

MONITORING AND MEASURING ALE AT COUNTRY AND GLOBAL LEVELS

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CONFINTEA VI MID-TERM REVIEW: THE POWER OF ADULT LEARNING

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OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

Part 1

- **LLL and ALE: definitions and conceptions**
- **Existing instruments to measure and monitor ALE at different levels**
- **Limitations**
- **Why do we know so little about ALE: initial reflections?**

Part 2

- Ideally, which aspects of ALE should we expect to collect information and data, some of which may be comparable?
- At which levels of analysis? Micro-meso-macro
- How can we build up new sources of information and data on ALE?
A proposal

INITIAL DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTIONS OF LLL WITH EMPHASIS ON ALE

Broad definitions of lifelong learning and ALE

UIL definition of LLL (GRALE): *Lifelong learning comprises **all learning activities undertaken throughout life** with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competencies, within personal, civic, social and employment-related perspectives (UIL, 2015).*

UIL working definition (2016): *Lifelong learning is rooted in the integration of learning and living. It covers **learning activities for people of all ages in all life-wide contexts** and through a **variety of modalities**, which together meet a **wide range of learning needs and demands.***

ALE definition in RALE (2015): *ALE comprises **all forms of education and learning that aim to ensure that adults participate in their societies & the world of work.** It denotes the **entire body of learning processes** – formal, non-formal and informal -- whereby... adults... develop and enrich their capabilities for living and working, both in their own interests and those of their communities, organizations and societies*

FORMAL, NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION

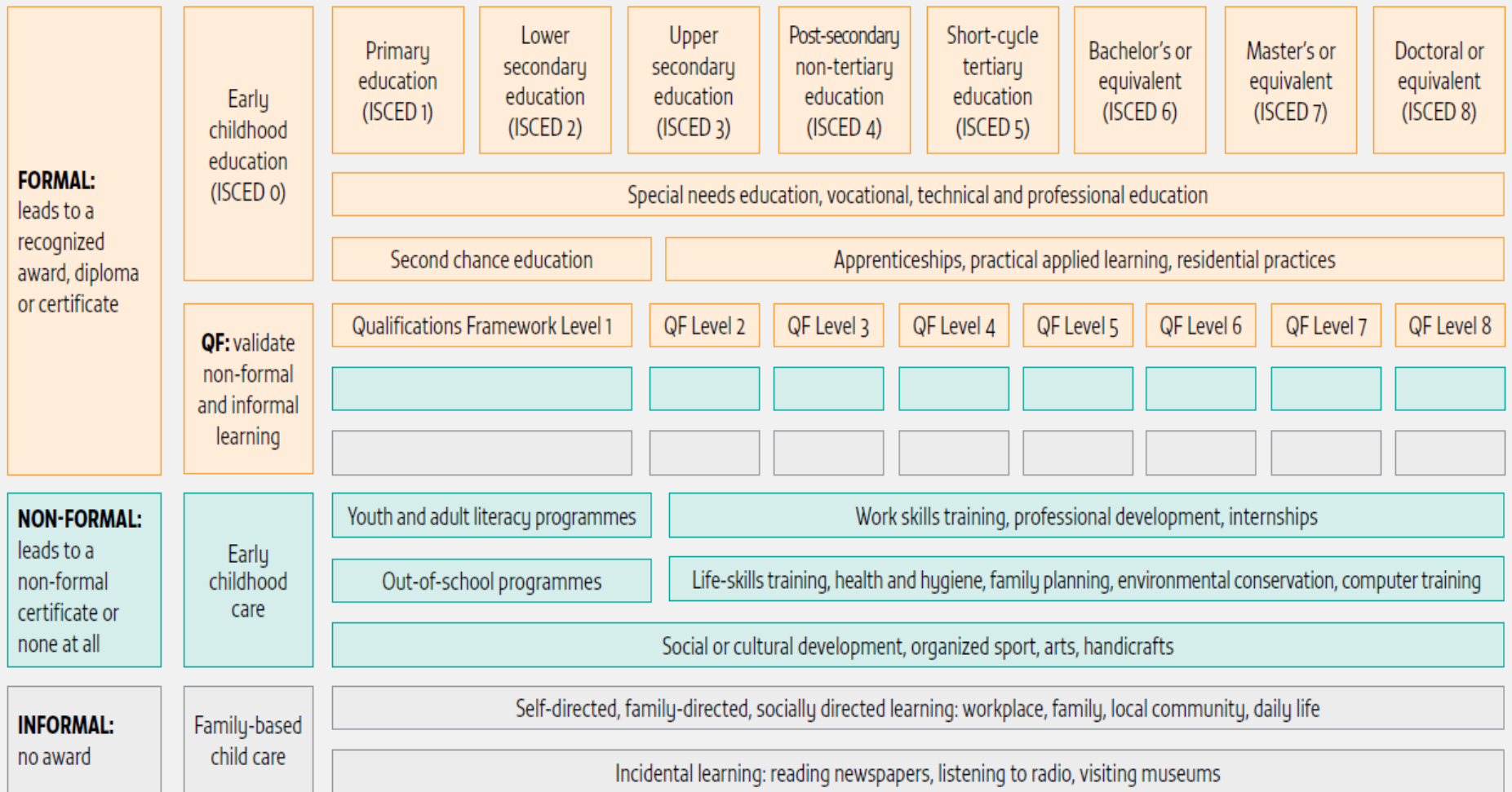
Formal education systems usually focus on learners between ages of 5 and 25: Pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary according to ISCED levels

