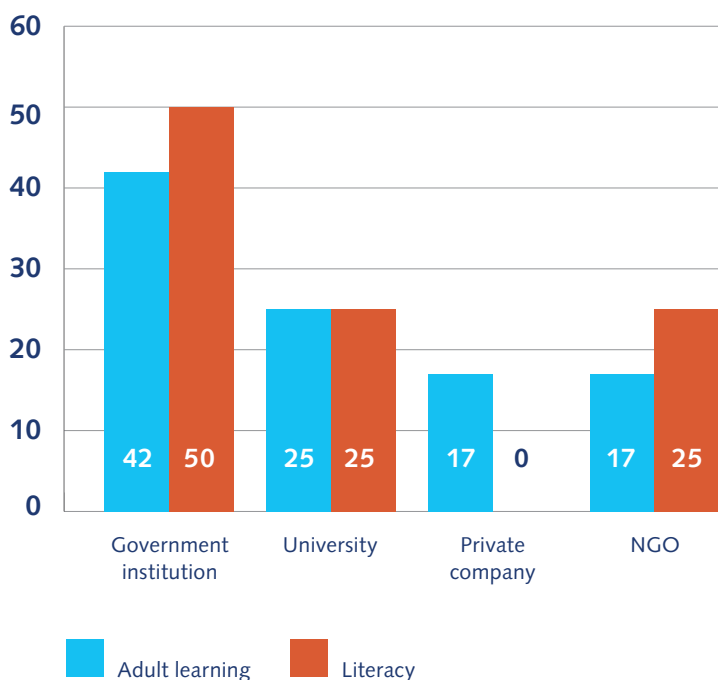
- Government institutions continue to retain a dominant role in the training of youth and adult educators with the support of other actors, including the

**Figure 1: Initial training of teachers for ALE**  
(percentages)



Source: Data from 14 national reports, 2011–12

**Figure 2: In-service teacher training for ALE**  
(percentages)



Source: Data from 12 national reports, 2011–12

private sector, whose share in training is just over 50 per cent. In general, government entities do most of the training of educators both at the initial stage and for those who are in service.

- On the use of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, 71 per cent of the ministries reported monitoring processes for literacy, while only 57 per cent do so for the rest of the youth and adult education. This means that about one-third of the ministries are not performing any monitoring of the processes on the ground, which is a cause for concern. Monitoring is a key tool for obtaining timely information to improve action on the go.
- There are even fewer countries conducting evaluation processes: only 64 per cent are performing evaluations of literacy processes and just 36 per cent are doing so for youth and adult education processes. These figures indicate an alarming lack of a systematic approach. Attention is rather focused on delivering services, not on quality assurance mechanisms to determine whether they are producing the expected results.
- In addition, only 57 per cent of the countries studied have carried out some survey on youth and adult education – only 50 per cent for literacy and 14 per cent for lifelong learning.

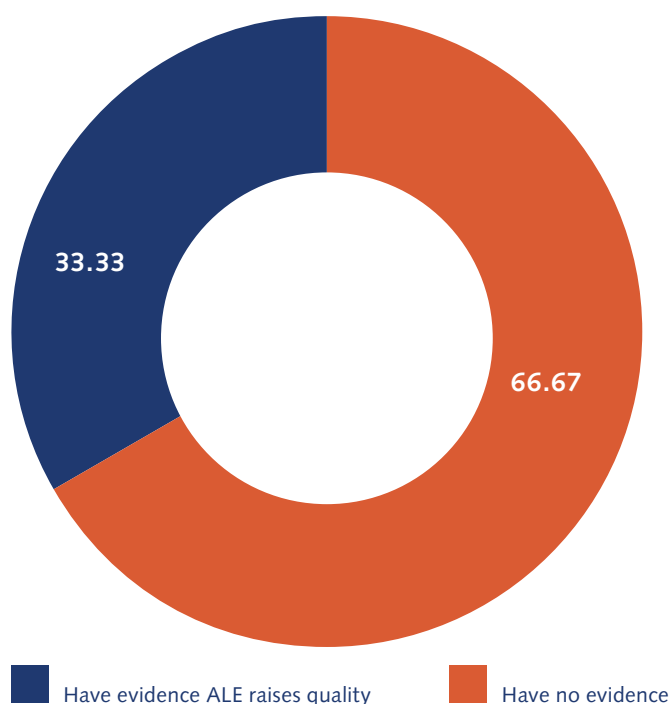
## CRITICAL NODES

CEAAL takes the view that it is inappropriate to impose a single view of quality in education, particularly when reduced to purely quantitative and decontextualized expressions. To that end, in partnership with CLADE, CEAAL organized a virtual debate to discuss different conceptions and experiences related to quality in education and, in particular, in YALE.

