

organizers and partners

The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) is UNESCO's specialist resource centre in charge of adult learning, non-formal education and lifelong learning, and it is in this capacity that it is coordinating the process leading to CONFINTEA VI, in cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters and Regional Bureaux and the CONFINTEA VI Host Country, in particular the UNESCO Brasília Office and the Ministry of Education. A multi-partnership and multi-agency Consultative Group has also been established to act as the key conceptual think tank and advisory committee and to support UIL in coordinating the preparatory process.

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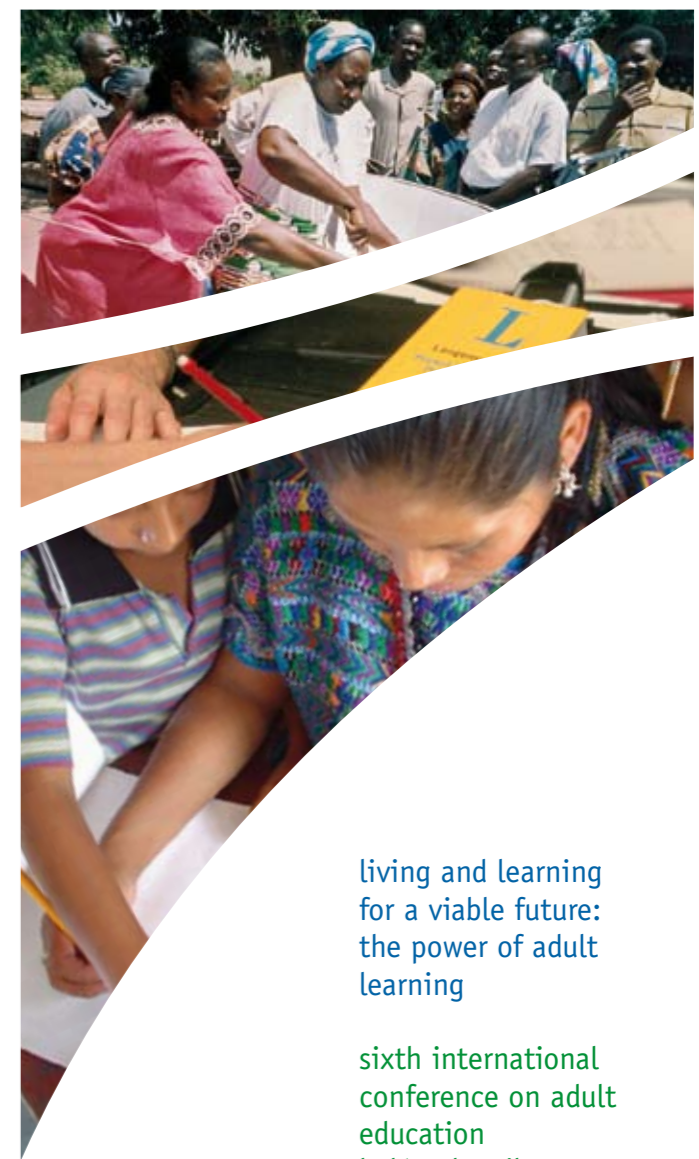


why is adult education important?

The 1997 Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning, the highly commended outcome document of the 5th International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V), defined adult education as the “entire body of ongoing learning processes, formal or otherwise, whereby people regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, and improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction to meet their own needs and those of their society”. Adult education takes different forms (formal, non-formal, informal). It is provided in different places and set-ups (community learning centres, folk high schools, on-the-job, evening classes, etc.), for different purposes (general, vocational) and at different levels from primary to post-doctoral (adult basic education, continuing education, higher education, etc). The term “adult education” has in recent years often been accompanied by “adult learning”, placing more emphasis on demand than on the process of provision.

Access to education and learning for adults is a fundamental aspect of the right to education and facilitates the exercise of the right to participate in political, economic, cultural, artistic and scientific life. The Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning looks at adult education as “a powerful concept for fostering ecologically sustainable development, for promoting democracy, justice, gender equity, and scientific, social and economic development, and for building a world in which violent conflict is replaced by dialogue and a culture of peace based on justice. Adult learning can shape identity and give meaning to life.”

