

# GLOBAL REPORT ON ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Institute  
for Lifelong Learning

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# FOREWORD

Lifelong learning is at the core of UNESCO's mandate. Since its founding, the Organization has played a pioneering role in affirming the critical role of adult education in the development of society and promoting a comprehensive approach to learning throughout life.

The universal right to education for every child, youth and adult is the fundamental principle that underpins all our initiatives. Adult learning counts more than ever in the era of globalisation characterised by rapid change, integration and technological advances. Learning empowers adults by giving them the knowledge and skills to better their lives. But it also benefits their families, communities and societies. Adult education plays an influential role in poverty reduction, improving health and nutrition, and promoting sustainable environmental practices. As such, achieving all the Millennium Development Goals calls for good quality and relevant adult education programmes.

Since the First International Conference on Adult Education in 1949, UNESCO has worked with Member States to ensure that adults have the basic right to education. In 1976, the UNESCO General Conference approved the *Nairobi Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education* which enshrined governments' commitment to promote adult education as an integral part of the educational system within a lifelong learning perspective.

Two landmark documents – the Faure Report (1972) *Learning to Be* and the Delors Report (1996) *The Treasure Within* – were instrumental in promoting a framework for lifelong learning. The publication of this *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)* marks a timely contribution as the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education meets for the first time in the Southern Hemisphere, in the Brazilian city of Belém. Based on national reports from 154 Member States, *GRALE* analyses trends, identifies key challenges and best practices, and recommends a course of action to improve vastly the scope of adult education and learning.

As this *Report* shows, the field of adult education is highly diverse. Literacy classes provide women and men with foundational skills which empower them, increase their self-esteem and enable them to continue learning. Vocational training courses improve the employment prospects of youth and adults, enabling them to acquire or upgrade their competences. Life-skills programmes equip learners with knowledge and values on how to deal with issues like HIV prevention. Learning to use new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) effectively is now a must for many, if not all.

While this *Report* demonstrates the value of adult education in helping women and men to lead better lives, it also underlines that large numbers of adults are still excluded from learning opportunities. Low participation among groups who stand to benefit most from learning programmes maintains a cycle of poverty and inequity. Addressing this is the key challenge facing policy-makers and the international community at CONFINTEA VI. Governments, the private sector and civil society need to work around well-articulated policies with clearly defined targets and governance arrangements. Such synergies, together with adequate funding, are central elements of a strategy to make lifelong learning a guiding principle of educational policy.

The *Report* finds that in industrialised countries, adult education policies are informed by a lifelong learning perspective and integrated into other policy portfolios. But globally, successful coordination of a wide range of stakeholders is rare. Adult educators all too often suffer from low status and remuneration, affecting the quality and sustainability of programmes. Sufficient, predictable and well-targeted funding is more the exception than the rule.

We are not short of answers. Good practice exists on how to develop policies that integrate adult education with poverty reduction strategies. Governance frameworks that promote genuine participation of all stakeholders are found in some countries. A few governments have measures in place to increase funding in this chronically-under-funded sector of education. Accounts of how governments,

civil society and the private sector assure quality in adult education programmes warrant broader analysis and dissemination.

Five CONFINTEAs have provided us with many recommendations on how to improve the situation of adult education and, by doing so, to reach out to the marginalised and disadvantaged who stand to benefit most from learning opportunities. We need to translate these into policies and programmes now. Two UN Decades – the United Nations Literacy Decade and the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development – are occasions for advocating adult education and promoting equitable and inclusive policies. The Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE), which I launched as a flagship programme, is proving that the concerted and coordinated efforts of all stakeholders towards a common vision make a real difference.

I hope that this *Report* will contribute to clarifying the main challenges and to providing some pointers on how we can make sure that adult education truly counts.

Koïchiro Matsuura  
Director-General of UNESCO (1999-  
November 2009)

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Adama Ouane

Director  
UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

# INTRODUCTION

For a very large number of people, adult education means making up for the basic education they missed. For the many individuals who received only a very incomplete education, it is the complement to elementary or professional education. For those whom it helps to respond to the new demands which their environment makes on them, it is the prolongation of education. It offers further education to those who have already received high-level training. And it is a means of individual development for everybody.

(Faure *et al*, 1972: 205)

In the 21st century, the rapid pace and complexity of economic, technological and cultural changes require women and men to adapt and re-adapt throughout their lives – all the more so in the context of globalisation. In this era of the knowledge society – where production structure is shifting towards greater knowledge use and away from reliance on physical capital, manufacturing and agricultural production – growth in personal, national and regional incomes is increasingly defined by the ability to create, manage, disseminate and innovate in knowledge production.

The new information and communication technologies (ICTs) intensify the rate of exchange of information. They also allow users to participate actively in virtual networks that can easily be mobilised to shape public opinion. Globalisation means that individuals and families are crossing national borders in large numbers. They, as well as the receiving communities, need to learn new ways of living together amidst cultural differences. These developments not only highlight the importance of continuous learning in general; they also demand that adults keep on acquiring more information, upgrading their skills and re-examining their values.

The critical role of adult education in the development of society has long been recognised. Since the First International Conference on Adult Education in 1949, UNESCO member states have dedicated themselves to ensuring that adults are able to exercise the basic right to education. Later Conferences in Montreal (1960), Tokyo (1972), Paris (1985) and Hamburg (1997) reaffirmed this right, and proposed ways of making it a reality. In 1976, the UNESCO General Conference approved the *Nairobi Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education* (UNESCO, 1976) which

enshrined governments' commitment to promote adult education as an integral part of the educational system within a lifelong learning perspective.

Over the course of these 60 years the landscape of adult education has evolved. This *Global Report* aims to describe the current position. First it sets out to document trends in key areas of adult education at the global level, intended to serve as a reference document for policy-makers, practitioners and researchers. Second, it provides an advocacy tool to promote the importance of adult education as well as to share effective practice. Finally, as one of the key inputs to CONFINTEA VI, it will provide evidence to support the outcome document of the meeting.

The understanding of the role of adult education has changed and developed through time. From being seen as promoting international understanding in 1949, adult education is now seen as a key in the economic, political and cultural transformation of individuals, communities and societies in the 21st century. While UNESCO has spelled out a definition of adult education in the *Nairobi Recommendation*, what is considered as adult education is still subject to a wide range of interpretations. The shift from education to learning also constitutes an important change in conceptualising the field (see Definitions box, p. 13).

But what, exactly is an “adult”? Cultural and social factors have significant impact on the division of the human life-course into age-linked stages and phases. These phases vary widely across time and space. Furthermore, there is no inevitable or automatic correlation between age and learning needs or preferences beyond

## Definitions of adult education and related concepts

**Adult education** “denotes the entire body of organised educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in twofold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development, adult education, however, must not be considered as an entity in itself, it is a sub-division, and an integral part of, a global scheme for life-long education and learning.”

*(From the Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education, UNESCO, 1976: 2)*

**Lifelong education** and learning “denotes an overall scheme aimed both at restructuring the existing education system and at developing the entire educational potential outside the education system in such a scheme men and women are the agents of their own education, through continual interaction between their thoughts and actions; education and learning, far from being limited to a period of attendance at school, should extend throughout life, include all skills and branches of knowledge, use all possible means, and give opportunity to all people for full development of the personality; the educational and learning processes in which children, young people and adults of all ages are involved in the course of their lives, in whatever form, should be considered as a whole.”

*(From the Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education, UNESCO, 1976: 2)*

**Adult learning** encompasses both formal and continuing education, non-formal learning and the spectrum of informal and incidental learning available in a multicultural learning society, where theory- and practice-based approaches are recognised.

*(From the Hamburg Declaration, UIE, 1997: 1)*

**Non-formal education**, contrary impressions notwithstanding, does not constitute a distinct and separate educational system, parallel to the formal education system. It is any organized, systematic, educational activity, carried on outside the framework of the formal system, to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as well as children. Thus defined, non-formal education includes, for example, agricultural extension and farmer training programmes, adult literacy programmes, occupational skill training given outside the formal system, youth clubs with substantial educational purposes, and various community programs of instruction in health, nutrition, family planning, cooperatives, and the like.

*(Coombs and Ahmed, 1974: 8)*

the boundaries of childhood and early adolescent development. The parameters vary with personal and social circumstance, as has always been the case. The boundaries between youth and adulthood, and between adulthood and old age, are much more fluid than cultural and social conventions imply. Especially within a lifelong learning paradigm, it is increasingly unhelpful to make sharp distinctions between 'youth education' and 'adult education'.

Adult learning and education are located at the heart of a necessary paradigm shift towards lifelong learning for all as a coherent and meaningful framework for education and training provision and practice. The framework given by the concept of lifelong learning should engender borderless education. This means open, flexible and personally-relevant opportunities to develop the knowledge, competences and dispositions that adults at all stages of their lives need and want. It means providing learning contexts and processes that are attractive and responsive for adults as active citizens – at work, in the family, in community life and, not least, as self-directed individuals building and rebuilding their lives in complex and rapidly-changing cultures, societies and economies.

Lifelong learning as an integrating framework for all forms of education and training is not new. However, its recent rise as a feature of policy discourse derives from linked changes of global relevance: economic and cultural globalisation; simultaneous dominance of and crisis in market economies; social modernisation processes and the transition to knowledge societies (Torres, 2009; UNESCO, 2005a). In this complex change scenario, Held and McGrew (2007: 243) identify a number of global "deep drivers" as follows:

- changing global communications infrastructures prompted by the IT revolution;
- developing global markets for goods and services, consequent on global information distribution patterns;
- rising rates of migration and mobility, driven by shifting patterns of economic demand, demographic changes and environmental problems;

- transformation of state socialist systems into more open societies based on democratic principles and market relations, with accompanying spread of consumerist and anti-globalisation values;
- emerging global civil society formations and associated incipient global public opinion.

Within the rich overall concept of lifelong learning, adult learning and education must be anchored in respect for the integrity and dignity of adults' lives in their social diversity. It is in this spirit that this *Global Report* approaches the available information and data on the sector.

Lifelong learning remains more a vision than a reality. However, the concerted modernisation of education and training systems to meet the challenges posed by contemporary social and economic macro-change – affecting the whole world – is now high on policy agendas. This has brought adult learning into higher profile. However, policy attention thus far typically focuses on vocational education and training of all kinds – public and private, inside and outside workplaces, formal and informal – rather than on general adult education.

Adult literacy rightly continues to occupy centre-stage with respect to international policy initiatives and programmes. It has also re-surfaced as an important issue for the high-income countries, as low levels of functional literacy for living and working in these kinds of countries turn out to be more widespread than had been assumed in recent decades. The *Global Report* argues that both of these areas are important; but that they are just part of the potential that is offered by real integration of adult learning into the policy goals of governments.

Most importantly, it is clear that those who need it most are the ones who are systematically marginalised from enjoying the benefits of adult education. Low rates of participation and inequitable access therefore remain the key challenges for adult education today.

This *Global Report* is the outcome of many people working together through several phases. In late 2007, UNESCO member states were requested, on the basis of a structured set of questions and topics, to provide a National Report on progress in adult learning and education policy and practice since CONFINTEA V in 1997. These guidelines covered the key areas of policy, governance, participation, provision, quality and resources. A total of 154 National Reports were submitted. Most were delivered in time and in formats that could be used for the preparation of Regional Synthesis Reports for sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab states, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and North America, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

The *Global Report* uses the information and analyses in the five Regional Synthesis Reports, together with comparative statistical and survey data (where available) and contextualising research-based material, to provide an overall view of the issues and challenges facing adult learning and education today, and a set of thematic discussions around key dimensions for action.

While the National Reports constitute a wealth of information, there are some limitations in their use as primary data. As a mechanism for accounting for what the countries have accomplished, the data are based on self-reporting, written by either an individual or a team of authors. Except for some countries who validated their National Reports through stakeholder consultations, it has not been possible to verify the data that has been presented. Due mainly to lack of regular and systematic collection of data on agreed areas, most of the information from the National Reports is not comparable. Finally, most of the National Reports covered only the education sector, although the Report Guidelines had specifically advised that governments should incorporate information from other sectors.

The *Global Report* is divided into six chapters. The first, *The case for adult learning and education*, examines the international educational and development policy agenda and the place within it of adult education. It reflects on the importance of situating adult education

within a lifelong learning perspective. Finally it draws attention to the opportunities offered by CONFINTEA VI to strengthen and gain recognition for adult learning as a central tool in resisting marginalisation across the world. Chapter 2 presents developments in the areas of policy and governance. It looks at how far appropriate policies have been adopted and then examines governance issues in adult education. Chapter 3 describes the range and distribution of provision of adult education, as reflected in the National Reports, and offers a typology for understanding the variety of provision in the sector. Chapter 4 reviews patterns of participation and access to adult education. It specifies the obstacles to raising participation levels and proposes the directions in which adult education policy must move if these are to be overcome. Chapter 5 deals with quality in adult education, with a particular focus on relevance and effectiveness. It also reviews the status of adult education personnel, given their critical role in ensuring quality. Chapter 6 appraises the current state of the financing of adult education. In particular, it assesses the extent to which the commitment to improve this, made at CONFINTEA V in the *Hamburg Agenda for the Future* (UIE, 1997), has been met. A concluding section synthesises the main points of all six chapters to provide an overview of trends in adult education. Finally there are some reflections on building the data and knowledge base in adult education.





## CHAPTER 1

# ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION

The world's leading economies are slowly recovering from deep recession following the collapse of overblown financial markets in late 2008. Many fragile and weak economies will share the resulting unpleasant consequences, the ultimate depth of which is currently unknown. For public services, including education, the outlook for the coming years is not promising. Progress to achieve the Education for All (EFA) Goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 is mixed and patchy. There continue to be enormous challenges in eradicating poverty, improving maternal health, reducing child mortality, promoting gender equality and ensuring environmental sustainability. At the core of meeting these broad development challenges is the importance of respecting, protecting and fulfilling the right of all to quality basic education.

The current situation both exacerbates the problems facing the most marginalised and threatens the funding necessary for education to combat disadvantage. The reality is that side by side with the precarious economic environment, a host of other challenges impinge on adult learning and education. Disease, hunger, war, environmental degradation, unemployment and political instability continue to dominate the lives of millions. These inter-related problems destroy the social fabric of communities and families. Citizens in many countries experience the effects of an erosion of social cohesion. And for many, the cycles of exclusion and marginalisation persist and are passed on from one generation to the next.

Education alone cannot resolve these problems but it is certainly part of the solution. Laying a strong foundation for continuous learning and capacity

development are critical measures for all societies. Adult education plays an important role by providing space, time and settings in which adults can – using the terms of the Delors Report (Delors *et al*, 1996) – learn to know, learn to do, learn to live together and learn to be.

An active and productive citizenry is a fundamental societal asset. Mobility within and across national borders provides possibilities for individuals and communities to experience and learn about other peoples, cultures and languages; and all kinds of knowledge are available through new information and communications technologies to those who have internet access. Indeed, in a connected world, the opportunities for learning are vast and diverse. Adult education – provided in formal, non-formal and informal settings – supports these opportunities as it facilitates learning for all, wherever their location and whatever their particular needs and motivations.

Yet all those working in education know only too well that inadequate resources limit such opportunities, erode the quality of education and reduce learning outcomes. These issues are accentuated in the adult education sector, which is seldom a policy priority and suffers from chronic under-funding.

This chapter examines the global educational and development policy agenda, the significance of adult education as a means to meet the goals of such policy and the evidence that adult learning is key to the achievement of world targets for greater equality. It explores the development of the concept of lifelong learning and the rationales it has been associated with, from the economic goals of education to the wider societal and

personal benefits that learning brings. Finally it evaluates the issues that have arisen since CONFINTEA V and draws attention to the opportunities offered by CONFINTEA VI to strengthen and gain recognition for adult learning as a central tool in combating oppression and marginalisation across the world.

### 1.1 Adult education in the global education and development policy agenda

Equalising opportunities in education is “one of the most important conditions for overcoming social injustice and reducing social disparities in any country [...] and is also a condition for strengthening economic growth” (UNESCO, 2008a: 24).

Since the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000, there has been uneven progress towards achieving the EFA Goals (Box 1.1)

mainly in relation to universal primary education (UPE) and the reduction of gender disparities (UNESCO, 2008a).

Improvements in early childhood care and education have been limited to date, and wide disparities in pre-primary enrolment ratios between countries in the North and the South remain. During the 1999-2006 period average net primary enrolment ratios rose approximately 10 to 15 percentage points in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia. Yet more than 75 million children of primary school age (55% of whom are girls) were not enrolled in school in 2006.

Unsatisfactory progress is especially apparent for the EFA Goals directly related to adult education – namely, ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are equitably met and reducing adult illiteracy rates by 50% by 2015.

#### Box 1.1 The Dakar Education for All Goals

##### Education for All called for a collective commitment to the attainment of the following Goals:

- 1 expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
- 2 ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
- 3 ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes;
- 4 achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
- 5 eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
- 6 improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

(UNESCO, 2000)

Limited access to educational opportunities in the past has left 774 million adults lacking basic literacy skills, of whom about two in every three are women. In some 45 countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia, adult literacy rates are below the developing country average of 79%.

Gender disparities in primary and secondary education participation rates had been eliminated in 59 of 176 UN countries by 2006, although most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, South and West Asia and the Arab States have yet to achieve this EFA target.

In the end, because the learning needs of children and adults have received inadequate attention in implementing EFA, the goal of improving educational quality and excellence (Goal 6) is also off target.

Of course, overall progress in early childhood care and education and in basic education has a positive impact on adult learning and education in the medium-term, since children and young people who have had greater access to formal education are more likely to continue their participation in various learning settings as adults. Nevertheless, this progress has to be put in context: poverty, living in rural areas or urban slums and belonging to an indigenous or migrant minority still significantly constrain educational opportunity. Around the world, girls are still educationally disadvantaged – and disadvantage is cumulative.

Worldwide agreement on the EFA agenda was critical in focusing on the key educational challenges. However, the slow and uneven progress sends a message that certain goals are more important than others and therefore should be prioritised when, in fact, all the goals are inter-connected and need to be addressed concurrently. The continued dominance of universal primary education, whether measured by enrolment ratios in the EFA agenda or completion rates in the MDGs, underscores the marginalisation of the youth, adult literacy and lifelong learning objectives which are vital to overall success.

The consensus on the Millennium Development Goals (Box 1.2) was part of an international compact meant to address key global problems at the start of the 21st century. The MDGs not only summarised the development aspirations of the world as a whole, but also brought attention to universally-accepted values and basic rights. Building on the recommendations of UN Conferences in the 1990s, they set out development benchmarks to be reached by 2015, with clear indicators to track progress. However, out of close to 100 strategies enumerated on how to move the MDGs forward, not a single one refers to adult learning and education as a means (United Nations, 2001). The absence of adult education as an MDG strategy, despite overwhelming evidence of its transformative power, is astounding,

We should never set adult education against the education of children and young people...It follows that adult education can no longer be a fringe sector of activity in any society and must be given its own proper place in educational policies and budgets. This means that school and out-of-school education must be linked firmly together.

(Faure *et al*, 1972: 205)

### Box 1.2 The Millennium Development Goals

- Goal 1:** Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2:** Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3:** Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4:** Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5:** Improve maternal health
- Goal 6:** Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Goal 7:** Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8:** Develop a global partnership for development

(United Nations, 2001: 56-57)

The MDG Report 2008 (UN, 2008) indicated some improvement in relation to MDGs 2 and 3, which approximate to EFA Goals 2 (universal primary education) and 5 (gender equality), and modest progress in relation to the other MDGs. For example, 51.4% of employed people in sub-Saharan Africa lived on less than US \$1 per day in 2007 (compared with 55.5% in 1997).

There were also improvements in maternal and reproductive health. Yet in all regions, mortality rates continue to be higher for children from rural areas and poor families and those where mothers lack basic education (United Nations, 2008). Overall, despite limited progress, the international community remains off-track in fulfilling its MDG commitments (Box 1.3).

### Box 1.3 The enormity of the remaining MDG challenges

- The proportion of people in sub-Saharan Africa living on less than \$1 per day is unlikely to be reduced by the target of one-half;
- About a quarter of all children in the South are considered to be underweight and face the long-term effects of undernourishment;
- 113 countries failed to achieve gender parity in both primary and secondary school enrolment by 2005, and only 18 of them are likely to achieve this by 2015;
- Almost two thirds of employed women in the South are in vulnerable jobs;
- In a third of countries in the South, women make up less than 10 per cent of parliamentarians;
- More than 500,000 prospective mothers in developing countries die annually in childbirth or of complications from pregnancy;
- Some 2.5 billion people, almost half the developing world's population, live without improved sanitation;
- Carbon dioxide emissions have continued to increase;
- Foreign aid expenditures declined in both 2006 and 2007, and risk falling short of the commitments made in 2005;

(United Nations, 2008: 4)

Careful consideration of the MDG challenges reveals a simple truth: improvements in the provision of, participation in and quality of adult education can accelerate progress towards all eight Millennium Development Goals. Research convincingly demonstrates that parental education and qualification levels – especially those of mothers – are positively associated with children's (particularly girls') educational participation and attainment. Better educated parents understand more readily the importance of ensuring that their children – and especially their daughters – attend school and gain qualifications that enable them to lead, in turn, more independent and active lives. Family

learning with resultant parental involvement in schools is shown to be more important than socio-economic class in influencing pupil performance at 16 (Nunn *et al*, 2007).

Young men and women with better education, training and qualifications can improve their life chances and standards of living. They are more likely to be gainfully employed and able to venture into self-employment. Later life learning brings a return through an improvement in occupationally-based social status (Blanden *et al*, 2009).

Better educated adults are more able to take care of their health and protect themselves from sexually-transmitted diseases more effectively. They know more about family planning options and the care of young children. Informed parents perceive the connections between infant survival and maternal and reproductive health, and are more equipped to educate and protect their children from life-threatening diseases.

Studies in Bolivia, Mexico, Nepal and Nicaragua show that women participating in adult education programmes, who also have access to radio and other information sources, have become more proficient in managing health issues in their families. Higher levels of education for women have been shown to increase their knowledge of HIV-AIDS prevention (see UNESCO, 2005b; 2007). Meanwhile as a result of their participation in adult literacy programmes, many women have higher self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities (Box 1.4).

Adults of all ages who continue to participate in education have greater access to information and knowledge that are important for forming views and taking action with respect to key social and political issues, such as environmental protection. They are also better able to use new sources of information and knowledge – in particular, information and communication technology (ICT) – independently and meaningfully.

**Box 1.4****How literacy helps to attain the Millennium Development Goals: evidence from evaluation and research****MDG 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger**

When adult literacy is an integral element of skill training programmes, e.g. farming, with content derived from the skill and knowledge set, it enables significant minorities of learners – 20 to 30 per cent – to upgrade their productivity. The effects depend also on a context that facilitates and supports behavioural change.

In addition, participants who became literate said that they could handle money, especially paper money, more confidently as a result. More importantly, they felt less vulnerable to being cheated in monetary transactions. This is a key gain for people who are micro-entrepreneurs, enabling them to better manage their businesses – and thus a key signal for initiatives that offer to train women and men in managing micro-credit and small enterprises.

**MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education**

60 to 70 per cent of participants, particularly mothers and female carers, in literacy classes are more likely to send and keep their children in school, as well as monitor their progress.

**MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women**

30 to 40 per cent of women in literacy education develop greater confidence in helping to make family decisions and in participating in local public affairs.

**MDG 4: Reduce child mortality and MDG 5: Improve maternal health**

20 to 30 per cent of participants show increased likelihood of improving the health and nutritional practices of their families, while a long-term study (in Nicaragua) found that 'graduate' mothers had healthier children and fewer child deaths.

**MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability**

30 to 40 per cent of participants in literacy education develop a stronger awareness of the need to protect the environment and a willingness to take action for it.

(DFID, 2008)

Improving and enriching knowledge, skills and competences, together with growth in personal development and self-confidence for youth and adults, bring benefits far wider than just those to individuals and their families – valuable and legitimate though these certainly are. There is evidence that the social returns on investment in adult education (starting with adult literacy) compare well with those on investment in primary education (UNESCO, 2005b). Three World Bank literacy projects showed a private rate of return to investment ranging from 25% in Indonesia (1986) to 43% for females and 24% for males in Ghana (1999) and 37% in Bangladesh (2001). In the Ghana project, the social rate of return for females was 18% and for males 14%. Moreover, data from 32 countries

indicate that training programmes that incorporate literacy and numeracy bring in significant rates of return to investment (both individual and social) and contribute to the acceleration of the attainment of the eight MDGs (DFID, 2008). A study of the social and personal benefits of learning in the UK demonstrates strong influences on health (cancer prevention up and smoking down), improved racial tolerance and increased civic participation among the least educationally qualified, even when courses taken are primarily for leisure purposes (Feinstein *et al*, 2008). These examples further reinforce the essential point that the MDGs can only be achieved if adult education receives higher priority in the international policy agenda. Its contribution can no longer be ignored. Confronted with

such complex development questions, adult learning and education offer a clear response.

## 1.2 Adult education within a perspective of lifelong learning

Adult education has long been defined as a vehicle for social change and transformation (Baumgartner, 2001; Mezirow, 1990; 2000). As far back as 1900, Dewey had asserted that adult education is at once an entitlement and a public good, to which all should have access, but in which all equally have a responsibility to participate – in the interests of building and sustaining democracy.

Fostering capacities for critical reflection and learning to learn were central in the traditions of the Folk High Schools of Europe's Nordic and Baltic countries, and of popular education that originated in nineteenth-century European and North American workers' movements. Emphasis was placed on the importance of cultural and socio-political fields of knowledge and on the development of community-based, non-formal adult education.

From Latin America, Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed became the most internationally celebrated model of adult education as a cultural act of empowerment and social change (Barreiro, 1974; Freire, 1968; 1996; Puiggrós, 2005; Torres, 1998). It provided a dimension of structural transformation from below, beginning with the circumstances of people's daily lives and ultimately aiming to shape a more just society.

Many social and political movements have integrated adult learning and education as a powerful means for supporting personal, social and political empowerment (Antikainen *et al*, 2006; Chrabolowsky, 2003; Gohn, 2008; Mayo, 2009). For example, in Tanzania, Julius Nyerere's vision of socialism embraced adult education as a means of mobilising people for self-reliant community development and societal transformation.

In the 1960s such community-based political and cultural traditions of adult education were challenged by the introduction of adult education policies as a means for economic development. Framed within the notion of human capital, these policies were developed, either solely or partly, on principles of instrumental rationality that consider the outcomes of learning primarily in terms of use-value. In its narrowest interpretation, such a perspective places education at the service of competitive economies.

Alongside the emergence of this purely economic interpretation of adult education was the development of policy thinking that situated adult education within the broader framework of lifelong learning. Two UNESCO reports elaborated key principles in a lifelong learning perspective. Both the Report of the International Commission on the Development of Education, *Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow* (the Faure Report, 1972) and the Report of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, *Learning: The Treasure Within* (the Delors Report, 1996) pointed to the need for a learning culture that is open to all and embraces a learning continuum that ranges from formal to non-formal and informal education. They further maintained that learning is not only lifelong but also 'life-wide', taking place in all spheres of an adult's life, whether at home, at work or in the community (Box 1.5).

The Delors Report (Delors *et al*, 1996), while supporting the same humanist tradition as the Faure Report (Faure *et al*, 1972), also addressed the challenge posed by education and training policies, through the lens of human capital theory.

The 1996 Report also marked a shift from the use of the term 'lifelong education' in the Faure Report to 'lifelong learning', which is presently more commonly used. This change signalled not only a semantic change but in fact reflected a substantive development in the field. Lifelong education as put forward by the Faure Report was associated with the more comprehensive and integrated goal of developing more humane individuals and communities in the face of rapid social change. On the other hand, the more dominant interpretation of

### Human capital theory

The phrase "human capital" was originally coined by the economist Adam Smith in 1776 but taken further in the 1960s by Theodor Schultz and Gary Becker. Human capital theory posits that investment in education and skill formation is as significant for economic growth as investment in machines and equipment. Economists have tried to measure the rate of return on investment in human capital. However, the validity of applying narrow econometric analysis to educational inputs and outputs for individuals has been subject to thorough-going critique.

For a fuller discussion, see Schuller and Field (1998)

### Box 1.5 Lifelong education according to Faure and Delors

“Now, finally, the concept of lifelong education covers the entire educational process, from the point of view of the individual and of society. It first concerns the education of children and, while helping the child to live his own life as he deserves to do, its essential mission is to prepare the future adult for various forms of autonomy and self-learning. This later learning requires many wide-ranging educational structures and cultural activities to be developed for adults. These, while existing for their own purposes, are also a pre-condition for reforming initial education. Lifelong education thereby becomes the instrument and expression of a circular relationship comprising all the forms, expressions and moments of the educative act...”

*(Faure et al, 1972: 143)*

“This has led us...to rethink and update the concept of lifelong education so as to reconcile three forces: competition, which provides incentives; cooperation, which gives strength; and solidarity, which unites “ (p 18) “...human resources in every country must be activated and local knowledge and local people and institutions must be mobilized to create new activities that will make it possible to ward off the evil spell of technological unemployment....” (p 80)

*(Delors et al, 1996)*

lifelong learning in the 1990s, especially in Europe, was related to retraining and learning new skills that would allow individuals to cope with the demands of the rapidly-changing workplace (Matheson and Matheson, 1996; Griffin, 1999; Bagnall, 2000). On the other hand, the emphasis on the learner in lifelong learning could also be interpreted as assigning greater agency to individuals, in contrast to lifelong education’s thrust on structures and institutions (Medel-Añonuevo, 2006). This shift also influenced the outcomes of CONFINTEA V, which discussed adult learning more prominently than previous International Conferences on Adult Education.

We now have a landscape of adult education and lifelong learning where mixed principles, policies and practices co-exist, with the evolution of open and flexible systems of provision capable of adapting to social and economic change. Repositioning adult education within lifelong learning therefore requires a shared philosophy of the purposes and benefits of adult learning. Global complexity calls for the contribution of both instrumental and empowering rationales for adult education. In recent

decades, it is the former that have become more prominent, with human capital approaches shaping policies more strongly than in the past. In contrast, the original vision of adult education as contributing to political empowerment and societal transformation has receded: it is rarely considered in policy-making.

This is changing as a more encompassing perspective – the capability approach (Sen, 1999) – considers the expansion of human capabilities, rather than merely economic development, as the over-arching objective of development policy. This approach looks beyond the economic dimension, and the mere pursuit of happiness, to encompass concepts of affiliation such as the capability to interact socially and participate politically.

Today’s case for adult education must begin from the view that it is precisely these values and principles of empowerment that need to be put at the centre. It is this sense of distinct purpose and its accumulated experience of grounded and socially-worthy educational practice – that are its critical and indispensable legacy. The principles of the capability approach offer this connection.

### The capability approach to development

Amartya Sen’s (1999)

understanding of development entails much more than increasing income and wealth. Poverty can be seen as a deprivation of basic capabilities, in the form of high mortality, significant under-nourishment, morbidity and widespread illiteracy. It is, in this sense, a limitation on freedom. For Sen, the enhancement of human freedom is both the main object and the means of development. Human freedom is founded on economic facilities, political freedom, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security.

People have to be seen to be actively involved in shaping their own destinies, rather than as passive recipients of development programmes. In this context, then, adult education is an important component in enabling and empowering communities to strive for social, political and economic freedoms.



In the shift towards lifelong learning, adult education has a pivotal role to play in ensuring that equity and social justice are pursued, together with the sustenance of democracy and human dignity. These principles stand at the heart of the future global adult learning and education agenda. The real value of lifelong and life-wide learning is personal and social agency, enabling people to equip themselves to act, to reflect and to respond appropriately to the social, political, economic, cultural and technological challenges they face throughout their lives (Medel-Añonuevo *et al.*, 2001)

### 1.3 The need for a strengthened adult education

The Five International Conferences on Adult Education were landmarks in supporting international and national efforts to establish and expand adult education programmes and policies. Moreover, they, along with other milestones such as the Faure and Delors Reports and the influential 1976 UNESCO *Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education*, set out the vital role of adult education as “forming part of lifelong education and learning”.

CONFINTEA V broke new ground in 1997 with the *Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning and Agenda for the Future* (UIE, 1997). It identified adult learning and education as “both a consequence of active citizenship and a condition for full participation in society”. They were considered to be a key to reaching the goal of creating “a learning society committed to social justice and general well-being” in the 21st century.

Reaffirming the centrality of the right to basic education and skills for all throughout life, with adult literacy as the cornerstone of entitlement, the *Hamburg Declaration* underlined public responsibility for adult education provision, funding and quality. It drew attention to the need for partnerships between state, civil society and the private sector in developing and sustaining adult learning and education. The *Declaration* highlighted the importance of promoting gender equality, the integrity of cultural diversity and indigenous knowledge, the need to extend provision for older adults, and the need to assure education for peace,

democracy and environmental sustainability. Addressing the themes set forth in the accompanying *Agenda for the Future* (Box 1.6) would demand considerably more investment in adult learning and education at both national and international levels.

However, from a worldwide perspective, as evidenced from country reports in the period since 1997, many national government education and social policies have not prioritised adult learning and education as had been expected and hoped for following the *Hamburg Declaration*. Some of these issues were already flagged in the Synthesis Report of the CONFINTEA V Review Meeting (UIE, 2003). Two international agreements – the Dakar Framework for Action and the Millennium Development Goals – are weak in their advocacy for adult education. There is a lack of shared understanding of adult learning which has led to a policy discourse divide between the North and the South, with the former concentrating on the operationalisation of the discourse of lifelong learning and the latter, focusing on basic education for all. The contribution of adult education in development remains unrecognised and unacknowledged.

While countries have reported improvements, adult education as a sector still needs to be strengthened. Some factors that need to be examined in the process are the following:

First, despite the frequent use of the term ‘lifelong learning’ in a variety of legal, policy and programme documents, conceptual clarity about what constitutes lifelong learning and the place of adult learning and education within it has not become generalised. This lack of clarity has not only resulted in a tendency for discussions to continue to prioritise education for the young but has also often resulted in a division of the adult education field between general adult education, on the one hand, and vocational adult education and training on the other. Each set of distinctive actors emphasises differences in principles, purposes and practices rather than establishing connections and seeking cross-cutting alliances and partnerships.

Second, the narrow association of adult education with literacy education and basic skills development in many countries has

often resulted in educationally low-status content and outcomes. Precisely because of this feature of adult education provision, participants – especially in the countries of the South – are likely to be drawn from socially and educationally disadvantaged populations and hence represent a weak political constituency.

Third, adult education provision straddles the entire education continuum, with strong roots in non-formal and informal education contexts and methods. Participation in adult education does not necessarily or even typically lead to formal credentials with high marketable or social value. The quantification of outcomes from investment is also challenging.

Fourth, few countries have allocated the necessary financial resources for adult education. Low prioritisation, public spending constraints and the unequal distribution of resources all contribute to inconsistent, non-predictable and inequitable funding patterns.

Fifth, with such poor resourcing the adult education sector remains under-professionalised. Too many practitioners have minimal specialised training or recognised qualifications, and arrangements for the accreditation of prior learning and experience for those working professionals are insufficiently developed. Employment conditions are typically poor, a situation which does not favour long-term retention of experienced and competent practitioners. These conditions affect the quality of adult education practitioners' performance and necessarily have an impact on the quality of adult learning experiences. The fragmentation of body of professionals involved means that the ability to lobby for better training and increased investment is difficult. The lack of powerful institutions handicaps advocacy for practitioners and target groups alike. The interconnectedness of this lack of power with the lack of funding mentioned above is a serious problem for all involved.

Sixth, and again a connected issue, the wide dispersion and diversity of adult learning and education stakeholders inhibits effective collaboration with others who share similar agendas. While recognising the state's main responsibility for the provision of adult education, the

### Box 1.6 The Hamburg Agenda for the Future

- Theme 1:** Adult learning and democracy: the challenges of the twenty-first century
- Theme 2:** Improving the conditions and quality of adult learning
- Theme 3:** Ensuring the universal right to literacy and basic education
- Theme 4:** Adult learning, gender equality and equity, and the empowerment of women
- Theme 5:** Adult learning and the changing world of work
- Theme 6:** Adult learning in relation to environment, health and population
- Theme 7:** Adult learning, culture, media and new information technologies
- Theme 8:** Adult learning for all: the rights and aspirations of different groups
- Theme 9:** The economics of adult learning
- Theme 10:** Enhancing international co-operation and solidarity

*(UIE, 1997)*

contributions of civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders have not been properly acknowledged, valued and tapped.

Today's international financial crisis, as well as urgent development challenges, has created a critical moment. If adult education is to play a role in improving the quality of economic and social life in the 21st century, considerably more resources – efficiently used and distributed – are necessary. Absolutely essential is a shared vision of adult learning and education that is achievable and that can engage all stakeholders. Vulnerable and marginalised groups need to be at the centre of this vision. CONFINTEA VI offers an opportunity to break new ground and to identify clear objectives and feasible lines of action to be achieved in the coming decade. Moving from rhetoric to action is an imperative.



## CHAPTER 2

# THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT AND GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK OF ADULT EDUCATION

Recognising the importance of adult education for achieving sustainable social, cultural and economic development means explicit and visible political commitment translated into policy. It also means allocating the resources needed to implement measures well. The basis of any policy should be that adult education is a right for all, without exception.

A key issue for understanding adult education policy, provision and governance is the acknowledgement of a learning continuum between formal, non-formal and informal education and its implications for life-wide and lifelong learning (Chisholm, 2008; Colley *et al*, 2004; Du Bois-Reymond, 2005; Otto and Rauschenbach, 2004) (see Box 2.1). Recognising where and how learning occurs, and appreciating the full spectrum of learning processes and outcomes, are fundamental for developing the potential of adult education.

In countries that have poorly developed education infrastructures, it is difficult to establish the kinds of comprehensive formal education and training systems that exist in more affluent nations. Effectively, learning in non-formal and informal settings is the most realistic option in these countries. It can also be innovative and empowering in providing greater learning opportunities for the population as a whole, using different and culturally appropriate concepts and practices. Adult education policies therefore need to take into consideration the significance of such learning for individuals and communities.

This chapter first looks at how far appropriate policies have been adopted worldwide. It then examines how the

governance of adult education is managed and, within this, the distribution of power from the national to regional, sub-regional and local levels. It concludes with a review of policy and governance as interwoven dimensions of adult education anchored in a lifelong learning perspective.

## Box 2.1 The learning continuum

### Formal learning

Formal learning occurs as a result of experiences in an education or training institution, with structured learning objectives, learning time and support which leads to certification. Formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective

### Non-formal learning

Non-formal learning is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. It is, however, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective.

### Informal learning

Informal learning results from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and typically does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but in most cases it is non-intentional (or 'incidental'/random).

Source: European Commission, 2000; 2001

## 2.1 Policy development in adult education

Of the 154 countries which submitted National Reports in preparation for CONFINTEA VI, 126 (or 82%) declared that adult education is covered directly or indirectly by some kind of government policy (Appendix Table 1). Regional differences exist, with the European region having the highest proportion at 92%, followed by Asia with 83%, the Latin American and Caribbean region with 80%, sub-Saharan Africa 79% and the Arab region with 68%. Closer examination of

the responses, however, indicates the wide range of interpretations of the term 'policy', starting with the most basic law of the land, the Constitution, through executive fiats and legislative enactments to medium-term development plans and decennial education plans.

When asked about a specific policy on adult education since 1997, only 56 countries (or 36%) responded affirmatively. Almost half of these countries (27) are in the European region. Nineteen (or 34%) countries are from sub-Saharan Africa. The high rate for the European region is to be expected

### Box 2.2

#### The Lisbon Strategy, the Communication on Adult Learning and the Action Plan on Adult Learning

The Lisbon Strategy is the European Union's overarching strategy focusing on growth and jobs. Within the EU, national governments are responsible for education and training but the problems of ageing societies, skills deficits within the workforce and global competition are seen as benefiting from joint responses and learning between countries. As part of this response it is recognised that lifelong learning must become a reality across Europe as a key to growth and jobs as well as being critical for full participation in society.