Non-Formal education (NFE): education outside the formal education system which addresses adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children and youth, life-skills, work-skills and knowledge about general culture [eg, immigrants]...” (UNESCO 2007). Typically NFE programs have **clear learning objectives**, but **vary in duration** and **whether the acquired learning is certified by social agencies**. Strong presence of non-public sector providers. While NFE is found in early childhood programs; most prevalent in programs targeting youth and adults.

Informal education refers to incidental learning that occurs throughout ⁴ life, not based sequenced learning objectives. Intensity of **IE** changes over life course

FIGURE 0.1:

Lifelong learning opportunities for all



Source: GEM Report team.

WHAT KINDS OF INSTRUMENTS EXIST FOR MONITORING ALE?

- **National** level: particular countries have surveys or institutional accounts of lifelong learning or adult participation in further and continuing education, sometimes including TVET (ex Germany, Estonia)
- **National**: Many descriptive and some comparative case studies of ALE policies, programs, participation and financing in academic literature
- **Regional**: *Education at a Glance* (OECD) reports annually an indicator of 'adult education levels': % of adults (25-64) who have completed secondary or tertiary education levels (educational attainment)
- **Regional**: PIAAC (OECD) provides overview of adult cognitive skills and participation in education and training (formal and non-formal) over the lifecycle, based on household samples in 37 countries (2011-18)
- **Regional** Eurostat's *The Adult Education Survey* estimates adult participation in education and training (formal, non-formal and informal learning) among adults aged 25-64 living in private households (2007, 2011, 2016)
- **Regional**: UIS survey (2013) of enrolment in adult education in Latin ⁶

INSTRUMENTS AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL TO COLLECT ALE-RELATED INFORMATION

- UIS reports conventional youth and adult literacy rates for about 120 countries based on questions from national census schedules or household surveys
- UIS reports TVET enrolment: % of youth enrolled in secondary TVET
- Eurostat (2014) and World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators database (2016) provide information on ICT skills of adults (ex. sending emails with attached files; using basic arithmetic formulas in spreadsheet; finding, downloading, installing and configuring software)
- UIL GRALE monitoring survey of CONFINTEA VI, Belem Framework for Action, based on official country responses to questions covering 5 areas of action: policy, governance, financing, participation, inclusion and quality.
- GRALE3: 139 of 197 countries responded (71%) to at least to some of the 75 questions in survey

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LIMITATIONS

- All data sources provide, to different degrees, partial information on ALE and NFE, by focusing on select aspects/dimensions of ALE.
- Limited global coverage of ALE–related information -- data uneven or lacking in many regions and countries
- Validity and reliability of collected information (ex. GRALE survey) difficult to determine
- Lack of trend data: little information on the extent to which ALE programs, policies and participation levels change over time
- Thus, currently not possible to construct global pool of comprehensive and accurate profiles of ALE and LLL and their outcomes and impacts.