In terms of the quality of YALE, several issues can be identified:

- Quality has different meanings, which can lead to very different interpretations. Both quantitative and qualitative concepts and perspectives need to be balanced.
- Quality needs to address complementary aspects such as the updating of curricula and production of educational materials and resources. This requires funding, which is not available in most cases.
- A key aspect for the quality of education is the training of educators. Training provided by government institutions or universities is not yet sufficiently developed.
- In most cases, youth and adult education is underfunded. Hence, the capacity to meet the quality requirements is limited.

**Figure 3: Evidence that YALE raises the quality of work** (percentages)



## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To develop a shared understanding of quality in YALE that is based on the recognition of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity in Latin America and the Caribbean, 'quality' should be based on the sense of belonging which is indispensable for linking educative processes with the real contexts in which young people and adults develop. The concept of quality should encompass an inclusive perspective and a focus on the dimension of gender.
2. The quality of YALE inevitably depends on the extent to which the realities of exclusion and marginality are transformed. Quality implies recognizing the transformative meaning of education and the degree to which it can transform the life of youth and adults, and aid sustainability and human development. Transforming the world does not mean consuming ever more resources; on the contrary, it means being socially responsible and making rational and ethical use of available resources.
3. Initial and in-service training of teachers needs urgent improvement, and adult educators need more support from universities, teaching associations and civil society organizations.

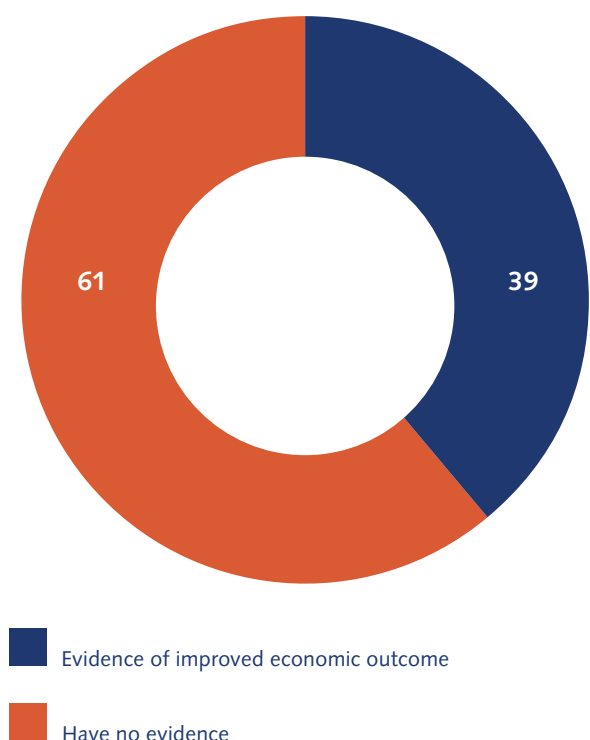
## YALE'S IMPACT ON WORK AND HEALTH

Education at any stage of life and in any of its modalities has an impact on people's lives. There are two important areas linked to YALE: work and health.

The former is often explicit, with adults seeing YALE as a means of achieving conditions required for better job opportunities. The systematization of learning carried out in the Dominican Republic's *Quisqueya Learns with You* plan identified, for example, that of the three main reasons young or adult people joined the programme, two were directly associated with work improvement (Cabrera, MINERD and OEI, 2016). This demonstrates that improving material living conditions through dependent work or self-employment is one of the most common motivations for YALE.

Participating in YALE also has a positive impact on health: people learn not only to read and understand doctors' medical prescriptions, but also about diseases and how they can be prevented.

**Figure 4: Evidence of a relationship between YALE and improved economic income (percentages)**



resulting in better income. Only 39 per cent of the countries reported evidence of a positive relationship between YALE and improved economic income (See *Figure 4*).