Member states have strengthened their political co-operation through an Education and Training work programme and a strategic framework for co-operation in education and training. This strategic framework identifies four long-term strategic objectives:

- Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality
- Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training
- Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship
- Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training

It is supported by benchmarks for achievement.

Alongside the Lisbon Strategy are specific communication and action plans for adult education respectively – "It's Never too Late to Learn" (European Commission, 2006) and "It's Always a Good Time to Learn" (European Commission, 2007) – which focus on adult education policy and practice across the EU. Five priorities are identified for concrete action:

- To reduce labour shortages due to demographic changes by raising skill levels in the workforce generally and by upgrading low-skilled workers (80 million in 2006).
- To address the persistently high number of early school-leavers (nearly 7 million in 2006), by offering a second chance to those who enter adulthood without any qualifications.
- To reduce poverty and social exclusion among marginalised groups. Adult learning can both improve people's skills and help them towards active citizenship and personal autonomy.
- To increase the integration of migrants in society and labour markets. Adult learning offers tailor-made courses, including language learning, to contribute to this integration process. Adult learning can help migrants to secure validation and recognition for their qualifications.
- To increase participation in lifelong learning and particularly to address the fact that participation decreases after the age of 34. At a time when the average working age is rising across Europe, there needs to be a parallel increase in adult learning by older workers.

given that since 2000, the Lisbon Strategy – which considers lifelong learning as key measure for making the region the most competitive in the world – has been in place (see Box 2.2). In eight of the African countries reporting a specific policy on adult education, closer inspection reveals that these policies are actually centred on improving literacy.

The National Reports prepared for CONFINTEA VI point to some policy features that appear to be shared by most countries:

- Adult education policy is usually subsumed under general education policies. It is rarely mainstreamed within comprehensive development frameworks. Adult education policies are incoherent and fragmented – more like a patchwork of measures responding to specific issues than a framework of linked principles and programmes.
- There are wide gaps between legislation, policy and implementation, with weak relationships between formal policy-making and practice. Adult education policy-making and reform tend to take place in a vacuum: high-level councils and

### Box 2.3

#### Adult education policy: key points from the CONFINTEA VI Regional Synthesis Reports

##### Arab Region

Throughout the region, adult education is seen as synonymous with youth and adult literacy, including education for those who have left school early. The relevant policies are mostly incorporated into national education policies. Egypt, Kuwait and Tunisia have specific laws on the eradication of illiteracy. Kuwait, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen have translated such policy into action plans.

##### Asia-Pacific Region

Many countries lack a comprehensive adult education policy framework. Many are still struggling to provide basic education for people of all ages, so policy is closely linked with literacy. China and India, the 'Asian Giants,' have both focused on literacy, with gradually broadening policy agendas in recent decades. Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand have been able to diversify their policy scope through non-formal programmes, and are now moving towards a concept of lifelong learning. Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea and Singapore have moved towards a policy placing adult education within lifelong learning.

##### Europe and North America Region

General objectives and overall policy direction in the region's countries display broad similarities, with the European Union's policies having clear influence. Nevertheless, many countries still do not have comprehensive and distinct adult education policies. In former socialist republics, current policies are typically linked to continuing vocational training. Many countries, including Canada and the United States of America, are now identifying the continued need for adult literacy and basic skills programmes.

##### Latin America and Caribbean Region

Adult education remains primarily associated with basic and compensatory education, most specifically with respect to adult literacy and the vocational and social integration of out-of-school youth. Recent policy documents – especially in the Caribbean – include references to lifelong learning, typically a synonym for continuing education. Since 2000, adult education has gained greater policy visibility. This is due both to the impact of poor progress of related EFA Goals on public opinion and to civil society pressure for change and improvement. The majority of countries have improved laws and policies with respect to the right to free education and provision for linguistic and cultural diversity.

##### Sub-Saharan Africa Region

Adult education is mainly associated with literacy and adult basic education and typically subsumed in general education policies. Few countries have specific legal provisions. Few implement specific adult learning and education policies. Cape Verde, Namibia and Seychelles are outstanding exceptions in their comprehensive and coherent approach.

*Source: Ahmed, 2009; Aitchison and Alidou, 2009; Keogh, 2009; Torres, 2009; Yousif, 2009*

elaborate advisory structures exist, but have little concrete impact, with the risk that these arrangements become a proxy for implementation.

- Coordination of policy and action within government and between government and stakeholders is often ineffective – decentralisation to regional and local levels is more apparent than real. Responsibilities – including those for the funding of adult education programmes and activities – are more likely to be delegated than are decision-making powers. This shows that the ‘command and control’ model of organisation and governance remains predominant, undermining local autonomy and flexibility and lowering civil society participation.

Together, these features account for many specific characteristics of policy that affect governance and provision in adult education. Clearly there are important differences between countries and world regions in the way adult education policy is conceptualised and realised. Box 2.3 summarises key points from the Regional Synthesis Reports prepared for CONFINTEA VI.

There are concrete examples of integrated legislation that give equal visibility to initial and continuing education for young people and adults. One of these is Sweden’s Education Act, in which such a holistic approach is reflected at local level where municipalities serve both secondary and adult education needs. Table 2.1 lists the range of legislation and policies adopted since 1997 that countries reported as specifically addressing adult education.

**Table 2.1**  
Examples of major legislation and policies specific to adult learning and education introduced since 1997

Country	Legislation/ Major Policy (Year)	Content
<b>Armenia</b>	Draft law on Adult Education, 2007	Drafted and presented for discussion, but then temporarily eliminated from the list for general discussion, with a suggestion to make amendments
<b>Australia</b>	Skilling Australia’s Workforce Act, 2005	Strengthened the funding framework, and linked funding for the States and Territories to a range of conditions and targets for training outcomes
<b>Bangladesh</b>	Non-Formal Education Policy, 2006	To introduce a system and national framework for non-formal education (with all the required flexibilities in-built) as supplementary and complementary to formal education; to institute a framework of equivalence for non-formal compared to formal education; and to vocationalise non-formal education, keeping in view literacy levels emerging from non-formal education
<b>Benin</b>	Déclaration de Politique Nationale d’Alphabétisation et d’Education des Adultes (DEPOLINA), 2001	Announced a break with the concept of instrumental literacy and is part of a holistic vision of adult education-based development activities
<b>Bolivia</b>	Administrative Resolution 008, 2004	Regulates the process of accreditation of prior learning in literacy as part of the primary education of adults
<b>Botswana</b>	National Policy on Vocational Education and Training, 1997	Laid down the broad framework, within which training activities are carried out. For example, it made recommendations on skills development and training, public institutional planning; employer-based training; and training for both the formal and informal sectors of the economy
<b>Bulgaria</b>	Vocational Education and Training Act, 1999	Regulates the vocational training of pupils – its objectives, principles, stages, organisation, and management
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	Non Formal Education Policy, 2006	To promote literacy and alternative forms of education as factors of local development and to support access to lifelong learning opportunities

Country	Legislation/ Major Policy (Year)	Content
<b>Cape Verde</b>	Law No. 34/98, 1998	Approves the Curriculum of Basic Education for Adults
	Law No. 38/99, 1999	Approves the assessment system for learners of adult basic education
<b>Chad</b>	Decree No. 414, 2007	Establishes that the Ministry of Education has confirmed its commitment in education and training of adults
<b>Comoros</b>	The Master Plan for Education and Training (PDEF) from 2005 to 2009	Based on objectives defined in the National Plan for Education For All, and composed of seven programmes to promote youth and adult education
<b>Croatia</b>	Adult Education Act, 2007	Specifies different forms of adult education and which bodies may provide these under different conditions; introduces the concepts of vertical mobility, educational study leave, adult education funding and partnership principles
<b>Eritrea</b>	Draft National Policy on Adult Education (NPAAE), 2005	To promote a broad concept of adult education and create awareness of adult education as a diverse multi-sectoral activity; to implement of the right to education for all and to establish inter-sectoral co-ordinating mechanisms for the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and accreditation of adult education activities
<b>Estonia</b>	Lifelong Learning Strategy, 2005-2008	To integrate adult education sectors (public, private and third sector), specify their different roles in the meeting of social demand and harmonise Estonian adult education with documents from the European Commission and with EU standards
<b>Finland</b>	Vocational Adult Education Act, 631/1998	Regulates competence-based qualifications, including apprenticeship training
	Liberal Education Act, 632/1998	Regulates adult learning and education at folk high schools, adult education centres, study centres, physical education centres and summer universities
<b>Honduras</b>	Revised Law for the Development of Alternative Non-Formal Education, Decree No. 135-2003, 2003	To promote education and training of school-age children outside school, youth and adults, and at higher educational and technical levels
<b>Kenya</b>	Sessional Paper No. 1 on A Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research, 2005	Recognises adult continuing education as a vehicle for transformation and empowerment of individuals and society, and calls for its integration into a national qualifications network
<b>Lesotho</b>	Draft National Policy Document on Non-Formal and Adult Education, 1998	Has never been adopted as policy, but is referred to and used for planning purposes. Cited liberally in the chapter on lifelong learning and non-formal education in the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2005-2015
<b>Lithuania</b>	Law on Non-formal Education 1998	Regulates non-formal educational provision and gives legislative guarantees to participants, providers and social partners
	Law on Vocational Education and Training 1997	Regulates basic (formal) and general secondary education and labour market vocational training; currently undergoing revision
<b>Madagascar</b>	National Policy on Literacy and Adult Education (PNAEA), 2003	Formalises procedures to coordinate literacy and adult education and standardises performance criteria, facilitating the enhancement of learner achievements and their reintegration into professional categories of socio-economic sectors
<b>Malawi</b>	National Adult Literacy Policy, 2006	To guide programme planners and decision-makers in establishing a comprehensive set of programme and services to increase literacy levels by 85% by 2011 and to create greater understanding of adult literacy issues in national development priorities and concerns



Country	Legislation/ Major Policy (Year)	Content
<b>Mali</b>	National Policy of Non-Formal Education, 2007	To increase the adult literacy rate at least 50% (40% for women) and allow at least 50% of school-leavers and youth aged 9 to 15 who have never been to school to reach a minimum learning level
<b>Mozambique</b>	National Strategy for Adult Literacy and Non-Formal Education Programmes	Designed mainly to eradicate illiteracy in the country
<b>Namibia</b>	National Policy on Adult Learning, 2003	Provides a framework of adult learning, addressing programme development, resources, co-ordination, policy implementation and monitoring; identifies the Government's role within this framework and recognises the important contribution of the private sector and civil society in the promotion of adult learning
<b>New Zealand</b>	Adult Literacy Strategy, 2001	Highlights the need to build capacity and capability in the sector; government agencies assisted by an advisory group in formulating national development approaches
<b>Niger</b>	National Policy of Non-Formal Education (PNENF), 2008	To consolidate and develop social achievements in literacy and non-formal education; defines the major options, guidelines and policy measures necessary for the development of this sub-sector
<b>Panama</b>	Presidential Order, 2007	Decision to implement the literacy campaign "Move On Panama, Yo Si Puedo" developed by the Ministry of Social Development with support from volunteers and civil society organisations at community level
<b>Republic of Korea</b>	Lifelong Education Act, 2007	Revision of the 1999 Act; metropolitan and provincial governments required to establish annual implementation plans within five-year national lifelong education promotion strategies set out by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
<b>Seychelles</b>	Seychelles Qualifications Authority Act, 2005	The Seychelles Qualification Authority (SQA) created as the para-statal body responsible for formulating and administering the National Qualifications Framework, and to assure the quality of education and training
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	Act of Parliament, 2001	Establishment of the National Council for Technical, Vocational and other Academic Awards (NCTVA) and establishment of regional polytechnics to diversify human resource development for various vocations and careers
<b>Slovenia</b>	Adult Education Act, 2006	Defines and regulates the provision of adult learning and education (organisation, monitoring and documentation, annual programme cycles, public funding, counselling and examination centres); currently undergoing revision
<b>Solomon Islands</b>	Education for Living: Policy on technical, vocational education and training, 2005	Comprehensive document, with 22 policy areas aimed at integrating technical, vocational education and training or skill training into the education system
<b>South Africa</b>	Adult Basic Education and Training Act, 2000	Provides for establishment of public and private adult learning centres, funding for Adult Basic Education and Training provision, the governance of public centres and quality assurance mechanisms for the sector
<b>Thailand</b>	Non-Formal and Informal Education Promotion Act, 2008	Aims to promote and support non-formal and informal education in line with the National Education Act, which designates education as a lifelong process with the participation of all sectors of government, civil society and private enterprise

Country	Legislation/ Major Policy (Year)	Content
<b>The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</b>	Law on Adult Education, 2008	To initiate and maintain a positive and active approach for education throughout life; directly linked with the previous Programme for Adult Education in the context of lifelong learning, which is an integral part of the National Strategy for Development of Education 2005-2015
	Credit Recognition Act, 2008	Revision of the 1999 Act; permits direct conferment by the government of Bachelor's degrees to learners through the Academic Credit Bank System
<b>Tunisia</b>	National Programme for Adult Education, 2000	Developed from the 1992 national literacy plan to accelerate the pace of literacy and to create an educational system responding to the basic educational needs of the target population
<b>Uganda</b>	Draft Policy on Adult Learning and Education	Yet to be finalised and approved by responsible government organs
<b>United States of America</b>	Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (as the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, AEFLA), 1998	Reforms Federal employment, adult education, and vocational rehabilitation programmes to create an integrated, one-stop system of workforce investment and education activities for adults and youth. Entities that carry out activities assisted under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act are mandatory partners in this delivery system
<b>Yemen</b>	Literacy and Adult Education Law, 1998	A basic building block for the institutional framework of the literacy and adult education organisation; some implementation issues still to resolve
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	Lifelong Education Policy, 1998	To mobilise and motivate illiterate and semi-literate adults to acquire the basic skills of reading, writing and calculation using their first language and to foster skills training

Source: National Reports prepared for CONFINTEA VI

The table points to five trends in policy objectives:

- framework-setting, usually within a lifelong learning perspective (for example, Bangladesh and Namibia);
- promotion of literacy and non-formal education (as in Honduras and Thailand);
- regulation of vocational or adult education (for example, Lithuania and Slovenia);
- creation of specialised agencies (for instance, Seychelles and Sierra Leone); and
- provision for the implementation of specific programmes (as in Comoros and South Africa).

The extent to which countries are locked into widespread poverty, high levels of internal inequality and international debt influences the direction of adult education policy-making. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab States, and much of Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean, adult education is equated with adult literacy and compensatory or 'second-chance' education.

The European Union's Lisbon Agenda, with its focus on lifelong learning, is a highly influential driver for policy innovation in the field of adult learning and influences 'neighbourhood countries' such as the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States). Within the region, there still exist disparities as to how the strategy is implemented (see Box 2.4). Moreover, individual countries' adult education policies place different emphases on the dual policy aims of economic competitiveness and social cohesion. In some countries (such as the United Kingdom and the United States of America; similarly in Asia's more developed countries) maintaining economic competitiveness dominates. Other countries (notably Europe's Nordic countries) underline the 'public good' model and are strongly committed to education throughout life as a humanistic endeavour for personal and civic development as well as for human resource development.

Interestingly, countries with more resilient economies in South-East Asia appear to be making a 'policy jump' from adult education

### Box 2.4 Challenges in the establishment of legal frameworks for adult education in Bulgaria and Romania

Lifelong learning objectives are integrated in the most important national strategic documents, such as Romania's National Development Plan 2007-2013 (NDP) and Bulgaria's National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013. Both countries' operational programmes for human resources development and strategies for national employment and for continuing vocational education are informed by lifelong learning.

"However, the countries are facing a number of challenges in the implementation of these strategies, as for example:

- The existence of a historical delay with regard to the provisions of the Lisbon Strategy, followed by the insufficient development of a lifelong learning culture;
- The lack of a systemic and coherent debate involving ministries, public institutions, civil society and businesses in the development, implementation and monitoring of lifelong learning policies;
- The lack of global approaches in lifelong learning policies, which should consider the entire path of an individual learning and training and a unique vision, both pre-school education, compulsory education and initial training, and the continuing adult education and training;
- Lack of correspondence between the priorities of the education policy documents and the financial resources allotted to their attainment;
- Insufficient commitment of the responsible actors in the development and implementation of human resources development policies."

*Source: divv international, 2008: 11*

as adult literacy and basic skills towards adult education within a lifelong learning policy frame. The Republic of Korea, a particularly noteworthy example, developed a comprehensive policy approach to adult education in the 1980s as part of building a lifelong learning society, currently anchored in the 2007 Lifelong Education Act. Regional and local bodies in the country pass their own laws to support the national Act.

External factors can bring about rapid changes in adult education policies. For example, in the wake of the 1997-8 Asian financial crisis, measures were introduced which entailed the restructuring of labour market policies and employment training systems. The People's Republic of China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand quickly set up new provision frameworks closely linked to human resources development requirements.

Regional and international organisations exert an increasing influence on educational policy-making. The role that the EU is

playing in encouraging Member States to focus on common problems in education and training has been mentioned, as has the differentiated response that countries have developed to similar issues. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), through studies like the International Adult Literacy Survey, also shapes national policy responses to adult education. In its Biennale meetings, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) has been able to provide a platform to discuss the importance of literacy and non-formal education, persuading Ministers of Education to re-examine their policies. The Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos (OEI), through its plan for literacy and basic education for youth and adults, promotes multilateral cooperation in Ibero-America, linking the different actors who promote adult education programmes, taking into account diverse contexts. Through policy dialogue, technical assistance and South-South cooperation, UNESCO has promoted literacy within a framework of lifelong learning. The World Bank is also able to sway educational policies.

These supra-national players support their policy initiatives with significant funding for programmes and activities consonant with their objectives. But these efforts are not necessarily embraced wholeheartedly. Some governments are wary about top-down approaches and insist on developing policies that are responsive to their specific contexts. Ambivalence and tension between national and international levels of policy and action are to be expected. However, the Regional Synthesis Reports for CONFINTEA VI testify to the significance of regional and international organisations and their policy initiatives for stimulating or underplaying support for adult education.

## 2.2 Coordinating and regulating adult education: some governance issues

Concepts and practices of governance, including educational governance, have risen to the forefront of international discussion and debate in the past decade: the 2009 EFA *Global Monitoring Report* headlines governance as a key factor in overcoming educational inequalities. It describes governance as “institutions, rules and norms through which policies are developed and implemented – and through which accountability is enforced” (UNESCO, 2008a: 128). Governance therefore covers policy decision-making, resource allocation and government accountability. Educational governance is not solely the concern of central government but encompasses every level of the system, from the education ministry to schools and the community. It ensures access to well-funded educational provision with well-qualified, motivated staff and responsiveness to local needs.

Educational governance in principle must be based on universal participation. There is a personal stake in education for all citizens, even when their interests and needs are not being met through existing policy, provision and practice. Furthermore, education is vital to civil society, local and regional communities and social movements; minorities, nations and states; the business world, labour markets and economies. Educational governance has to accommodate many stakeholders and a diverse range of interests. The consequences of bad governance in adult learning and education are all too obvious and include weak provision characterised

by inequity, low quality and the involvement of lowly-paid, untrained and unmotivated facilitators.

In the past decade, political and institutional responses in educational governance have generally included two linked processes which are in tension with each other. On the one hand there is a call for greater organisational and financial decentralisation and autonomy. On the other there is a demand for greater regulation and quality monitoring mechanisms steered by centralised public administration and its agencies (see here, for example Altrichter *et al*, 2007; Husemann and Heikkinen, 2004; Lindblad and Popkewitz, 2001). These developments have been accompanied by the greater involvement of civil society-based groups and associations the mechanisms for which have been public consultation processes, advisory groups and governing councils of various kinds, and the growth of educational project funding programmes available to NGOs. The patterns drawn from the Regional Synthesis Reports indicate the resultant wide variety that currently exists (see Box 2.5).

The National Reports present a diversity of governance arrangements in place. These statements broadly suggest three formal governance patterns:

- departments within education ministries (or their equivalent);
- relatively independent authorities, which may or may not be under the direct formal control of a ministry;
- delegation of responsibility to local agencies.

### The location of adult education within national governments

Adult education legislation and policy may be at a very generalised level or aimed at a narrow constituency within time and geographical limits. In practice, adult learning is fashioned by circumstances on the ground. Between these two ends of the policy-practice continuum, a variety of intermediary governance arrangements can exist. The majority of countries reported that more than one Ministry is involved in adult education (see Table 2.2). Each is accountable for particular aspects of adult education or for particular target groups. The Philippines, for example, divides responsibility

**Box 2.5****Governance patterns drawn from Regional Synthesis Reports****Arab Region**

All countries have high-level policy-making bodies (National Councils or similar) chaired by the relevant Minister (in Egypt by the Prime Minister), which are responsible for programme development and implementation. Such bodies typically include government, civil society, universities and the private sector, and have regional and local subsidiary councils or committees.

**Asia-Pacific Region**

In most countries, the Ministry of Education is responsible for policy implementation, sometimes in cooperation with Ministries for health, agriculture, gender issues, social welfare, human rights and economic development. Ministries may devolve some administrative responsibilities, but the locus of power still rests at the centre in terms of budgets, programme design and planning, programme content, structure and learning outcomes.

**Europe and North America Region**

Some countries approach adult education as a distinct sector within lifelong learning, with policy and measures supported by strong arrangements that sustain the formal, active involvement of social partners and civil society.

**Latin America and Caribbean Region**

Here the implementation gap is wide – policies are usually disconnected from practice, whereas diversification and decentralisation processes have led to coordination problems.

**Sub-Saharan Africa Region**

Countries advocate multi-sectoral stakeholder governance, but there is little concrete evidence of its implementation. Generally, Ministries of education take charge of policies and programmes, sometimes in cooperation with Ministries for agriculture, health, youth and sport, women and social development. Ineffective coordination – between Ministries but also between state agencies and civil society – has a negative impact on the status and quality of adult learning and education. In addition, while many countries state that they have a decentralisation policy, what this means in reality, especially in relation to decision-making, is unclear.

*Source: Ahmed, 2009; Aitchison and Alidou, 2009; Keogh, 2009; Torres, 2009; Yousif, 2009*

between different departments for general education, vocational education and training, and higher education – each of which mounts separate programmes. This may be explained by the different concepts inherent in the delivery of adult education programmes, with adult learning sometimes being thought of as a good in itself (for example, a straightforward literacy programme) and at other times being conceived of as a support to other agendas (for example, a programme to promote better health) as the means rather than the end itself.

Many governments have established a department that is explicitly responsible for adult education (sometimes combining this with other responsibilities, such as citizenship education and e-learning, as has been the case in Austria). Typically, such offices are located within the Ministry of Education, but responsibilities for adult education may be assigned to other Ministries. In Malaysia, for example, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development is responsible for non-formal education, which effectively covers much adult education and learning provision in a country with a dispersed rural population. Inter-ministerial and inter-agency committees are increasingly established

**Table 2.2**  
**Countries stating more than one ministry involved in adult education<sup>1</sup>**

Region	Arab states	Asia-Pacific	Europe and North America	Latin America and Caribbean	Sub-Saharan Africa	Total
	Egypt, Kuwait, Palestine, Oman, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia	Bhutan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Iran, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Vietnam	Armenia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Switzerland, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey	Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Uruguay	Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, Swaziland, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe	
<b>Frequency</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Countries responding to question</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>National Reports submitted</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>154</b>

Source: National Reports prepared for CONFINTEA VI

<sup>1</sup> Refers to responses to question 1.1.3. from the Guidelines for the Preparation of National Reports on the Situation of Adult Learning and Education:

- How is adult learning and education organized within the government? What ministry/s are in charge or involved? Is adult learning and education centralised/decentralised? How?

to coordinate measures and funding allocations (for example, United Republic of Tanzania). They are also likely to ensure the exchange of information and good practice, take on monitoring tasks (for example, through the development of indicators and benchmarks) and engage in forward planning (with respect to staff development, for example, or needs assessment and public campaigns). Such committees also develop communication and exchange channels with sectoral, regional and local stakeholders, in order to make democratic and sustainable governance 'come alive' in everyday implementation.

### **Governance by agencies with some degree of autonomy**

The past decade has witnessed the proliferation of apparently decentralised governance in the form of publicly-funded agencies that manage and coordinate the implementation of para-state and inter-ministerial policies (see Box 2.6). Such agencies may take responsibility for funding, for quality control and for programme planning and design. These bodies, which couple greater autonomy with greater accountability, should not be seen as isolated from debates about decentralisation (for example, see Llieva, 2007). However, even where such agencies

are designed to involve stakeholders and grassroots groups, unless there is a real devolution of power to other interests this form of apparent decentralisation remains a form of central control.

### **Decentralised governance arrangements**

Governance is a political process and adult education is embedded in social, political and cultural contexts that draw some of

their vitality from the motivation to further democracy and human rights. Devolution of governance in adult education is thus a political (and perhaps even economic) imperative. Such devolution may involve a trade-off where the benefits of increased grassroots support require the giving-up of a degree of public responsibility for mainstream provision and practice, whether in school education or in adult education.

#### **Box 2.6**

#### **Adult education governance by autonomous agencies**

##### **Bangladesh**

The Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE) was established as the National Agency for non-formal education with full authority; a district level structure is developed in each of the 64 districts.

##### **Croatia**

The Adult Education Council consists of key stakeholders in adult learning and education appointed by the government; the Agency for Adult Education performs administrative duties for the Council.

##### **India**

The National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA) is an independent and autonomous arm of the Central Government; the registered body Zila Saksharta Samiti is the main implementation agency for literacy and continuing education programmes; NGOs are also involved.

##### **Lebanon**

The National Committee for Literacy and Adult Education (NCLAE) was established by the Council Ministers in 1995: its members come from the public sector, NGOs and various international organisations working in the field of literacy and adult learning and education. It is headed by director of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

##### **Mongolia**

The National Centre of Non-Formal and Distance Education (NFDE) under the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science co-ordinates adult learning and education at national level.

##### **Nepal**

The Non-Formal Education Centre (NFEC) is the main organisation in charge of adult learning and education, but there are five Regional Education Directorate Offices (REDs), 75 District Education Offices (DEOs), Resource Centres (RCs) and Community Learning Centres (CLCs) for its implementation.

##### **Republic of Korea**

The National Institute for Lifelong Education under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has been in charge of adult learning and education since 2007; metropolitan or provincial Lifelong Learning Councils and Lifelong Learning Centres run various programmes; second-chance schools; in-company universities; distance learning universities; facilities from media organisations and from civic social groups also provide adult education.

##### **St. Lucia**

There are three public institutions providing adult learning and education, namely the National Enrichment and Learning Unit (NELU), the National Skills Development Centre (NSDC) and the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College which provides post-secondary/tertiary education.

**Table 2.3**  
**Decentralised organisation of adult learning and education<sup>1</sup>**

Region	Arab states	Asia-Pacific	Europe and North America	Latin America and Caribbean	Sub-Saharan Africa	Total
<b>Countries mentioning decentralisation in adult learning and education</b>	Egypt, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan	Afghanistan, Australia, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Vietnam	Armenia, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America	Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru	Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe	
<b>Frequency</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>National Reports submitted</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>154</b>

Source: National Reports prepared for CONFINTEA VI

<sup>1</sup> Refers to responses to question 1.1.3. from the Guidelines for the Preparation of National Reports on the Situation of Adult Learning and Education:

- How is adult learning and education organized within the government? What ministry/s are in charge or involved? Is adult learning and education centralised/decentralised? How?

In the National Reports, the majority of countries stated that adult education is decentralised. Devolved powers can lead to greater responsiveness to local needs and circumstances (see Table 2.3). The active involvement of stakeholders in such decentralisation processes has been a concern for many civil society organisations (African Platform for Adult Education, 2008). The decentralisation of responsibility for adult education to organisations at an arm's length from government itself has not been accompanied automatically by systematic and intensified involvement of other stakeholders in planning, implementing and monitoring adult education policy and practice. Where this has taken place,

organised civil society and grassroots interest groups, together with professional associations, have tended to be involved.

Whatever their governance structures, high-income countries increasingly focus on improving effectiveness and efficiency, by seeking ways to involve employers and trades unions in provision and participation issues (not simply in funding issues). Contemporary governance entails more than legislation, ministerial responsibilities and organisational arrangements for implementation; it involves good communication in the public sphere (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003).



Taken globally, the governance of adult education is still under-developed. Few countries have specific legislation that sets out the aims and regulatory principles for the sector. Even fewer establish implementing frameworks that clearly define overall responsibilities for planning, funding and provision. This leads to ‘fuzzy’ governance patterns, which may enable healthy diversity and create space for local innovation, but which make it difficult to pinpoint accountability and designate responsibility. This reduces the sector’s visibility within educational policy and in society at large.

Few, if any, countries have found effective governance solutions for the sector. The Regional Synthesis Reports prepared for CONFINTEA VI record numerous examples of fragmented governance arrangements that stifle efforts to achieve effective and coherent implementation. The Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Synthesis Report notes several countries where failure to ratify adult education policy documents is a serious hindrance (Aitchison and Alidou, 2009). It stops the flow between policy, legislation, regulations and, of course, funding, so that mandates cannot be implemented. Policies can be effective without specific legislative back-up, but it is difficult for effective adult learning and education to take root when policies are absent or only minimally visible. cursory or superficial inclusion of adult education in broader-based educational policies is no substitute for specific and ratified adult education policies as exemplified by Benin, Cape Verde, Eritrea, Madagascar, Mali, Namibia and South Africa.

Strong societal commitment is a prerequisite for providing good governance and clear strategic direction for adult learning and education. Without it, the sector’s resilience and its capacity to develop its potential are diminished. This commitment, in turn, has an impact on the resources allocated to adult education. Coherent links between adult education and its many cognate policy domains have to be forged in order to coordinate and make best use of available resources. This implies the mainstreaming of policies, with supporting infrastructures firmly anchored in lifelong learning frameworks. A more informed

citizenry can play a critical role in ensuring that governance reforms (in education and in general) highlight the significance of active participation with respect not only to autonomy but also to accountability – in alliance with Sen’s (1999) ‘capability approach’ to development as freedom.

## 2.3 Conclusion

The framework for the future lies within the concept of lifelong learning – understood here as an overarching framework that genuinely integrates the specific purposes and scope of adult education within a global frame of reference encompassing the full continuum between basic literacy and professional continuing education, while valuing personal and social development as well as vocational training and human resources development.

A key challenge is to mainstream adult education policy within an integrated lifelong learning policy framework. This is not easy, given the realities, for countries in Africa, the Arab States, Latin America and Asia. It may be that this shift of emphasis to adult learning and education within lifelong learning is, as yet, of little real relevance for the global South but Asian examples have shown that it is possible to make a “policy-jump” to a lifelong learning approach once a certain platform has been achieved. In most countries which have a low Education for All Development Index, adult education is politically fragile, institutionally unstable and highly dependent upon external funding. By itself, the move towards a lifelong learning discourse changes nothing in practice. Adult education in these countries must revise its rationale and perspective if it is to break through the progression barrier between adult literacy and basic skills on the one hand, and further education and qualification on the other. A critical first step is to demonstrate that learning is socially valued, and that public policy is committed to fostering learning cultures.

Governments set policy to the level of detail they judge to be appropriate. Value can be added by pooling resources, knowledge and experience. For example, regional and international collaboration can build a common platform and a common monitoring system for adult education. This can supplement the making and carrying-out of national policy. Europe's Lisbon Strategy has been instrumental in establishing common objectives and providing a forum for countries to exchange and debate. Public policy needs to gear itself to establishing legal, funding and governance structures that can better link formal, non-formal and informal adult learning into cohesive systems.

To date, governance arrangements for education and training systems throughout the world have generally been predicated on a compartmental approach to serve different purposes and different target groups. They are characterised by rather chaotic top-down regulation processes which try to bridge between grassroots realities and formal channels and procedures. This tension is especially evident in adult education, because local diversity is so characteristic. There are advantages in this. The key actors in adult education are accustomed to working in the interstices; providers are agile in responding to highly diverse learners' needs and demands; and partners have an increasing stake in supporting the development of citizens who can begin to contribute actively to the social and economic development of their communities and countries. However, the lack of strong institutional forms of governance remains problematic.

There are still too few opportunities for meaningful public participation in specifying frameworks of provision and funding, quality standards and indicators for monitoring and evaluation. This may explain why the more theoretical literature regards with circumspection the motives for governance reform. Some see reform as a back-door retreat of the state from its responsibilities to citizens and civil society, rather than the provision of ways to re-position and institutionalise decision-making and regulation as channels for responsible coordination between stakeholder networks to serve the public good (Sumner, 2008).

Lifelong learning governance rises above established educational policy-making by demanding more integrated, more accessible, more relevant and more accountable structures and processes (Griffin, 2001). The shift of emphasis towards learning entails the transition from system-controlled to learner-controlled education and training, in which people can gain greater access to open learning environments and networks of communication (Alheit, 2001). This will inevitably exert an impact on educational governance by privileging social learning and self-management systems (Raven and Stephenson, 2001).

Making democratic and sustainable educational governance a reality for adults throughout the world, whatever their starting-points and whatever they hope to achieve for themselves and their families, is a way forward. However, the best governance imaginable can only be effective when people are engaged in learning and have access to educational opportunities. As Chapter 4 will show, patterns of participation in adult learning indicate, above all, that equity and inclusion remain distant goals in all parts of the world. This is now more crucial in view of the global financial crisis, which, at the time of writing, continues to deepen, affecting employment levels and curtailing social benefits. The next chapter discusses how policy and governance play out in terms of the forms and types of adult education provision available.

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¿La institución aporta más a la comunidad?



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## CHAPTER 3

# THE PROVISION OF ADULT EDUCATION

A global understanding of adult education demands recognition of the full diversity of provision, purpose and content that is likely to be included in any meaningful definition. Adult learning is relevant to personal empowerment, economic well-being, community cohesion and societal development. As a sector, adult education contributes to alleviating poverty and unemployment, skilling the workforce, stemming the spread of HIV/AIDS, preserving and sustaining the environment, raising awareness of human rights, combating racism and xenophobia, supporting democratic values and active citizenship and strengthening gender equity and equality. All this is set against a background of the urgent need to raise levels of adult literacy, basic skills and key competences throughout the world and most acutely in the South.

Adults learn in all kinds of settings provided by a range of actors, from public authorities overseeing formal education and training institutions to companies and employers, trades unions, non-governmental organisations, charitable foundations, church-based associations and cultural groups. Directly or indirectly, provision represents the motivations and interests of different stakeholders. These may be broad-ranging, as in the case of public provision or narrower in scope, as in the case of continuing education and training provided by specific companies and employers.

With a broad array of purposes, adult education programmes range from basic literacy, numeracy and life skills through to advanced professional development for senior executives. They cover personal development and leisure-linked activities through to retraining courses for the long-term unemployed. They can range from consciousness-raising workshops

to courses providing or upgrading ICT skills. They may also include capacity development activities meant for government and the NGO community who provide various public services. This variety of adult education provision has inevitably led to persistent debates over what does and does not belong to the sector. What is considered in one context as a valid form of adult education provision may not be in another, and so it is difficult to derive a common basis for comparison purposes or for a global perspective.

The effects of this diversity on policy development were discussed in Chapter 2. This chapter focuses on the range and distribution of provision and providers as reflected in the National Reports prepared for CONFINTEA VI. It offers a typology for development in adult education provision, looking at current trends and the possible impact of the changing balance between public and private provision.

## 3.1 The broad range of adult education provision

### Types of adult education provision

The National Reports amply illustrate the variety of adult education provision. Globally, basic education (mainly adult literacy programmes) remains the most dominant form of adult education, with 127 countries (82%) declaring this as one of their programmes. This is closely followed by vocational and work-related education (117 countries, or 76%). Life-skills and knowledge generation activities are also a significant form of provision for many countries (see Table 3.1). Regional differences in patterns of provision can also be observed: basic education is the principal form in sub-Saharan Africa (93%), the Arab

**Table 3.1**  
**Type of adult education provision, as recorded in National Reports, by region<sup>1</sup>**

	Arab states	Asia-Pacific	Europe and North America	
<b>Total National Reports</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Basic/general competencies (i.e. literacy)</b>	Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen	Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Fiji, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Japan, India, Iran, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Vietnam	Armenia, Belgium (Flemish), Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Norway, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America	
	16	21	26	
<i>Percentage<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>84</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>68</i>	
<b>Vocational/ technical &amp; income-generating/ on-the-job training</b>	Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen	Afghanistan, Australia, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, India, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Palau, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Vietnam	Armenia, Austria, Belgium (Flemish), Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America	
	9	24	34	
<i>Percentage<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>47</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>89</i>	
<b>Life skills, Post-literacy, Health issues</b>	Lebanon, Mauritania, Oman, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen	Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Lao People's Democratic Republic, India, Iran, Japan, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Palau, Thailand, Tajikistan, Vietnam	Canada, Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Serbia, Sweden, Spain, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	
	7	7	8	
<i>Percentage<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>37</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>21</i>	
<b>Knowledge generation, innovation (i.e. ICTs, second languages)</b>	Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine	Australia, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, China, Fiji, Japan, New Zealand, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Tajikistan, Thailand, Vietnam	Armenia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom	
	5	14	21	
<i>Percentage<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>26</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>55</i>	
<b>Human rights education, civic education</b>	Kuwait, Lebanon, Sudan, Syria, Yemen	Fiji, India, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, New Zealand, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Tajikistan, Thailand	Armenia, Georgia, Germany, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey	
	5	9	8	
<i>Percentage<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>26</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>21</i>	
<b>Liberal/Personal education (i.e. artistic, cultural)</b>	Kuwait	Australia, India, Kyrgyzstan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Tajikistan	Belgium (Flemish), Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Israel, Norway, Sweden	
	1	6	8	
<i>Percentage<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>5</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>21</i>	
<b>Continuing education</b>	Bahrain, Kuwait	Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, China, India	Austria	
	2		1	
<i>Percentage<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>11</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>3</i>	
<b>Second chance education</b>	N/A*	Cambodia, China, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic	Austria, Belgium (Flemish), Greece, Israel, Romania, Sweden	
	0	5	6	
<i>Percentage<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>0</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>16</i>	
<b>Teacher training</b>	Yemen (unclear if for adults)	Bhutan, Cambodia	Armenia, Romania, Turkey	
	1		3	
<i>Percentage<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>5</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	
<b>Secondary education</b>	N/A	N/A	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Sweden, United States of America	
	0	0	3	
<i>Percentage<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>8</i>	

Latin America and Caribbean	Sub-Saharan Africa	Total
25	43	154
Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Uruguay, Venezuela	Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe	127
96	93	82
Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Uruguay, Venezuela	Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe	117
72	74	76
Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, St. Lucia, Suriname, Uruguay	Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cape Verde, Chad, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia	74
40	74	48
Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname	Botswana, Burkina Faso, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Malawi, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, Seychelles, United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe	68
48	37	44
Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay	Botswana, Cape Verde, Chad, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Namibia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia	49
40	40	32
Cuba, St. Lucia	Guinea-Bissau, Seychelles	19
8	5	12
Colombia	Botswana, Eritrea, Nigeria, Seychelles, United Republic of Tanzania	14
4	12	9
N/A	Cape Verde, Guinea	13
0	5	8
Nicaragua	Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Lesotho	11
4	9	7
Bolivia, Venezuela	N/A	5
8	0	3

Note  
1) Percentage of National Reports submitted in the specific region

\* No answer

States (84%) and much of Latin America and the Caribbean (96%); vocational and work-related educational activities tend to dominate in Asia (83%) and Europe (89%).

It is not surprising that adult education provision in the South is predominantly centred on literacy programmes, given that this is where the majority of the 774 million without basic reading and writing skills live. In sub-Saharan Africa, literacy programmes are delivered in different ways: (1) reading and writing campaigns with strong political backing, usually centrally-controlled; (2) functional literacy programmes that seek typically to link literacy with livelihood or skills training; (3) basic education, equivalence programmes and/or formal primary school; (4) innovative participatory programmes

provided by NGOs (for example, REFLECT – Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques); and, more recently, (5) family literacy programmes that provide parent-child or inter-generational literacy support (Aitchison and Alidou, 2009: 27-28).