Adult learning and education as components of lifelong learning are gaining increased relevance in view of the growing pressure to face new, complex and rapidly changing issues and challenges, such as poverty, exclusion, migration, environmental degradation and climate change and a shortage of food and natural resources, HIV/AIDS and other diseases, and the advent of new technologies that now permeate all fields of life.



living and learning
for a viable future:
the power of adult
learning

sixth international
conference on adult
education
belém, brazil
1 –4 december 2009



regional preparatory conferences

Latin America and the Caribbean

Mexico City, Mexico, 10–13 September 2008

From Literacy to Lifelong Learning: Towards the Challenges of the 21st Century

Asia and the Pacific

Seoul, Republic of Korea, 6–8 October 2008

Building Equitable and Sustainable Societies in Asia and Pacific: The Challenge to Adult Learning

Africa

Nairobi, Kenya, 5–7 November 2008

The Power of Youth and Adult Learning for Africa's Development

Europe/North America

Budapest, Hungary, 3–5 December 2008

Adult Learning for Equity and Inclusion in a Context of Mobility and Competition

Arab States

Tunis, Tunisia, 5–7 January 2009

Investing in Adult Learning: Building Knowledge and Learning Societies in the Arab Region

scope, objectives and themes

As a UNESCO Category II intergovernmental conference, CONFINTEA VI will provide a platform for policy dialogue and advocacy on adult learning and education within and across countries at the global level, with the participation of a large number of UNESCO Member States, United Nations agencies and international development partners, civil society representatives, research institutions and the private sector. CONFINTEA VI will create commitment to and action on adult learning and education, while pursuing the three major objectives of:

- Pushing forward the recognition of adult learning and education as important elements of and factors conducive to lifelong learning, of which literacy is the foundation;
- Highlighting the crucial role of adult learning and education for the realization of current international education and development agendas (Education for All/EFA, the Millennium Development Goals/MDGs, the United Nations Literacy Decade/UNLD, the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment/LIFE and the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development/DESD);
- Renewing political momentum and commitment and developing the tools for implementation in order to move from rhetoric to action.

The overall thrust of CONFINTEA VI will be to draw attention to the relationship and contribution of adult learning and education to sustainable development, interpreted as encompassing a social, economic, ecological and cultural dimension.

The themes to be explored will include:

- policies, structures and financing for adult learning and education
- inclusion and participation
- quality in adult learning and education
- literacy and other fundamental, essential key competencies
- poverty eradication
- critical citizenship

history of CONFINTEA VI

CONFINTEA VI will continue a series of global UNESCO meetings on adult education and learning which have been held every twelve to thirteen years since 1949. These meetings illustrate and constitute a vivid testimony of the relevance and power of the Organization's convening mandate. The first CONFINTEA took place in Helsingør (Denmark) in 1949, followed by conferences in Montreal (Canada) in 1960, Tokyo (Japan) in 1972, Paris (France) in 1985, and, finally, in Hamburg (Germany) in 1997. CONFINTEA V, which was considered a landmark conference, established a holistic understanding of adult learning and education within the perspective of lifelong learning. Adult learning and education were recognised as key tools for addressing current social and development challenges worldwide. However, the recognition and strong commitment expressed in 1997 did not lead to the corresponding integration, policy prioritisation and allocation of resources for adult learning and education, either nationally or internationally. CONFINTEA VI thus aims to renew international momentum for adult learning and education, and to redress the discrepancy between insights and discourse, on the one hand, and the lack of systematic and effective policies and conditions for adult education and learning, on the other.



preparatory process

The preparatory process was built on three pillars:

1. National reports on the state of adult learning and education at the country level, prepared by UNESCO Member States under the leadership of UNESCO National Commissions and based on analytical guidelines and selected indicators. These national reports were condensed into a series of Regional Synthesis Reports and were presented in the Regional Preparatory Conferences for discussion, validation and further enrichment. The national reports also provided data and illustrative cases for a Global Report on Adult Learning and Education.
2. Regional Preparatory Conferences, prepared and organized in cooperation with the respective UNESCO Regional Bureau and its regional partners, and hosted by a UNESCO Member State. As well as discussing the respective Regional Synthesis Reports, the regional conferences identified the key issues on adult learning and education in the various regions before developing and adopting specific key recommendations and strategies to be submitted to the global conference.
3. Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE): To accompany the Regional Synthesis Reports, a Global Report has been prepared whose main results have fed into the CONFINTEA VI Working Documents. Based on this report as well as on the discussions and outcomes of the regional conferences, CONFINTEA VI will discuss and adopt the "Belém Framework for Action" containing key strategies/recommendations and benchmarks for renewed policy and action, and the monitoring of adult learning and education in all world regions.