Regarding the perception by decision-makers of the link between YALE and improved productivity, most of them reported awareness of it. *Figure 5* shows that 47 per cent of respondents considered that there is a 'strong' link between these two variables, 17 per cent considered the link 'modest', 12 per cent considered that there was no link, and 24 per cent did not respond. If future investment in YALE is to grow, the effect of YALE on productivity and, consequently, on the economy needs to be better documented.

**CRITICAL NODES**

There is a critical node concerning the fragmentation of public interventions. Frequently, there is a lack of coordination and even of common goals between ministries that allocate resources for the training of young people and adults. This situation requires the creation of synergies, which the ministries of education can lead.

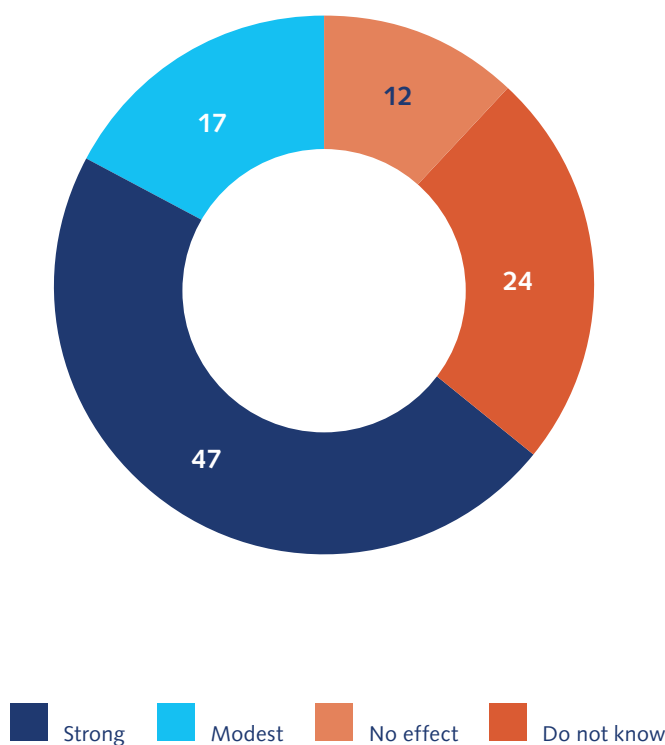
**IMPACT OF YALE ON THE WORLD OF WORK**

Information provided by relevant governmental agencies in countries from the Latin American and Caribbean region establishes a link between YALE and the world of work. It is useful to know how governments in the region are interpreting this link and how they are bringing together both aspects.

Only one-third of the countries in the region (Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua and Suriname) reported evidence of the link between YALE and the improved quality of work. This may illustrate a lack of effort in the region to investigate and document these links. However, making this link visible is important for YALE to achieve greater attention as a public policy priority and to attract more public resources. The private sector commonly considers adult education as an expense rather than an investment. This is a relevant fact that should be highlighted in the future.

Similarly, evidence that YALE affects the capacity of innovation in the work field is insufficiently documented and, worryingly, most countries have no evidence of YALE

**Figure 5: Awareness of decision-makers regarding relationship between YALE and productivity (percentages)**





**Mexico's National Institute for Adult Education (INEA) has developed Model of Education for Life and Work (MEVyT) modules that utilize books, magazines, brochures, maps, games or whatever the learning subjects require as opposed to rigid teaching materials.**

**The model is characterized by emphasis on work. This has the double function of offering a certificate equivalent to the ninth grade of general education, and opening possibilities for a better incorporation into the world of work.**

## THE CONTEXT OF JOB INSECURITY

Latin America and the Caribbean face permanent deterioration of working conditions. National economies depend to a large extent on so-called 'informal' economies and on emigration (remittances). In both cases, however, working conditions have become precarious and the vulnerability of people has increased.

The World Bank reports that half of the region's workers are in the informal economy (48 per cent in 2014), which, according to the same source, is an improvement on previous years (Banco Mundial, 2014). This results in a large segment of the population without any social protection or income security.

YALE is therefore also challenged to face these conditions and to provide training to overcome them. Work and basic social achievements such as social security, labour benefits and others have been seriously affected and are becoming less and less common; therefore, YALE processes must also be inscribed in the framework of the right to decent work and of the demand for better living conditions.