Adult illiteracy and low levels of adult literacy are not problems limited to low-income countries (see Box 3.1), as shown so clearly by international surveys such as IALS (International Adult Literacy Survey, OECD and Statistics Canada, 1995) and ALL (Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, OECD and Statistics Canada, 2005) and UNESCO-OREALC's (2008) survey in seven Latin American nations. Many countries of the North have chosen to address literacy issues by providing adult literacy or basic skills programmes. Such initiatives respond to the economic consequences of poor

### Box 3.1

#### Literacy programmes – a key area of provision

##### **Bolivia**

The national literacy programme “Yes I Can” has been in place since 2006, aiming to eradicate functional illiteracy in the country. Central to the programme are bilingual literacy courses in Castilian and in native languages such as Aymara, Quechua and Guarani.

##### **Cuba**

The literacy programme “Yo Si Puedo” (Yes I can) consists of the development and implementation of a method for learning literacy, a system of teaching and learning that is based on the use of radio or television, a system for the training of those involved in the programme, and a model of assessing learning and social impact.

##### **Germany**

The [www.ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de](http://www.ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de) platform offers internet-based learning modules for self-study courses in reading, writing, mathematics and English. The anonymous nature of this course means that individuals are more inclined to participate; the fact that learners are able to take the course at any place, at any time and at their own pace are additional key benefits.

##### **Ghana**

The Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation promotes mother-tongue literacy in Northern Region and Western Region rural communities. The World Vision Ghana Rural Water Project (GRWP) is a special project in this context, aiming to foster the long-term sustainability of water and sanitation programmes and adult literacy as a part of this effort, reaching almost 6,000 local people who have learned to read and write as part of the water and sanitation training programme.

##### **India**

Zila Saksharta Samiti (ZSS) runs the ‘Each One Teach Two’ programme, in which one 9th or 11th grade school student volunteer works with two local adults needing literacy education. Students receive training beforehand, for which they receive credit and certificates of recognition.

**Iran**

The Reading with Family Project aims to promote self-directed learning and self-reliance in reading, with back-up support from instructors as observers and guides. The idea is to bring reading into the social sphere of the family, so that all members learn and benefit together.

**Jordan**

The “District without Illiteracy Project” is for men and women who are over 15 years old who live in rural districts. The project is not only designed to eliminate illiteracy but also to improve citizens’ perceptions of scientific, cultural and social aspects through the use of innovative teaching methodologies.

**Kenya**

Adult literacy facilitators are encouraged to work with community groups, in order to infuse literacy learning as an integral component of the groups’ income-generating activities, thus lending literacy a clear purpose and an immediate application.

**Mozambique**

Complementary youth and adult literacy programmes focus their content on HIV-AIDS, malaria and cholera prevention, ‘green medicine’ and environmental issues, including exploration and sustainable use of natural resources and community rights.

**Namibia**

The Family Literacy Programme supports children’s educational progress through their parents, targeting families in disadvantaged communities. The programme equips parents of 1st-grade children with the knowledge and skills needed to support their children’s learning at home, focusing on the transition between pre-primary education and primary school. Parents thus become their children’s first teacher. The programme’s outcomes are evaluated with standardised instruments and monitored by district and regional coordinators.

**Norway**

The Family Learning initiative aims to improve future prospects, quality of life and motivation for learning for the whole family, by building on and strengthening families’ existing competences and resources. The concept has been used in connection with Norwegian language courses for adult newcomers to the country for some years, with relevant content (for example, information about local community services) shared in everyday family and community contexts.

**Serbia**

Co-funded by the Serbian government and the Roma Education Fund, basic adult education programmes for Roma communities offer both basic general education and initial vocational training leading to a first recognised qualification.

**Slovakia**

The Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family has emphasised the need for a “new literacy” and has developed programmes linking literacy with workplace skills.

**Uganda**

In Bugiri District the NGO Literacy and Basic Education (LBE) has been running Family Basic Education (FABE) since 2000; by 2005, it was operational in 18 schools, reaching at least 1,500 families. This district is one of the poorest in Uganda, with well-below average primary school achievement and one of the poorest literacy rates in the country – especially amongst women.

**United States of America**

Family literacy programmes address the family as a whole, providing English language and literacy instruction for adults and children. Typically, such programmes include information and learning about parenting, child development and child literacy.



**Box 3.2**  
**Examples of vocational education and training initiatives****Austria**

At the AMS's Career Guidance Centres (BerufsInfoZentren, BIZ) interested individuals have at their disposal a large selection of free information media about occupations, employment options, vocational education and training (VET) and continuing education and training (CET) paths. The AMS offers state-of-the-art mediatheques at some 60 sites across Austria. There is free access to brochures, information folders, video films and PCs providing information about occupations, VET, CET, the labour market and job opportunities.

**Botswana**

A significant development for Botswana in the area of adult vocational education and training has been the establishment of the Botswana Training Authority (BOTA). BOTA has introduced a system of accrediting vocational programmes both within and outside the mainstreams of provision. BOTA has established the National Vocational Qualifications Framework that serves as a guide to various providers.

**Kuwait**

The work of the Ibn Al-Haitham Centre for In-Service Training is based on the premise that there is a single route for human development of Kuwaiti Society: training of all social groups in various training institutes and through special courses. The Centre seeks to raise the levels of the skills of working citizens to the highest level of progress achieved in their various professions.

**St. Lucia**

The new adult education programme, NELP, is considered innovative. Since its creation it has served to afford adults who were not literate in St. Lucia a second chance in obtaining basic literary skills as well as technical/vocational or enrichment skills. These are adults who otherwise would not be able to pursue any studies via any of the existing adult education providers. A high proportion of learners are enrolled in classes for the Caribbean Certificate Examination as well as in information technology and other technical areas.

**Uzbekistan**

The Mobile Training Team (MTT) in vocational education was initiated with the support of UNESCO in 2004. Its objectives are to disseminate new learning materials nationwide and to develop professional skills, to provide updated retraining facilities for educators, and to establish close collaboration networks with potential partners. MTT contributes to community empowerment by organising training seminars on new educational technologies and methodologies, retraining courses in priority areas, and virtual libraries on various subjects in education.

*Source: National Reports prepared for CONFINTEA VI*

literacy resulting from social disadvantage and ineffective schooling. The mode of delivery in these contexts also varies, with the emergence of more ICT-based offerings. For example, Germany has developed an e-learning-based literacy support system to provide for flexible acquisition of literacy skills. Norway has established a website for 'fun' literacy training called 'read and write'. In Ireland a 'read and write' TV-series was developed as part of its literacy strategy.

As finding work and remaining employed are key preoccupations in our societies, it is logical that vocational education and training, income-generating-related education programmes and other work-related learning opportunities figure as the second most dominant type of provision. Skills formation for work is indeed a prerequisite in our world with its fast-changing demands for different competences. Upgrading qualifications and acquiring a diverse set of know-hows is said to be a must in highly competitive job markets (see Box 3.2).

Improving other life skills (e.g. better health) is likewise necessary for individuals to be able to cope with their increasingly complex environments. The introduction of new ICTs has meant an endless generation of information and knowledge that people need to deal with. Educational programmes that equip adults to handle new technologies – permeating almost all areas of our life – are therefore responding to such a pressing need.

### **Types of adult education providers**

Who provides adult education programmes also varies by region (see Table 3.2). While government remains the primary provider in much of the world, other stakeholders are associated with particular forms of adult education in different regions. By and large, basic skills and literacy programmes for adults are provided through the public sector and the efforts of NGOs. Several Arab States exemplify this trend: 1,200 Sudanese and 600 Egyptian organisations today contribute to national literacy and adult education initiatives.

The private sector is more likely to be involved in continuing vocational education and training (CVET) and workplace learning than in other forms of provision. This trend, confirmed in recent National Reports, is in line with observations emerging from CONFINTEA V in 1997 as well as those mentioned in the Synthesis Report of the CONFINTEA V Review Meeting of 2003 (UIE, 2003).

In a number of countries, tripartite alliances between the state, civil society and enterprises have become commonplace; these public-private partnerships (PPPs) have taken on an increasingly important role as public education budgets have failed to meet the rising demand for education and qualification, not least in general and vocational adult learning.

National Reports show that secondary schools and colleges are also involved in providing basic education as part of second-chance opportunities for adults. In many cases, further and higher education institutions provide continuing education – traditionally through 'extra-mural studies' departments, and more and more through courses carrying specific recognised diplomas and certificates with an increasingly vocational orientation. These patterns are especially marked in Europe and North America.

An ever-more common phenomenon is that of young adults who move in and out of education and training at different life stages, and who combine learning with work and family responsibilities. Providers are increasingly responding to these trends by developing IT-based open and distance learning. Higher education institutions like the National University of Malaysia have recently experienced a rapid growth in professional distance education programmes. The Korean National Open University (KNOU) has set up a state-of-the-art delivery infrastructure that can respond with high flexibility to the diversity of students' circumstances and learning preferences (see Box 3.3).

**Table 3.2**  
Stakeholder involvement in adult education provision by region, as recorded in National Reports and based on multiple responses (percentage of countries) <sup>2</sup>

Type of provision	Public Entity					Global Rate	Arab states
	Arab states	Asia-Pacific	Europe and North America	Latin America and Caribbean	Sub-Saharan Africa		
Basic education/ general competencies (i.e. literacy)	84	66	61	88	88	77	42
Vocational (technical, income-related)	32	72	87	68	65	68	26
Life skills, post-literacy, health Issues	42	52	11	32	63	40	5
Knowledge generation, innovation (i.e ICTs, second languages)	21	31	53	44	28	37	5
Human rights education, civic education	26	28	3	20	16	17	0
Liberal/ personal education (i.e. artistic, cultural)	5	17	8	8	0	6	0

**Box 3.3**  
University-based adult education programmes

**Austria**

Austria has a well-established variety of adult learning and education programmes for personal and professional development purposes, offered by many providers, including universities.

**Estonia**

Estonia's adult education system requires higher education institutions to integrate 'pure' with 'applied' knowledge and to link these with business and capacity-building.

**Malaysia**

Many countries of the South have begun augmenting further education colleges and universities to include centres for professional and vocational education and competence development, as in Malaysia.

**Poland**

In Poland the future prospect of a rapidly-ageing society has prompted the development of Universities of the Third Age for older adults who are no longer fully engaged in the labour force.

Source: Ahmed, 2009; Keogh, 2009;

Non-Governmental Organisation / Civil Society Organisation				Global Rate	Private					Global Rate
Asia-Pacific	Europe and North America	Latin America and Caribbean	Sub-Saharan Africa		Arab states	Asia-Pacific	Europe and North America	Latin America and Caribbean	Sub-Saharan Africa	
38	34	32	63	44	16	10	16	20	26	18
38	39	24	28	32	5	21	58	24	35	32
24	11	16	37	21	0	0	0	4	12	4
7	18	12	16	13	11	17	21	16	16	17
14	21	32	26	20	0	3	0	8	5	3
10	13	0	2	6	0	0	0	0	2	1

Note 2: Based on frequency count of responses to Question 2.1.2. Please list and describe briefly the adult learning and education programmes in your country the following items a) Different Types of providers (governmental, non-governmental, corporate/private, incl. institutions of higher education) of adult learning and education. b) Areas of learning they address.

Source: National Reports prepared for CONFINTEA VI

Workplace learning, entrepreneurial and corporate education constitute forms of adult education provision, whose importance grows as the global economy becomes more knowledge-oriented. Many companies are increasing their investments in employee education and training as they recognise that corporate success largely depends on how well employees build their professional capacity to adjust to rapid and ongoing change. Larger firms tend to spend considerably more than smaller ones on training per worker, although resources tend to be concentrated on those at higher levels within organisations.

Meanwhile community learning centres have been set up to provide flexible programmes for adults. Common in Asia, these centres usually include reading spaces and computer facilities, an example of providing a literate environment at community level (see Box 3.4).

Organised learning across national boundaries has gained ground, spearheaded and benchmarked by multi-national global corporations. The concept of competence development, where learning outcomes can be measured and tracked, is central to this trend. Education and training at one site is almost synchronously shared and exchanged with other parts of the globe. Motivated by these developments, global education and training companies have begun selling their education and

**Box 3.4****Community learning centres – examples of provision at the community level**

UNESCO APPEAL (Asia-Pacific Programme for Education for All) defines CLCs as “local institutions outside the formal education system for villages or urban areas usually set up and managed by local people to provide various learning opportunities for community development and improvement of people’s quality of life.” Through active community participation CLCs are adapted to the needs of all people in the community. The CLC is often located in a simple building. Its programmes and functions are flexible. The main beneficiaries of a CLC are people with few opportunities for education, especially pre-school children, out-of-school children, women, youth and the elderly. CLCs are seen as a model for community development and lifelong learning. They operate in the following countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. CLCs adopt different characteristics in each country. Partners include governments, ministries, national and international NGOs, UN Agencies (such as UNICEF and UNDP) and the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU).

(APPEAL and ACCU websites)

consultation services across nations. E-learning over the web is an important development with the potential to open up learning opportunities.

While the involvement of formal institutions and enterprises in adult education is increasing, non-traditional education providers are the norm in adult education. Non-governmental organisations, which are minimally involved in formal education institutions, are key providers of adult education programmes in many countries, especially in the South. Frequently replacing government provision, the offerings of NGOs range from basic literacy to vocational education to awareness-raising in health, women’s rights and gender equality. Funded in most cases by international NGOs, they are more flexible and able to reach isolated areas.

More recently, providers have focused on capacity-building and development activities aimed at government and civil society actors to improve the management and implementation of on-going programmes. It is estimated that \$20 billion is spent annually on activities and products to enhance the capacities of developing countries. Coming mostly from multilateral and bilateral donors, this amount constitutes approximately 40% of development assistance (World Bank, 2009).

### 3.2 An international typology for understanding adult education

A range of contextual factors helps account for variations in adult education provision across and within countries. It is possible to gain insights into what kinds of adult education are characteristic for countries, classified according to their position on the Education for All Development Index (see Box 3.5). Their positions are based on scores recorded in the EFA 2009 *Global Monitoring Report* (UNESCO, 2008a). Countries with low EDI scores (under 0.80) tend to be located in South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States region. Medium-level EDI countries score between 0.80 and 0.94; they are fairly evenly distributed across South East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Arab States. High EDI scores of at least 0.95 apply to countries in Europe and North America together with parts of Latin America, East Asia and the Pacific Rim (Appendix Figure 1).

Figure 3.1 offers a template for understanding how these factors come together, suggesting an international typology of adult education provision. As is to be expected, such a typology points to broad tendencies rather than definite positions of countries.

### Box 3.5 Education for All Development Index (EDI) initiatives

“The EFA Development Index (EDI) is a composite scale based on proxy measures for four of the six EFA Goals (selected on the basis of data availability):

- Universal primary education
- Adult literacy
- Quality of education
- Gender

One indicator is used as a proxy measure for each of the four EFA Goals, and each EDI component is assigned equal weight in the overall index in accordance with the principle of considering each Goal as being of equal importance.

The EDI value for a particular country is thus the arithmetic mean of the observed values for each component. Since these components are all expressed as percentages, the EDI value can vary from 0 to 100% or, when expressed as a ratio, from 0 to 1. The higher the EDI value, the closer the country is to achieving Education For All as a whole.”

*Source: UNESCO, 2009: 244*

The typology suggests that profiles of adult education provision are dynamic and tend to change in relation to social and economic development. Countries with low EDI scores are most likely to concentrate their provision on adult literacy programmes while countries with medium EDI scores focus more on human resource development programmes. Countries with high EDI scores tend to provide a more comprehensive array of options including general adult education, community education, basic skills and literacy for adults, ‘second-chance’ education to achieve secondary level qualifications and certificates, university continuing education, continuing vocational education and training and company-based training, including programmes that are integrated into the workplace and on-the-job training.

Put differently, as countries become more developed, the provision of adult education expands to cover a greater range of content, purposes and programmes. In this accumulative process, existing adult education frameworks are not discarded, but supplemented by new ones. When the scale and extent of provision reaches a certain level of complexity, new ways

of ordering and understanding the aims and contribution of the sector become necessary. This could be one important reason for the current development of national qualification frameworks, which attempt to position and relate different forms and levels of adult education and training to one another. European countries are particularly active in this regard, specifying commensurate relationships between formal, non-formal and informal learning outcomes in terms of competences high on educational policy agendas. Elsewhere in the world, similar schemes are also being considered (for example, Australia, Malaysia, Namibia, New Zealand, the Seychelles and South Africa).

In general, private sector funding of adult education has expanded in the past decade, both absolutely (to respond more precisely to employer and company needs) and relatively in the light of public spending restrictions (Stevenson, 1999; Whitty and Power, 2000). In more affluent countries, private investment in adult education is rather extensive; in poorer, low EDI countries, private entities invest very little. Countries with traditionally weak public funding have experienced large-scale private

“Human Resources Development is a process for developing and unleashing human expertise through organization development and personnel training and development for the purpose of improving performance”

*Source: Swanson and Holton, 2001: 4*

**Figure 3.1**  
An international typology of adult education provision

	Category I (Low EDI countries)			Category II (Medium EDI countries)					Category III (High EDI countries)		
Regional Groupings	Arab states	Asia South and West	Sub-Saharan Africa	Arab states	Asia (ASEAN)	Europe and North America	Latin America and Caribbean	Sub-Saharan Africa	Asia	Latin America and Caribbean	Europe and North America
<b>Key issues in adult education</b>	Sustainable literacy and sustainable livelihoods; poverty reduction and HIV prevention; women's education and education for indigenous groups; empowerment for social participation			Community development, human resources development and continuing vocational education and training, social and economic integration					Human resources development, personal and social development, social and vocational integration of new migrants, re-training for older and low-qualified workers, early childhood education		
<b>Adult education defined in terms of</b>	← <b>Adult literacy</b>			← <b>Human resources development</b>					<b>Lifelong learning framework</b> →		
<b>Major providers</b>	From international donors through to local NGOs in public adult learning and education organisations, community centres and higher education			Private and public continuing vocational education and training organisations, community learning centres and via local associations					Higher education institutions, further, adult and community colleges and centres, public and private/corporate continuing vocational education and training organisations, commercial training companies, civil society and social partners		
<b>Private: public balance</b>	Public and international donors			Emerging private market					Public and private, with (quasi-) marketisation		
<b>Adult education and lifelong learning</b>	Adult education lacking a lifelong learning perspective			Adult education towards lifelong learning					Adult education with clear lifelong learning perspective		

sector shaping of provision in the past 15 years (as in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia).

The privatisation or commercialisation of certain types of programmes results in a dramatically-changed provision profile in adult education. The impetus for these trends is a widespread belief that privately-funded provision is more flexible to market demand, and that publicly-financed provision fails to match the workplace requirement for competencies. The strengthening of this notion has resulted in for-profit provision increasing its share relative to publicly-funded programmes (Drache, 2001; Meyer and Boyd, 2001; Stevenson, 1999; Whitty and Power, 2000; Williams, 2007).

Thus in many countries a commercial learning market has emerged and gained acceptance. In light of declining public financing for adult education, such a market operates under several assumptions: (1) responsibility for training is re-located from the state to the employer or to employees themselves; (2) adult education programmes are increasingly outsourced to national and trans-national education and training companies; and (3) there is pressure for the results of learning tend to be more recognised, validated and transformed into some sort of qualification or, metaphorically speaking, learning currencies, which may be exchanged for higher-social status or job positions, enabling individuals to recover the invested value. For many, the increasing for-profit provision of adult education has resulted from an increasingly insecure job market. Changes in economic climate threaten job security. This, in turn, elevates the value of academic or vocational qualifications in the eyes of employers, who use higher and higher levels of recognised qualifications to filter and select from the ever-growing pool of job applicants.

In sub-Saharan Africa and Asia the trend in adult education provision has been the growing involvement of non-governmental organisations. Mostly externally-funded, they are less bound by government monitoring. Few have a mandate to deliver programmes at the national level and, given their budget constraints, their work is

mainly confined either to local programmes or specific target groups. The National Reports corroborate this pattern, which was already observed in CONFITEA V and the Synthesis Report of the CONFITEA V Review Meeting in 2003 (UIE, 2003) and which appears to be increasingly entrenched as the outsourcing mechanism.

The delegation of such operations to private adult education providers, including non-governmental organisations, has been developing in many contexts, without necessarily reducing national public budgets for adult education. Often monitoring and evaluation activities are also contracted outside government. In a few countries in Africa, the outsourcing (also known as *faire-faire*) of literacy classes is gaining ground (see Box 3.6). In this case, NGOs are the service providers, delivering a national curriculum with government funds. As with many subcontracting endeavours, quality assurance is a major issue.

As previously argued, patterns of adult education provision respond to social and economic changes. The corollaries (and consequences) of cultural and economic globalisation, together with the transition to knowledge societies – which impacts world regions and countries in both similar and differing ways – have implications for the structuring of all forms of education and training, including adult education. Governments slowly give up their direct involvement in adult education and responsibility is transferred to others: the private sector, NGOs and/or individuals. Alongside this development there is a notable increase in international and regional policy-making in education and training provision.



### Box 3.6 The faire-faire strategy

The strategy consists in making each partner play his or her own part, and there is a clear comparative advantage according to the principle of 'each doing what he does best'. This construct shows the following characteristics, recognised as essential by all stakeholders:

- Separation between the orientation, follow-up, and assessment functions of the Ministry, on the one hand, and the operational functions of literacy groups, on the other.
- Contractual bases for those literacy missions to be performed with public funds made available by the Ministry.
- Equal access to funds for all service providers whose proposals are consistent with a set of eligibility criteria that all partners acknowledge to be appropriate.
- Impartiality and transparency of the funding allocation system.
- Prompt payment for services rendered by providers, who in most cases have limited funds of their own and limited resources.

*Source: Association for the Development of Education in Africa, 2006: 12*

### 3.3 Conclusion

The development of market-driven adult education provision significantly changes the adult learning landscape, as does the growing presence of civil society organisations. The fluctuation and instability of public funds for adult education further underscores the sensitivity and vulnerability of this sector. With an unstable legal and financial framework, adult education provision is extremely susceptible to even minor economic or political change.

Except for the Nordic countries and those with established lifelong learning systems (as in the Republic of Korea) adult education provision in most countries is increasingly taking on the following characteristics:

- public provision is restricted to a minimum purpose at the lowest level;
- any provision beyond 'minimum' public supply is given over to the private sector, commercial providers or NGOs whose provision is subject to the laws of supply and demand;

- provision thus becomes short-term, dispensable and contingent on the availability of resources; and
- a weakened rationale for an elaborate and stable governance structure for the provision of adult learning and education.

As adult education provision becomes increasingly diversified and decentralised, there is an even greater need for co-ordination to secure resourcing, policy impact and public support. The quantity and quality of the provision of adult learning opportunities are, of course, determined by the overall social and economic environment but the priority given to this activity is a matter of political will. Public funding for adult education is heavily influenced by political ideology and the distribution of wealth in society. The social democratic political formations of, for instance, Germany and the Scandinavian countries encourage strong public involvement in politics, an involvement which is positively interconnected with democratic and voluntary participation in learning.

As the number and scope of private providers grow, the issue of regulation over the 'invisible hand of the learning market' demands attention. In some countries, the increasingly commercialised learning

market and its new rules seriously threaten equity and balanced development in adult education provision and participation. Given the decline of public involvement in adult education, a critical challenge revolves around how to prevent fast-growing profit-driven providers from dominating provision. There is a real need for government to maintain an interest in equity issues for economic reasons and for maintaining social cohesion.

The active participation of civil society organisations is one way to mitigate emergent imbalances. There is enough evidence to show that the programmes of these not-for-profit organisations yield positive results. Yet because of their mandate and resources, their reach and sustainability is limited (BALID, 2009).

In addition to the balance of public-private provision, a key concern is the scope and coverage of adult education programmes. Even though programmatic variety is evident in many countries, the issue of who benefits from existing provision needs to be addressed. Rural and indigenous populations, migrants, people with special learning needs and prison inmates typically have restricted access to programmes, thereby maintaining or even deepening inequalities rather than reducing them.

As the next chapter will show, the majority of those excluded from adult learning opportunities often belong to already-marginalised sections of the population. A profit-driven framework for adult education provision will inevitably reinforce their exclusion.



## CHAPTER 4

# PARTICIPATION AND EQUITY IN ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education provides a means to address the development challenges of the 21st century. It enables people to acquire knowledge, skills and values which allow them to improve the quality of their present and future lives. It helps people to discover what resources they need, identify new possibilities to acquire them and, most importantly, to use the resources at their disposal to fulfil their aspirations. In short, access to, and participation in, relevant and appropriate adult education are fundamental to personal, economic and societal development.

Equity was a key issue of the CONFINTEA V deliberations. It must certainly be central to any new vision of adult learning and education. As previous chapters underscore, equitable access and participation are clear expressions of sustainable educational inclusion and social justice. People of all ages have the right to basic education, which is a prerequisite for further learning.

In reality, however, overall participation rates in adult education in most countries are low, and there are very significant inequalities of access and participation both within and between nations. This chapter first reviews patterns of participation in adult education across groups of countries and sets out the main reasons for non-participation. It then specifies major obstacles to raising participation levels and concludes by proposing the directions in which adult learning and education policy must move if these obstacles are to be overcome.

## 4.1 Low overall rates of participation

Describing and analysing international adult education participation patterns are fraught with difficulties, given the paucity of comparative statistical data related to adult learning and education. This is acutely the case for the countries of the South. Nevertheless, of the 154 National Reports submitted in preparation for CONFINTEA VI, 29 cited participation rates in adult education while 66 presented participation rates in literacy programmes (see Table 4.1). This represents an overall increase when compared with the data compiled for CONFINTEA V. Nevertheless, the quality and comparability of available data from the 2008 National Reports, especially from developing countries, are problematic. In far too many cases, data on adult education lack historical reference points and are insufficiently comprehensive in their coverage.

In many cases countries only provide enrolment data in government-led programmes; data on participation in NGO programmes are typically sparse or non-existent. In other cases, the available information do not reflect a broad understanding of adult learning and education such as, for example, the inclusion of participation in employer-provided and/or -funded training. Thus statistics on adult education for most countries of the South must be viewed with caution, since reported figures may underestimate actual participation levels.

It is only for high-income countries, and a select set of developing nations, that fairly robust and comparable data have been available since the mid-1990s. They cover participation in adult education and its provision. They also include information on the characteristics of adult participants and

**Table 4.1**  
Information on participation in adult education, by type of programme and sector

Regions/number of countries with reports	Arab states 19	Asia-Pacific 29
<b>Enrolment rates in highschoools and/or universities</b>	Iraq, Kuwait, Oman 3	Bhutan, China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, New Zealand, Palau, Republic of Korea, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Vietnam 11
<i>Percentage</i>	16	38
<b>Enrolment rates in vocational education and training</b>	Kuwait, Libya, Palestine, Yemen 4	Bhutan, China, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan 10
<i>Percentage</i>	21	34
<b>Participation rates in literacy programmes</b>	Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen 13	Afghanistan, China, India, Lao People's Democratic Republic, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Vietnam 9
<i>Percentage</i>	68	31
<b>Participation rates in adult learning and education</b>	N/A N/A	Australia, Palau, Republic of Korea, Vietnam 4
<i>Percentage</i>	N/A	14
<b>Participation rates in specific adult education programmes</b>	Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Yemen 5	Bhutan, Japan, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Tajikistan, Vietnam 6
<i>Percentage</i>	26	21

Source: National Reports prepared for CONFINTEA VI

What is counted as organised forms of adult learning and education can be surmised from this question in the International Adult Literacy Survey (1994-1998): "During the past 12 months, that is since ..., did you receive any training or education including courses, private lessons, correspondence courses, workshops, on-the-job training, apprenticeship training, arts, crafts, recreation courses or any other training or education?" (OECD and Statistics Canada, 2000)

<b>Europe and North America</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>Latin America and Caribbean</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>Total 154</b>
Austria, Belgium (Flemish), Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States of America	16	Argentina, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Jamaica, Peru, St. Lucia	7	Botswana, Cape Verde, Namibia, Sao Tome & Principe, Seychelles, United Republic of Tanzania	6	<b>43</b>
42		28		14		<b>28</b>
Austria, Belgium (Flemish), Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, France, Ireland, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey	16	Argentina, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Peru, St. Lucia	6	Botswana, Cape Verde, Eritrea, Ghana, Liberia, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles, United Republic of Tanzania	10	<b>46</b>
42		24		23		<b>30</b>
Belgium (French), Canada, France, Ireland, Slovenia, United States of America	6	Brazil, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, St. Lucia	11	Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, Seychelles, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe	27	<b>66</b>
16		44		63		<b>43</b>
Austria, Belgium (Flemish), Canada, Estonia, Germany, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America	15	Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines	7	Cameroon, Seychelles, South Africa	3	<b>29</b>
39		28		7		<b>19</b>
Belgium (Flemish), Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Lithuania, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United States of America	18	Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, St. Lucia	9	Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Gambia, Ivory Coast, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe	17	<b>55</b>
47		36		40		<b>36</b>

can suggest explanations for the observed variations in participation. This section therefore relies heavily on the comparable information available for many countries of the North (mainly OECD countries), but also includes additional, though often non-comparable, programme-level data for some countries of the South.

Overall, while there is some improvement in participation rates in adult education since CONFINTEA V, in most countries they remain unacceptably low. The proportion of adults who have not completed primary schooling or its equivalent is evidence of a large unmet demand for adult basic education. Appendix Table 2 illustrates this unmet challenge for large segments of the population aged 25 and older. At least 18% of the world's adults have not completed primary schooling or ever been to school. This rate reaches 30% in Latin America and the Caribbean, 48% in the Arab States, 50% in sub-Saharan Africa and 53% in South and West Asia. Given that for many of the

poorest countries in the world, no data are available at all, it is certain that were these countries to be included in the estimates given in Appendix Table 2, average rates of adults not completing primary schooling would be even higher.

The picture is mixed for some countries in Europe and North America, where adult education surveys are able to track patterns of participation. In Finland, for example, surveys in 1980, 1990, 1995 and 2000 concluded that there was a doubling of the participation rate over 20 years. Three national household education surveys undertaken in the United States of America in 1995, 1999 and 2001 indicate a growing rate of participation in adult education from 40% to 45% and 46% respectively. The first Europe-wide adult education survey, covering 29 countries, carried out between 2005 and 2006, reveals a wide range of divergence from the European average of 35.7%, with Sweden having the highest participation rate at 73.4% and Hungary having the lowest at 9.0% (see Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2**  
Participation by adults in formal or non-formal education and training,  
by country, gender and age, 2007 (percentages)

Country	Sex			Age		
	Male	Female	Total	25-34 years	35-54 years	55-64 years
Austria	44.0	39.9	41.9	47.1	45.7	25.4
Bulgaria	37.9	35.0	36.4	44.7	39.7	20.3
Cyprus	43.0	38.2	40.6	53.2	41.1	20.1
Estonia	36.9	46.7	42.1	52.5	42.6	27.5
Finland	48.9	61.3	55.0	66.0	58.6	37.8
France	36.4	33.8	35.1	48.2	35.9	16.2
Germany	48.3	42.4	45.4	53.3	48.7	28.2
Greece	14.3	14.6	14.5	22.7	14.0	5.1
Hungary	8.3	9.6	9.0	15.8	9.0	2.5
Italy	22.2	22.2	22.2	30.5	23.0	11.8
Latvia	25.9	39.0	32.7	39.0	34.3	21.8
Lithuania	28.7	38.7	33.9	42.7	35.1	19.0
Norway	53.3	55.9	54.6	65.0	55.5	41.2
Poland	21.3	22.4	21.8	34.1	20.7	6.8
Slovakia	45.3	42.8	44.0	51.0	48.3	23.8
Spain	30.8	31.0	30.9	39.7	30.8	17.0
Sweden	70.8	76.1	73.4	81.0	76.4	60.7
United Kingdom	47.2	51.3	49.3	58.8	50.3	37.0
<b>EU average</b>	<b>36.1</b>	<b>35.4</b>	<b>35.7</b>	<b>44.7</b>	<b>37.2</b>	<b>21.6</b>

Source: Eurostat, 2009

Countries with available comparable data on adult education activity can be divided into four distinct groups based on participation levels (see Box 4.1). This classification is based on data in Appendix Table 3 showing the proportion of adults aged 16 to 65 (excluding regular full-time students aged 16 to 24) who participated in any organised form of education or training within a 12-month reference period. Very few countries have participation rates at or above 50%, except for a number of European Nordic countries (Group 1). At the other end of the scale, several southern and eastern European countries – and Chile – fall into a group with the lowest participation levels. A study conducted in Brazil suggests a participation rate there of 16%.

In general, adult education participation rates are positively correlated with a country's level of economic development as measured by per capita GDP: on average,

the more prosperous the country, the higher the participation rate. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 cross-tabulate data to show how per capita GDP relates to the rate of participation in adult education and to the functional adult literacy rate. In both figures, the relationship is positive. However, there are interesting country variations. For example, participation rates in the Nordic countries are significantly higher than countries with similar levels of per capita GDP such as Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. While New Zealand, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Portugal have similar income levels, participation rates are considerably higher in the first two than in the latter two countries.

Differences between income level and participation rate in adult education tend to be wider in countries of the South, especially among low-income countries.

Data for Brazil are available from a survey carried out by two NGOs which found that in 2007, 16% had taken a non-formal education course in the last 12 months, 31% had done so previously to this, and 52% had never done so. The results confirm an earlier survey from 2001, so this would place Brazil in the group of countries with participation levels of under 20% (see Box 4.1).

*(Brazil National Report prepared for CONFINTEA VI)*

#### **Box 4.1**

#### **Country groupings by participation in organised forms of adult education in the previous year, population aged 16-65**

##### **Group 1: Participation rates close to or exceeding 50%**

This Group comprises the Nordic countries, including Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

##### **Group 2: Participation rates between 35% and 50%**

This Group includes countries of Anglo-Saxon origin: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. A few of the smaller Central and Northern European countries, including Austria, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland, as well as the Caribbean archipelago of Bermuda, are also among this group.

##### **Group 3: Participation rates between 20% and 35%**

This Group features the remainder of Northern European countries including Belgium (Flanders) and Germany as well as Ireland. Also among this Group are some Eastern European countries, namely Czech Republic and Slovenia, and some Southern European countries including France, Italy and Spain.

##### **Group 4: Participation rates consistently below 20%**

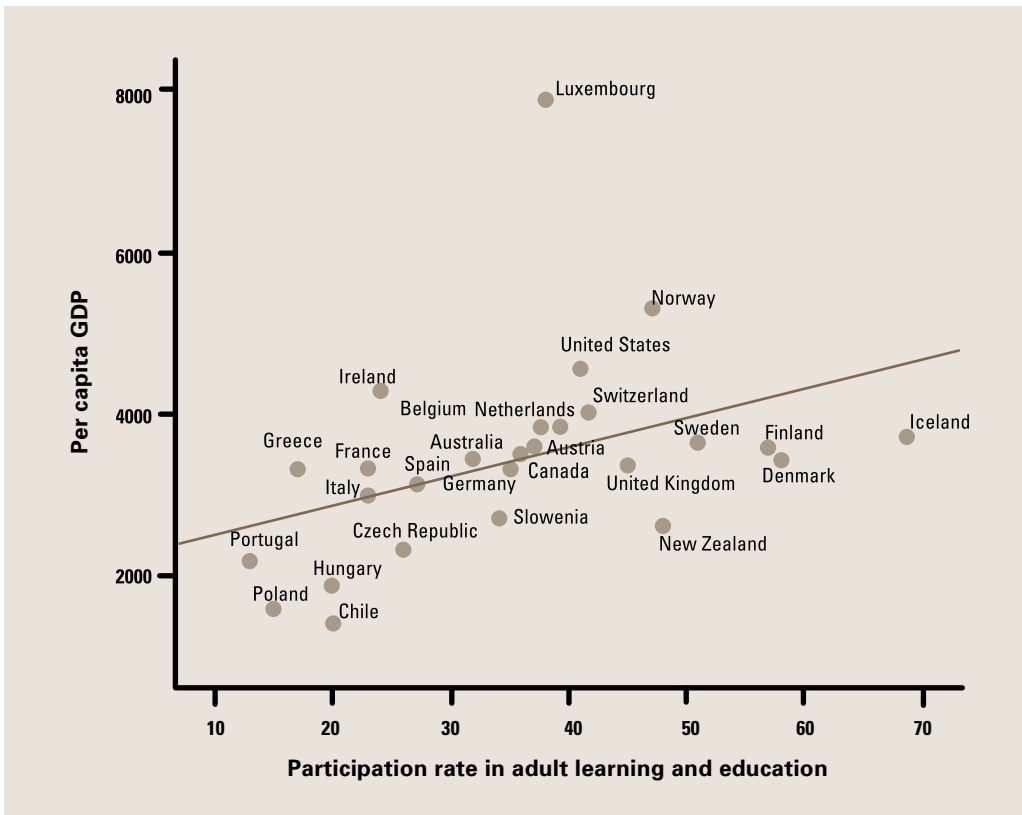
This Group includes the remaining Southern European countries, namely Greece and Portugal, as well as some additional Eastern European countries, Hungary and Poland, and the only South American country with comparable data, Chile.

*(Calculations based on the following databases: Statistics Canada, 1994, 1996, 1998; NCES, 1998 and Eurobarometer, 2003.*

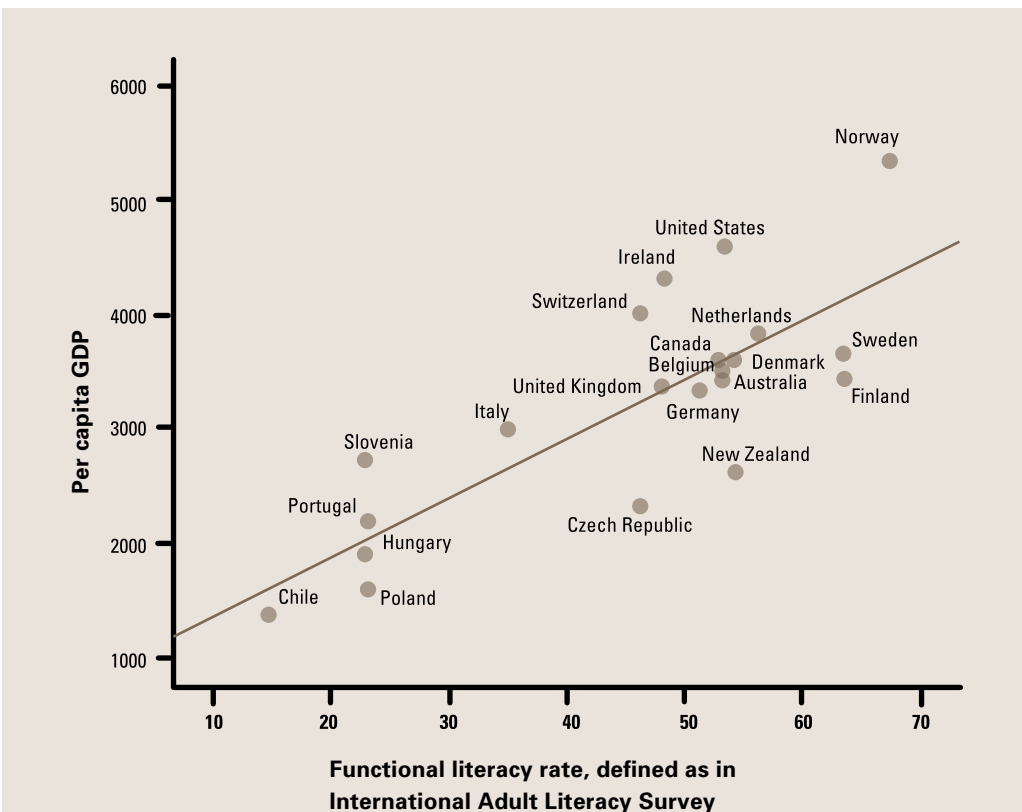
*See also Desjardins et al., 2006: 36 and Rubenson and Desjardins, 2009: 193.)*



**Figure 4.1**  
Relationship between per capita GDP and rate of participation in adult education



**Figure 4.2**  
Relationship between per capita GDP and functional literacy rate



In some CONFINTEA VI National Reports, the evidence suggests that these differences may have increased in recent years.