WHY DO WE KNOW SO LITTLE ABOUT ALE?

Possible explanations

- ALE is voluntary and cannot be mandated
- Adult motivations for participation in ALE are multiple and change as they age, making provision policies complex and difficult to coordinate
- ALE covers so many diverse programs and learning contexts, which make it difficult to count and operationalize
- Teaching adults is more challenging than teaching children and youth in school. Adults have multiple life commitments -- to family, work, their parents, community -- which can undermine their commitment to ALE and regular attendance.

WHY DO WE KNOW SO LITTLE ABOUT ALE? (2)

- ALE cover areas of education and learning that are often not under the authority of, or regulated by, the national ministry of education; thus difficult to get other ministries to coordinate and cooperate in order to provide a comprehensive account of ALE & LLL
- Governments are reluctant to fund ALE, prefer to invest in formal education of children and youth, which is more easily monitored; short-term dividends from investments in formal education are more visible
- Trends in adult literacy and acquired adult skills and competences change slowly; whereas politicians need to show short term gains from their policy priorities before leaving office. Some claim that ALE is less easily understood by politicians, undermining political will and funding.
- Overall, ALE provision is less standardized and less easily captured by categories employed in existing monitoring instruments

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IDEALLY, WHAT KINDS OF INFORMATION IS NEEDED TO MONITOR ALE & LLL

- **Definitions and conceptions** of ALE and position within LLL
- Official **ALE regulations, laws and policies in place, regardless of provider** (for profit and non-profit)
- Overall **investment (funding) in ALE** by government, private sector, civil society;
- Actual **provision** of ALE – both formal and non-formal frameworks and programs
- **Differential access and participation rates in ALE** among different youth and adult populations;
- The **quality** of ALE programs especially background of **educators**;
- **Completion** rates of ALE participants;
- The **sustainability of outcomes** from ALE program participation over time and during an individual's life
- **Assessment of impact** of ALE on society, economy, polity and environment

IDEALLY WE NEED INFORMATION AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

MONITORING ALE OPPORTUNITIES IN LIFE AND WORK TO ASSESS:

Macro: Global and regional patterns

Macro: National patterns and trends

Meso: Urban areas and 'Learning Cities'

Meso: Community-based programs or community learning centers

Meso: Workplaces/ Employer-sponsored training programmes

Micro: Individual or household participation

A MODEST PROPOSAL

Develop a dynamic, global online platform showcasing national ALE profiles

- Should draw on the experiences of existing platforms of education profiles – e.g, IBE's World Data on Education; EU's EURYDICE (and others)?
- Proposal: **build up over 5-10 year period an international platform of knowledge on LLL and ALE through crowd-sourcing activities**
- Develop a **template** of specific categories of information needed to fill out each national ALE profile (see GEM Report diagram)
- Draw on expertise of different actors in each country (both inside and outside of government) to create a wiki platform of national ALE and LLL profiles.
- Academics, researchers, policy analysts, consultants, NGOs and government sources would submit contributions, which would be vetted by experts and then placed on line
- Online platform grows to include additional countries and is further revised and validated over time

REFLECTIONS

Arguing that ALE is basically non-comparable, and can only be understood in terms of its specific history and context, effectively limits what you can or cannot say about the issue in comparative/global terms and limits monitoring, advocacy and funding

The continuing lack of systematic and comparable information on ALE to help drive policy interest, reform and expansion, will effectively marginalize adult learning and education for another generation

Concerted and innovative efforts are needed to build up a comparative and international database on ALE and LLL, which could be used to shine new light on key issues and challenges facing ALE.

Thank You!

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CONCLUDING REMARKS

Seemingly global trends should warrant more interest in ALE and LLL:

- Adults living longer and generate more demand in LLL
- Diversifying populations increase need for social integration and solidarity through ALE
- Impact of climate change and environmental degradation means need to improve resilience of adults
- Growing refugees and displaced populations have increased calls for adult education, training and skill acquisition
- ...

But many obstacles to progress in ALE remain

- Political interest and will
- Government capacity to coordinate and collaborate across ministries
- Our inability to measure and monitor, using suitable comparative frameworks

Yet, never has there been a more opportune time to advocate for LLL and ALE