## IMPACTS OF YALE ON HEALTH

The information provided by Latin American and Caribbean governments for *GRALE III* offers relevant evidence of the link between YALE, health and well-being. Most countries in the region recognize this link (*Figure 6*), which implies that objectives and contents related to health and well-being are being considered in the formulation of YALE programmes and plans. Despite this, only 42 per cent

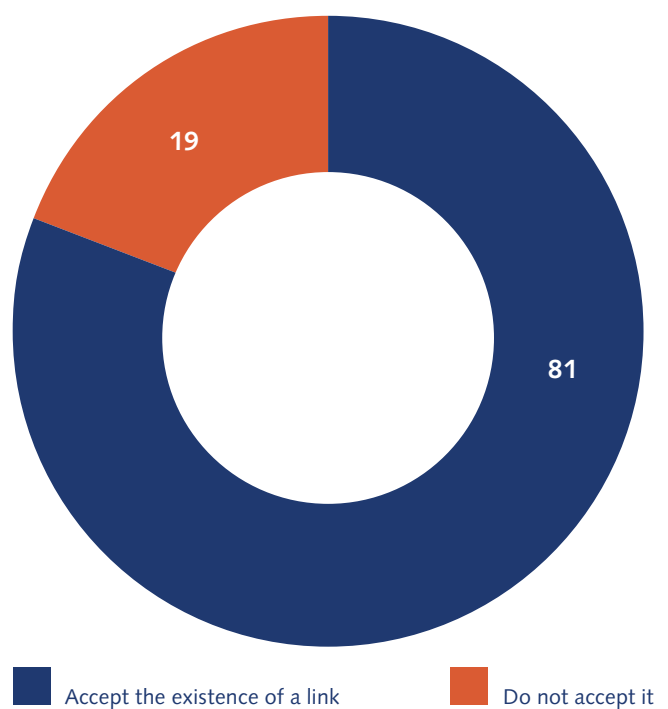
of countries in the region (Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua) reported having evidence that their programmes improve knowledge, attitudes and values that allow caring for or improving health.

In a similar vein, only a little more than half (57 per cent) indicated being close to the World Health Organization (WHO) concept of integral health, which includes mental and physical health from a holistic perspective (Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curacao, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Uruguay and Venezuela).

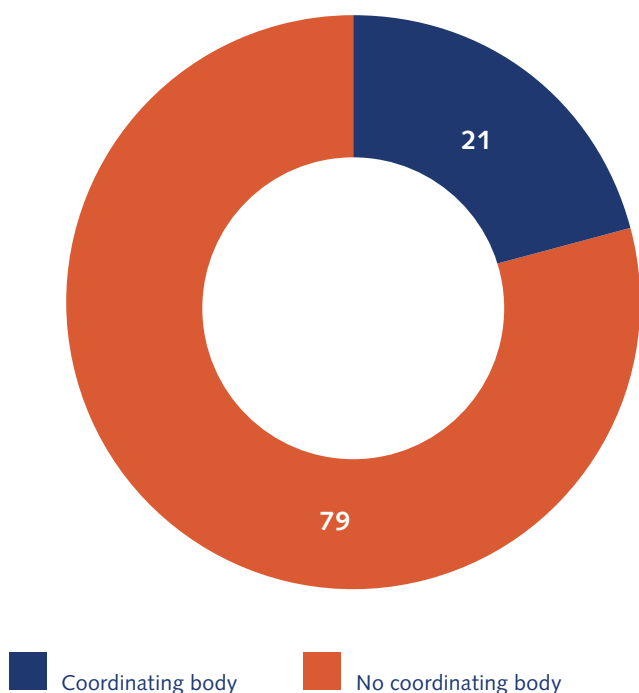
Only a quarter of the countries (Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Cuba and Honduras) declared having evidence of the positive impact of YALE on the health of the population. This is very important considering the link between education and better quality of life and confirms that more efforts have to be made to document the impacts of YALE in the field of health and well-being.