Large differences in adult education participation between countries at different development stages are to be expected. However, variation between countries at the same development stage suggests that participation is not solely a function of income level (*per capita* GDP), but a consequence of other factors, perhaps particularly the impact of public policy. Several factors emerge from a reading of the National Reports:

- The degree to which public policies are supportive of adult education
- The extent to which governance and provision structures foster and promote adult participation in education and learning opportunities at work
- How much communities attach social value to adult learning and education
- The level of political commitment to diverse learning cultures and regard for learning as a means to improve social cohesion.

These factors help explain why some countries are more able than others at comparable per capita income levels to attain higher participation levels and relatively lower levels of inequity in access. Addressing equity issues is therefore paramount. One explanation for the success of adult education in the Nordic countries (Group 1) is that, for various historical, social and cultural reasons, these countries have established public policies that promote adult education, foster favourable structural conditions, target barriers to participation, and ensure that disadvantaged groups have equal opportunity to participate in adult education. Existing research reveals that differences among nations are not necessarily due to the existence of barriers to participation but rather to the conditions that allow persons and groups to overcome such barriers.

## 4.2 Inequity in participation

Within countries levels of participation vary according to socio-economic, demographic and regional factors, which reveal structural deficiencies in access to adult education.

Lack of comparable data limits the analysis of the characteristics of adult participants internationally. Apart from countries in Europe and North America, there is extremely limited information on adult education participation levels broken down by age, income, ethnicity, language and educational background.

Figures obtained from the countries of the North (see Appendix Table 3) show markedly lower rates for older workers and senior citizens, adults with low levels of education and low levels of skills, those working in low-skill jobs and the unemployed, those from poorer socio-economic backgrounds, and immigrants, migrants and ethnic minorities. These patterns are consistent across countries, but the extent of the disparities between such social groups varies from country to country (OECD and Statistics Canada, 2000; 2005). As previously mentioned, inequalities are substantially less pronounced in the Nordic countries (Group 1).

In the United States of America, the data from the national household education survey show differences in participation vis-à-vis key demographic variables. As in Europe, participation rates are higher in younger cohorts. Educational attainment and household income are positively related to participation in adult education. Race and ethnicity are also important factors in adult education participation (see Table 4.3).

Patterns of participation for women in Europe and North America are not as straightforward, with some countries experiencing lower rates than for males and others showing higher rates of participation, as the data displayed earlier in Table 4.2 illustrate. In general, gender disparities in participation rates and achievement are much greater in the countries of the South than of the North. They are especially prevalent in the Arab States, Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

**Table 4.3**  
**Formal adult education participation rates, by selected demographic characteristics**  
**and type of educational activity, USA, 2004-2005**

Characteristic	Participation in formal adult education activities (%)								
	Number of adults (thousands)	Any formal adult education	ESL classes	Basic skills/ GED classes	Part-time college degree program (1)	Part-time vocational degree/ diploma program (2)	Apprenticeship(1)	Work-related courses	Personal-interest courses
<b>Age</b>									
16 to 24 years	25,104	53	2	6	9	2	3	21	27
25 to 34 years	38,784	52	2	2	7	2	3	32	22
35 to 44 years	42,890	49	1	1	4	1	1	34	22
45 to 54 years	41,840	48	#	#	3	1	1	37	20
55 to 64 years	29,068	40	#	#	1	1	#	27	21
65 years or older	33,922	23	#	#	#	#	#	5	19
<b>Sex</b>									
Male	101,596	41	1	1	4	1	2	24	18
Female	110,011	47	1	1	4	1	1	29	24
<b>Race / ethnicity</b>									
White, non-Hispanic	146,614	46	#	1	4	1	1	29	22
Black, non-Hispanic	23,467	46	#	2	4	1	2	27	24
Hispanic	26,101	38	6	3	4	1	2	17	15
Asian or Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	7,080	44	2	1!	6	1!	1!	24	23
Other race, non-Hispanic	8,346	39	#	1	4	1	2	23	20
<b>Highest education level completed</b>									
Less than a high school diploma / equivalent	31,018	22	2	7	#	1	1	4	11
High school diploma / equivalent	64,334	33	1	1	2	1	2	17	16
Some college/vocational/ associate's degree	58,545	51	1	#	6	2	1	31	25
Bachelor's degree	37,244	60	#	#	6	1	#	44	29
Graduate or professional education or degree	20,466	66	1!	#	7	1	1!	51	30
<b>Household income</b>									
\$20,000 or less	34,670	28	1	2	2	1	2	11	16
\$20,001 to \$35,000	35,839	36	2	2	4	1	1	18	17
\$35,001 to \$50,000	33,376	42	2!	1	2	1	1	23	22
\$50,001 to \$75,000	47,114	48	#	#	5	1	1	33	21
\$75,001 or more	60,607	58	1	1	5	2	1	39	27
<b>Employment status</b>									
Employed full-time	106,389	53	1	1	5	2	2	40	20
Employed part-time	27,090	53	1	2!	7	1	1	32	29
Unemployed and looking for work	9,941	38	2	6	3	2	2!	14	23
Not in the labour force	68,187	28	1	1	2	1	1	6	20
<b>Occupation</b>									
Professional / managerial	48,647	70	#	#	8	1	1	56	29
Sales / service / clerical	66,218	48	1	2	5	2	1	31	22
Trade and labour	37,585	34	2	2!	2	2	3	19	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>211,607</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>21</b>

# Estimate rounds to 0 or 0 cases in sample. ! Interpret data with caution; coefficient of variation is 50% or more.

1 Includes those enrolled only part-time in college or university degree or certificate programs or those enrolled through a combination of part-time and full-time enrollments in the 12 months prior to the interview.

2 Includes those enrolled only part-time in vocational or technical diploma, degree, certificate programs or those enrolled through a combination of part-time and full-time enrollments in the 12 months prior to the interview.

NOTE: Details may not sum to totals because of rounding.

The information gleaned from CONFINTEA VI National Reports suggests that there are large and systematic disparities in adult education participation between urban and rural populations, particularly in most countries of the South. The International Adult Literacy Survey data (see Appendix Table 3) indicate that the urban-rural gap in participation is wider than the gender gap in most high- and middle-income countries.

Older adults over the age of 45 also tend to be at a disadvantage when it comes to adult education participation. Until recently many countries had rarely targeted the older age groups in policies and programmes although now this group is a key target in high-income ageing societies. In low- and lower-middle income countries most government programmes give priority to younger adults. In some instances, programmes set upper age limits for access, typically age 35 or 40. As the Latin America-Caribbean Regional Synthesis Report (Torres, 2009) highlights, in Brazil and Mexico – the most populated countries in Latin America – over half of those over 50 years old either have low levels of education or have never been to school.

For the large majority of the countries included in Appendix Table 3, adults from migrant and minority backgrounds are at a greater disadvantage with respect to participation. This is true in the most prosperous countries but even more so in middle-income countries. A similar picture emerges for language status groups: people whose first language differs from the country's official language(s) are typically unfavoured. Participation is likely to be even lower if, for example, dimensions such as disability compound marginalisation due to gender, age and race.

Disadvantaging factors are cumulative so that, for example, older women living in rural areas are least likely to participate in adult education of any kind, particularly if they belong to a minority ethnic group. The needs of such social groups are immense and complex, and are clearly not being met by current provision and policy.

Rural areas with large indigenous populations (for example, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru) have the lowest overall educational participation rates for people of all ages. Indigenous groups in the Latin American region thus remain largely invisible in policy and governance frameworks. Tribal, ethnic and religious minorities as well as indigenous peoples living in the Asia-Pacific region tend to be very poor, unemployed and in poor health. Few participate in any form of education and often lack access to basic public services. As a result adult literacy rates are extremely low, especially in poorer countries.

#### **4.3 Multiple and structural causes for low and inequitable access to adult learning and education**

Unless consciously redressed through equity-oriented policies, formal educational systems tend to reinforce social inequalities (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970; Shavit and Blossfeld, 1993). As Rubenson (2006) concludes, patterns of inequality in adult education mirror the distribution of social power and resources, and more precisely exemplify the degree to which justice, rights, responsibilities and entitlements prevail in a particular country. The Asia-Pacific Regional Synthesis Report (Ahmed, 2009) indicates a variety of economic, political, social and structural barriers that constrain women, the poor, older adults, ethnic minorities and indigenous groups from participating in adult education. Unequal participation rates have multi-faceted causes, ranging from those located at the level of the individual learner to those linked to institutional and cultural contexts. As far as more developed economies are concerned the following typology is useful. It distinguishes among three types of barriers that generate inequities in access and participation: institutional, situational and dispositional (Cross, 1981).

**Institutional barriers** include institutional practices and procedures that discourage or prevent participation, such as a lack of provision or opportunity (at the right time or location), high user fees, or entry qualifications. These have an impact on adults of all ages, but especially the poor and least educated.

**Situational barriers** arise from an individual's life situation at a given point in the family life-cycle (for example, care for children or parents) and working life (for example, sufficient time or resources for study). Family-related barriers tend to be most intense in early to mid-adulthood and particularly affect women. Place of residence and factors related to linguistic and ethnic minority status can also be situational in nature. Institutional and situational barriers are often inter-related.

**Dispositional barriers** refer to psychological factors that may impede an individual's decision to participate (for

example, perception of reward or usefulness of participation, self-perception and other attitudes). These barriers are particularly prevalent among poor, weakly literate or elderly populations. Such attitudes can often be rooted in ambivalent memories of initial education and training, but also by judgements that adult education has little relevance for improving one's life and job prospects. Although dispositional barriers are socio-psychological in nature, they too are interwoven with institutional and situational barriers and interact with them. Box 4.2 shows the profile of adult learners in Canada and identifies some impediments to participation in learning.

#### Box 4.2 Impediments to participation in learning

Analyses from the Adult Education and Training Survey (AETS) show that:

- "Canadian adults are more inclined to participate for job or career-related purposes than for personal interest.
- Participation in adult education is mainly instrumental. For example, even at age 55-64, job or career-related motives are still slightly stronger than personal interest.
- Women are slightly less likely than men to participate for job or career reasons, but they are twice as likely to enrol out of personal interest.
- Canadian adults that report job or career-related reasons are foremost looking to upgrade their skills for a current job. However, approximately one in two indicate the importance of study in order to find another job. Some of those upgrading for current, different or future jobs are also looking at possibilities for promotion.
- The follow-up question to those who participated for personal reasons reveals a quite complex picture. The two dominant motives – upgrading skills and personal development – often seem to go hand in hand.
- Institutional barriers are mentioned slightly more often than situational barriers.
- Among working Canadians, being too busy at work was the dominant reason for not starting a course. Only a small group saw lack of employer support as a barrier.
- Family responsibility was a substantially greater barrier among women than among men.
- High costs are reported as a major barrier particularly among young and low-income adults.
- The analysis of the profiles of the respondents who expressed 'needed' or 'wanted' training but did not participate suggests that a substantial segment of the workforce is working under conditions that do not stimulate their interest in participating in organised learning activities."

Source: Rubenson, 2001: 34

Table 4.4 reports the proportion of adults who have overcome different types of barriers to participation. In almost all countries, dispositional barriers are the most difficult to overcome, while situational barriers appear to be easiest to deal with. Generally, learners living in countries with more developed economies are most able to overcome barriers – with some notable exceptions (Luxembourg, with a high per capita income, scores lower than other countries in Group 2). Analysis suggests that overcoming situational and institutional barriers is linked to public intervention schemes such as family policy frameworks supporting childcare and release time for adults, especially women. On the other hand, workplace learning programmes, supported by employers, can help to break through some of the barriers, particularly for men. Situational barriers are more easily overcome where a broader range of welfare and labour market services exists (for example, in Nordic countries), whereas institutional barriers are more directly linked to adult education strategies, policies and programmes. Although useful for the country groupings discussed, the challenge of dealing with situational barriers might be more extreme in the low-income economies of the South.

**Table 4.4**  
Proportion of population overcoming barriers to participation,  
countries grouped by adult education participation rate,  
multiple sources, 1994- 2003

				Proportion who overcome barriers to participation in adult learning and education (%)		
	GDP per capita (PPP)* 2007	Participation rate in adult learning and education (%) 1994-2003	IALS functional literacy rate (%) 1994-1998	Situational barriers	Institutional barriers	Dispositional barriers
<b>Group 1 (close to or &gt; 50%)</b>	<b>39,414</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>52</b>
Denmark	35,787	57	54	58	47	47
Finland	34,411	58	63	62	54	49
Iceland	37,174	69		65	68	69
Norway	53,334	47	67	49	44	43
Sweden	36,365	51	63	56	50	49
<b>Group 2 (35-50% range)</b>	<b>41,234</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>29</b>
Austria	38,155	39		40	31	22
Australia	34,882	36	53			
Bermuda		47				
Canada	35,729	37	53			
Luxembourg	78,985	38		41	39	29
Netherlands	37,960	38	56	40	32	33
New Zealand	26,110	48	54			
Switzerland	39,963	42	46			
United Kingdom	33,535	45	48	40	29	32
United States	45,790	41	53			
<b>Group 3 (20-35%)</b>	<b>31,950</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>
Belgium	34,458	32	53	35	26	22
Czech Republic	23,194	26	46			
France	33,414	23		21	20	16
Germany	33,154	35	51	35	24	22
Ireland	43,035	24	48	34	29	27
Italy	29,934	23	35	25	20	20
Slovenia	27,095	34	23			
Spain	31,312	27		16	15	16
<b>Group 4 (below 20%)</b>	<b>20,641</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
Chile	13,885	20	15			
Greece	33,074	17		18	15	10
Hungary	18,679	20	23			
Poland	15,811	15	23			
Portugal	21,755	13	23	8	6	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,333</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>45</b>			

## Notes:

1. International Adult Literacy Survey 1994, 1996, 1998 (Columns 2-3); Eurobarometer 2003 (columns 4-6). World Bank data on GDP and population (column 1). Also see Rubenson and Desjardins (2009: 193 and 203-204) for an expanded table of sub-categories of situational, institutional, and dispositional barriers.

2. IALS functional literacy rate is defined as the percent of adults aged 16 to 65 who score at proficiency Level 3 or higher on the prose literacy scale as measured in the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS).

3. Data collected on barriers in the Eurobarometer Survey (2003) are grouped as follows.

**Situational barriers:**

"My job commitments take up too much energy; My employer would not support me; My family commitments take up too much energy; My family would not support me; I would need some equipment that I do not have (computer, etc.)."

**Institutional barriers:**

"I have not the necessary qualifications to take up the studies / training course I would like to; There are no courses that suit my needs; There are no courses available nearby; I could not get to them; I would not want to go back to something that is like school (double constraint)."

**Dispositional barriers:**

"I have never been good at studying; I would not like people to know about it in case I didn't do well; I think I am too old to learn; I would not want to go back to something that is like school; I do not know what I could do that would be interesting or useful; I would have to give up some or all of my free time or leisure activities; I have never wanted to do any studies or training."

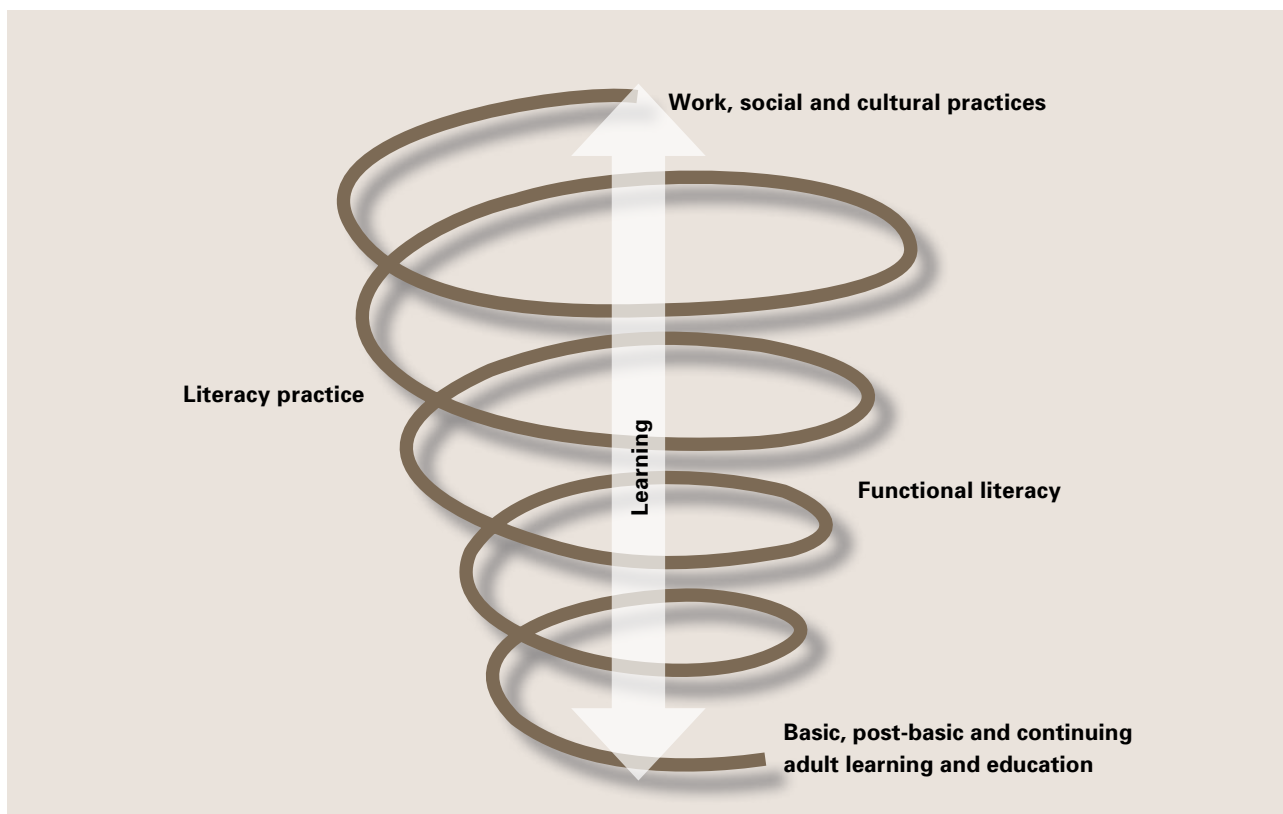
The available data on who participates reveals a consistent pattern across a wide range of countries and regions: those who have acquired more education tend to get more and those who do not, find it difficult to receive any at all. However, enabling participation can break this cycle, leading to an upward spiral of achievement for those becoming involved in education as adults.

Following Gray's (1956) analysis, Figure 4.3 below illustrates how this polarising tendency (the so-called 'Matthew effect') operates as initial formal education, adult education and literacy practices in work, social and cultural life become mutually-reinforcing. Literacy is a foundational skill which is a prerequisite for continuous learning in our increasingly written environment. In modern society, functional literacy represents a fundamental capability that individuals need to convert resources in ways that enable them to achieve their goals. Functional literacy enables adults to engage in a wide range of literacy and

learning practices – textual, visual and digital – at work, home and in the community (see OECD and Statistics Canada, 1995; 2000; 2005; UNESCO-OREALC, 2007).

It is important not to see participation in learning as separate from other aspects of life. The nature of work environments and the social and cultural practices embedded in daily life are equally important in securing personal development. In fact, as Figure 4.3 illustrates, systematic learning opportunities are at the centre of a spiral. Workplaces rich in literacy practices and conducive to learning reinforce the upward development of knowledge and competence. By extension, embedding literacy and learning practices in everyday work practices not only fosters functional literacy but also shapes opportunity and life chances (Desjardins, 2004; Reder, 2009). The same can be said about social and cultural practices. Diverse and nurturing learning experiences raise awareness of complex social processes and interactions

**Figure 4.3**  
The upward spiralling effect of learning, literacy and literacy practices



(Adapted from Gray, 1956: 24)

(Pring, 1999), creating a greater interest in participating actively in social life and contributing to change.

Given the chance to learn, people have the potential for continued growth. In contrast, few or limited opportunities can lead to stagnation, decline, entrapment and isolation. This applies to communities as well as to individuals. Opportunities to learn are socially, culturally and economically bounded, and are thus distributed via complex societal mechanisms which are both explicit and implicit. In most societies today, awarding recognised educational qualifications which are acquired through basic, post-basic and/or continuing adult education is a very common way to structure life chances. It is therefore important to understand how qualification systems function and, more generally, the extent to which systems that validate prior learning and experience (via non-formal and informal learning) are equally accessible to all. Werquin (2007) pointed out that the Matthew effect applies to the validation of prior learning too: individuals who already have recognised qualifications are more likely to obtain further validation of their knowledge and skills.

#### **4.4 Increasing participation rates and addressing inequity**

This chapter has documented low levels and social inequalities in access to, and participation in, adult education – both between and within countries and world regions. Disadvantaged adults, especially those with multiple disadvantages, are least likely to participate in adult education. They tend not to perceive the benefits to be derived from participation, and they believe that little is to be gained personally from such investments. In addition they are more likely to find themselves in living and working environments that are not conducive to learning. The potential of adult education to help realise social and economic development and sustainable well-being has yet to be realised in most countries.

#### **Using targeted policies to tackle barriers to participation**

Policies are needed to address the double challenge of low participation and high inequality in adult education – in particular by reducing structural barriers to participation and combating individual scepticism about the benefits of adult learning. Such policies need to address institutional, situational and dispositional barriers in integrated ways. Table 4.4 earlier identified, for countries with available data, the significance of these barriers in depressing participation and distinguished between countries that are more or less successful in overcoming these obstacles. Learning from good practice is vital to progress in this area.

In the last decade, many countries have acknowledged the need for targeted policies to address inequalities in participation in adult learning. Much targeting focuses on the specific barriers that face adults in accessing education and training. Such initiatives can release time for participation in adult learning, remove monetary constraints and reduce institutional barriers. In practice, changing course formats, increasing distance and flexible learning options, offering monetary incentives and developing flexibility around entrance requirements have all been useful.

Measures can be implemented through direct targeting, compensating for market failures and for increased reliance on markets, mobilising contributions from all stakeholders through appropriate incentives (especially for NGOs and civil society organisations) and developing social and legal infrastructures for building and sustaining learning cultures.

There is a need for strong public equity policies which emphasise adult learning as a tool. These require the involvement of civil society organisations since the capacity for flexibility and vitality of such practitioners has been shown to be successful in targeting disadvantaged and rural populations.

Situational constraints on participation in adult learning and education can also be addressed by targeted policies. Policy options include improving access to health and social services, including childcare



(OECD, 2006); establishing measures to release time and subsidise participation in adult education, especially for disadvantaged groups; developing support for single-parent and child allowances to overcome family-related barriers. In Chad, for example, UNICEF established day-care facilities at community centres of adult education. Work-life balance issues – namely, flexible working hours, educational leave schemes and employer co-financing models – fall into a similar category for action. Active labour market measures that combine re-training and employment subsidies are also relevant elements of comprehensive adult education policies.

### **Box 4.3** **Measures to mobilise adult learners in Gambia**

In Gambia strategies used by different providers in mobilising adult learners to participate include:

- Income-generating programmes and provision of micro-credit facilities to beneficiaries
- Skills training
- Home visits to inactive participants
- Linking access to loans with regular attendance
- Community sensitisation
- Involving (male) opinion leaders in planning literacy projects
- Providing grants
- Training of literacy participants to serve as development agents (nurse attendants, facilitators to work in their own communities, and so on)
- Prize-giving ceremonies
- Use of resource persons
- Employment opportunities

*Source: Gambia National Report, 2008: 25*

Lack of funds is but one element which clearly restricts participation in adult education. If family circumstances allow little time away from employment and work-related activities, then adults from poorer households will continue to be excluded from educational opportunities, unless learning can be linked with income-generating activities. Among others, measures to improve working conditions and pay, to waive fees and provide free facilities such as childcare can, and should,

be considered in order to prevent income being an insurmountable barrier to adult education.

Establishing mechanisms to foster personal interest and motivation can help to break through dispositional barriers, especially if targeted among disadvantaged groups. While potentially costly, these measures are probably crucial for the poorest countries, where stimulating demand is essential to secure the levels and kinds of literacy needed to keep pace with cultural and economic modernisation. Also important are policies that generate the production and distribution of diverse print media for new readers, by forging partnerships with publishers and newspaper producers. Flexible programmes run by NGOs or local community organisations are an important means for attracting 'new' adult learners. Employers, unions and community organisations also have an important role to play in promoting literacy development in everyday working, social and cultural practices. Dispositional barriers can be weakened by mass awareness-raising and outreach campaigns, especially in conjunction with a mix of other strategies as, for example, in Gambia (see Box 4.3).

The need for targeted policies does not entail a 'one-size-fits-all' solution for a given target group. There is value in meeting heterogeneous needs through diverse means. The range of policies found in the Nordic countries exemplifies how countries can address the diverse needs of their populations. This helps account for the relatively high participation levels among older adults (over 45) in this sub-region.

### **Developing programmes focusing on specific groups**

Alongside generalised policies there is a need to address the specific problems and needs of particular groups within countries. This kind of targeting is apparent from many National Reports. A notable tendency in low- and lower-middle income countries is the targeting of women and young people/young adults. However, only in a few countries are indigenous groups, rural areas and the elderly targeted, even though these are commonly among the most excluded from provision.

**Box 4.4****Improving equity: examples of measures to improve participation in adult education**

**Afghanistan's** Constitution obliges the state to devise and implement effective programmes for balancing and promoting education for women, improving the education of nomad groups and eliminating illiteracy.

**Eritrea's** adult literacy programmes target youth and adults aged 15-45 of both sexes who did not benefit from formal education in their childhood and early youth.

**Lesotho** seeks to reach herders, domestic workers, senior citizens, those living with disabilities, out-of-school youth, adults who have never to school and vulnerable communities touched by poverty, rural isolation and HIV/AIDS.

**Madagascar's** literacy programmes target out-of-school children and young people, women, prisoners, military personnel and elected officials

**Malawi** in particular wants to reach illiterate adults of both sexes, elderly people, those who are poor, unemployed people aged 15 and older; in addition, its programmes target orphans, displaced people, people living with AIDS and disabled people.

**Mongolia** prioritises (1) out-of-school children, youths, adults, those who have left school early and vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, and (2) children and adults who want to study via extension programmes and other alternative pathways.

**Pakistan** sets first priority on reducing illiteracy and in particular for rural people, the poor and disadvantaged, ethnic minorities, nomadic groups and tribal populations, refugees, those living with disabilities, girls and women, street children and child workers, tithed agricultural workers and domestic workers. Limited resources have led Pakistan to prioritise the following target groups: out-of-school youth and those who have left school early aged 10-14; the young illiterate aged 14-15 years of both sexes; illiterate adults aged 25-45, especially women.

**The Philippines** see distance learning as an alternative delivery mode that reaches out to learners – including children and young people – in underserved, high-risk and disadvantaged areas, especially those affected by conflict.

**Thailand's** adult education has developed discrete provision to serve the following target groups: (1) 6-14-year-olds who are not in school, (2) 15-59-year-olds in general and (3) those aged 60 and older. Special target groups with special financial support include the disabled, street children, the hill tribes and minority ethnic groups.

**Zambia** targets vulnerable groups who are most likely to be illiterate: women, out-of-school youth and unemployed adults, particularly in rural areas.

*Source: National Reports prepared for CONFINTEA VI*

Box 4.4 notes selected examples of specific target groups in countries of the South. These typically include women, out-of-school youth, street children, unemployed youth, indigenous groups, rural residents and, increasingly in recent years, disabled, migrant and refugee populations, as well as nomadic groups and prison inmates. Many Asia-Pacific countries have undertaken

innovative programmes to encourage the participation of tribal, ethnic and religious minorities, not least through first-language adult literacy and basic education programmes. The aims and priorities shown in Box 4.4 are ambitious; actual implementation continues to lag far behind policy intentions (see Chapter 2).

Targeted initiatives exist in many countries, and examples of good practice can be identified (see Box 4.5). Closing the gender gap in literacy programmes is an important focus. Many sub-Saharan African countries now compile gender-specific participation data to better design projects and programmes specifically for women. They involve ministry departments responsible for women's affairs more closely in implementing educational policies and, on paper at least, their governments and administrations subscribe to the principle of equal opportunities for women and men.

Active policies to bridge urban-rural participation disparities do appear to have positive impact (see Box 4.6). The use of traditional and modern technologies can be instrumental for stimulating demand and reaching people in rural areas. Radio has been an effective tool for decades, but now audio-visual media present viable options. The E-Mexico initiative is a leader in Latin America and the Caribbean with

#### Box 4.5

#### Women's Literacy and Empowerment Programme, Sindh Education Foundation, Pakistan

The Women's Literacy and Empowerment Programme (WLEP) works towards providing disadvantaged women with educational and self-development opportunities and contributes to their empowerment. It operates through 40 Women's Literacy and Empowerment Centres (WLECs) which ensure provision of learning facilities. Teachers are hired from within the community and are provided with both training and ongoing pedagogical support by the WLEP team. Regular meetings with community members ensure their participation, involvement and ownership. Awareness-raising sessions on health, nutrition, early childhood development, cleanliness and hygiene are conducted with the learners, as well as with the community at large. To organise women and harmonise efforts for programme sustainability, women's organisations have been established in each centre.

Source: Pakistan National Report, 2008: 56

#### Box 4.6

#### Education at distance centres in rural areas, Poland

This project is designed to create about 1,150 centres throughout the country, located in rural areas only. They will contribute to reducing the disparity between villages and cities. The centres appear mainly in localities where, due to demographic changes, small schools are closed or threatened by closure. The centres are provided with internet-enabled computer equipment with educational software. The project also provides support from competent instructors, in the form of both remote consultations and short-term, direct instruction. For inhabitants of small localities, the centres offer non-formal education and an opportunity to improve qualifications. Thus, the centres can contribute to promoting the concept of learning throughout life, by increasing access to all levels of education, from post-gymnasium to the continuing education of adults.

Source: Poland National Report, 2008: 30

respect to using IT tools. Programme or community tele-centres or info-centres are especially important in promoting post-literacy programmes and sustaining functional literacy (as in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru). In Eritrea radio programmes are broadcast in four local languages to support literacy, post-literacy, agricultural and health programmes as well as targeting teachers.

Language issues are paramount when designing more inclusive adult education initiatives. Effective programmes enable adults to overcome language barriers by using appropriate languages as a medium of instruction (see Box 4.7). In Spain, the National Plan for the Social Integration of Immigrants provides Spanish language classes for adult immigrants; organises awareness campaigns and fosters cultural tolerance; and trains intercultural mediators and facilitators at regional and local levels (Keogh 2009: 26). In some European Union countries special programmes target the social and vocational integration of their

### Box 4.7 Addressing language

#### Ulpan for Ethiopian migrants, Israel

In Israel a special programme uses migrants' native language. The Ulpan for Ethiopian Immigrants introduced a novel approach to second language instruction, offering basic educational instruction in Amharic, with Ethiopian-born teachers. Hebrew language and literacy are taught by a veteran Israeli teacher, assisted by an Ethiopian translator. The approach has met with significant success and is widely used in ulpan classes for Ethiopian immigrants. The 'Open Door to Employment' Programme for Ethiopian immigrants, which provides elementary learning and prepares learners to enter the labour market, is another success story.

Source: *Israel National Report, 2008: 12*

#### The Karen Po project, Thailand

This tribal group has its own spoken language, but no written form. The project, therefore, tried to match the sounds of Po language to Thai and develop an alternative alphabet. This method is used as the principle measure for teaching Thai to other tribal groups, and has been used to produce supplementary reading materials to promote bilingual learning as well as the management of informal education programmes for adults.

Source: *Thailand National Report, 2008: 68*

### Box 4.8 "Second Chance" Project, Montenegro

The "Second Chance – Literacy and Professional Development for Social Integration" project is intended for illiterate settled Roma people older than 15 in two towns (Podgorica and Nikšić), which have the largest numbers of Roma.

It is based on the national programme of elementary functional literacy, which in addition to elementary ability to read, write and calculate, involves mastering minimum knowledge and skills necessary for successful and quality implementation of various activities in work, family and social environments.

Upon completion of the programme, learners have a chance to enrol in the professional development programme for occupations which are in demand on the labour market. Completion of the IT literacy programme and driving courses improves their competencies and employment opportunities and social integration.

Source: *Montenegro National Report, 2008: 34*

scattered Roma populations (see Box 4.8). Increases in life expectancy are prompting many governments to view age as a dimension of unequal participation – especially in the rapidly 'ageing societies' of Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. In Canada, the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers is a federal-provincial/territorial cost-shared

initiative providing support to unemployed older workers in communities affected by significant downsizing or closures (Keogh, 2009). Important initiatives are emerging elsewhere: for example, the 'Help Age Ghana', project is designed to encourage the participation of older adults in education.

### Establishing learning communities

While learning is inherently an individual activity, it takes place in sub-cultures that reflect different ways of life. Community education, learning cities, learning festivals and other collective efforts that extend individual learning into the realm of community and societal learning can contribute substantially to the promotion of adult learning and education. For example, Saudi Arabia's 'illiteracy-free society' programmes are models of good practice with a number of innovative features. Learning cities and regions in Europe and Asia or 'Education Cities' in Southern Europe and Latin America make for a new learning ecology in which the entire city actively participates as a provider of adult learning opportunities and activities.

### 4.5 Conclusion

The information received from National Reports and Regional Synthesis Reports on the issues of participation and equity has revealed the intransigence of the problems facing those who believe that adult learning provides a critical tool in the fight against poverty and exclusion. It is not enough merely to persuade governments and policy-makers of the vital role that adult learning plays in improving life chances and social justice, although this is a critical first stage. An equally momentous task is enabling those who would profit most from adult learning programmes to believe in themselves and see how adult learning offers a key to economic, personal and societal development. The case for adult education has to be directed at both

#### Box 4.9 Adult learners' festivals

Since the early 1990s, literacy celebrations, adult learners' weeks and lifelong learning festivals have been mounted at local, national and/or regional levels worldwide to mobilise for adult learning and non-formal education. These promotional campaigns have created visibility and support for adult and lifelong learning.

At CONFINTEA V, delegates committed themselves to promoting the "development of a United Nations Week of Adult Learning". UNESCO, on the initiative of a coalition of several UNESCO member states (notably the United Kingdom, Jamaica, Australia and South Africa), took up the issue, adopting a resolution in November 1999 launching International Adult Learners' Week, which would "enrich International Literacy Day and strengthen its links to the larger adult learning movement to which it contributes".

On behalf of UNESCO, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning coordinates International Adult Learners Week, linking national campaigns which are currently carried out in approximately 45 countries around the world. Addressing policy-makers, providers, cultural institutions, adult educators and adult learners alike, they have also helped to build cooperation, networks and synergies, and have provided arenas for adult learners to articulate their aspirations and to emerge increasingly as partners in policy dialogue.

funderson and policy-makers and to potential participants. This requires adult educators to target multiple audiences as they wrestle with the issues involved. In order to move forward it is important to gain ground in a number of key areas.

First, and as a basis for action, more data on participation is needed for middle- and low-income countries. It is difficult to argue without facts and figures and the levers and insights that comparative data provides. The lack of information from the South leads to the risk that inappropriate solutions from higher-income countries may suggest, and lead to wasted efforts just where funding is lowest and efficacy most necessary. In data collection the need is for simple data accounts that can be easily collected rather than diverting vital resources to a bureaucratic struggle for sophistication. However, even in high-income countries there is scope for improvement in what is available: complex issues of definition and scope continue to muddy the water and undermine arguments for needed resources.

A striking pattern emerges from the National Reports concerning the intransigence of many of the participation and equity issues in adult education. In essence, those who have least education continue to get least. This is the “wicked issue” that adult education policy must attack. It is clear that generalised policy will not redress the balance, although a commitment to universal access must be maintained. Substantial resources, however, must be concentrated on those who have least. Improving the participation of disadvantaged groups must form the heart of any adult education policy. Policies here must take account not merely of the need for provision but also for the huge task of motivation and attitudinal change.

Lastly, and turning to the development of practice, the roles of government and other players – both from the private sector and from civil society – will need to be clearly defined and understood if resources are to be used effectively. Government can combat institutional barriers by giving sufficient resources to make a difference.

The private sector can be persuaded to enhance learning in workplaces. However, practice with excluded groups needs the kind of flexibility that NGOs offer and the ways into communities that are their special skill. If targeting is to succeed, resources need to be available to these players (with appropriate controls and accountability) so that their skills are used to ensure the availability of cost-effective and quality provision to the most marginalised.

Ensuring access to, and participation in, adult education goes beyond increases in the quantity of participants. It is also about striving to improve and assure quality, to which the next chapter turns.



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## CHAPTER 5

# QUALITY IN ADULT EDUCATION

Assuring the quality of educational experience and learning outcomes has become a concern of public policy and action in the past decade. Three major imperatives underlie this development.

- Aggregate levels of education and qualification must rise to meet the demands of social and economic development. Under-achievement and drop-out rates must fall, and educational outcomes for the majority must improve.
- Public spending constraints, combined with the rapidly-emerging need to enable lifelong and life-wide learning, make it imperative to use resources effectively and efficiently.
- Increased deregulation and decentralisation of educational provision necessitate new kinds of monitoring and evaluation systems and processes, that is, quality assurance mechanisms.

As Chapter 3 reports, adult education consists of many diverse forms of provision. Providers and practitioners have developed their own specific definitions and ways of assuring educational quality. However, unless these are transparent and comparable from one geographical context to another the potential for transferring good practice is reduced. With the move towards lifelong learning, there is now greater policy interest in adult education, and a demand to demonstrate the quality of the learning experience and learning outcomes. Funders will continue to give support only if they see that their contributions are well spent. Adults are more likely to participate in learning if they believe that they will gain some personal, economic or social rewards from their learning in return for their investment of money, time, energy and commitment. Given the lack of participation of the most marginalised (see Chapter 4) there is an

obligation to ensure that those who suffer disadvantage are encouraged to participate and receive the best possible reward in terms of both experience and outcomes. To address the rising expectations of both funders and learners, greater resources are required (see Chapter 6), but good use of these resources is essential.

What exactly constitutes an appropriate approach to understanding, recognising and demonstrating quality in adult education? Quality is a complex concept, and even more so in the diversified environment of adult education. Four core dimensions can be identified. Equity is vital, as demonstrated in Chapter 4. Efficiency, which relates to levels and distribution of resources, is covered in Chapter 6. The present chapter focuses on the relevance of adult education to learners and its effectiveness. It will consider quality questions at the individual, programme and system levels and will examine issues related to processes and outcomes. The role of research and the importance of instruments for monitoring and evaluation are also briefly discussed. Given their key responsibility in assuring quality, the chapter concludes with the situation of teachers and facilitators in adult education programmes.

## 5.1 Relevance as a quality indicator

Arguably the most important quality dimension in adult education is the relevance of provision to learners. Relevance means that the learning in programmes must represent an effective route to, and support for, personal and social transformation – a source for improving the quality of life. Quite apart from the basic physical necessities of life –



clean water, food, clothing, shelter, physical security, a healthy environment – access to basic education is universally accepted as a human right. It is from the exercise of this right that the ability to earn a livelihood, to have a measure of personal autonomy and to participate in political processes in a wider community are derived.

Relevance is more likely to be achieved if adult education policies and their consequent programmes are fully integrated with other education sectors – from early childhood education to higher education and across the continuum of formal, non-formal and informal education. The education of children is an investment whose impact and benefits are mainly in the future. In contrast, adult education seeks to deliver immediate and palpable benefits in the quality of learners' lives; otherwise their participation may lapse. By developing links across different age-groups and generations, and between formal and informal settings, as well as by connecting education policy with social, health, employment, environmental and agricultural policy agendas, adult education practitioners can achieve much to ensure relevance to learners. Quality adult programmes are those that offer meaningful opportunities for positive personal and social change. They require curricula and materials specifically designed for adult learners, which are open to, and draw on, diverse information sources and are capable of being adapted to local realities and different target groups. By contrast, literacy materials designed for children are neither appropriate nor efficient when used for adults.

When education is linked with economic transformation, it acts as a catalyst for adult literacy and basic human rights education (Schmelkes, 1983; 1988; 1995). In Malaysia, for example, vocational courses such as fashion, batik-making and sewing classes have strong literacy components (Malaysia National Report, 2008). The Women's Federation of China has integrated literacy education for women with the mastering of agricultural techniques, increasing the understanding of laws and regulations, and safeguarding women's rights and interests.

The Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Synthesis Report (Aitchison and Alidou, 2009) emphasises that life skills and community

development are the basis of many forms of public education on health issues (particularly HIV/AIDS prevention and care), family planning, community development, rural development, environmental issues, citizenship, human rights and participation in government programmes and local government.

Engendering and sustaining enthusiasm to learn are a central challenge in adult education programmes. Motivation is contingent on the provision of relevant learning content that addresses the contexts and hopes of adult learners. Their participation in the definition and design of adult education programmes can contribute to their personal and cultural self-esteem. When adult learning is perceived as being imposed from outside, or disconnected from familiar cultures and languages, interest in learning may decline.

Attracting, motivating and retaining adult learners are no less difficult to attain in countries of the North (see, for example, the National Reports for Cyprus, Germany, Slovenia and Switzerland) than in the countries of the South (see, for example, the National Reports for Morocco and Nigeria). The drive to learn certainly draws on positive learning experiences, as may be seen from the return-to-learn rates of those who have had successful initial education (Ahl, 2006; Blair *et al*, 1995; Henry and Basile, 1994; Smith and Spurling, 2002). Many adults with poor literacy and basic skill levels have few such experiences on which to draw. They may associate education as something for children only. For them, participating in learning may be seen as a negation of their adult status, or a public admission of deficiency.

As Chapter 4 notes, adult education must hold out the possibility of transforming the subjective conditions of people's lives for the better, so that imagined opportunity costs for the individual fall to acceptable levels. High real opportunity costs deter people from crossing the crucial first threshold to learning, so incentives, concrete advice and support measures are essential. These may be monetary in nature (for example, fee-waiving), but are just as likely to take the form of assistance in finding work placements or starting a micro-enterprise as well as mentoring

and counselling services that take the circumstances of people's lives seriously.

Much adult learning is specific to the dominant culture (Rogoff, 2003). At a minimum, programme content should include subject matter and perspectives drawn from learners' cultural traditions and bodies of knowledge. Programme structuring should respect how local cultures understand and organise time and space in their daily lives. In multicultural and multi-ethnic environments, dimensions of diversity include not only age and gender but also deeply-held cultural values and religious beliefs. By nurturing learners' self-esteem and cultural pride, educational practice can begin to address these issues successfully. Many now recognise the importance of culture-specific responses in meeting adult aspirations and generating lifelong learning strategies. Particularly challenging for island nations in the Pacific is the development of educational design and learning content, which has to draw on indigenous knowledge and values to ensure the survival of cultural identity in an increasingly technology-driven global economy (Ahmed, 2009).

It follows that learning opportunities – especially in adult literacy and basic skills programmes – are best when available in the language in which learners feel most comfortable to express themselves and convey information and ideas. The use of other languages of instruction demands careful planning and graduated transitions and should be introduced without 'demoting' first languages (Schmelkes, Águila and Nuñez, 2008). In Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Guatemala, Mali, the Philippines, Senegal, Suriname, Thailand and Togo, for example, literacy materials are available in a range of local languages. In regions marked by cultural diversity and geographical dispersal, mother-tongue literacy deserves a high priority in the adult education agenda.

Nowhere is the key criterion of relevance more essential in demonstrating the value and usefulness of literacy than in communities that are geographically, socially or culturally isolated and whose environments have had little need to acquire textual or digital literacy to sustain their ways of life. The demand for literacy

increases as people interact with state administrations, for example, or negotiate employment contracts and take up social and political rights.

Learning to read and write are, of course, important for personal development as in, for example, fulfilling the desire to communicate and exchange with those to whom we are emotionally connected and with whom we share everyday life and experiences. Acquiring and sustaining literacy in such contexts can be enhanced when directly associated with, for example, writing and receiving letters and e-mails from children or relatives living elsewhere. Programmes have to devise ways to bring literacy into everyday life, so that it gains a practical and meaningful purpose. Box 5.1 provides the example of the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment, in which countries with large illiterate populations are striving for increases in quantity and quality of literacy provision.

#### **Box 5.1** **Quality improvement in the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment**

UNESCO's Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE, 2006-20015) promotes collaborative action in advocacy and communication, policy and capacity-building in literacy. It covers the 35 countries where 85% of the world's non-literate population lives.

Three years of the initiative have led to renewed commitment to literacy. Indications of progress towards improvement in quality are reflected in increased budgetary allocations, the mobilisation of new learners, increased capacity in policy-making and provision, the piloting and dissemination of innovative approaches, and a stronger culture of continuous monitoring and evaluation.

The remaining years of the initiative will build on these early successes and ensure that

- marginalised and difficult-to-reach groups receive good quality literacy provision
- there is a clear distribution of roles and responsibilities within partnerships
- increases in quantity of provision do not compromise quality
- effective support and scaffolding mechanisms continue to cascade quality down to learners in the teaching and learning process
- short-term action does not endanger sustainability and continuity of processes.

*Source: UIL, 2009*

Many countries are changing adult educational content and methods to make them more responsive to local needs and demands. For instance, 16 Asian countries participate in UNESCO's APPEAL programme, which supports the development of decentralised adult learning and education provision via community learning centres. Yet even here, many detailed curricula and syllabi are prescribed centrally, thus limiting their responsiveness to local conditions and learners' circumstances. As noted in the Asia-Pacific Regional Synthesis Report (Ahmed, 2009) this apparent paradox arises from the need to maintain quality and content relevance.

China has a decentralised community education project operating in 300 pilot areas; the United Republic of Tanzania is implementing an integrated community-based programme that builds on local curriculum development and management. In effect, the capacity to design and implement programmes that combine clear guidelines with opportunities to adapt flexibly to local needs and circumstances leads to quality in curricula. Yet for many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, curriculum approaches, development and content are not prominent issues (Aitchison and Alidou, 2009).

## 5.2 Effectiveness as a quality indicator

This section focuses on the success of programmes once learners are engaged, taking into consideration the participation constraints highlighted in Chapter 4. In this context, effectiveness in adult education generally expresses means-end relationships in terms of educational outcomes for learners, and the time needed to achieve programme aims.

In terms of means, an important factor is the provision of adequate and appropriate infrastructural conditions. When buildings, teaching rooms and learning materials are inadequate, dilapidated and out-of-date, those working and learning in these contexts are less likely to feel that they themselves and their efforts are of value. All Regional Synthesis Reports make explicit reference to the prevalence of poor infrastructural conditions. In far too many

instances, adult education takes place in spaces designed for other purposes and which are thus likely to be insufficiently equipped for up-to-date teaching and learning tools and methods, as reported by Lithuania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Materials which are appropriate and responsive to learners' needs must be accessible in libraries and archives, both traditional and virtual (see, for example, in Eritrea, Kenya, Oman and Venezuela), and open to local adaptation (for example, in Brazil, Kenya, Mauritania, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sudan and Yemen).

Levels of digital literacy among adults are still generally low throughout the world, especially among older populations and those with minimal experience with formal education. As IT-based tools and methods become important features of delivery and didactics, not only for individual learning but also for group-based learning processes, adult education programmes need to address age-related digital divides. Open and distance learning can be employed to reach isolated populations, including women, whose mobility is constrained not only geographically but also socially and culturally.

Poor conditions have a negative impact on cost-benefit ratios. While IT is generally considered to be a cost-effective medium to engage greater numbers of learners, its use does not in itself necessarily reduce direct costs. There may well be high start-up costs and continuing development costs. When open and distance learning and computer-supported communication systems cannot be used effectively, there will be a reduction in efficiency. Poor quality and patchy connectivity, together with high hardware costs, affect many parts of the South. While adult basic education programmes are now beginning to use IT-based methods and materials, most Sub-Saharan African countries confront low-speed and expensive internet connections and hardware shortages, made even more precarious due to difficult environmental and climatic conditions. IT training is largely commercially provided, with academies often financed through foreign companies.

Effective programmes allow individual learners to determine the time needed to reach both their own goals and those

set by the programme. Mexico's Modelo de Educación para la Vida y el Trabajo or 'Educational Model for Life and Work' (INEA, 2008) exemplifies flexible provision, taking learners from basic literacy through to the completion of secondary education at a pace which they themselves decide. In the Philippines, the life-skills-oriented programme Alternative Learning Systems offers alternative learning pathways to primary and secondary educational qualifications.

Completion rates and achievement levels are hard indicators of effectiveness, but there is much room for improvement in the design and implementation of assessment and accreditation procedures and outcomes. In particular, it is a challenge to find ways to accredit outcomes related to personal development and growth and to maintain flexibility within accreditation systems.

The accreditation of prior learning and informal learning is still only available to small numbers of learners (see Box 5.2). Many instruments are inappropriate, certainly for multilingual learners, and the respective roles of internal versus external mediation of achievement remain unresolved.

Meanwhile, national qualifications (see Box 5.3) provide broader forms of recognising achievement and can open up routes to further qualification pathways. In Europe this is an important policy issue since it also relates to the mutual recognition of qualifications across national systems. The development of national qualification frameworks is likely to sweep Africa in the next decade. As the Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Synthesis Report notes (Aitchison and Alidou, 2009), South Africa, Namibia and the Seychelles have made considerable progress towards establishing such frameworks. Botswana, Cape Verde, Kenya, Lesotho and Zambia are currently developing qualification frameworks; Zimbabwe may also follow suit.

Research in adult education still has not provided policy-makers with convincing evidence on how adults learn best and what are the most effective ways to ensure that learning is used. The Regional Synthesis Reports testify to this gap. The foundation for evidence-based policy-making in adult

### **Box 5.2** **Recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning**

The recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning give credence to the knowledge and skills that adults gain outside of the formal education system. In this way it is possible to give value to learning that occurs in working life, through non-formal education, and in community, family, leisure and daily life activities.

Emphasis is laid on the use of mechanisms to recognise both prior learning (from informal settings) and equivalent learning (that is, programmes from non-formal education) for the purpose of certification, qualifications, and access to and progression within lifelong learning systems. More and more, experience is itself considered a source of learning which can be assessed in terms of competence. Recognition and assessment of such experiential learning is an important element within a framework of lifelong learning for all.

The approach gives value to "soft" learning outcomes, such as life skills, which are not easily amenable to measurement. By establishing equivalence with formal learning outcomes, the process acknowledges a wide range of adults' achievements and knowledge, but may also be used to give a fuller picture of the economic and social benefits of learning, wherever and whenever it takes place.

*Source: French National Commission for UNESCO, 2005; 2007*

education remains weak, both in substance and in the capacity for collaborative development and dissemination (Crewe and Young, 2002; Jones and Villar, 2008; Moseley and Tierney, 2004; Pieck, 1993; Sanderson, 2006). Strengthening documentation and information centres is a positive step in gathering all kinds of information and making it available to different stakeholders (see Box 5.4).

Collecting regular and timely information is one of the key challenges in a field as diverse as adult education. What kind of data and how to collect it are not simply technical questions. Decisions have to be made as to what is important – and not just what is easy – to measure and monitor. Quality enhancement, rather than just audit, should be the central motivation (see *Key issues*).

### **Box 5.3** **Examples of measures to create National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs)**

#### **Australia**

The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) was launched in 2007.

#### **Kenya**

Specialists advocate the development of an NQF because participants in adult learning and education take the same national examinations as school students and should receive recognition.

#### **Montenegro**

The Draft Law on National Vocational Qualifications is currently under preparation.

#### **Sweden**

The National Commission on Validation's final report, *Towards a National Structure*, was published in 2008.

#### **Thailand**

The government has established standard instruments (including personal portfolios) to record and assess achievement along four designated dimensions: basic knowledge, vocational development, quality of life improvement, and social and community development.

#### **Uzbekistan**

Studies and inter-agency agreements are under way to set out equivalences between certificates awarded by formal and non-formal adult education programmes.

*Source: French National Commission for UNESCO, 2005; 2007.*

### **Box 5.4** **Information for research and policy-making**

The importance of having access to relevant adult learning documentation and information for improving the quality of research, policy-making and programme development was recognised at CONFINTEA V. In response, the global ALADIN network was launched to strengthen documentation and information services through networking, workshops and capacity-building. Nineteen national and international ALADIN meetings have taken place since then, and today the ALADIN website ([www.unesco.org/education/aladin](http://www.unesco.org/education/aladin)) is the most comprehensive knowledge platform on adult learning, giving access to 200 adult learning links and to the information services of some 100 ALADIN members from 50 countries.

Issues of policy framework and the availability of data to be collected, their analysis and the infrastructure for their dissemination all have financial implications. While the term 'evidence-based policy-making' has become part of official discourse, the reality is that the appropriate funding to undertake research to produce such evidence is not readily available. When asked in National Reports to describe the

availability of research on adult education, very few countries responded. The Adult Education Surveys mentioned in the previous chapter give an idea of the kind of data culled from such exercises. Examples of more recent efforts to produce relevant and useful data are illustrated in Boxes 5.5 and 5.6. It is clear, however, that for the moment, most of these studies are focused on medium- and high-income countries.

**Box 5.5****Improving literacy measurements: The Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP)**

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) launched the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP) in 2003. It relies on a piloting effort conducted in countries from different regions of the world (El Salvador, Mongolia, Morocco and the Palestinian Autonomous territories).

The objective of LAMP is to develop a methodology that is simultaneously simple enough to be feasible, and complex enough to provide relevant and sound evidence reflecting the complexity of the acquisition of literacy. This approach is carried out paying particular attention to those showing very limited skills. In these cases, a special instrument exploring the fundamental components of reading (vocabulary; letter and digit recognition; word, sentence and passage processing) is also administered.

LAMP also generates information on national and local contexts, on the individual and his/her household. These relate to mother tongue, educational experience, socio-economic characteristics, and frequency of exposure to written materials. The centrality of cultural issues leads to the promotion of ethnographic components to enrich the body of evidence generated. LAMP documentation comprises guidelines to do so. This represents a breakthrough in the field of educational assessment which usually focuses exclusively on so-called quantitative procedures and techniques.

After completing field trials, the national teams are working on implementing the main assessments to yield the actual information in 2010. Jordan, Namibia, Paraguay, and Vietnam have also initiated the implementation process. Several other countries have expressed interest and are exploring options for implementing LAMP.

*Source: UIS, 2005*

**Box 5.6****The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)**

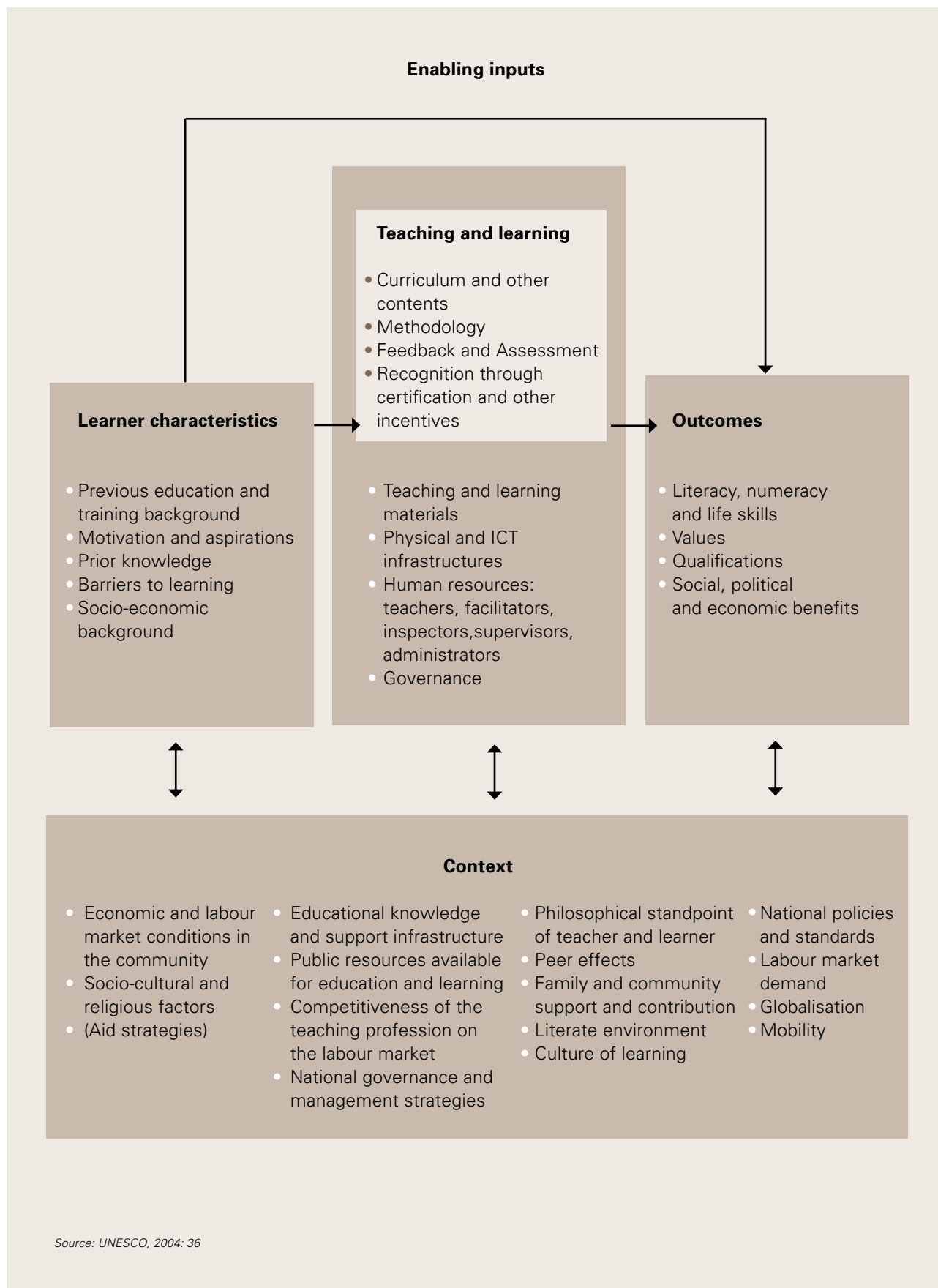
The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) is an international assessment of adult skills managed by the OECD, implemented by 27 countries in Europe, the Americas and Asia. Data will be collected over the period August 2011 to March 2012, with results available at the end of 2013.

PIAAC has been designed to link with the two earlier international adult skills surveys: the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) of 1994-98 and the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL) of 2003-06. It will extend the scope of the measurement of adult skills to those relevant to the digital age, using recent developments in assessment technology. The target group is persons aged 16-65 years.

PIAAC will assess (reading) literacy, numeracy and problem-solving in technology-rich environments. A particular emphasis will be placed on the cognitive skills needed to manage information in digital environments. The assessment will be based on digital texts (websites and emails) as well as print-based materials.

*Source: Thorn, 2009*

**Figure 5.1**  
 An adapted framework for understanding education quality



### 5.3 Assuring quality

Addressing quality entails an understanding of the many related factors that contribute to it. Figure 5.1, which is an adaptation from the *Global Monitoring Report of 2005* (UNESCO, 2004), shows the need to examine learner characteristics, context, enabling inputs and outcomes when considering the key elements that affect quality. This framework allows one to visualise the complexity in ensuring quality.

Improving quality in adult education entails effective monitoring and quality assurance, preferably undertaken by representative, non-bureaucratic and autonomous adult education councils. Quality assurance mechanisms have been established in many European countries (at best with the involvement of adult education providers and participants), but much less so in the countries of the South. Although governments in Asia and the Pacific recognise the need to develop monitoring mechanisms, the technical and resource capacities to do so are limited. Many sub-Saharan African countries lack national standards, quality assurance mechanisms or national assessments of learning and curricula in non-formal education and literacy programmes. What exists is a mix of formative and summative assessment protocols at programme level.

Some countries of the South have begun to recognise that diversification and flexibility demand regional and national quality assurance bodies, which can ensure shared objectives and standards as well as local relevance (see, for example, the National Reports of Egypt, Gambia, Morocco, Sudan, Yemen and Zambia). Bangladesh has introduced a stakeholder and civil society-based format for the external evaluation of adult literacy programmes, whereas Kenya has established an Association of Adult Learners to address quality assurance from a similar perspective. Thailand has introduced quality assurance mechanisms that apply throughout the public system of adult learning administration and practice. Eritrea's Department of Adult and Educational Media includes a division for monitoring and quality assurance. It is quite clear that much work is under way in Africa,

but that the wider benefits of evaluation and assessment are hampered by weak dissemination. Ministries, government departments and donor agencies need to step up their efforts in these respects.

Implementing quality assurance is not a straightforward process, as quality itself is not absolute but relative. It can only be judged when adult learning programmes and activities are either compared with each other (normative evaluation) or against an external set of objectives and standards (criterion evaluation). Quality is dynamic – in other words, in a continuous process of change and development, responding to changing contexts and demands. Although quality indicators generally focus on educational outcomes and impact, quality is fundamentally created and sustained in educational processes. Indicators of educational quality are always indirect and unusually difficult to isolate. They should ideally be differentiated, taking into account the diversity of programmes, populations served and the contexts in which adult learning and education activities occur. At present such indicators are not readily available or widely used.

Box 5.7 shows the results of participatory research undertaken by civil society covering 47 countries to develop benchmarks on adult literacy which have an impact on quality.

### 5.4 Adult education personnel as the key to ensuring quality

As in other education sectors, teachers, facilitators and trainers constitute the most important quality input factor in adult education. However, in too many cases, adult educators have been inappropriately trained, hold minimal qualifications, are under-paid and work in educationally unfavourable conditions. In 50 National Reports, the quality of adult education personnel is cited as a key challenge. Table 5.1 lists the wide range of entry or training qualifications for adult education personnel and describes the terms of employment. Some countries require not only postgraduate qualification but also a certain number of years of experience. In many countries, however, secondary education or even less is enough to qualify as an adult education teacher.



### Box 5.7 Writing the Wrongs: the 12 Adult Literacy Benchmarks

1. **Literacy is about the acquisition and use of reading, writing and numeracy skills**, and thereby the development of active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods, and gender equality. The goals of literacy programmes should reflect this understanding.
2. **Literacy should be seen as a continuous process** that requires sustained learning and application. There are no magic lines to cross from illiteracy into literacy. All policies and programmes should be defined to encourage sustained participation and celebrate progressive achievement rather than focusing on one-off provision with a single end point.
3. **Governments have the lead responsibility in meeting the right to adult literacy** and in providing leadership, policy frameworks, an enabling environment and resources. They should:
  - ensure cooperation across all relevant ministries and links to all relevant development programmes;
  - work in systematic collaboration with experienced civil society organisations;
  - ensure links between all these agencies, especially at the local level; and
  - ensure relevance to the issues in learners' lives by promoting the decentralisation of budgets and of decision-making over curriculum, methods and materials.
4. **It is important to invest in ongoing feedback and evaluation mechanisms**, data systematization and strategic research. The focus of evaluations should be on the practical application of what has been learnt and the impact on active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods, and gender equality.
5. **To retain facilitators it is important that they should be paid at least the equivalent of the minimum wage of a primary school teacher** for all hours worked (including time for training, preparation and follow-up).
6. **Facilitators should be local people who receive substantial initial training** and regular refresher training, as well as having ongoing opportunities for exchanges with other facilitators. Governments should put in place a framework for the professional development of the adult literacy sector, including for trainers /supervisors – with full opportunities for facilitators across the country to access this (e.g. through distance education).
7. **There should be a ratio of at least 1 facilitator to 30 learners and at least 1 trainer/supervisor to 15 learner groups** (1 to 10 in remote areas), ensuring a minimum of one support visit per month. Programmes should have timetables that flexibly respond to the daily lives of learners but which provide for regular and sustained contact (e.g. twice a week for at least two years).
8. **In multilingual contexts it is important at all stages that learners should be given an active choice about the language in which they learn.** Active efforts should be made to encourage and sustain bilingual learning.
9. **A wide range of participatory methods should be used** in the learning process to ensure active engagement of learners and relevance to their lives. These same participatory methods and processes should be used at all levels of training of trainers and facilitators.
10. **Governments should take responsibility for stimulating the market for production and distribution of a wide variety of materials** suitable for new readers, for example by working with publishers / newspaper producers. They should balance this with funding for the local production of materials, especially by learners, facilitators and trainers.
11. **A good quality literacy programme that respects all these Benchmarks is likely to cost between US\$50 and US\$100 per learner per year** for at least three years (two years initial learning + ensuring further learning opportunities are available for all)
12. **Governments should dedicate at least 3% of their national education sector budgets to adult literacy programmes** as conceived in these Benchmarks. Where governments deliver on this, international donors should fill any remaining resource gaps (e.g. through including adult literacy in the Fast Track Initiative).

**Table 5.1**  
**Qualifications and training levels of adult education personnel**

Country	Area of teaching or training	Entry	Qualification	Training
<b>Arab States</b>				
Egypt	Literacy	University graduates, with intermediate degrees. Trainers need to be from the community they will work in		Education course before commencement of work
Kuwait	Adult education	Teachers of adult education are chosen from among the teaching staff of the general teaching sector of the Ministry of Education		N/A
Lebanon	Literacy	Illiteracy trainers must have as minimum Baccalaureate II part		Usually trained on issues of adult learning and education
Mauritania	Literacy	State department employs graduates who have high levels of literacy		Training in andragogy or pedagogy
Palestine	Literacy	All adult teachers are teachers in Ministry of Education and Higher Education schools		N/A
Sudan	Adult education	Must be fully acquainted with the Sudanese environment, with a relevant certificate		N/A
Syria	Literacy	Teachers of literacy classes all have licenses degree and are appointed by the Ministry of Education		N/A
<b>Asia-Pacific</b>				
Australia	Vocational education and training	National certificate in training and assessment		N/A
	Literacy	Teaching qualification and postgraduate qualification with at least three years' experience		N/A
Fiji	Adult education	A Certificate in Non-formal Education or equivalent is considered adequate		N/A
India	Literacy	Eight or more years of formal schooling to become a Volunteer Teacher		Ten to 12 days' training
Iran	Vocational education and training	Possession of a Bachelors' Degree has now been introduced into selection criteria for instructors.		N/A
Kyrgyzstan	Adult education	However many instructors do not possess the degree yet teachers or tutors who teach adults have different qualifications and education. They should have documentary evidence of their knowledge in one or other profession, but it the ability to use innovative and interactive training methods is also important		N/A
Mongolia	Literacy	Must be graduate from either teacher training college or higher education institute		N/A
Nepal	Adult education	N/A		Pre-service training for seven days and in-service training for three days
New Zealand	Literacy	Specific qualifications for adult literacy and numeracy educators have recently been developed, including a qualification for educators engaged in other vocational learning		N/A
Pakistan	Non-formal education	Minimum academic qualification of 10 years of schooling		Three to four weeks' pre-service training
	Literacy			One to two weeks of pre-service training
Republic of Korea	Adult education	Lifelong educators are certified by the government. They are neither subject masters nor instructors		Training through undergraduate, graduate courses, or in-service course programmes
Solomon Islands	Literacy	Bachelor of Education, degree in adult literacy, certificate in management and public administration		Training of trainers is organised by adult literacy providers
Thailand	Adult education	Capability in managing non-formal education effectively, ability to promote the organisation's operations		N/A
Vietnam	Adult education	Adult educators of Equivalency Programmes must be graduates from teachers' training college or university		N/A

<b>Europe and North America</b>			
Austria	Adult education	Different previous educational backgrounds, mainly depending on the provider sector	Universities and other institutions have didactically-oriented programmes for trainers and lecturers in their programme
Belgium (Flemish community)	Adult education	Since 2008 teachers in adult basic education need proof of pedagogical competence	Training of trainers programme, consisting of 280 teaching periods, 120 of which are dedicated to practical training
Croatia	Adult education	Different qualifications depending on the area of work. In the public sector teachers and trainers are required to have the same qualifications as teachers and trainers working in primary and secondary schools	N/A
Denmark	Adult education	Master's programme at a university or corresponding level; completion of a course in educational theory and practice	N/A
Estonia	Adult education	Adult educators' professional qualification has four levels	N/A
Finland	Adult education	Same qualification requirements as for teachers: degree in the teaching subject, 35 credit points in pedagogic studies (one credit point equal to 40 hours of student's work)	On average, Finnish teachers participate in continuing professional training for 9-15 days a year
Ireland	Adult education	Qualifications for adult education organisers and coordinators employed by Vocational Education Committees are growing. For example, the NALA/WIT Higher Certificate in Arts in Adult Education (NFQ Level 6) or equivalent is required to become an Adult Literacy Organiser	In-service support and training is administered by the Department of Education and Science's Teacher Training Unit, the Further Education Support Service and a grant to the Vocational Education Committees is provided towards training in specific programmes
Israel	Adult education	Teacher's college or university certification is a prerequisite for employment in publicly administered adult education; facilitators require certification by the Division of Adult Education	Participation in periodic in-service training sessions is part of the accepted timetable of teachers
Latvia	Adult education	N/A	Educators of adult learners need specialised training which, in turn, is part of general adult learning and education
Lithuania	Adult education	Same qualification requirements apply as for teachers in general education schools	A teacher has the right to attend in-service courses at least five days per year
Romania	Adult education	Occupational standard for Trainers contains eight units of competences: planning, delivery, assessment, methodology, marketing, planning of programmes, organisation, evaluation	The Romanian training systems for adult educators envisage both initial and continuing vocational education
Slovakia	Adult education	In general, university education in the field in which the educators lecture, practice in the field and the lecturer's skills constitute the basic requirement	N/A
Slovenia	Adult education	Adult educators must have a higher education qualification in the appropriate field and must pass the professional examination; teachers in non-formal programmes of adult education are not bound to these demands	Teachers can receive at least five days of training per year or 15 days every three years
	Literacy	Literacy teachers must have a University degree, need to have finished adult education training and must pass the professional exam	Initial adult literacy teacher training is a 112- to 132-hour programme
Switzerland	Vocational education and training	The modular train-the-trainer system comprises four stages, each of which leads to a certificate or diploma which is required for an adult educator	N/A
United Kingdom	Further Education	Teaching qualification based on National Standards for teaching and supporting learning	N/A

**Latin America and Caribbean**

Argentina	Vocational education and training	Qualifications that are recognised by the Ministry of Education	N/A
	Literacy	Volunteers must have completed secondary education	N/A
Belize	Adult education	In the informal setting where short skills training programmes are offered, facilitators possess a certificate in the area for which training is offered or a certificate in a related area	N/A
Bolivia	Adult education	Facilitators must have teacher training or training in Youth and Adult Education qualification	N/A
Chile	Adult education	Same requirements as required to practise as a teacher in the school system, namely a university degree	Courses of one week, followed by annual refresher sessions
El Salvador	Adult education	Educators in the programmes of the Institute Educame must undergo a certification process for teachers and tutors in flexible forms of education	N/A
	Literacy	Ninth-grade academic standards for first level	N/A
Haiti	Adult education	Trainer is required to hold a diploma for the level at which he/she will teach	N/A
Mexico	Adult education	15 years-old or older, must have fulfilled junior high studies, an inclination to teach and availability to travel	The permanent training of these facilitators most cover three stages: orientation, initial training and continuing education

**Sub-Saharan Africa**

Botswana	Literacy	Facilitators must have a first Degree	N/A
Burkina Faso	Literacy	Facilitators must have a Certificate of Primary Education	Continuing retraining in adult education, national language transcription (write, read and calculate) and so on
	Adult education	Given the specificity and diversity training programmes, the profiles of teachers / facilitators are disparate	N/A
Cameroon	Adult education	Two levels of training and qualification are required	Two levels of training
Central African Republic	Literacy	N/A	One to two or three weeks of training for trainers of literacy
Chad	Adult education	Secondary education	Initial and ongoing training for ten to 12 days
Democratic Republic of Congo	Adult education	Secondary education	Training sessions, seminars and workshops
Eritrea	Literacy	Recruited from the national service, elementary school teachers and the community. The majority (66%) possess at least a Grade 8 certificate, and 10% are below Grade 8	Six weeks' pre-service training plus orientation weeks
Gambia	Adult education	Completion of basic and/or secondary education. Literacy graduates have at least three years of learning	Pre- and in-service training
Ghana	Literacy	Minimum educational background for a facilitator is basic education	Two-week intensive training on teaching illiterate adults, including skills involved in the functional literacy programme
Guinea	Adult education	High school degree; facilitators have to master the alphabet of the language of literacy, the techniques of preparing lessons and the techniques of animation and learning evaluation	N/A
Lesotho	Literacy	Volunteers	Training workshops
Liberia	Adult education	Minimum educational standard of secondary education/ high school graduate	Periodic refresher training workshops held by the Ministry of Education and its local and international partners and stakeholders
Madagascar	Literacy	At least 21 years old, secondary education or equivalent, trained as a trainer, have a systemic view of development, have a sense of social communication	N/A
Malawi	Literacy	Instructors are identified by the community and usually have a minimum qualification of Primary school Grade 8 up to Form 4 secondary school certificate	Induction course for about two weeks. In-service courses are rarely offered due to resource constraints

Mali	Literacy	For CAF (Functional Literacy Centre, Centre d'Alphabetisation Fonctionnelle), the required qualification level is junior high (from 6 to 9 grade in Mali) and the certificate of the national language transcription (write, read and calculate)	N/A
Mauritius	Literacy	Form V with five credits, followed by training in adult literacy	Either a 60- or 90-hour course in adult literacy
Mozambique	Adult education	Apart from professional and volunteers educators (who need to have completed Grade 7) programmes are also guided by primary teachers and graduates from Grade 10 and 12 classes	The professional agents have a training course at National Institute of Adult Education (INEA)
Namibia	Adult education	A recognised teaching qualification needed to teach in professional adult education programmes	N/A
	Literacy	N/A	Literacy promoters within the regions participate in both advanced and basic promoter's course
Niger	Literacy	Ex-students	Training ranges between 21 and 45 days
Senegal	Adult education	Trainers are chosen for their experiences in non-formal education	Initial training of at least 21 days
Seychelles	Adult education	Adult literacy educators/instructors must be qualified with at least a Diploma or Teaching Certificate	No continuing or in-service training measures in place
Swaziland	Adult education	From grade 10 to skills certificate and diploma	From time to time facilitators are offered refresher courses according to the programmes they participate in
United Republic of Tanzania	Literacy	Possession of Secondary Education Certificate	Training in adult learning required, initial training of up to two weeks; in-service training courses of up to two weeks, depending on funding
Togo	Literacy	Facilitators are chosen among the beneficiary population with a minimum of Class 4	Initial training of two to three weeks on techniques and methods of teaching adults
Zambia	Adult education	N/A	Ministries conduct continuous professional courses for staff members involved in the provision of adult learning and education
Zimbabwe	Adult learning and education	Formal qualifications that equate with those in the formal school system and educators/facilitators are usually drawn from the formal school system	N/A

Source: National Reports prepared for CONFINTEA VI

N/A: no answer

In the Asia-Pacific Region, adult education provision is largely dependent upon voluntary ethics and service. The Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE), launched in Pakistan and Bangladesh with UNESCO support, seeks to support the sector by offering training for managers and teachers working in literacy programmes (Pakistan National Report, 2008). Low-income Asian countries have been unable to develop human resource policies and practices effectively. Better-situated countries such as Indonesia and Thailand have greater resources and capacity to invest in the professionalisation of adult education.

Most National Reports from sub-Saharan Africa describe plans to improve the capacity and professionalisation of the

field, but turning this into reality has proved difficult, not only with respect to political will but also on account of financial stringencies (Aitchison and Alidou, 2009). Box 5.8 describes efforts in Eritrea to ensure that adult education personnel are competent. Many countries report a shortage of well-trained adult education staff, most particularly for adult literacy programmes. This is compounded by unevenness in the recognition of adult education qualifications. For example, Ethiopia does not recognise such qualifications for the purpose of civil service employment, whereas Cameroon makes distinctions between those who work in tertiary sector institutions and those who work in literacy programmes. These structural differentiations are reflected

in poor salaries and work conditions. In fact, many of those working in adult education are ‘moonlighting’ – that is, gainfully employed in second jobs, with their main employment as teachers in the formal school system. Consequently, many working in the sector have difficulties developing a professional identity and primary commitment as adult educators; many others do not recognise themselves as genuinely belonging to the sector.

Specifically-designed initial and continuing education programmes for adult educators in higher education sector remain sparse. All the Regional Synthesis Reports refer to this problem. There are pioneering initiatives that deserve to be noted: for example, training programmes in Malaysia and Bangladesh; the Alpha Omega distance education programme in francophone Africa; university-based programmes in Ghana, Kenya and South Africa; university research projects in Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Sudan. The contributions made by voluntary workers are valuable, but cannot replace the presence of a qualified and adequately remunerated profession. Until this problem is resolved, staff turnover in adult education will remain high, with a loss of experienced practitioners that the sector can ill afford. In most countries in the South, adult educators still do not enjoy professional status. Just like teachers in other education sectors, they need specialised higher education qualifications and continuous training, based on course curricula that convey the essential dimensions of quality in process and outcome.

## 5.5 Conclusion

Quality adult education ensures that pedagogies take their cue from what learners already know and involves them fully in the shaping of teaching and learning processes. Relationships between teachers and learners lie at the heart of educational processes. Teachers and trainers need to understand the contexts in which learners live and what sense they make of their lives. What learners already know and value must be the starting point for adult learning programmes. In particular, teachers should convey their positive expectations of learners’ potential. Since teaching

### Box 5.8

#### Adult education teacher development in Eritrea

One of the aims of teacher education development in the draft National Curriculum Framework for Eritrea is to produce competent, conscientious and responsive teachers for all education sectors, including formal and non-formal sub-sectors. Effort has been made to improve the capacity of staff and facilitators in assisting adults to learn. Some of the measures at national level include the following:

- A teaching/learning manual developed in one local language (Tigrigna) on how to assist adults to learn;
- More than 20 guidelines and formats, including teacher’s records, have been developed and used since 1999;
- Charts of literacy-teaching materials developed in local language at national level and distributed to the zobas;
- Short training programmes and orientations organised at national and zoba levels for literacy facilitators, supervisors and managers by the DAEM in the past ten years.

*Source: Eritrea National Report, 2008*

and learning are mutual and reciprocal processes, learners, too, can offer what they know to their peers and teachers. This is the basis of educational dialogue (Freire, 2005). Under these conditions learners can and will participate actively in designing their learning pathways. This includes defining their aims and evaluating their progress, through self-evaluation and feedback methods. This is the foundation of genuinely inclusive and inter-cultural education that can approach diversity appropriately and positively whilst defining aims and outcomes for all to achieve (IBE-UNESCO, 2008; Delors *et al*, 1996). Such an approach can overcome the deficit model that mars the compensatory education tradition.

While learner-centeredness of this kind is a vital quality determinant for adult educators, funders, policy-makers and governments have proved themselves more pre-occupied with the concrete outcomes of learning, often expressed through accreditation and qualifications. It is important not to see these two viewpoints as in conflict – but inevitably they are sometimes in tension.

Part of a solution is to advocate for participatory and locally-adapted programmes and activities that operate in a transparent and professionalised environment and that provide demonstrable outcomes for providers and

participants alike. Provision and practice require appropriate quality assurance arrangements, with a key role for organised civil society. Investment in human resources – that is, in the quantitative and qualitative supply of teaching personnel with adequate contractual, working and professional development conditions – is probably the most salient indicator of quality in adult education. It should be the focal point of quality in educational policies.

In the policy realm, adult education should be visible in national and regional development policies and measures. Having said that, to designate quality as the priority does bring difficult choices in the short-term, given finite and inadequate resources. Should policy implementation concentrate available resources on developing and assuring quality adult education for a smaller proportion of the target groups? Or is it preferable to spread resources more widely, so that more adults have access to adult learning and education programmes, even if not all of these can deliver high-quality learning experiences and outcomes? These kinds of questions require political responses and social commitment. They are crucial for low-income countries against the background of the acknowledged under-performance of many adult education programmes.