Regarding the link between YALE and HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, only 29 per cent of the countries (Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala and Mexico) declared having evidence of the

**Figure 6: Extent of recognition of the link between YALE and health and well-being in programmes (percentages)**



**Figure 7: Existence of a coordinating body articulating YALE with health programmes (percentages)**



positive impact of YALE. The results are very similar when they refer to cases of viral diseases, epidemics, sexuality and reproductive health, diabetes, exercise and stress reduction. Hence, the evidence collected by the different governments in the region is not enough to verify the positive impact that YALE can achieve in an area as important and transversal as health.

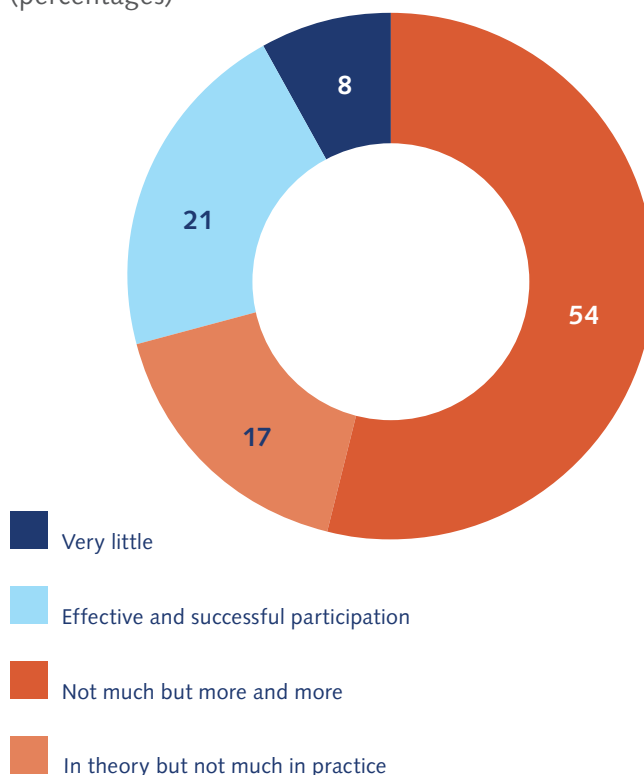
The lack of governmental awareness of these links is very important because it prevents YALE programmes from adopting a more integrated perspective. In addition, the lack of coordination between relevant governmental agencies means that synergies are not exploited and effort and resources are wasted.

Very few countries (21 per cent) (Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Cuba and Honduras) indicated that they have a coordinating body that links YALE and the agencies responsible for managing health programmes (Figure 7). Regarding the contribution of different actors to the definition and execution of public programmes, as shown in Figure 8, participation scenarios are promising, although still insufficient with respect to the mandates of greater participation, accountability and results. The articulation of efforts between different stakeholders is an important contributor to better results.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Governments, in collaboration with civil society entities and other actors, should make efforts to better document YALE experiences and to record the positive impacts it has on the world of work, health and well-being.
2. Documenting such benefits will serve to better and more fully explain the positive effects of YALE and how it can impact on areas beyond education itself. Documenting these effects can provide other actors, including public policy- and decision-makers, with elements to support significantly the YALE processes being carried out in the countries of the region.
3. YALE programmes should be planned from a holistic perspective that considers their very diverse effects, either explicit or not, so it is understood that an intervention in the educational processes of young people and adults goes far beyond the certification of classroom learning. Such processes are linked to effective changes in the lives of individuals, families, communities and the countries themselves. This will help change the perspective of public spending under which YALE is commonly seen and increase its possibilities of expansion.

**Figure 8: Participation of other actors, including NGOs, in design and execution of action (percentages)**



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The **Sixth International Conference on Adult Education** (CONFINTEA VI), held in Brazil in December 2009, closed with the adoption of the Belém Framework for Action, which recorded the commitments of Member States and presented a strategic guide for the global development of adult learning and education from a lifelong learning perspective. The third *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE III)*, published in 2016, drew on survey data to evaluate progress made by countries in fulfilling the commitments made in Brazil, while also highlighting some of the contributions adult learning and education can make to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review, in Suwon, Republic of Korea, in October 2017, takes stock of progress made by Member States in the past eight years, looking ahead to *GRALE IV* in 2019. This regional report, one of five produced for the Mid-Term Review in cooperation with the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), examines progress in **Latin America and the Caribbean**, exploring the contribution of key policy agreements and frameworks and offering recommendations in advance of CONFINTEA VII in 2021.