Improving efficiency in adult education becomes a meaningful challenge once issues pertaining to equity, effectiveness and relevance have been addressed. Efficiency refers to the economical investment of resources to achieve specified aims under given conditions, that is, the ratio of costs against benefits. Where lower investment results in poorer quality outcomes, then efficiency falls. Thus under-funding is *per se* inefficient, because it has a negative impact on the quality of educational outcomes. Poor distribution of available funds intensifies the problem, insofar as poor administration bleeds the resources intended for education.

Undoubtedly, adult education requires the commitment of financial resources if they are to reach their full potential. Only then can the parameters of quality outlined here take real shape. Much (but never enough) can be done with non-material resources – even when funding streams are inadequate. The final chapter of this report turns to this question. Nevertheless, with few and inadequate funds for adult education, the major problems discussed in the preceding chapters cannot be addressed effectively, no matter how much commitment and expertise can be mustered from all possible sources.

Participants à la conférence de Bamako  
Demandez **OUI** à **3%** du budget de l'Education Nationale  
en faveur de l'Alphabétisation !  
pour vaincre le SIDA et promouvoir le développement

Kalan de be  
Jamana bango  
la'

APPG EDUCATEURS  
UNION DES ENSEIGNANTS

Kalan be Sido  
bana Kteli  
nago ya

demisema ko  
beliku Kalan  
b'ama Kaptan  
Solanti!

bit Ki Sika  
dang  
Lamin Yankou

ASSOCIATION FOR  
TEACHERS  
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UNION DES ENSEIGNANTS  
MALI

UNION DES ENSEIGNANTS  
MALI



## CHAPTER 6

# THE FINANCING OF ADULT EDUCATION

Adult learning and education are a central component of effective development strategies that seek to ensure the long-term well-being and sustainability of a nation. Earlier chapters have illustrated essential elements of an optimal adult education strategy: good governance (Chapter 2); a balance between public and private provision (Chapter 3); expanded participation and equitable access (Chapter 4); and effective quality provision involving well-trained and motivated staff (Chapter 5). This chapter focuses on the issue of the financial resources needed to revitalise adult education. In particular, it examines the extent to which the commitment to improve its financing, made at CONFINTEA V in the Hamburg *Agenda for the Future*, has been met.

Three key questions are addressed. First, are the resources devoted to adult education adequate and, if not, in what sense and what is the shortfall? Second, who should pay for adult education programmes and how? Third, what policy lessons have been learned about mobilising desirable levels of resource commitments for adult education? A brief review of the current state of the data on adult education financing provides some necessary background.

## 6.1 The current state of adult education financing: an overview of available data

Participants at CONFINTEA V committed themselves to improving the financing of adult education, 'seeking to invest, as proposed by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, at least 6 per cent of Member States' gross national product (GNP) in education and by allocating an equitable share of the

education budget to adult education.' An "equitable share" was assessed at 3% of the total education budget. It would seem at first glance that a simple measurement of progress towards this aim would show the scale of improvement made but, regrettably, data issues make this a far from straightforward task.

With different interpretations of the meanings associated with adult education and the number of public and private stakeholders involved, reliable and comparable data on adult education financing are difficult to obtain. Out of 154 National Reports, only 57 countries (37%) provided information on budget allocations to adult education. Closer examination of these figures reveals inconsistent responses: some refer to adult education expenditures as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP); others to the share of the state budget; and still others calculate the share of the education budget devoted to adult education. In addition, reports differ as to which components of adult education (literacy, non-formal education, vocational education or post-compulsory education) are included.

The scant figures cited in the National Reports preclude a comprehensive evaluation of which countries have or have not reached the 6% benchmark and, if so, whether an "equitable" share is allocated to adult education. Examination of the 2009 Global Monitoring Report shows that comparable data on total public national expenditure on education as a share of GNP exists for only 47 countries for 2006 and, of these, only 14 (Belarus, Cape Verde, Cuba, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Guyana, Kenya, Lesotho, Maldives, Republic of Moldova, New Zealand, St. Lucia, Seychelles and Ukraine) have allocated at least 6% of their GNP to education.

### GDP

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross National Product (GNP) are the two most common means of measuring the size of a country's economy. By comparing results from previous reporting periods, it is possible to determine if the overall economy is growing or shrinking. GDP can be thought of as the total value of all goods and services produced within the borders of a particular country for a given time period (usually one year). Everything produced in the country is counted without regard to the nationality of the workers involved or the ownership of the firms producing the goods – in short, if it is produced within the country's borders, it is counted as part of the GDP.

(<http://www.fxpedia.com/GDP>)

**GNP** also measures the value of goods and services produced in the country, but ownership and employee location are considered when determining final value. GNP includes goods and services for all domestically-owned firms, as well as goods and services produced in foreign countries by domestic companies. In return, goods and services produced in the country by companies that are foreign-owned are not included in GNP – these are the major differences between GDP and GNP calculations.

Since 2001 the World Bank no longer uses the term “Gross National Product” and has replaced it with “Gross National Income”.

(<http://www.fxpedia.com/GDP>)

Determining how much of education’s share of national income is allotted to adult education is therefore extremely problematic, especially as many of the world’s major economies have adopted GDP as their preferred base figure rather than GNP. The National Reports of Germany and Hungary present adult education’s share of GDP as 1.05% and 1% respectively. Earlier figures from OECD (2003a: 84) show that in 2001 Finland spent close to 0.6% of GDP on adult education (roughly 9.5% of its education expenditure). In 1998, Denmark and Sweden allocated 1% and 4.9%, respectively, of GDP on adult education.

Only the German National Report provides relevant information over a ten-year period (1996-2006), during which direct financing for continuing education as a proportion of GDP declined from 1.48% to 1.05%.

Very few countries – mainly affluent ones – actually meet the 6% recommendation. For example, public expenditures on education in the United Kingdom and the United States of America are about 5.5% and 5.3% of GDP, respectively, with private expenditure contributing an additional 1.3% and 2.4% respectively. Given the Nordic countries’ strong public commitment to free tuition for higher education, the level of public expenditure on education is about 7-8% per country, but there is little, if any, private expenditure disclosed. Appendix Table 4 presents detailed estimates of actual and recommended public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP, including estimated shortfalls in relation to the 6% recommendation.

As previously noted, caution is needed when comparing such figures, given the lack of international standardisation. For example, Sweden includes in-service training in its figures, which partly explains why its share dwarfs that of other countries. The inclusion (or not) of direct and indirect spending significantly affects the estimates derived. Indirect spending by all stakeholders can be substantial. In the case of Austria it is estimated that indirect spending alone on adult education was equivalent to about 1.2% of GDP in 2004 (Austria National Report, 2008). This includes foregone taxes, wage costs during training periods, and individual opportunity costs.

While limited to European countries, the above figures demonstrate that spending devoted to adult education constitutes a very small proportion of GDP, supporting the view that adult education remains a marginalised sector. Moreover, to put the above adult education percentages into perspective, average total public expenditure on all levels of education for a high-income country was about 5% of GDP in 2005. Although the 4.7% world average education spending was an increase from the 4% being spent in 1998, it is still less than the recommended 6% of GNP.

Only a few developing countries come close to achieving recommended targets for the financing of adult education programmes. Cape Verde is the sole developing country that meets the recommended investment levels, with estimates of government spending on adult education reaching 8.7%. Mozambique and Nigeria come close, with national budgetary allocations to adult education of 3.5% and 2.4%, respectively (Aitchison and Alidou, 2009). Even in these cases, it is clear that if the aim is for adult education to receive an “equitable share” (ie, 3%) of education budgets and for governments to ‘dedicate at least 3% of their national education sector budgets to adult literacy programmes’ (Global Campaign for Education, 2005), then investments levels are woefully short.

Appendix Table 4 provides country-level estimates of investment shortfall for adult education. It also includes estimates to finance programmes for eradicating illiteracy. These estimates are based on the assumption that government expenditure on adult education varies according to a country’s income level (that is, 0.25% = low income; 0.50% = lower middle income; 0.75% = upper middle income; 1.00% = high income: non-OECD; 1.25% = high income: OECD).

Based on these calculations, an estimated global shortfall of US\$72 billion must be found if investment targets in adult education are to be met. Shortfalls exist for countries in all income groups. In fact, high-income countries account for about US\$41 billion of the total shortfall (since all investments are projected in proportion to GDP). An important difference in high-

**Table 6.1**  
**Allocations to adult education as a share of the education budget**

Country/ Region	Share of education budget allocated to (specific sector of) adult education	Year
<b>Arab States</b>		
Morocco	0.50%	2006
Yemen	1.4% (Literacy and adult education)	2007
<b>Asia-Pacific</b>		
Cambodia	Up to 2%	annually
China	1.87%	2005
Kyrgyzstan	16.9% (7.6% for elementary professional education, 3.4% for general professional education, 5.9% for higher education)	2007
Lao People's Democratic Republic	1% (Non-formal education) 5% (Vocational education and training)	2006/2007
Nepal	1.13% (Literacy and Non-formal education)	2005/2006
Pakistan	0.74% (Literacy)	1998-2003
Papua New Guinea	4.6% (Non-formal education)	2005
Vietnam	2.83% (Adult and non-formal education)	2005
<b>Europe and North America</b>		
Armenia	0.49%	2008
Austria	average of 2.3%	annually
Finland	11% (52% of this to vocational education and training; 20% to liberal education)	2008
Ireland	1.96%	2008
Portugal	6.3% (5.8% to young people education, 0.5% to adult education)	2008
Russia	1.4% (re-training)	2008
Serbia	1.63%	2006
Turkey	2.5% (Non-formal education and apprenticeship)	2008
United Kingdom	29% (Post-compulsory education and training, mostly for young people)	2005/2006
<b>Latin America and Caribbean</b>		
Bolivia	3.22%	annually
Costa Rica	0.024%	annually
Dominican Republic	2.72%	2008
Guatemala	less than 1% (Literacy)	annually
St Lucia	14%	annually
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>		
Botswana	1.2% (Non-formal education) 4.1% (Vocational education and training)	2007/2008
Cape Verde	8.71%	2005
Chad	0.96% (Literacy)	2007
Equatorial Guinea	19.5%	2008
Gambia	0.30%	2008
Guinea	0.02%	1990-2000
Kenya	less than 1%	1998- 2008
Malawi	0.15% (Literacy)	2008
Mali	1.40%	2008
Mozambique	3% (Literacy and adult education)	2006/2007
Nigeria	1.41%	2008
Rwanda	0.5% (Literacy)	2008
Senegal	0.7% (Literacy)	2008
South Africa	Average of 1%	Annually
Zambia	2% (Literacy)	Annually

Source: National Reports prepared for CONFINTEA VI

income countries, however, is that private spending on adult education (including expenditure by individuals and firms) far outstrips this figure.

Critically important is the fact that the estimated global shortfall does not include the financial resources needed to eradicate illiteracy in the world. Given the size of the literacy challenge (see Appendix Table 5), meeting this target would require significant additional investments, particularly for low- and middle-income countries, and especially those in South and West Asia. For the Asia and the Pacific Region alone, about US\$9 billion per year for five years would be needed to reach the EFA literacy target – that is, reducing adult illiteracy rates by 50% by 2015) (Asia South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education, 2009). For most Asian countries, these investments fall within the range of 3% to 6% of their respective national education budgets.

Table 6.1 illustrates the wide variation in the share of education budget allocated to adult education (according to countries' own varying definitions): from 0.02% to 29%. Quite clearly, adult education remains a non-priority for many countries as it receives less than 3% of the education budget.

With data caveats in mind, the general assessment is clear: in the vast majority of countries current resources remain wholly inadequate for supporting a credible adult education policy. In 44% of the submitted National Reports, countries recognised the need to increase finances for adult education. The acute shortage of resources reinforces conclusions emerging from the National Reports submitted for CONFINTEA V in 1997 and in the Synthesis Report of the CONFINTEA V Mid-Term Review Meeting in 2003 (UIE, 2003): there appears to have been little improvement in the quantity of resources allocated to adult education since the mid-1990s. The current global financial crisis and the slow growth outlook will exacerbate this dire financial situation.

At the national level the limited trend data give a mixed picture of how funding for adult education has developed (see Table 6.2). Of the 36 countries providing time series data, only Belgium (Flemish) Bhutan, Cambodia, Eritrea, Laos, Palestine, Republic

of Korea and Vietnam indicate that their expenditures for adult education have been consistently on the rise, whereas Senegal shows a steady decline in the reported period. For the remaining 26 countries, trends are mixed: in some years there were increases; in others funding decreased. This unpredictability in funding translates into major problems for both providers and learners on the ground.

## 6.2 Under-investment in adult education

The previous section underscored the unpredictability in adult education investment, based on the limited time series data available. Globally there is a noticeable tendency to under-invest in adult education. Data limitations and poor information systems on the costs and benefits of adult education have reduced the capability for informed policy-making and have led to under-investment.

There are market-related reasons why individual learners and employers may under-invest in adult education. Individuals, for example, cannot use skills acquisition as collateral for borrowing to invest in learning. Banks, too, are risk-averse when it comes to issuing loans for educational investment purposes. Although the average return is high, there is considerable variation around the average, with an attendant risk that the return on investment could be lower than the average. Many employers may under-invest in worker skill development because of the risk that their employees may be 'poached' by other employers, either in the same country or in neighbouring ones.

Governments may under-invest because they are unable to measure fully the wider benefits to society. There is considerable evidence that the overall returns to education are substantial (at least as high as the return on investment in physical infrastructure), and some evidence indicating that more equitable participation in education improves overall economic development (OECD and Statistics Canada, 2005; Coulombe *et al*, 2004). Nonetheless, there are many unresolved debates about the nature and extent of these benefits. In the case of adult education, these issues are especially challenging given the difficulties of measuring not

**Table 6.2**  
Trends in public spending on adult education

Country	Trend			Reference Period	Sub-sector of adult education
	Constant Increase	Mixed	Constant Decrease		
Angola				2004 - 2008	Education of young adults
Belgium (Flemish)	x	x		2001 - 2007	Adult education
Benin				1997 - 2007	Literacy/ Adult education
Bhutan	x	x		2004 - 2007	Non-formal education
Botswana				2004 - 2009	Non-formal education/ Vocational education and training
Cambodia	x	x		2002 - 2009	Non-formal education
Chad				1997 - 2007	Literacy
China		x		1997 - 2005	Adult schools
Egypt		x		1997 - 2006	Adult education/ Literacy
Eritrea	x	x		1997 - 2008	Literacy/ Vocational education and training/ Continuing education
Finland				1997 - 2008	Vocational education and training/ Polytechnics/ Universities/ Liberal education
Gambia*		x		1998 - 2008	Adult education/ Non-formal education
Germany		x		1996 - 2006	Continuing education
Greece		x		2003 - 2007	Adult education
Jamaica		x		1997 - 2007	Adult education/ Vocational education and training
Japan		x		1989 - 2005	Adult education
Kenya		x		1998 - 2008	Adult education
Lao People's Democratic Republic	x	x		1995 - 2007	Non-formal education/ Literacy
Malawi				2003 - 2008	Literacy
Mauritania		x		2002 - 2005	Literacy
Nepal		x		2000 - 2006	Non-formal education/ Literacy
Nigeria		x		1997 - 2008	Adult education
Pakistan		x		1955 - 2003	Literacy
Palestine	x	x		2003 - 2007	Non-formal education/ Literacy
Papua New Guinea				2001 - 2005	Non-formal education/ Literacy
Paraguay		x		2000 - 2007	Adult education
Portugal		x		2001 - 2008	Adult education
Republic of Korea	x	x		2005 - 2007	Lifelong learning
Senegal*			x	2003 - 2010	Literacy
Seychelles				1998 - 2007	Adult education
South Africa		x		2003 - 2007	Adult education
St. Lucia*		x		1997 - 2008	Adult education
Tajikistan*		x		2003 - 2007	Professional adult education
Thailand		x		2000 - 2007	Literacy
Vietnam	x	x		2001 - 2005	Adult education/ Non-formal education
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>35</b>	
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100</b>	

Source: National Reports prepared for CONFINTEA VI

Note: Countries marked \* give relative data, not absolute, in their National Reports

only the monetary benefits but also the non-monetary benefits of adult learning and education, which are thought to be significant (Schuller *et al*, 2004).

While the list of potential societal benefits resulting from adult education is long (McMahon, 1999; Schuller *et al*, 2004; Feinstein and Hammond, 2004; Reder, 2009), empirical studies of such benefits are few and far between. When societal benefits accruing from an investment in adult education are opaque or unknown, then investment levels tend to be lower. As a result, some governments remain sceptical of the wider social benefits of investing in adult learning (see the

### **Box 6.1** **The wider impacts of literacy education**

Beyond learning reading, writing and numeracy, what is the impact of literacy learning on everyday life? This is discussed in the final report of the COL Literacy Project (COLLIT). With support from the British Department for International Development (DFID), COL undertook a pilot project in India and Zambia to explore ways in which literacy programmes might be enhanced through the use of appropriate technologies.

Although learners used writing skills less than reading skills, being able to sign their name and do small writing tasks enhanced their self-esteem. People reported using writing skills to sign forms and applications such as ration cards, attendance registers, children's report cards, bank forms and government documents. Numeracy skills were used mostly for counting and handling money, maintaining household accounts, reading bus schedules and telling time. Learners involved in wage labour used numeracy skills for monitoring wage payments, saying that now nobody could cheat them.

Literacy classes had the most profound effect on people over the age of 40. These people had considered themselves too old to learn, but soon realised they could learn to read, write and use technology. They gained confidence and felt more self-reliant in everyday life. They also believed their status in the family and community increased as a result of their improved literacy. Many parents in the COLLIT project developed a more positive attitude towards education and became more involved in their children's schooling. They were better able to monitor their children's progress and started to interact more with teachers. The COLLIT project demonstrated that the benefits of improved literacy extend far beyond reading, writing and numeracy. In fact, many of the impacts that people described had to do with everyday life and how they earn a living.

*Source: Commonwealth of Learning website*

### **Box 6.2** **Pilot study in Latin America and the Caribbean on the costs of illiteracy**

Research had demonstrated a strong correlation between income and schooling levels in Latin America. In 2008 the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), together with the UNESCO Regional Bureau of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC), developed a pilot study on the costs of illiteracy for individuals and society as a whole in the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and the Brazilian State of São Paulo. The study correlated years of schooling with income levels, employment levels and employment quality of the economically active population.

The preliminary results show that higher education levels are more likely to be linked to well-paid employment. On the other hand, illiteracy significantly reduces the income that employees may earn during their working life. Losses in productivity were calculated for different types of illiteracy (absolute or functional) and shown to be considerably higher for the State of São Paulo (US\$209 billion) than for Ecuador and the Dominican Republic (US\$25 billion).

Further research and development is required to address the social and economic costs of illiteracy in other areas such as health, education, social integration and cohesion, as well as intergenerational implications.

*Source: CEPAL/UNESCO/OREALC (2009)*

National Reports from the Czech Republic, Kyrgyzstan and Poland, 2008). Box 6.2 illustrates the start of a process to measure the societal costs of illiteracy.

The information available to make optimal decisions regarding the allocation, distribution and use of resources in the education sector is fraught with imperfections. For many governments, this lack of information means that they are unable to establish priorities, allocate adequate resources, and justify investments

in adult education. Likewise, lack of hard data prevents firms and individuals from assessing the costs and benefits, which can lead to reduced incentives and under-investment. Without political will, governments will not be able to take the first important step – developing accurate and reliable cost data on adult education or commissioning studies of the impact of these investments.

Given this lack of robust data on costs and benefits, it might be possible to use levels of investment in high-performing countries as a benchmark. While country circumstances differ, ideas and standards from the best-performing countries can inform adult education investment decisions even in poorer countries. Nonetheless, an important lesson is that high levels of GDP allocations to adult education reflect and derive from a strong social commitment to broad and equitable access to adult education (Chapter 4). It is necessary for governments to recognise explicitly adult education as a public good, since it promotes social cohesion, active citizenship and viable democratic institutions. Without this political commitment, investment at such levels is unlikely.

### **6.3 Stakeholder contributions: experiences and problems in determining who should pay**

How should the large global shortfall in adult education investment be met, and what should be the appropriate share of costs contributed by different stakeholders – governments, employers, civil society organisations, donor agencies and individuals?

Economic principles suggest that who pays depends on whether the value to be gained is personal, social or economic and on who stands to benefit from this added value. The share of benefits accruing to different stakeholders varies by programme type. For example in work-related training programmes, if employees benefit in the form of higher wages, then employees should pay. If employers gain in the form of higher productivity and profits, then employers should contribute as well. If society stands to benefit – since industry and commerce become more competitive

and better able to attract investment and thus create more and better jobs – then there should also be a public contribution.

Unfortunately, such general principles provide only a weak basis for sharing the cost of adult education provision among partners. More often than not the benefits of each programme are not easily identifiable. Even if they were, it is difficult to identify an appropriate or fair share for each partner. What monetary value should be placed on a well-educated, skilled and participatory citizenry, or on the value of achieving equitable access to adult education for social cohesion?

In practice, therefore, governments use different criteria to decide on levels of resource allocation and cost-sharing arrangements. Three considerations are often involved: (1) adequacy – assessing the total resources needed for adult education; (2) equity – ensuring that the distribution of programme costs and benefits are fair; and (3) efficiency – employing funding mechanisms that maximise resource use. The efficiency with which the resources are used will determine their effectiveness, as well as the outcome and impact of adult education.

Information gleaned from the National Reports indicates that sources of funding for adult education are multiple and diverse. Of the 108 countries that provided funding information, only 26 (or 24%) mentioned a single source of funding. While governments still remain the main funding source, the private sector, civil society, international donor agencies and individuals also contribute substantially (see Table 6.3). Regional patterns can also be observed. In the Arab States, Asia and Europe, government is the main stated source of funding of adult education. In much of sub-Saharan Africa, international donors constitute the most common financial supporter of adult education, followed by civil society and then the public sector. In contrast, the private sector is the second most frequently mentioned source of funding in Europe, after the public sector.

The National Reports also describe a relationship between funding sources and programme type. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, public funding is the

most frequently cited source for literacy, adult basic education and alternative schooling (non-formal education), though foreign aid or other donor funds may subsidise it (Aitchison and Alidou, 2009: 14). Substantial investment in workplace training tends to occur in countries with

larger industrial and commercial capacity (South Africa, for example), but data on this provision type is not easily collected (Aitchison and Alidou, 2009: 15). In the Arab States financing literacy and adult education is primarily a government responsibility. Civil society organisations contribute by

**Based on responses to the following questions:**

1.1. Financing of adult learning and education  
Financing is often provided through a variety of channels. For a comprehensive picture, please give recent data on the following sections and describe trends that have emerged since 1997 (CONFITEA V):

1.2.1. Public investment in adult learning and education:  
a) Share of the budget allocated to adult education within the education sector (indicate measures, activities, responsible bodies);  
b) Share of the budget allocated to adult education from other sectors, made either directly or indirectly within their policies (indicate responsible ministries, describe activities);  
c) Adult learning and education in decentralised/local budgets (local governments and authorities, municipalities, communities);  
d) Other investment, e.g. from regional funds, transnational organisations, etc.

1.2.2. Foreign bilateral/multilateral donor investment in adult learning and education  
• list annual amounts and key areas/activities.

1.2.3. Support to adult learning and education from private/corporate sector:  
• provide data on annual expenditure from corporate sector; provide relations to e.g. overall national budget, overall expenditure from selected national and multinational enterprises.

1.2.4. Civil society support to adult learning and education (e.g. religious institutions, unions, NGOs).

1.2.5. Learners'/individuals' contributions to adult learning and education

1.2.6. Are there specific direct or indirect financial incentives in support of adult learning and education e.g. learning vouchers, scholarships, paid educational leave, special funds and funding schemes etc.? Are these specific to some programmes or general schemes? Please elaborate.

1.2.7. Are benchmarks (targets) in relation to financing of adult learning and education in place? In your context, what would be realistic benchmarks related to financing of adult learning and education?

**Table 6.3**  
**Sources of adult education funding, by region**

	Arab states		Asia - Pacific	
<b>Reports submitted</b>		<b>19</b>		<b>29</b>
<b>Public financing</b>	Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen	10	Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, India, Iran, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Vietnam	22
<b>Private financing</b>	N/A		Australia, China, India, Mongolia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Vietnam	8
<b>Civil society financing</b>	Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Sudan, Syria	5	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Fiji, India, Japan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Tajikistan	8
<b>Donor financing</b>	Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria	7	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Fiji, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan	11
<b>Learners' contribution</b>	N/A		Australia, China, Fiji, India, New Zealand, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Vietnam	8

Source: National Reports prepared for CONFITEA VI



mobilising support and organising specific programmes under their guidance. However, the private sector's contribution is very small. All the National Reports in the region confirm that existing provision is insufficient (Yousif, 2009: 17).

#### *a. The role of government*

Countries differ widely in the degree of state responsibility for adult education.

The Nordic countries are justly regarded as leaders in giving adult education a high priority for state action. Elsewhere public policy is perceived as having little to do with

Europe and North America Region		Latin America and the Caribbean		Sub-Saharan Africa		
	<b>38</b>		<b>25</b>		<b>43</b>	<b>154</b>
Armenia, Austria, Belgium (Flemish & French), Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America	35	Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Uruguay, Venezuela	18	Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial-Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Swaziland, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania	33	<b>118</b>
Armenia, Austria, Belgium (Flemish), Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Latvia, Montenegro, Netherlands, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Switzerland, United Kingdom	24	Argentina, Belize, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Suriname, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Uruguay	15	Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe	18	<b>65</b>
Armenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Switzerland, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom, United States of America	19	Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname	12	Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe	25	<b>69</b>
Belgium (Flemish), Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia	22	Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Uruguay	15	Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe	30	<b>85</b>
Armenia, Austria, Belgium (Flemish), Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom	24	Belize, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname	6	Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Seychelles, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia	19	<b>57</b>

adult education, the main responsibility falling to employers and individuals (for example, in the Czech Republic, Kyrgyzstan and Poland); and in Japan and the USA upgrading the skills of the labour force is considered the responsibility of employers and employee organisations. Between the two ends of this broad spectrum there are interesting trends and examples of good practice, which have important financial implications for adult education.

In countries where public services are decentralised, whether at the federal, provincial or local levels, the responsibility for investing in adult education remains a key issue. South Africa's is one of the few National Reports discussing provincial-level funding (see Table 6.4), noting that it is not necessarily the best endowed provinces

that allocate more resources to adult education (more precisely, in this instance, to adult basic education and training).

To compensate for market under-investment in skill development, governments can play an active role in meeting labour market needs, particularly under adverse conditions such as unemployment, or in helping to retrain those who are most vulnerable to structural dislocation. A number of high-income countries support active labour market policies – for example, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands. Such policies seek to get the unemployed back to work as quickly as possible through (re-)training and skill development rather than by providing passive support through payments of unemployment insurance and welfare benefits. In many high-income countries

**Table 6.4**  
South Africa: provincial spending on adult basic education and training (ABET),  
2003 – 2007 (millions of Rands)<sup>1</sup>

	2003/04		2004/05		2005/06		2006/07	
	Amount (Rm)	% of education budget	Amount (Rm)	% of education budget	Amount (Rm)	% of education budget	Amount (Rm)	% of education budget
Eastern Cape	136.3	1.3	126.0	1.2	136.3	1.2	155.8	1.2
Free State	70.9	1.7	45.8	1.0	93.2	1.9	65.4	1.2
Gauteng	118.1	1.2	138.8	1.4	157.8	1.5	168.1	1.4
KwaZulu-Natal	39.6	0.3	49.7	0.4	85.8	0.6	72.6	0.5
Limpopo	28.6	0.3	36.7	0.4	54.1	0.5	50.2	0.4
Mpumalanga	48.9	1.1	53.7	1.1	76.0	1.3	75.5	1.2
Northern Cape	21.6	1.7	19.6	1.4	20.0	1.3	23.5	1.4
North West	54.2	1.1	44.3	0.9	63.6	1.1	83.3	1.2
Western Cape	18.5	0.4	21.2	0.4	23.1	0.4	23.5	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>536.7</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>535.8</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>709.9</b>	<b>1.09</b>	<b>717.9</b>	<b>0.98</b>

Source: South Africa National Report, 2008

<sup>1</sup> In January 2007, US\$1 was equivalent to R7

public policies have shifted, becoming more active than in the past.

In addition, many governments are creating basic infrastructures to facilitate adult education markets and promote public-private partnerships. Co-financing arrangements between different stakeholders exemplify this trend of government action, especially in the high-income countries. The picture is mixed as to how this trend and its concomitant tools are actually adopted in different national contexts.

A number of European countries, however, maintain a commitment to direct government involvement, which establishes shared responsibilities among various social partners including employers and trade unions. Social partnership models are common in Northern and Central European countries (as in Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway). In such cases public-private co-financing plays an important role, but negotiated tripartite agreements are favoured over the market mechanism. Collective labour agreements among social partners commonly include strategic training funds to assist the re-skilling of employees.

Other incentives to stimulate individual demand for adult education include tax credits, income maintenance provisions, paid educational leave combined with study loans or grants, and individual learning accounts. Sweden grants training vouchers to under-represented groups, which allow providers to reduce fees among specific target groups. Efforts to stimulate demand are also aimed directly at employers.

Among governments that decide to intervene by providing incentives, an important distinction is between supply-oriented and demand-driven approaches. Some countries are experimenting with shifting the targeting of subsidies from suppliers to learners, by giving subsidies such as training vouchers (for example, Austria and Germany) directly to individuals rather than providers. This (demand-driven) approach helps to create incentives for learners, their families, employers and other partners for mobilising investment for learning. In this scenario, the adult learner becomes an active consumer who chooses

where to spend earmarked funds, thereby creating the conditions, at least in theory, of fostering competition among providers and of improving the capacity to respond to diverse and local needs.

Supply-based approaches to adult education in which public funding goes directly to providers have been effective for developing advanced governance and provision structures in many high-income countries, especially in the Nordic countries. However, this institutionally-based model may be less suitable for areas where expansion of participation is a first priority. More coverage implies the need for diversification and greater complexity in provision, which becomes difficult under conditions of central-control.

#### ***b. Contributions from the private sector***

Employers are major investors in adult education in many countries. In the industrialised countries, on average, about two out of every three persons who undertake any adult education activity do so with at least some employer support, implying that employers are the most common funding source for adult education (Chisholm, Larson and Mossoux, 2004; Desjardins *et al.*, 2006). A dramatic trend in adult education over the past 25 years has been the growing role of employers in providing education and training for adults, and as a source of demand for adult learning and education (see Chapter 2). In Sweden, for example, the proportion of adults receiving employer support for adult education has nearly tripled in the 1975-2000 period (Boudard and Rubenson, 2003: 267).

Employers are increasingly investing in upgrading the skills of workers so as to remain competitive in globalised product and service markets. These trends point to the pervasive impact of broader changes in the labour market and the forces that encourage people to take up adult education. Some studies suggest that adult education is strongly associated with competition, innovation and globalisation. In addition, the presence of trade unions is strongly linked to formalised approaches to training within firms (Boudard and Rubenson, 2003: 268). This is especially so in large firms, involved in highly competitive global markets, which are undergoing

significant technological shifts and/or changing work practices (OECD, 2003a: 51-53).

This is not, however, a straightforward increase and important differences in employer training practices are worth noting. In some cases, there is reluctance by employers to invest at all in employee education and training (see Slovakia National Report, 2008). The Georgia National Report (2008) acknowledges that, until recently, employers and other social partners did not fully comprehend the importance of adult education for the improvement of productivity and competitiveness.

Small employers are much less active in employee training. This is related partly to their scale of operations and workforce but also because of the fear of losing their trained workforce to competition. To address these problems, some employers are pooling their training resources across many small establishments to establish an industry-wide training programme. Italy and Australia provide good examples of such initiatives. In the latter case, the government played a facilitative role, through investment in infrastructure and financial incentives. Co-financing arrangements are another example where governments mobilise contributions from different partners by providing the necessary institutional and legal infrastructures as well as financial incentives.

Some governments choose to impose a training levy on firms of a particular size. The levy goes into either a national training fund or is earmarked for training employees who work at the contributing firms (as in France, Hungary and South Africa). Training issues have become so prominent in some countries (for example, Hungary), that their National Reports focus almost exclusively on work-based education, training, and qualification levels, rather than on societal and cultural development aims, when referring to adult education. Likewise, skill validation to develop adult competencies more efficiently and effectively has almost completely taken over the adult education policy discourse in some countries (see Portugal National Report, 2008).

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) represent an emerging trend in the field, similar to co-financing schemes in high-income countries. They are primarily promoted to share the costs of adult education and reduce government expenditure. Tata Consultancy Services in India is a good example of a PPP, where the firm has launched a computer-based literacy programme and donated 450 computers to continuing education centres. In other examples from Kenya, Seychelles and South Africa, private sector companies, as part of their corporate responsibility agenda, directly sponsor community adult education programmes and the production of learning materials.

### ***c. Contributions by non-governmental and civil society organisations***

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other civil society organisations (CSOs) play important roles in the delivery of adult education. They are particularly active in low- and middle-income countries, but are also present in some high-income countries. Australia reports over 1,200 non-profit community-based providers (Ahmed, 2009). In Cameroon, Gambia and Senegal, NGOs fund a substantial part of the programmes. In Africa, faith-based organisations (FBOs), trades unions and NGOs have been key actors in adult learning and education for years (Aitchison and Alidou, 2009: 21).

Contributions can range from offering space, volunteers, materials and other in-kind contributions to organising and delivering courses. Not least, FBOs and other community groups help disadvantaged groups gain access to adult education. The impressive success of India's literacy campaign can be attributed primarily to the mobilisation of large numbers of volunteers and civil society organisations. The same is true for Bangladesh, Brazil and many other developing countries. At the same time, many countries report that NGOs are finding that it is increasingly difficult to get grants or that funding dries up after an initial period. In the Arab States CSOs not only support government efforts in mobilising and teaching learners, but also organise their own literacy and adult education programmes (Yousif, 2009: 12).

Many government-funded programmes in developing countries are heavily reliant on civil society organisations. Enabling such organisations to operate using public facilities can be considered an example of good practice in sharing, coordinating and employing available resources. States that strengthen capacity-building by providing the necessary infrastructure development and incentives can leverage more commitment from organisations and communities. However, the commitment to these organisations needs to be long-term. Temporary and ever-changing provision can be counter-productive in terms of motivation. Additionally, as mentioned in Chapter 4, civil society organisations have to contend with their own marginality and their inability to sustain a cadre of professional adult education staff to ensure high-quality teaching and learning. If civil society organisations are to operate effectively they need to be well-resourced and secure in their operations.

#### ***d. International aid and assistance***

Low-income and post-conflict countries greatly depend on external assistance, and multilateral and bilateral aid can make up a large part of the budget for adult education. Earlier in this chapter, Table 6.3 showed that international donor assistance is the most common form of financial support in sub-Saharan Africa, and the second most cited in Asia. Sometimes external funding may be accompanied by technical support. Afghanistan's state budget for adult education, for example, only covers salaries for core staff (Ahmed, 2009). Literacy programmes in Afghanistan are thus primarily funded by donors such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), USAID, UNESCO and UNICEF. While Mongolia has no budget for adult education, it has received about \$US9 million for adult education activities from international agencies and NGOs in recent years. In Senegal, 93% per cent of the adult literacy budget comes from external sources (Aitchison and Alidou, 2009).

Recent data show that overall development assistance (ODA) rose in 2008 after two successive years of decline. Closer examination of allocations by sector reveals that the share of the education sector has remained unchanged at roughly 12% since 2000. The health sector, on the other

hand, has benefited from an increase in the eight-year period under review. While 2007 figures indicate a doubling of overall aid to education of OECD-Development Assistance Committee members in five years (from US\$ 5.2 billion in 2002 to US\$ 10.8 billion in 2007), the allocation to basic education has decreased from 41% to 38% during the same period. Those who continue to support basic education are limited to a small number of donor countries (OECD-DAC, 2009; Benavot, 2009). It is against this backdrop of inadequate levels and unpredictability of development assistance to education – with declining levels of aid to basic education and the diminishing number of countries who donate to education – that one is able to put into context the acute and precarious financial situation of adult education.

Even when education aid is pledged by donors to support the EFA and MDG agendas, adult education and lifelong learning receive inadequate commitments. According to UNESCO (2008a), US\$2.5 billion a year is needed every year until 2015, if the literacy target alone is to be achieved. But there is no equivalent for literacy and adult education in the World Bank Fast Track Initiative (FTI) to support EFA primary education goals. FTI does not even include alternative second-chance and non-formal complementary approaches to primary education, despite evidence of the effectiveness of such frameworks for those who remain outside the formal system (Ahmed, 2009: 42).

However, there are a few encouraging signs. Official development assistance has been dominated historically by project-oriented and narrow profitability requirements. The social development sectors have been neglected. Since the 1990s, priorities have noticeably changed with the shift to poverty reduction strategies, sector-wide approaches to aid modalities and the emergence of the MDGs and EFA. Recent studies that document education's contribution to economic growth and the benefits of adult education investment are slowly influencing donor priorities.

The total aid package itself remains less than the 0.7% of *per capita* income in rich countries, which was the benchmark

set nearly four decades ago (Ahmed, 2009). In addition, it appears that donors are reluctant to invest in adult education because of inadequate mechanisms and infrastructure to administer the funds as well as the difficulty of ensuring that such investments contribute to the target goals. While foreign aid has, in many cases, been a most welcome contributor to funding for literacy, basic education, non-formal education and various forms of community education, it is usually distributed on a time-fixed basis, which does not help sustainability. Instead of consolidating programmes into an overall adult education infrastructure that includes appropriate and sustainable governance and provision structures, governments often terminate programmes when external funding ceases because of their own weak and conditional commitment to the funding of adult education. Moreover, progress that is made often disintegrates because of competing agendas and a general lack of coordination among various actors, including international donors and local authorities.

#### ***e. Contributions by the individual***

Individual contributions to adult education raise considerable controversy, primarily because such contributions are regarded by adult educators as inequitable for provision where disadvantaged or marginalised groups are the focus of activity. Equity considerations suggest that employers should pay for employment-related training because such training benefits the firm, while individuals should bear the cost of general skills training because of perceived labour market rewards. Even in such cases, however, it is not so straightforward. Participation by adults may be hampered if they are unable to meet the up-front cost. Employment-related training involves short-term salary loss, for example, for which an individual needs to be subsidised. Similarly, rewards flow only over a long period of time and are subject to market fluctuations. Thus, where the benefits to the individual adult are identifiable, achieving the right level of investment by the individual requires incentives from the government or the employer, a condition that has led to various co-financing mechanisms, as discussed above.

For much of adult education provision, a contribution from individuals would not only be inequitable, but also seriously limit participation. The benefits accruing to society at large, not least greater social cohesion, suggest that individuals should not be expected to pay for them. Charging fees for literacy and citizenship programmes would be highly inequitable and seriously constraining, especially in poor countries.

In practice, individuals living in industrialised nations contribute a significant part of the cost of the programmes that they attend. Available data show that on average self-financing is the second most common source of financial support and, in some cases, the dominant source (Chisholm *et al*, 2004; Desjardins *et al*, 2006).

In Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere, user fees, which partly cover programme costs, are common for work-related courses. Kyrgyzstan, for example, offers vocational and technical courses to job-seekers or job-holders who need skill-upgrading or re-training to improve their employment prospects. However, such courses are solely on a payment basis, without subsidies for the unemployed, or those from low-income or socially excluded groups (UNESCO, 2008b), and thus unaffordable to those who may be most in need (Ahmed, 2009: 41). In 2000, urban families in Cameroon spent about 6% of their budget on adult education, while rural families spent about 3.7%. In Senegal, a comparable figure for all families is estimated to be about 5% (Aitchison and Alidou, 2009). Tanzania charges fees up to US\$150 for courses that lead to specialised certificate programmes (for example, the Certificate of Distance Education) and up to US\$700 for diploma-oriented courses such as the Diploma in Youth in Development Work (Tanzania National Report, 2008).

## **6.4 Moving forward In mobilising resources**

The data received exposes the substantial shortfall in funding for adult education. Funding gaps exist in countries throughout the world. It is estimated that some \$72 billion is needed, of which \$41 billion is for the developed world, to meet internationally-agreed targets of equitable

spending of public education budgets on adult education, with the understanding that the education sector is allocated 6% of GNP. This shortfall constitutes a critical obstacle to the successful implementation of adult education programmes and policies that could contribute to economic and societal development across the world.

Governments have a major responsibility for reducing funding gaps and mobilising the necessary resources. Since adult education has multiple funding sources, governments have a two-fold role: they need to augment their own contribution to adult education as well as mobilise contributions from other stakeholders, including the private and commercial sector, NGOs and CSOs, and the international community. As Aitchison and Alidou (2009) note, country policy documents and development plans typically assume that sufficient funding will be available from public, private and corporate sectors as well as from bilateral and multi-lateral development partners. They state that funding is a collective responsibility of government in conjunction with agencies and organisations across all sectors. In many cases, however, assumptions go unmet and the adult education mandate remains unfunded or under-funded (Aitchison and Alidou, 2009).

The next section looks at how the case for closing these funding gaps can be made and the steps that need to be taken to make that case.

#### ***a. Providing the necessary information base***

Policy debates on adult education and informed decision-making by stakeholders are severely handicapped by a serious lack of data. Developing comprehensive databases is particularly problematic since it involves compiling information from multiple organisations and partners, as well as many government levels and jurisdictions. Few, if any, efforts have been made to set up administrative or survey data that would permit the measurement of costs for all the different provision areas, or the staff and other resources such as foregone production and leisure time. However, the example of the Republic of Korea in tracking contributions from different ministries shows that this is not an impossible task (see Table 6.5).

Without stronger databases progress cannot be measured and challenging comparisons between countries cannot be made. Adult education policy-makers and practitioners need to work with governments to ensure robust data is collected without resulting in a bureaucratic burden that deflects limited funding from provision.

#### ***b. Raising the value of adult education***

In contrast to the level of resources needed, the overwhelming reality is that resources allocated to adult education represent a marginal element in most government budgets, not only in the South, but also in many countries of the North. In addition, funding streams are often uncertain and temporary. In some cases, even if budgeted, adult education funds are only released after other priorities have been met and adult education resources are often diverted to compensate for shortfalls in the primary or secondary education budget (Aitchison and Alidou, 2009: 20).

The low and inconsistent budgeting currently applied to adult education partly reflects the low priority that society places on adult education. As reported in Chapter 4, resource levels for adult education depend as much on the value society attaches to a well-informed, skilled and participatory citizenry as on the level of GDP per capita. A first priority for governments and adult educators is to take steps to raise the perceived value and actual visibility of adult education.

Perhaps the most important thing to achieve is the mainstreaming of adult education policy by showing its contribution to other socio-economic and developmental policies. A major deficiency of current adult education policies is their narrow association with the educational portfolio. Finance ministries will allocate more resources to adult education if it seen as contributing to other policy areas. Chapter 2 of this *Report*, on policy, gives examples of the linkages that are sometimes made between ministries. These need to be built on and extended.

Publicly-funded adult education can help to prevent and alleviate unemployment, and large-scale displacements associated with structural changes in the economy, by

**Table 6.5**  
**Republic of Korea: lifelong education budget by government office (2006)<sup>1</sup>**

Ministry	Total expenditure 2006 (a) (hundred million KRW)	Lifelong education budget 2006 (b) (hundred million KRW)	Proportion of lifelong education budget (c=b/a) (%)	Budget amount	Budget share
				(b) ranking	(c) ranking
Science & Technology	29,689	3,301	11.13	3	4
Education & Human Resources Development	291,273	3,060	1.05	5	14
National Defense	259,440	1,815	0.70	7	15
Labor	96,354	11,731	12.2	1	3
Agriculture & Forestry	222,000	326	0.15	13	19
Rural Development Administration	4,774	737	15.44	10	2
Culture & Tourism	33,782	3,235	9.58	4	5
Health & Welfare	169,087	3,418	2.02	2	11
Commerce, Industry & Energy	83,407	1,702	2.04	8	10
Gender Equality & Family Affairs	9,100	198.7	2.18	16	9
Finance & Economy	66,398	257.7	0.39	15	16
Information & Communication	72,858	2,019.7	2.63	6	8
Small & Medium Business Administration	87,946	1,140	1.30	9	13
Civil Service Commission	1,009	482.5	37.8	12	1
Government Youth Commission	1,375	130	3.03	18	7
Korean Intellectual Property Office	2,980	147.8	4.96	17	6
Maritime Affairs & Fishery	38,418	577	1.50	11	12
Government Administration & Home Affairs	342,866	258	0.33	14	17
Environment	36,419	90	0.25	19	18
<b>Total</b>		<b>34,638</b>			

Source: Republic of Korea National Report, 2008

<sup>1</sup> In January 2006, US\$1 was equivalent to KRW 1,006



training, retraining, skilling, up-skilling or re-skilling adult workers and communities. This is also applicable to community development in low- and middle-income countries. Rather than making transfers of aid to individuals or communities, adult education represents a mechanism for activating development, along personal, social and economic dimensions. In their National Reports, at least 24 countries made an explicit reference to the importance of adult education for the overall development of their country. The potentially pervasive impact of adult learning and education for economic and social development should be encapsulated as a central element of every sustainable development strategy.

***c. Focusing greater attention on achieving equity***

A major objective of adult education policy is to contribute to greater equity and social cohesion. However, programme design to address the serious inequity problems faced by most countries is an expensive process. At a time when governments throughout the world seek to increase efficiency through the adoption of market-oriented approaches and outcomes-based funding, there is a real risk that adult education initiatives will only reach adults who are easiest to recruit and most likely to succeed.

Government policies that provide incentives to the private sector are increasingly prominent as are co-financing mechanisms directed at both employers and employees. While market-based strategies can be effective in mobilising resources in many circumstances, they often have negative side-effects. Focusing on regulatory and institutional arrangements to enhance investments by firms and individuals can deepen inequalities in access to adult education. Data for several high-income countries show that, instead of reaching vulnerable groups – for example, women, older adults, the least educated, and those possessing few skills or in low-skill occupations – government support has tended to benefit those who already display high rates of participation. This tendency exacerbates socio-economic divisions as well as skill mismatching in the labour market.

The pressure to meet accountability criteria applied for use of public funds by NGOs can potentially become barriers for disadvantaged groups as the tendency is to give programme access to those most likely to reach the stated learning outcomes. Similarly, promoting decentralisation of authority can lead to a concentration of power in the hands of local elites who have an agenda other than securing equity and development for those most in need.

To maintain social cohesion and to ensure that those at a disadvantage are able to participate in society and the economy, governments need to be encouraged to see that such market-based incentives need to be coupled with equity-based implementation strategies. Existing funding regimes do not achieve this because they do not compensate for the higher costs of reaching vulnerable or marginalised groups. Government strategies need to include special outreach and guidance activities. Focusing on the rationale for such equity-based targeted approaches to addressing inequities can encourage prioritisation of such programmes in spite of the costs.

***d. Mobilising resources from partners – the private sector and civil society***

Mobilising resources from other stakeholders requires governments to understand clearly the motivation of different adult education providers, the comparative advantage they have in catering for particular groups of participants, the incentives that can best motivate them and the supporting infrastructures that they require. In addition governments must ensure their efforts generate a net increase in resources. Increased contributions from one stakeholder should not displace those from another. Finally, these efforts must be consistent with other government adult education objectives, such as ensuring equity of access and programme quality.

Governments can provide a broad strategic framework – legal, institutional, financial and technical infrastructure – within which various actors can find their specific role. Providing a set of financial incentives for particular partners can encourage investment, including tax and institutional arrangements that favour cost-sharing among individuals, firms and governments. Special subsidies can be given for specific

objectives such as programmes that promote equity. Stakeholder investment in adult education depends on understanding the benefits to be gained, and on whether it is viewed primarily as a public or private good. Provision of information therefore is itself a key input for informed stakeholder decisions.

A number of tools can encourage participation from the private sector. Employers have an incentive to invest in their employees to improve productivity and develop new products and services, but they are under constant pressure to control costs. Governments can provide strategic direction in industrial policies that support skill development by firms so that they do not fall into the trap of choosing low-skill strategies to compete in product and service markets (Brown *et al*, 2001). Co-financing schemes that channel resources from at least two partners can include tax arrangements, grant schemes, pay-back clauses, apprenticeships, working-time and training-time accounts, loan schemes, tax incentives for individuals, subsidies to individuals, individual learning accounts, training leave and leave for part-time study (OECD, 2001; 2003b; 2003c).

Arrangements for pooling of costs among employers, especially small-scale employers, can be an effective policy solution to the fear of company brain-drain. Favourable tax treatments in some countries and levy systems in others are helpful in promoting adult education. Comprehensive policy frameworks designed to address these incentive problems are needed.

Encouraging governments to mobilise buy-in from the private sector can be a cost-effective means of ensuring access for those in employment and who are able to contribute to their learning, freeing funds for a necessary focus on equity.

The NGO and civil society sector is an important provider of adult education, but requires public funding and support. This sector is more flexible and adapts to new demands faster than the formal system. It can reach adults who might otherwise not enrol. This form of adult education provision has potential for social and economic development. This sector can be integrated

successfully into a comprehensive adult education policy if public funds are available. Direct state intervention, however, may lead to bureaucratic barriers that prevent operation or access to funds. As long as the goals for which state funding is received are fulfilled, the sector must be given a measure of autonomy. At the same time, coordination mechanisms and information-sharing are essential. Effective coordination across many NGOs is often lacking, especially in developing countries, and can lead to inefficiencies and parallel provision structures, even though there might be clear advantages in sharing facilities and staff. Collaboration between providers can cut programme development costs, and may allow for a more efficient use of accommodation and equipment. Adult educators and governments need to work together to create the best conditions for partnership between the state and civil society in the provision of adult education.

#### ***e. Raising the level of international assistance***

If the ambitious goals in the EFA agenda are to be met, including those relating to adult literacy and life skills, then bilateral and multilateral assistance needs to be scaled up. To reach the literacy target in the Asia and the Pacific Region alone, for example, it is estimated that US\$9 billion per year for five years is needed (Asia South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education, 2009). It is clear that some countries – specifically, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Laos, Nepal and Pakistan – will need external assistance and sustained political will to meet their literacy commitments.

Just as recipient countries need to strengthen the value placed on adult education, so too do donor nations. Recipient nations have to make a better case for adult education in their funding proposals – for example, by integrating adult education policies into poverty reduction and sustainable development strategies. Studies of the impact of adult education, for example, can help increase the priority of the sector in aid allocations. The co-operation of donor nations that place high value on adult education can be harnessed in convincing other donor nations of the worthiness of their contribution.

For many donor countries, however, unless there is accountability and transparency on both sides, and aid can be shown to work effectively for the poor, funds are likely to be withheld. Without good governance and the accompanying commitment of recipient countries to providing consistent funding that is proportional to GDP along the recommended guidelines, the effectiveness and long-term sustainability of adult education programmes will remain problematic. Little will be gained and much will be lost if adult education becomes an unreachable goal that is accompanied by intermittent political rhetoric but no real action.

## 6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has exposed the seriously chronic lack of investment in adult education in most countries worldwide. There is a depressing spiral where weak investment means a low level and profile for activity that fails to interest possible investors. This in turn leads to a lack of dynamic policy and thus continued low investment. The challenge is to break through this *impasse* by convincing government and the multiplicity of funders and stakeholders of the relevance and importance of adult education to the achievement of broader goals and policies.

One of the most interesting recent developments is the increasing commitment of the private sector to adult education and training throughout workers' careers. Those involved in global competition have realised the intrinsic necessity of learning and knowledge production for success in world markets. There is some recognition of the importance of investment for the value of learning. What is seen as vital is to generalise beyond the lucky few so as to pay equal dividends for the disadvantaged majority across the world. Governments have not adequately considered the value given to learning by the private sector to be the means by which their own multiple goals can be met.

The chapter has pointed out ways to mobilise resources and identifies some of the threads that are essential for future progress: better knowledge of what is happening on the ground through better

data provision, more and better studies of cost-benefits in both economic and social terms, better partnerships and clearer views on what partners are best able to contribute. These ingredients can be used to make the financial case in terms of the effectiveness of adult education provision – one of the four key dimensions (relevance, equity, effectiveness, efficiency) identified earlier in this *Global Report*. It is a case that needs to be made robustly.

The main measure of progress in relation to funding has, due to the targets set by CONFINTEA V, been bounded within the framework of education budgets. However, placing adult learning within a lifelong learning framework and conceiving of learning within this as life-wide and part of a capability framework demands a broader perspective on progress. Given the critical role that adult learning plays in the attainment of wider targets – for example in improving health, reducing poverty and building stronger communities – the major task now is for governments to develop cross-departmental funding for adult education to support the very many different benefits that can be realised. This must be at the heart of investment and funding strategies for CONFINTEA VI.



## CONCLUSION

In a world where change is constant, the scale, scope and pace of today's transformations are unprecedented. Expanding global markets, diversifying urban populations, rising migration and geographic mobility, spreading communication and information networks and an emergent global civil society – these are but a few of the 'deep drivers' of current socio-demographic and economic changes. For millions of households, however, some of these changes have created – or perpetuated – more hardship than hope. Many families face little improvement in the quality of their lives, only an intensification of poverty, hunger, marginality and inequality. Seen together, massive challenges and dislocations extend to the whole horizon, yet equally there are immense opportunities.

This *Report* focuses on the potential transformative power of adult learning and education to address contemporary challenges. Drawing on the contributions of many stakeholders from around the globe, it calls upon the international community to take practical steps to expand the quantity and quality of adult education opportunities worldwide, within a broad framework of lifelong learning. It argues that while adult education cannot claim to be the sole solution for the many problems facing the world, it nonetheless represents a critical and necessary building block for real progress. With enough political will, renewed stakeholder commitment and adequate resources, adult education can empower individuals and communities alike to break out of the cycle of exclusion and disadvantage towards a more sustainable future.

The publication of this *Report* coincides with CONFINTEA VI, a unique and timely platform for the international community to discuss and address the vast unmet demand for adult education opportunities. CONFINTEA VI offers the possibility to re-examine the role that adult learning and education can play to ensure that large numbers of the marginalised are able to participate actively in shaping their own development and, by so doing, contributing to societal transformation. This *Report* offers evidence of what adult learning and education can contribute. It shows what is needed to enable their full potential to be exploited so that the benefits of learning are available not just to the rich and privileged but also to those who live in the harshest conditions and at the edges of societies across the world.

The information compiled for this *Report* advances a strong case for adult learning and education. It highlights the diverse pathways through which adult learning empowers individuals and communities. It underscores the links between adult education and improved health outcomes, employability and lifetime earnings. It provides substance to the assertion that the effects of education multiply – for families and children – when parents, particularly mothers, experience quality learning programmes. It shows that investing in adults contributes directly (and indirectly) to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All targets. In fact, only when adult learning and education are adequately supported will poverty reduction and quality education for all be attained. Upward spirals of lifelong and life-wide learning, with literacy as their base, are the necessary foundation for economic growth and human progress. This is especially true in contexts where information and knowledge have become the major currencies of development.

In 1997, the Hamburg *Declaration on Adult Learning* identified adult learning as “both a consequence of active citizenship and a condition for full participation in society”. Since that time there has been an increasing shift to a perspective in which adult education is located within a lifelong learning context that, at its best, integrates both empowering and instrumental rationales for adult learning.

This in turn needs to be located within a capability approach, which considers the overall expansion of human capabilities and includes not merely personal and economic development but also the capability to interact socially and participate politically. These changes in thinking have altered the position of adult education in terms of policy development: it is no longer of interest only to education departments. Increasingly it must be seen as offering a means by which a wide variety of government agendas can be achieved and therefore should encompass other sectors.

Given the potential offered by investment in adult education, it is disappointing to see from the National and Regional Synthesis Reports that many governments have not taken the necessary strides in policy development to secure adult learning opportunities for their populations or invested the resources needed to make a reality of the adult education policies that exist. The evidence collected presents a rather depressing picture of a sector that has not yet managed to convince governments of either the benefits it can deliver or the costs of failure to invest.

The challenges remain immense – 774 million adults still lack basic literacy skills, two thirds of them women, and 45 countries have not yet achieved the developing country average of 79% adult literacy. Richer nations continue to struggle to motivate the disadvantaged to learn, and private sector involvement in education and training, while welcome, threatens to displace government monies with devastating consequences for equity.

There have been improvements but these have been patchy and piecemeal. Many governments have yet to formulate a clear and shared definition of what constitutes adult education and how it should be

measured. Countries are still searching for a common understanding of the overall parameters of the adult education sector – which runs the gamut from basic literacy programmes to higher education and professional development in the workplace – and its place in a lifelong learning framework. This situation reinforces policy fragmentation rather than coherence. In many cases the predominance of literacy programmes, especially in the countries of the South, associated as they are with disadvantaged populations, undermines political support for comprehensive adult education. Moreover, since participation in adult learning programmes is often informal and untied to formal credentials, it is difficult to estimate the short- and medium-term outcomes (or returns to investment) of adult education, thus complicating the policy formation process. Low and unpredictable levels of resource allocation reinforce a self-perpetuating cycle: limited budgets undermine the case for the sector, leading to inconsistent and short-term programmes and a high turnover of staff and teachers. These conditions inhibit the ability of adult educators to develop partnerships and common cause with civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders.

In terms of policy and governance this *Report* highlights the key challenge of mainstreaming adult education within a comprehensive lifelong learning policy. The realities of adult education in the South may make the necessity for this seem irrelevant but for countries in Africa, Asia, the Arab States and Latin America and the Caribbean it is important to make the connections and break through the barriers between literacy and further education and qualifications. On the positive side, regional dialogue and international collaboration have increased, resulting in, among other things, a common set of objectives and opportunities as well as a growing knowledge base of best practice in adult learning. In the realm of governance the mismatch between top-down approaches and the diversity of practice on the ground are all too visible. Palpable tensions between central control and local autonomy continue unabated.

This *Report* fully attests to the amazing diversity of adult education provision in the 21st century. From a global perspective the sector consists of a wide variety of programmes with a multiplicity of purposes provided by an increasing number of actors from the public sector, private organisations and civil society. In countries in the South literacy programmes dominate, while work-related programmes constitute the second most important form of provision. In much of the world the private sector has become more actively involved in provision, and in many instances adult learning opportunities cut across national boundaries. NGOs feature heavily in adult education programmes seeking to build community capacity. In essence provision is dynamic, responding to changes in economic and social development. The landscape has been changed by the development of market-driven provision and the growing presence of civil society organisations. In an area where state funding is unstable and often short-term, maintaining equity is a significant difficulty.

The National and Regional Synthesis Reports illustrate the enormity of this challenge. It resides not only in the difficulty of persuading governments that adult education is a key factor in eradicating poverty but also in the need to convince those who would most benefit from adult learning programmes that education will materially improve their lives and life chances. This struggle on two fronts is exacerbated by a continuing lack of reliable and systematic data, especially but not exclusively in the South. A weak information infrastructure hampers resource allocation arguments and impedes the measurement of effectiveness. The pattern emerging from the Reports shows the intransigence of the equity issues where those with most education continue to benefit most from learning as adults. This highlights the need to work with partners in tackling the low participation of excluded populations, and the highly inequitable access to learning opportunities.

The benefits of adult education depend not merely on participation but also on the value that the experience provides, primarily for learners but also for other stakeholders. Thus quality in adult learning and education is an important facet of this Report. Quality programmes must be both relevant and effective. The National Reports provide multiple examples of adult learning programmes that are notable for the ways in which they provide culturally-relevant responses to particular groups in the country and enable different qualifications systems to be inter-linked. The prime marker of quality is a pedagogy based on learners themselves, their knowledge and desires, which leads to active participation. This approach can be in tension with governments' and funders' preoccupation with tangible learning outcomes. Regardless, meeting the legitimate demands of both learners and funders for quality programmes requires a well-trained and motivated professional staff. The Report shows how low investment has operated against the development of a secure and professional adult education workforce. It also highlights the critical choices that have to be made when funding is scarce between investment in quality systems and increasing access.

The issue of under-investment in adult education is an underlying theme of the Report. Few countries are investing at anything like the levels identified as necessary at CONFINTEA V. Indeed, accurate figures on investment are difficult to collect, given the diversity of definitions of adult education coupled with the wide variety of activity, funders and government departments involved in adult education. Lack of funding contributes to the difficulties of making an adequate case for adult education and convincing governments of the value of greater investment. This lack of investment can be contrasted with the developing interest and commitment of the private sector to the training and development of their workers and the increasing commitment to adult education of civil society organisations. To address the issue of financing effectively, there needs to be a much clearer view of who is likely to pay for what and who can contribute. It is also evident that if adult education is to be conceived of within a lifelong learning and capability framework

then a different budgetary perspective is required: one that moves beyond the boundaries of education departments.

CONFINTEA VI can serve potentially as a crucial tipping-point for adult education. The need to address the current financial crisis as well as to secure a global future based on knowledge and justice provides a fertile context for reinvigorating actions in support of adult learning and education. For all countries – both in the South and in those with long histories of adult education systems – learning is needed if economic success is to run hand-in-hand with social cohesion. However, as this Report has clearly shown, much needs to be done to enable the sector to contribute to maximum effect. If the best possible results are to be obtained from what it can offer, then all of those engaged with the system have to play their part. All actors need to be mobilised and to work in a coordinated way to ensure a coherent use of resources.

For governments, a critical first step is to understand that adult education is neither a luxury nor an optional extra. It is able to contribute to a host of developmental goals at the heart of government agendas. The mainstreaming of adult education policy into a wide array of public policies is therefore a prerequisite. The support of regional groupings of countries in this process is invaluable, as demonstrated by the European Union's Lisbon Strategy, which provides for monitoring and cross-country comparisons of adult learning and education.

As this *Report* has clearly shown, adult education is inhibited in its ability to deliver equitable programmes by chronic under-funding. Governments have two roles to play in changing this situation. First there is an undeniable need for governments to augment their own contribution, for since Hamburg few governments have invested to the levels agreed even at that time to be necessary. Perhaps more importantly,

governments should mobilise other stakeholders – the private sector, NGOs, and, in some contexts, the international community – and clarify with them mutually-agreed resource and funding expectations for adult education in their country. The combination of policy-making and additional funding should establish clear roles and responsibilities – an essential component in constructing the stable platform for adult learning and education to flourish.

Mobilising resources from private enterprise and civil society partners requires that governments develop a clear understanding of their different motivations and to keep a focus themselves on the need to promote equity through government funding. It is also important that governments take a strong stance on issues of the quality of provision, but one mitigated by a clear view of the realities of the situation existing for different providers and in different contexts, so that monitoring activity does not divert scarce resources from delivery.

In addition to the policy formation, coordination and monitoring functions carried out by governments, the adult education sector must also play a key role to ensure that the sector thrives. For example, adult educators should support the collection of reliable data and minimise the over-use of anecdotal assertions – both limit sector accountability and programme scrutiny by external actors. While governments may be faulted for not establishing clear data collection practices, practitioners and academics must take responsibility for the on-going lack of empirical evidence and show themselves ready to move forward in this respect. A shared strategy for the collection and co-ordination of solid research among governments and other agencies, whether regional or international, should enable more effective targeting of resources.



The chapters on participation and equity underscore that it is not solely governments that need to be convinced of the value of adult education. An equally significant task lies in addressing the concerns of those who might benefit most from adult learning experiences. Even in countries with well-established infrastructures for adult learning, many disadvantaged adults remain convinced that adult education has little power to change their lives.

Private sector organisations have greater opportunities to influence employee attitudes about the benefits of lifelong learning, especially if workers are involved in global markets. Their influence is obviously circumscribed in communities where knowledge-based economies are weak. In these contexts, it falls on governments and partner NGOs to make the case to potential learners, especially those belonging to marginalised groups. Creative solutions are featured in the Report and are best achieved through dynamic partnerships. Developing the best pre-conditions for sustaining such partnership is one of the challenges to be addressed at CONFINTEA VI.

Civil society represents a vital constituency in the struggle to bring the benefits of adult learning to marginalised and disadvantaged populations. It needs a framework of support in which to work, and governments need to act in partnership with NGOs to achieve this, but the latter also need to be willing to work in collaboration and to understand and work with the requirements of governments for clarity about the uses of state funding. Adult educators have to provide evidence of the outcomes of their work that will ensure its support.

Finally, in a global society countries must help each other in this area, with donor countries making adult education a primary goal of their programmes. Recipient countries, meanwhile, need to build adult education into development proposals, poverty reduction programmes and health projects. The need for transparency and good governance on both sides hardly needs stressing.

CONFINTEA VI presents an opportune moment for all those deeply committed to adult learning and education. It offers a real chance to integrate adult learning across and within government departments through the concepts of lifelong learning and capability. The global recession will have many and far-reaching effects, but embracing the vital role of adult learning could provide one very positive ingredient in planning for a better future.

# KEY ISSUES IN DEVELOPING THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR ADULT EDUCATION POLICY AND PROGRAMMES

Since CONFINTEA II in Montreal in 1960, the importance of gathering information and undertaking research on adult education at the country level has been a recurrent theme of discussion. Successive CONFINTEA conferences have reiterated the critical contribution of data and research to help refine policies, monitor results and improve programmes. During the preparation of this first *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education* it has become clear that almost 50 years after the first calls for improved information and research considerable gaps in the knowledge base for adult education persist. This CONFINTEA should represent the point at which measurement moves from rhetoric into action.

## What exists now?

There are basic data and indicators, impact studies and studies of policy experience in the field of adult education and training, but global coverage is uneven. Many countries in Europe and North America have started to collect data systematically on participation in adult education, while there is little information on adult education at the national level in other parts of the world. The existing knowledge base for many countries is inadequate to support decision-making related to adult education. Thus, adult education programmes in most countries can neither be monitored properly, nor effectively developed or implemented to meet the objectives of individual learners or society as a whole.

## What are the measurement challenges?

Part of the reason for this is purely technical. Data requirements for adult education are more extensive than for formal education aimed at children and youth because they involve a wider range of learners, stakeholders, programmes, learning settings and pedagogies. It is easier to expand existing monitoring mechanisms in countries with a well-developed schooling system than in countries where the most basic education needs remain unmet. Moreover, the roles of different stakeholders vary considerably. Government agencies should collect administrative data on national programmes. Firms and other actors in the private sector manage programmes they offer in the market for adult learning. Members of civil society, among the key providers of adult education, also document their activities but more at the programme or local level.

## What are the next steps?

### 1. Learn from existing best measurement practices

Given the diversity of stakeholders and programmes, an inventory of existing data sets and their level of detail would be a first step towards a comprehensive assessment of the state of adult education. Existing measures of education outcomes should be used to their fullest, including traditional literacy statistics or other indicators of self-reported skills, as well as more sophisticated assessments of skills and learning outcomes like the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP). It is crucial to include data on participants and non-participants (those who are excluded from the education system) collected with sample surveys, and not only to focus on data from providers of

adult education programmes. A mapping of existing information and best practices in terms of measurement can help to articulate the current state of data on adult education.

## **2. Strengthen conceptual frameworks**

But such an inventory is only an initial step. The EFA *Global Monitoring Report 2008* concluded that in adult education there are (i) no quantitative targets, (ii) a lack of common understanding of which learning activities are to be included, and (iii) very few comparable and international indicators to measure the extent to which the needs of young and adult learners are being met.

This points to a more basic problem of articulating a shared conceptual understanding of adult learning and education and its implications for developing a knowledge base that will be useful to different stakeholders. Clarifying the nature and range of adult education and where responsibility for it is situated (not only in the education sector but also in other sectors such as labour, agriculture or health) is therefore essential. Once this is accomplished, it is necessary to understand the policy needs (policies, governance, financing) and dimensions (participation, quality) of adult education that need to be studied. A common understanding is essential to moving the measurement agenda forward.

## **3. Build national demand and capacity**

Every country has its own specific context related to the provision of adult education, the generation of data on such programmes, and the available technical and financial resources for undertaking data collection, analysis and dissemination. There has to be clarity about the objectives of building knowledge bases: they can be used for target-setting, development of

national action plans, capacity-building, planning and resource management, or monitoring of progress, outcomes and effectiveness. At some point governments need to make a political choice about how to use the data and research: either to regulate and control or to enhance and improve. Each country needs to determine itself what is feasible to achieve – conceptually, technically and in view of implementation capacities. Each has to determine what issues are more urgent in the short-term and what can only be reached over the long-term with additional capacity.

With such national efforts, there are greater opportunities to build up regional and international initiatives. Good practice can be shared and comparative studies planned to build a critical momentum for measurement. The publication of this first *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education* and the convening of CONFINTEA VI represent an important platform and opportunity to reflect on priorities for adult education data, build a strategy in support of the necessary national capacity-building, and map out clearly the roles of different UNESCO bodies, other international organisations and donor nations in supporting these efforts.

# APPENDICES

**Appendix Table 1**
**Laws or policies on adult learning and education, as reported in National Reports prepared for CONFITEA VI**

Region	Arab states	Asia-Pacific	Europe and North America
Total number of submitted reports	19	29	38
Countries with general laws or policies related to adult learning and education that were developed since 1997 (including strategies, plans, acts, decrees, papers) <sup>1</sup>	Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen	Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, India, Iran, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Solomon Islands, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Vietnam	Armenia, Belgium (Flemish), Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America
Total number of countries with related legislative frameworks	13	24	35
Share of countries mentioning any policy in relation to the sub-mitted reports per region (in %)	68	83	92
Of these countries, which have a specific law or policy on adult learning and education that were developed after 1997? <sup>1</sup>	Tunisia, Yemen	Australia, Bangladesh, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Solomon Islands, Thailand	Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom, United States of America
Total number of countries with specific legislation since 1997	2	6	27
Share of countries with specific legislation in relation to the submitted reports per region (in %)	11	21	71
Countries with aligned implementation of adult learning and education policies <sup>2</sup>	Egypt, Lebanon, Mauritania, Palestine, Tunisia	Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, New Zealand, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Vietnam	Armenia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Total number of countries with aligned implementation	5	13	19
Share of countries with aligned implementation in relation to the submitted reports per region (in %)	26	45	50
Countries where the existence of other policies have impact on adult learning and education <sup>3</sup>	Oman	Australia, Fiji, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Vietnam	Armenia, Belgium (Flemish), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Latvia, Montenegro, Norway, Slovenia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Total number of countries with aligned implementation	1	6	11
Share of countries in relation to the submitted reports per region (in %)	5	21	29

Notes:

1) Refers to responses to question 1.1.1. from the Guidelines for the Preparation of National Reports on the Situation of Adult Learning and Education:

- What is the legislative and policy environment of adult learning and education in your country? Indicate which policies and laws related to adult learning and education have been established since 1997 (CONFITEA V).

2) Refers to responses to question 1.1.4. from the Guidelines for the Preparation of National Reports on the Situation of Adult Learning and Education:

- How are the policy and implementation strategies aligned, for example, with:
  - policies in other sectors (health, economy, labour, rural development, etc.);

- other goals, such as gender equality, social cohesion, active citizenship, cultural and linguistic diversity;

- the creation of knowledge economies and/or the building of learning societies

- national development plans and strategies; or in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers;

3) Refers to responses to question 1.1.6. from the Guidelines for the Preparation of National Reports on the Situation of Adult Learning and Education:

- Are there other policies in place that have an impact on adult learning and education?

Latin America and Caribbean	Sub-Saharan Africa	Total
25	43	154
Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & Grenadines, Venezuela	Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe	Countries with general laws or policies
20	34	126
<b>80</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>82</b>
Honduras, Panama	Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Comoros, Eritrea, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Seychelles, South Africa, Uganda, Zimbabwe	Countries with specific laws or policies
2	19	56
<b>8</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>36</b>
Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Uruguay	Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe	Countries with aligned implementation
16	27	80
<b>64</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>52</b>
Argentina, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname	Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Equatorial Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Uganda, Zambia	Countries where the existence of other policies have impact on adult learning and education
9	15	42
<b>36</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>27</b>

**Appendix Table 2**

Estimated educational attainment of the population aged 25 years and older for countries with available data by region, sub-region and income group, latest year available

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	GDP per capita (PPP), 2007	Weighted average literacy rate (%), adults 15 or older	Weighted average of those with less than primary (%), total	Weighted average of ISCED 1 completion (%), total	Weighted average of ISCED 2 completion (%), total	Weighted average of ISCED 3 completion (%), total	Weighted average of ISCED 4, 5, 6 completion (%), total	Weighted average of those with less than primary (%), female	Weighted average of ISCED 1 completion (%), female
<b>World</b>									
<b>(available countries only)</b>	12,976	82	18	82	66	51	20	20	80
Low income	1,319	63	53	47	30	20	6	63	37
Lower middle income	4,783	83	26	74	54	42	18	28	72
Upper middle income	11,655	94	25	75	50	33	12	27	73
High income: Non-OECD	33,048	89	22	78	60	45	22	26	74
High income: OECD	35,135	98	2	98	88	71	29	3	97
<b>Arab States</b>	16,491	72	48	52	34	18	8	55	45
Low income	2,132	58							
Lower middle income	4,778	71	55	45	26	10	3	61	39
Upper middle income	12,241	87							
High income: Non-OECD	38,311	87	37	63	49	34	19	44	56
<b>Middle East</b>	25,173	79	44	56	41	26	14	50	50
Low income	2,336	59							
Lower middle income	4,708	80	56	44	28	13	7	59	41
Upper middle income	10,113								
High income: Non-OECD	38,311	87	37	63	49	34	19	44	56
<b>North Africa</b>	5,639	69	54	46	24	8	0	62	38
Low income	1,928	56							
Lower middle income	4,802	68	54	46	24	8	0	62	38
Upper middle income	14,370	87							
<b>Asia and the Pacific</b>	10,381	81	24	76	62	46	18	28	72
Low income	1,842	66	52	48	32	22	6	62	38
Lower middle income	4,545	83	18	82	58	45	20	18	82
Upper middle income	9,549	95	15	85	66	49	22	18	82
High income: Non-OECD	46,376	94	5	95	66	55	27	7	93
High income: OECD	29,807		0	100	94	71	28	0	100
<b>Central Asia</b>	4,736	99	5	95	88	76	35	6	94
Low income	2,053	98	3	97	91	78	24	4	96
Lower middle income	5,126	99	3	97	91	80	38	4	96
Upper middle income	10,829	100	9	91	82	71	38	11	89
<b>South and West Asia</b>	4,116	64	53	47	30	20	5	64	36
Low income	1,600	53	53	47	30	20	5	64	36
Lower middle income	5,626	68							
<b>East Asia</b>	19,008	93	6	94	81	61	24	6	94
Low income	1,845	89							
Lower middle income	5,155	93	22	78	49	35	15	21	79
Upper middle income	13,379	92	18	82	54	35	11	23	77
High income: Non-OECD	46,376	94	5	95	66	55	27	7	93
High income: OECD	29,118		0	100	94	71	28	0	100

10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Weighted average of ISCED 2 completion (%), female	Weighted average of ISCED 3 completion (%), female	Weighted average of ISCED 4, 5, 6 completion (%), female	Weighted average of those with less than primary (%), male	Weighted average of ISCED 1 completion (%), male	Weighted average of ISCED 2 completion (%), male	Weighted average of ISCED 3 completion (%), male	Weighted average of ISCED 4, 5, 6 completion (%), male	Estimated number of all adults over 25 without primary education (ISCED 1), (including only countries with data) (thousands)	Estimated total number of all adults over 25 without primary education (ISCED 1), (available data is imputed to account for non-coverage) (thousands)	Population covered in ISCED related estimates (%)
64	49	19	15	85	69	54	22	223,782	876,221	36
22	15	4	44	56	38	26	7	84,271	254,660	33
52	40	18	24	76	56	44	18	41,433	483,510	9
48	32	11	23	77	52	35	12	78,058	114,966	68
56	44	22	18	82	63	46	22	5,555	7,314	76
86	68	27	2	98	89	73	31	14,465	15,770	92
31	17	8	42	58	36	20	9	18,442	67,274	27
								0		0
23	8	2	48	52	28	12	4	13,417	57,859	23
								0		0
45	33	20	32	68	52	34	18	5,025	6,402	78
38	24	14	40	60	43	28	15	10,036	21,541	47
								0		0
28	10	4	53	47	28	17	10	5,012	12,388	40
								0		0
45	33	20	32	68	52	34	18	5,025	6,402	78
21	7	0	46	54	27	9	0	8,406	48,791	17
								0		0
21	7	0	46	54	27	9	0	8,406	45,018	19
								0		0
58	42	16	20	80	66	50	20	83,031	422,053	17
23	16	4	42	58	40	28	8	70,933	133,632	53
58	44	20	18	82	59	45	20	8,441	284,664	3
62	47	22	11	89	70	52	22	3,114	3,171	98
63	53	24	3	97	70	57	30	405	432	94
92	68	24	0	100	96	75	33	139	153	91
85	73	34	4	96	91	79	36	1,243	1,982	63
88	74	22	2	98	94	82	26	158	537	29
88	77	36	2	98	93	82	41	295	359	82
79	68	40	7	93	86	73	36	790	790	100
21	14	4	44	56	37	26	7	70,775	393,387	18
21	14	4	44	56	37	26	7	70,775	81,176	87
								0		0
80	58	22	6	94	83	64	28	10,875	223,773	15
								0		0
49	35	16	22	78	49	35	14	8,146	221,034	4
50	32	10	14	86	59	38	12	2,324	2,324	100
63	53	24	3	97	70	57	30	405	415	98
92	68	24	0	100	96	75	33	0	0	100

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	GDP per capita (PPP), 2007	Weighted average literacy rate (%), adults 15 or older	Weighted average of those with less than primary (%), total	Weighted average of ISCED 1 completion (%), total	Weighted average of ISCED 2 completion (%), total	Weighted average of ISCED 3 completion (%), total	Weighted average of ISCED 4, 5, 6 completion (%), total	Weighted average of those with less than primary (%), female	Weighted average of ISCED 1 completion (%), female
<b>The Pacific</b>	7,793	60	5	95	94	66	32	5	95
Low income	1,884	58							
Lower middle income	2,754	90	0	100	74	74	8	0	100
Upper middle income	4,439								
High income: Non-OECD									
High income: OECD	30,496		5	95	95	66	32	5	95
<b>Europe and North America</b>	25,731	98	4	96	82	67	27	6	94
Lower middle income	6,374	99	3	97	88	72	36	5	95
Upper middle income	13,445	97	14	86	53	38	12	21	79
High income: Non-OECD	24,599	99	3	97	85	66	23	4	96
High income: OECD	36,061	98	3	97	86	71	29	3	97
<b>Central and Eastern Europe</b>	13,819	97	9	91	70	54	20	13	87
Lower middle income	6,374	99	3	97	88	72	36	5	95
Upper middle income	13,445	97	14	86	53	38	12	21	79
High income: Non-OECD	24,173	100	2	98	92	72	23	2	98
High income: OECD	20,693	99	0	100	96	76	15	0	100
<b>Western Europe</b>	36,212	98	5	95	79	58	22	6	94
High income: Non-OECD	24,884	96	7	93	67	47	22	9	91
High income: OECD	38,100	98	5	95	79	58	22	6	94
<b>North America</b>	40,760		1	99	93	84	38	1	99
High income: OECD	40,760		1	99	93	84	38	1	99
<b>Latin America - Caribbean</b>	9,079	91	30	70	45	32	11	31	69
Low income	1,155	62							
Lower middle income	5,198	89	36	64	40	34	12	39	61
Upper middle income	10,262	93	28	72	47	31	11	29	71
High income: Non-OECD	19,645	98	8	92	84	46	17	8	92
<b>Latin America</b>	8,003	92	30	70	45	31	11	31	69
Lower middle income	5,048	90	36	64	40	34	12	39	61
Upper middle income	10,958	92	29	71	46	31	11	29	71
<b>The Caribbean</b>	11,036	87	14	86	69	41	10	15	85
Low income	1,155	62							
Lower middle income	6,691	89							
Upper middle income	9,102	97	14	86	69	40	9	15	85
High income: Non-OECD	19,645	98	8	92	84	46	17	8	92
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	3,640	62	50	50	38	18	7	55	45
Low income	1,052	59	64	36	19	8	4	73	27
Lower middle income	3,682	72							
Upper middle income	13,201	88	38	62	55	27	9	40	60

Source: Calculations based on following databases: UIS literacy data, UIS ISCED data and World Bank GDP and population data

Notes:

1. UIS literacy data (column 2: Database publicly available online at UIS Data centre); UIS ISCED data (columns 3-18); World Bank GDP and population data (columns 1, 18: World Development Indicators database, World Bank, revised 17 October 2008)

2. Data for the most recent year are taken for each country. Reference years for educational attainment data by region and sub-region range as follows: Arab States (2001-2006), Central and Eastern Europe (2001-2007), Central Asia (2001-2007), East Asia and the Pacific (1996-2006), Latin America and the Caribbean (2000-2007), North America and Western Europe (2002-2006), South and West Asia (2001-2006), Sub-Saharan Africa (1998-2002), World (1996-2007). Reference year for literacy data ranges from 1998 to 2007.

3. Educational attainment estimates for each region, sub-region and income group are calculated as weighted averages of the country estimates that are available. Thus estimates reflect the relative size or weight of each country, region, sub-region or income group. However, the weighted estimates in columns 3-16 do not take into account the impact of missing data.

4. It is important to note that because of missing data, estimates in columns 3-16 do not reflect the total number of adults in the world. Column 18 provides an estimate of the population covered within each regional, sub-regional or income group. Column 17 offers a weighted imputed estimate which takes into account the impact of missing data.



10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Weighted average of ISCED 2 completion (%), female	Weighted average of ISCED 3 completion (%), female	Weighted average of ISCED 4, 5, 6 completion (%), female	Weighted average of those with less than primary (%), male	Weighted average of ISCED 1 completion (%), male	Weighted average of ISCED 2 completion (%), male	Weighted average of ISCED 3 completion (%), male	Weighted average of ISCED 4, 5, 6 completion (%), male	Estimated number of all adults over 25 without primary education (ISCED 1), (including only countries with data) (thousands)	Estimated total number of all adults over 25 without primary education (ISCED 1), (available data is imputed to account for non-coverage) (thousands)	Population covered in ISCED related estimates (%)
94	64	33	5	95	95	69	30	139	1,057	13
								0		0
72	72	6	0	100	76	76	10	0	0	5
								0		0
								0		0
95	63	34	5	95	95	69	31	139	851	16
80	64	27	3	97	85	70	28	24,859	44,355	77
85	69	38	2	98	91	76	34	1,199	1,374	87
46	32	11	7	93	60	44	14	9,239	27,316	34
84	62	24	2	98	88	70	21	95	99	96
85	69	28	2	98	87	73	30	14,326	15,566	92
65	49	19	4	96	75	60	20	10,552	28,804	47
85	69	38	2	98	91	76	34	1,199	1,374	87
46	32	11	7	93	60	44	14	9,239	27,316	34
90	69	24	1	99	93	76	21	40	40	100
95	70	14	0	100	97	83	16	75	75	100
76	55	21	3	97	81	62	24	11,237	13,142	86
63	42	21	4	96	71	51	23	55	65	86
76	55	21	3	97	81	62	24	11,182	13,077	86
93	84	37	1	99	93	84	38	3,070	3,070	100
93	84	37	1	99	93	84	38	3,070	3,070	100
45	32	11	29	71	46	31	11	75,062	85,308	88
								0		0
38	32	11	36	64	39	33	11	18,376	24,228	76
46	31	11	27	73	47	30	11	56,656	59,792	95
85	49	19	8	92	82	43	16	30	313	10
44	31	11	29	71	45	30	11	73,974	80,398	92
38	32	11	36	64	39	33	11	18,376	22,573	81
45	31	11	28	72	46	30	11	55,598	58,376	95
67	41	10	12	88	72	41	10	1,089	2,909	37
								0		0
								0		0
66	40	10	13	87	72	41	9	1,058	1,264	84
85	49	19	8	92	82	43	16	30	313	10
34	16	6	44	56	42	21	8	22,387	140,539	18
13	5	3	54	46	25	12	6	13,338	130,990	10
								0		0
53	25	8	36	64	58	29	9	9,049	9,550	95

5. 88 countries and two occupied territories are included in calculation of ISCED completion estimates

a. Arab States

i. Middle East: Bahrain, Gaza, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, West Bank

ii. North Africa: Algeria

b. Asia and the Pacific

i. Central Asia: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan

ii. South and West Asia: Bangladesh, Pakistan

iii. East Asia: Hong Kong of China, Japan, Macao of China, Malaysia,

Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore

iv. The Pacific: New Zealand and Tonga

c. Europe and North America

i. Central and Eastern Europe: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine

ii. Western Europe: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland

iii. North America: Canada, United States of America

d. Latin America and the Caribbean

i. Latin America: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay

ii. The Caribbean: Anguilla, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada

e. Sub-Saharan Africa: Benin, Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe

**Appendix Table 3**

Proportion of adults aged 16 to 65 participating in organised forms of adult learning and education during the year preceding the interview, by country groupings and various classification variables, multiple sources and (1994-2003)

			Group 1 (≥50%)					Group 2 (35-50% range)				
	IALS average	Eurobarometer EU15+1 average <sup>5</sup>	Denmark <sup>1,2</sup>	Finland <sup>1,2</sup>	Iceland <sup>2</sup>	Norway <sup>1,2,3</sup>	Sweden <sup>1,2</sup>	Austria <sup>2</sup>	Australia <sup>1</sup>	Bermuda <sup>3</sup>	Canada <sup>1,3</sup>	Luxembourg <sup>2</sup>
<b>Overall participation rate</b>	33	37	57	58	69	47	51	39	36	47	37	38
<b>Age</b>												
16-25	42	47	68	70	90	43	41	44	46	56	44	59
26-35	43	42	63	70	71	56	57	41	41	56	42	36
36-45	41	41	64	65	68	52	61	47	40	47	42	44
46-55	34	34	55	55	62	47	57	36	31	44	33	36
56-65	18	21	32	30	56	24	35	26	18	29	15	24
<b>Gender</b>												
Women	36	36	59	62	72	46	52	40	35	52	36	35
Men	37	37	55	55	66	48	49	39	38	42	38	41
<b>Parent's education<sup>6</sup></b>												
Less than upper secondary	31		49	50		39	48		34	40	28	
Upper secondary	44		60	66		50	54		41	51	42	
Higher than upper secondary	53		69	77		58	57		48	60	56	
<b>Education<sup>7</sup></b>												
Less than upper secondary	22	21	41	36	71	25	35	28	24	19	21	20
Upper secondary	40	37	56	63	64	44	52	40	38	32	32	42
Higher than upper secondary	58	52	75	80	70	65	67	55	56	60	56	51
<b>Functional literacy level<sup>6,8</sup></b>												
Level 1	17		23	21		15	29		14	22	17	
Level 2	31		47	42		39	41		27	38	28	
Level 3	47		69	68		51	52		43	50	43	
Level 4/5	59		77	83		64	60		61	65	53	
<b>Employment status</b>												
Unemployed	27	34	53	30	75	38	44	41	29	32	30	11
Employed	44	43	60	70	68	53	59	43	43	49	42	45
Retired	10	14	18	17	100	7	16	19	9	24	11	8
Student <sup>9</sup>	63	89	89	92	100	44	40	94	96	83	66	100
<b>Outside labour force (eg. homemaker)</b>	15	15	22	29	43	14	25	29	13	35	23	29
<b>Occupation<sup>10</sup></b>												
Blue-collar low-skill	26	29	42	48	69	37	39	10	26	23	26	14
Blue-collar high-skill	30	31	47	50	57	43	42	32	33	29	29	30
White-collar low-skill	42	47	63	68	66	47	52	44	44	40	40	53
White-collar high-skill	58	59	73	82	74	63	68	61	55	61	53	58
<b>Immigration status<sup>6</sup></b>												
Foreign-born	34		55	61		41	38		31	51	33	
Native-born	37		57	58		47	52		38	45	38	
<b>Language status<sup>6</sup></b>												
First and official language(s) not the same	31		46	66		42	37		29	39	28	
First and official language(s) same	37		57	58		47	52		38	48	39	
<b>Community size</b>												
Rural	33	34	49	63	65	45	49	39	34	47	31	42
Urban	38	39	60	51	70	50	52	39	37	47	38	35

Calculations based on the following databases: Statistics Canada, 1994, 1996, 1998; OECD and Statistics Canada, 2005 and Eurobarometer, 2003.

					Group 3 (20-35%)								Group 4 (below 20%)				
Netherlands <sup>2</sup>	New Zealand <sup>1</sup>	Switzerland <sup>1,3</sup>	United Kingdom <sup>1,2</sup>	United States <sup>1,3</sup>	Belgium <sup>2,4</sup>	Czech Republic <sup>1</sup>	France <sup>2</sup>	Germany <sup>2,4</sup>	Ireland <sup>1,2</sup>	Italy <sup>1,2,3</sup>	Slovenia <sup>1</sup>	Spain <sup>2</sup>	Chile <sup>1</sup>	Greece <sup>2</sup>	Hungary <sup>1</sup>	Poland <sup>1</sup>	Portugal <sup>2,4</sup>
38	48	42	45	41	32	26	23	35	24	23	34	27	20	17	20	15	13
48	60	49	51	33	40	24	39	46	29	34	43	40	25	26	28	18	25
46	52	50	51	47	34	34	25	41	27	28	46	38	25	26	28	17	18
40	51	44	54	45	38	29	21	40	25	25	39	29	21	18	20	18	12
31	43	39	41	44	28	30	22	34	18	18	28	15	12	11	16	11	7
17	28	25	21	27	18	9	8	16	9	9	9	8	7	3	3	3	1
36	47	41	44	41	29	22	20	32	25	19	32	26	20	13	21	13	13
39	49	44	46	41	34	31	26	37	22	26	35	27	19	20	19	16	12
34	44	30	44	27		22			21	19	23		16		12	12	
49	52	48	63	45		34			33	39	45		33		25	21	
46	62	50	68	55		31			38	52	66		47		43	36	
26	38	20	34	14	13	18	14	24	14	9	12		10	4	7	8	8
44	51	45	53	32	31	36	20	35	28	38	36		25	16	18	21	19
53	65	56	71	63	47	47	32	51	45	51	74		45	31	48	34	42
22	30	22	21	14		12			9	8	15		11		8	8	
30	36	36	34	31		22			18	22	41		25		20	15	
42	56	52	58	48		33			30	39	62		40		35	23	
54	68	64	74	64		41			48	44	75		48		46	41	
38	33	33	30	26	26	19	46	35	10	16	17	43	19	20	13	9	8
43	54	46	57	48	41	33	25	43	30	29	42	30	23	23	29	20	17
13	18	20	9	13	14	5	4	6	3	5	6	11	15	3	1	2	0
66	92	49	56	42		21	100	59	50	100	88	84	100	100	30	19	10
23	23	25	14	14	6	0	7	16	11	3	11	10	8	2	0	4	1
29	36	28	37	22	21	19	18	25	17	13	18	16	12	10	13	11	11
40	41	36	37	29	29	29	16	37	16	15	25	27	13	16	15	10	10
43	54	44	58	44	50	23	26	41	38	27	47	32	30	27	25	18	23
48	69	56	69	65	70	45	37	59	46	50	68	46	50	43	45	38	41
45	46	27	45	30		13			26	29	23		31		24	3	
37	48	46	45	42		27			23	22	35		19		20	15	
42	41	33	41	29		24			28	18	23		13		11	11	
38	49	44	45	43		26			23	23	35		20		20	15	
36	40	37	46	43	30	21	22	34	18	19	25	22	9	10	14	10	12
38	51	44	45	34	33	29	23	36	27	27	37	29	22	20	23	18	13

Table 3: Notes:

1. Data source is the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), 1994-1998. Due to different exclusion criteria used with regard to defining the relevant adult population, participation rates can vary from results published in OECD and Statistics Canada (2000). Exclusion criteria used to produce participation rates presented here are as follows: Adults aged 16 to 19 participating in full-time studies (4 or more days per week) toward ISCED 0-3, and who are not financially supported by an employer or union are excluded. Similarly, adults aged 16 to 24 in full-time studies toward ISCED 4-7, and who are not financially supported by an employer or union are excluded.
2. Data source is Eurobarometer 2003. For countries who participated in both the IALS, 1994-1998 and Eurobarometer 2003, only the results of IALS are reported here so as to maintain best comparability with as many countries as possible. All full-time students 16 to 24 were excluded since it was not possible to make a more refined exclusion as in IALS. However, the general patterns among the various characteristics are very similar.
3. Bermuda, Canada, Italy, Norway, Switzerland and the United States participated in the Adult Literacy and Lifeskills (ALL) Survey, 2003. To maintain as much comparability as possible, however, the IALS results are reported for Canada, Norway, Switzerland, the United States, and Italy. Data source for Bermuda is ALL, 2003. The same exclusion criteria as described in Note 1 are applied in defining the adult population for Bermuda. It is noteworthy that Canada, Norway, Switzerland, and the United States of America all achieve rates near or exceeding 50% in ALL 2003, signifying substantial improvements, particularly for Canada, Switzerland and the United States of America, but due to changes in the questionnaire design, comparability with IALS is not guaranteed. Still, it could be argued that these countries should now be shifted to Group 1. Similarly, Italy's participation rate dropped in the ALL study to 19 per cent, providing grounds for it to be shifted to Group 4 but this is not done here since it was chosen to report the IALS results instead.
4. Belgium (Flanders), Germany and Portugal also participated in the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), 1994-1998, but because certain questions included in this analysis were not asked, or not deemed comparable, the Eurobarometer 2003 data were reported instead.
5. The Eurobarometer average includes all original 15 member states plus Iceland.
6. The variables parents' education, functional literacy level, immigration and language status were not available in the Eurobarometer, 2003 dataset.
7. In the Eurobarometer 2003 dataset the corresponding categories were actually defined using a 'total years of schooling' variable as: 10 years or less; 11 to 13 years; 14 or more years; whereas in IALS and ALL the categories were defined using a 'highest level of education attained'.
8. The functional literacy measure is based on the prose literacy variable in IALS, which was defined as: the knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts including editorials, news stories, brochures and instruction manuals. The IALS literacy levels on the prose scale are defined as follows:
  - a. Level 1 – Most of the tasks in this level require the respondent to read a relatively short text to locate a single piece of information which is identical to or synonymous with the information given in the question or directive. If plausible but incorrect information is present in the text, it tends not to be located near the correct information.
  - b. Level 2 – Some tasks in this level require respondents to locate a single piece of information in the text. However, several distractors or plausible but incorrect pieces of information may be present, or low-level inferences may be required. Other tasks require the respondent to integrate two or more pieces of information or to compare and contrast easily identifiable information based on a criterion provided in the question or directive.
  - c. Level 3 – Tasks in this level tend to require respondents to make literal or synonymous matches between the text and information given in the task, or to make matches that require low-level inferences. Other tasks ask respondents to integrate information from dense or lengthy text that contains no organisational aids such as headings. Respondents may also be asked to generate a response based on information that can be easily identified in the text. Distracting information is present, but is not located near the correct information.
  - d. Level 4 – These tasks require respondents to perform multiple-feature matches and to integrate or synthesise information from complex or lengthy passages. More complex inferences are needed to perform successfully. Conditional information is frequently present in tasks at this level and must be taken into consideration by the respondent.
  - e. Level 5 – Some tasks in this level require the respondent to search for information in dense text which contains a number of plausible distractors. Others ask respondents to make high-level inferences or use specialised background knowledge. Some tasks ask respondents to contrast complex information.
9. Adults aged 25 to 65 who consider themselves as students (full- or part-time) and part-time students aged 16 to 24 do not necessarily report participating in organized forms of adult learning and education. This may occur, for example, among students in formal degree programmes. In some countries they may, however, by default be counted as adult learners which explains the observations of 100 per cent in certain cases. This highlights the difficulties of making what counts as adult learning and education in each country strictly comparable, particularly among the 16 to 25 age group.

Occupational groups are defined as follows: 'white-collar high-skilled' include legislators, senior officials and managers and professionals, technicians and associate professionals; 'white-collar low-skilled' include service workers and shop and market sales workers and clerks; 'blue-collar high-skilled' include skilled agricultural and fishery workers and craft and related trades workers; and 'blue-collar low-skilled' include plant and machine operators and assemblers and elementary occupations. These data are classified according to the International Standardized Classification of Occupations (ISCO).

**Appendix Figure 1**  
**Classification of regions and countries by EFA Development Index (EDI), 2006**

		<b>LOW EDI COUNTRIES (EDI under 0.80)</b>	<b>MEDIUM EDI COUNTRIES (EDI: 0.80 – 0.94)</b>	<b>HIGH EDI COUNTRIES (EDI at least 0.95)</b>
<b>Europe and North America</b>	<b>Western Europe</b>			Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom
	<b>Central and Eastern Europe</b>		Azerbaijan, Moldova, Turkey	Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
<b>Latin America and Caribbean</b>	<b>Latin America</b>	Nicaragua	Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela	Argentina, Chile, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay
	<b>Caribbean</b>		Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Panama, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago	Aruba
<b>Asia-Pacific</b>	<b>Central</b>	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan		Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan,
	<b>South and West</b>	Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic		Maldives
	<b>East and South East</b>		Indonesia, Macao, Myanmar, Philippines, Vietnam	Brunei Darussalam, Japan, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Singapore
	<b>Pacific</b>		Fiji	Australia, New Zealand, Tonga
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	<b>West</b>	Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Senegal, Togo	Cape Verde, Sao Tome & Principe	
	<b>East and South</b>	Burundi, Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda	Botswana, Kenya, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia Zimbabwe	Seychelles
<b>Arab States</b>	<b>All</b>	Iraq, Mauritania, Morocco, Yemen	Algeria, Egypt, Iran Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia	Bahrain, United Arab Emirates

**Appendix Table 4**  
**Actual versus recommended expenditure on adult education**

	Actual public expenditures on education		Recommended public expenditures on education (6% of GDP) estimates (%)		Assumed public expenditures on adult learning and education (1% for all countries or variable % by income group)	
	% of GDP (weighted average)	Expenditure (\$, millions)	Expenditure (\$, millions)	Difference from actual public expenditure on education (\$, millions)	1% of actual public expenditures on education (\$, millions)	% of public expenditures on education
<b>World (available countries)</b>	4.7	2,589,956	3,309,197	-719,241	25,900	1.06
Low income	3.4	36,746	63,931	-27,185	367	0.25
Lower middle income	3.9	290,846	452,330	-161,484	2,908	0.50
Upper middle income	4.4	431,756	582,227	-150,470	4,318	0.75
High income: Non-OECD	4.8	77,335	96,330	-18,995	773	1.00
High income: OECD	5.0	1,753,273	2,114,380	-361,107	17,533	1.25
<b>Arab States</b>	4.7	77,146	97,613	-20,467	771	0.81
Low income	2.9	174	361	-188	2	0.25
Lower middle income	4.6	27,748	36,474	-8,726	277	0.50
Upper middle income	2.7	1,107	2,486	-1,379	11	0.75
High income: Non-OECD	5.0	48,117	58,292	-10,175	481	1.00
<b>Middle East</b>	4.9	49,224	60,778	-11,554	492	0.99
Low income			3,137			0.25
Lower middle income			7,068			0.50
Upper middle income	2.7	1,107	2,486	-1,379	11	0.75
High income: Non-OECD	5.0	48,117	58,292	-10,175	481	1.00
<b>North Africa</b>	4.5	27,922	36,835	-8,913	279	0.50
Low income	2.9	174	361	-188	2	0.25
Lower middle income	4.6	27,748	36,474	-8,726	277	0.50
Upper middle income			5,308			0.75
<b>Asia and the Pacific</b>	3.8	507,832	810,535	-302,704	5,078	0.88
Low income	2.8	19,207	41,806	-22,599	192	0.25
Lower middle income	3.7	206,452	338,705	-132,253	2,065	0.50
Upper middle income	4.8	25,067	31,596	-6,528	251	0.75
High income: Non-OECD	3.4	10,798	18,851	-8,053	108	1.00
High income: OECD	3.9	246,307	379,579	-133,271	2,463	1.25
<b>Central Asia</b>	2.6	7,927	18,000	-10,073	79	0.50
Low income	4.4	984	1,332	-349	10	0.25
Lower middle income	2.9	3,148	6,609	-3,461	31	0.50
Upper middle income	2.3	3,795	10,059	-6,264	38	0.75
<b>South and West Asia</b>	3.6	160,186	270,568	-110,382	1,602	0.47
Low income	2.7	17,430	38,160	-20,729	174	0.25
Lower middle income	3.7	142,756	232,408	-89,652	1,428	0.50
<b>East Asia</b>	3.8	297,032	471,062	-174,030	2,970	1.05
Low income	2.1	793	2,314	-1,521	8	0.25
Lower middle income	3.6	60,451	99,615	-39,165	605	0.50
Upper middle income	5.9	21,043	21,314	-270	210	0.75
High income: Non-OECD	3.4	10,798	18,851	-8,053	108	1.00
High income: OECD	3.7	203,947	328,968	-125,021	2,039	1.25

	Recommended public expenditure on adult learning and education (3% of recommended public expenditures on education) (\$, millions)	Estimated global shortfall in public adult learning and education investment based on recommended education and adult learning and education spending			Additional investment needed to eliminate adult illiteracy	
		Difference from % of public expenditures on education (\$, millions)	Difference adjusted for population coverage (\$, millions)	Difference adjusted for GDP coverage (\$, millions)	Cost per year of literacy programme aimed at eliminating illiteracy (\$, millions)	Cost for three years of literacy programme needed to eliminate illiteracy (\$, millions)
% of public expenditures on education (\$, millions)						
27,474	99,276	-71,802	-104305.50	-83,742	155,860	467,581
92	1,918	-1,826	-3129.51	-3,221	11,819	35,458
1,454	13,570	-12,116	-21390.66	-24,678	119,327	357,982
3,238	17,467	-14,229	-14515.76	-14,516	14,239	42,717
773	2,890	-2,117	-2614.57	-2,521	6,924	20,773
21,916	63,431	-41,515	-41536.13	-41,560	3,550	10,651
629	2,928	-2,300	-4319.22	-3,184	14,816	44,447
0	11	-10	-113.95	-101	574	1,723
139	1,094	-955	-1784.64	-1,679	7,637	22,912
8	75	-66	-165.85	-208	369	1,107
481	1,749	-1,268	-1295.13	-1,299	6,235	18,705
489	1,823	-1,334	-3144.66	-1,590	6,904	20,711
	94	-94	-94.11	-94	629	1,887
	212	-212	-212.03	-212	40	119
8	75	-66	-66.27	-66	0	0
481	1,749	-1,268	-1295.13	-1,299	6,235	18,705
139	1,105	-966	-1665.14	-1,644	8,068	24,204
0	11	-10	-39.37	-10	0	0
139	1,094	-955	-1544.74	-1,494	7,635	22,905
	159	-159	-159.24	-159	433	1,299
4,455	24,316	-19,861	-33640.47	-31,304	95,888	287,663
48	1,254	-1,206	-1811.50	-1,844	6,275	18,825
1,032	10,161	-9,129	-16850.97	-20,715	88,300	264,899
188	948	-760	-761.28	-760	780	2,339
108	566	-458	-812.16	-821	533	1,599
3,079	11,387	-8,309	-8308.52	-8,309	0	0
40	540	-500	-846.28	-647	35	105
2	40	-38	-121.60	-148	2	5
16	198	-183	-231.29	-220	8	24
28	302	-273	-273.30	-273	25	76
757	8,117	-7,360	-7454.73	-7,543	87,583	262,750
44	1,145	-1,101	-1101.21	-1,148	4,762	14,286
714	6,972	-6,258	-6362.90	-6,396	82,822	248,465
3,119	14,132	-11,012	-37871.14	-21,627	0	0
2	69	-67	-591.24	-526	792	2,375
302	2,988	-2,686	-12082.56	-14,101	24,233	72,699
158	639	-482	-481.58	-482	1,061	3,183
108	566	-458	-765.09	-821	533	1,599
2,549	9,869	-7,320	-7319.70	-7,320	0	0

	Actual public expenditures on education		Recommended public expenditures on education (6% of GDP) estimates (%)		Assumed public expenditures on adult learning and education (1% for all countries or variable % by income group)	
	% of GDP (weighted average)	Expenditure (\$, millions)	Expenditure (\$, millions)	Difference from actual public expenditure on education (\$, millions)	1% of actual public expenditures on education (\$, millions)	% of public expenditures on education
<b>The Pacific</b>	5.0	42,686	50,905	-8,219	427	1.25
Low income			841			0.25
Lower middle income	8.1	97	72	25	1	0.50
Upper middle income	6.2	229	223	6	2	0.75
High income: OECD	5.0	42,360	50,611	-8,250	424	1.25
<b>Europe and North America</b>	5.1	1,720,587	2,025,647	-305,060	17,206	1.19
Lower middle income	6.3	20,721	19,828	893	207	0.50
Upper middle income	4.1	174,917	253,060	-78,143	1,749	0.75
High income: Non-OECD	6.0	17,983	17,957	26	180	1.00
High income: OECD	5.2	1,506,966	1,734,801	-227,836	15,070	1.25
<b>Central and Eastern Europe</b>	4.4	224,880	310,074	-85,193	2,249	0.79
Lower middle income	6.3	20,721	19,828	893	207	0.50
Upper middle income	4.1	174,917	253,060	-78,143	1,749	0.75
High income: Non-OECD	5.5	4,576	4,992	-416	46	1.00
High income: OECD	4.6	24,666	32,193	-7,527	247	1.25
<b>Western Europe</b>	5.1	699,742	816,209	-116,467	6,997	1.25
High income: Non-OECD	6.2	13,407	12,965	442	134	1.00
High income: OECD	5.1	686,335	803,244	-116,909	6,863	1.25
<b>North America</b>	5.3	795,965	899,364	-103,400	7,960	1.25
High income: OECD	5.3	795,965	899,364	-103,400	7,960	1.25
<b>Latin America - Caribbean</b>	4.5	233,328	312,452	-79,123	2,333	0.72
Low income			666			0.25
Lower middle income	3.8	30,024	47,322	-17,298	300	0.50
Upper middle income	4.6	202,961	264,833	-61,872	2,030	0.75
High income: Non-OECD	6.9	344	297	47	3	1.00
<b>Latin America</b>	4.5	229,465	306,916	-77,452	2,295	0.72
Lower middle income	3.8	27,745	43,407	-15,662	277	0.50
Upper middle income	4.6	201,720	263,510	-61,790	2,017	0.75
<b>The Caribbean</b>	4.2	3,864	5,535	-1,672	39	0.62
Low income			666			0.25
Lower middle income	3.5	2,279	3,915	-1,636	23	0.50
Upper middle income	5.6	1,241	1,323	-83	12	0.75
High income: Non-OECD	6.9	344	297	47	3	1.00
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	4.9	51,063	62,951	-11,888	511	0.55
Low income	4.8	17,365	21,764	-4,399	174	0.25
Lower middle income	3.5	5,901	10,002	-4,101	59	0.50
Upper middle income	5.5	27,704	30,252	-2,548	277	0.75

Source: Calculations based on following databases: UIS public expenditure on education data and World Bank GDP data



% of public expenditures on education (\$, millions)	Recommended public expenditure on adult learning and education (3% of recommended public expenditures on education) (\$, millions)	Estimated global shortfall in public adult learning and education investment based on recommended education and adult learning and education spending			Additional investment needed to eliminate adult illiteracy	
		Difference from % of public expenditures on education (\$, millions)	Difference adjusted for population coverage (\$, millions)	Difference adjusted for GDP coverage (\$, millions)	Cost per year of literacy programme aimed at eliminating illiteracy (\$, millions)	Cost for three years of literacy programme needed to eliminate illiteracy (\$, millions)
532	1,527	-995	-1338.60	-1,014	5	14
	25	-25	-25.24	-25	0	0
0	2	-2	-7.85	-4	5	14
2	7	-5	-5.45	-5	0	0
530	1,518	-989	-988.82	-989	0	0
20,432	60,769	-40,337	-40976.50	-40,560	8,843	26,530
104	595	-491	-579.26	-589	25	74
1,312	7,592	-6,280	-6445.68	-6,403	5,308	15,924
180	539	-359	-371.91	-359	68	204
18,837	52,044	-33,207	-33227.84	-33,251	3,442	10,327
1,770	9,302	-7,533	-7867.51	-7,750	5,446	16,338
104	595	-491	-579.26	-589	25	74
1,312	7,592	-6,280	-6445.68	-6,403	5,308	15,924
46	150	-104	-104.00	-104	10	30
308	966	-657	-657.48	-657	103	309
8,713	24,486	-15,773	-15807.80	-15,817	3,506	10,517
134	389	-255	-267.82	-255	58	175
8,579	24,097	-15,518	-15536.59	-15,562	3,447	10,342
9,950	26,981	-17,031	-17031.37	-17,031	0	0
9,950	26,981	-17,031	-17031.37	-17,031	0	0
1,676	9,374	-7,698	-8226.16	-7,955	6,855	20,566
	20	-20	-19.98	-20	140	420
150	1,420	-1,270	-1475.47	-1,472	2,252	6,756
1,522	7,945	-6,423	-6431.18	-6,429	4,443	13,330
3	9	-5	-70.27	-42	20	60
1,652	9,207	-7,556	-7866.52	-7,747	6,932	20,797
139	1,302	-1,163	-1368.06	-1,366	2,187	6,562
1,513	7,905	-6,392	-6399.86	-6,398	4,745	14,235
24	166	-142	-232.21	-211	160	480
	20	-20	-19.98	-20	140	420
11	117	-106	-106.05	-106	0	0
9	40	-30	-30.55	-31	0	0
3	9	-5	-70.27	-42	20	60
281	1,889	-1,608	-2666.88	-2,224	8,716	26,148
43	653	-609	-1117.14	-1,252	5,495	16,486
30	300	-271	-270.56	-271	121	364
208	908	-700	-720.78	-728	3,099	9,298

## Notes:

1. Data for public expenditure on education are taken from the UIS publicly available online database and World Bank GDP data (World Development Indicators database, World Bank, revised 17 October 2008).

2. Budgetary allocations for public expenditures on education of 6 per cent of GDP, and for adult education of 3 per cent of the public education budget were recommended by the Global Campaign for Education in 2005.

3. Estimates of public expenditure on education for each region, sub-region and income group are calculated as weighted averages of available country estimates. Thus mean figures reflect the relative size or weight of each country, region, sub-region or income group. However, the weighted estimates do not take into account the impact of missing data.

**Appendix Table 5**

Estimated adult literacy rate and number of adult illiterates for countries with available data, by region, sub-region and income group, latest year available within two reference periods (1988–1997 and 1998–2007)

	GDP per capita, (PPP) <sup>1</sup> , 2007	Population covered in literacy related estimates (%)	Number of illiterates, adults 15 and over		
			1988–1997	1998–2007	Change between reference periods
<b>World (available countries only)</b>	12,976	70	736,500,669	603,074,742	-133,425,926
Low income	1,319	60	155,748,349	170,192,197	14,443,847
Lower middle income	4,783	91	545,191,416	405,564,596	-139,626,820
Upper middle income	11,655	72	28,816,747	22,157,903	-6,658,844
High income: Non-OECD	33,048	64	3,968,067	3,358,882	-609,184
High income: OECD	35,135	8	2,776,090	1,801,164	-974,926
<b>Arab States</b>	16,491	61	42,434,285	38,877,328	-3,556,957
Low income	2,132	0	4,685,565	5,081,432	395,866
Lower middle income	4,778	66	33,484,430	30,156,538	-3,327,892
Upper middle income	12,241	60	685,083	568,707	-116,376
High income: Non-OECD	38,311	93	3,579,207	3,070,652	-508,555
<b>Middle East</b>	25,173	40	8,476,517	8,310,685	-165,832
Low income	2,336	0	4,685,565	5,081,432	395,866
Lower middle income	4,708	13	211,745	158,602	-53,143
Upper middle income	10,113	0			
High income: Non-OECD	38,311	93	3,579,207	3,070,652	-508,555
<b>North Africa</b>	5,639	70	33,957,768	30,566,643	-3,391,125
Low income	1,928	0			
Lower middle income	4,802	74	33,272,685	29,997,936	-3,274,749
Upper middle income	14,370	100	685,083	568,707	-116,376
<b>Asia and the Pacific</b>	10,381	84	564,793,975	432,557,322	-132,236,653
Low income	1,842	52	60,198,907	64,261,787	4,062,880
Lower middle income	4,545	97	502,047,226	366,537,942	-135,509,284
Upper middle income	9,549	98	2,267,115	1,540,709	-726,406
High income: Non-OECD	46,376	38	280,727	216,885	-63,842
High income: OECD	29,807	0			
<b>Central Asia</b>	4,736	39	408,148	89,002	-319,146
Low income	2,053	17	67,993	15,078	-52,915
Lower middle income	5,126	34	61,878	29,516	-32,362
Upper middle income	10,829	100	278,276	44,407	-233,869
<b>South and West Asia</b>	4,116	88	345,911,371	333,933,167	-11,978,204
Low income	1,600	53	52,076,802	56,153,103	4,076,301
Lower middle income	5,626	98	293,834,569	277,780,064	-16,054,505
<b>East Asia</b>	19,008	85	218,439,144	98,502,899	-119,936,244
Low income	1,845	59	8,054,112	8,093,606	39,493
Lower middle income	5,155	96	208,115,465	88,696,108	-119,419,358
Upper middle income	13,379	100	1,988,839	1,496,301	-492,538
High income: Non-OECD	46,376	40	280,727	216,885	-63,842
High income: OECD	29,118	0			
<b>The Pacific</b>	7,793	1	35,313	32,254	-3,059
Low income	1,884	0			
Lower middle income	2,754	28	35,313	32,254	-3,059
Upper middle income	4,439	0			
High income: OECD	30,496	0			

	Literacy rate (%), adults 15 or older			Literacy rate (%), females 15 or older		
	1988–1997	1998–2007	Change between reference periods	1988–1997	1998–2007	Change between reference periods
	74	83	9	70	80	10
	49	62	13	39	55	16
	79	88	9	74	84	10
	89	94	5	87	93	6
	88	94	7	84	93	9
	94	97	3	92	96	4
	70	83	13	57	74	17
				17	40	23
	58	74	16	47	65	18
	76	87	10	63	78	16
	78	90	12	72	88	16
	79	90	11	65	81	16
				17	40	23
	86	93	7	80	89	9
	78	90	12	72	88	16
	56	72	17	43	62	19
	49	68	19	36	57	21
	76	87	10	63	78	16
	79	87	8	75	85	10
	64	75	11	54	69	15
	85	91	6	81	89	8
	90	96	6	87	95	8
	88	95	6	83	92	10
	98	100	1	97	99	2
	98	100	2	97	100	3
	99	99	1	98	99	1
	98	100	2	96	99	3
	57	72	14	48	65	17
	34	55	21	22	46	24
	72	83	10	65	77	12
	81	89	8	76	87	11
	72	80	8	65	77	11
	84	93	8	79	91	12
	83	92	9	77	90	12
	88	95	6	83	92	10
	87	92	5	86	91	5
	87	92	5	86	91	5

	GDP per capita, (PPP) <sup>1</sup> , 2007	Population covered in literacy related estimates (%)	Number of illiterates, adults 15 and over		
			1988-1997	1998-2007	Change between reference periods
<b>Europe and North America</b>	25,731	33	14,191,134	9,375,429	-4,815,704
Lower middle income	6,374	10	200,530	73,359	-127,171
Upper middle income	13,445	95	11,138,907	7,448,771	-3,690,136
High income: Non-OECD	24,599	34	75,606	52,135	-23,471
High income: OECD	36,061	10	2,776,090	1,801,164	-974,926
<b>Central and Eastern Europe</b>	13,819	79	11,443,870	7,624,088	-3,819,781
Lower middle income	6,374	10	200,530	73,359	-127,171
Upper middle income	13,445	95	11,138,907	7,448,771	-3,690,136
High income: Non-OECD	24,173	100	10,656	7,912	-2,744
High income: OECD	20,693	39	93,777	94,046	270
<b>Western Europe</b>	36,212	16	2,747,264	1,751,341	-995,923
High income: Non-OECD	24,884	9	64,951	44,223	-20,728
High income: OECD	38,100	17	2,682,313	1,707,118	-975,195
<b>North America</b>	40,760	0			
High income: OECD	40,760	0			
<b>Latin America &amp; the Caribbean</b>	9,079	58	20,383,905	18,650,217	-1,733,688
Low income	1,155	100	2,360,132	2,285,641	-74,492
Lower middle income	5,198	84	8,662,201	8,175,396	-486,805
Upper middle income	10,262	48	9,329,046	8,169,970	-1,159,076
High income: Non-OECD	19,645	23	32,526	19,211	-13,315
<b>Latin America</b>	8,003	60	17,991,247	16,345,366	-1,645,881
Lower middle income	5,048	90	8,662,201	8,175,396	-486,805
Upper middle income	10,958	50	9,329,046	8,169,970	-1,159,076
<b>The Caribbean</b>	11,036	28	2,392,658	2,304,851	-87,807
Low income	1,155	100	2,360,132	2,285,641	-74,492
Lower middle income	6,691	0			
Upper middle income	9,102	0			
High income: Non-OECD	19,645	23	32,526	19,211	-13,315
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	3,640	69	94,697,370	103,614,445	8,917,075
Low income	1,052	70	88,503,745	98,563,337	10,059,592
Lower middle income	3,682	17	797,029	621,361	-175,668
Upper middle income	13,201	100	5,396,597	4,429,747	-966,849

Source: Calculations based on following databases: UIS literacy data, World Bank GDP and population data

	Literacy rate (%), adults 15 or older			Literacy rate (%), females 15 or older		
	1988–1997	1998–2007	Change between reference periods	1988–1997	1998–2007	Change between reference periods
	96	98	2	93	97	3
	95	98	3	93	97	4
	96	98	2	93	97	3
	98	99	1	95	97	2
	94	97	3	92	96	4
	96	98	2	95	97	3
	95	98	3	93	97	4
	96	98	2	93	97	3
	100	100	0	100	100	0
	99	99	0	99	99	0
	93	97	4	90	95	5
	94	98	3	90	95	5
	92	96	4	90	95	6
	85	90	5	83	89	6
	46	62	16	46	64	18
	82	88	6	78	86	7
	92	95	3	92	95	3
	96	98	2	95	97	2
	87	92	5	84	90	5
	82	88	6	78	86	7
	92	95	3	92	95	3
	79	86	6	79	86	7
	46	62	16	46	64	18
	96	98	2	95	97	2
	54	67	13	47	62	15
	45	59	14	36	52	16
	70	85	15	64	82	17
	78	87	9	76	86	10

**Notes:**

1. Columns 2-11: literacy database publicly available online at UIS data centre; World Bank GDP and population data. Columns 1 and 2: World Development Indicators database, World Bank, revised 17 October 2008.

2. The number of illiterates is only counted for those countries in which there were observations in both periods in order to assess progress, 1988-1997 and 1998-2007.

3. Due to the wide range of years adopted for the reference periods, the time span elapsed between observation points for each country can range from 10 to 20 years.

4. Data for the most recent year is taken within each reference period. There is a small number of exceptions for the first period (1988-1997) where an earlier reference year was taken because no other data were available, as follows: Algeria (1987), United Arab Emirates (1985), Malawi (1987), and Swaziland (1986). For Cambodia the reference year for the first period was 1998 since it had no data from earlier but had data for 2007, making it the shortest time span elapsed between observation points.

5. Adult literacy estimates for each region, sub-region and income group are calculated as weighted averages of the country estimates that are available. Thus estimates reflect the relative size or weight of each country, region, sub-region or income group. However, the weighted estimates do not take into account the impact of missing data.

6. It is important to note that because of missing data, these estimates do not reflect the total number of adult illiterates in the world.

7. Cambodia, Chad and Rwanda are not in the corresponding regional, sub-regional and income group literacy estimate for females.

8. Yemen is only in the corresponding regional, sub-regional and income group literacy estimate for females, not the total literacy estimate. This is because no data were available for the total literacy rate in the first period for Yemen.

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