



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



confintea VI

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

sixth international conference on adult education
Belém, Pará, Brazil, 19 – 22 may 2009



Photo: Bob Menezes

GETTING READY FOR CONFINTEA VI

Regional synthesis reports and outcome documents online

In the run-up to CONFINTEA VI, 151 Member States produced national reports, giving insights into the state of adult learning and education in their countries. From this rich source, UIL distilled synthesis reports for each UNESCO region which fed into the five regional preparatory conferences.

Each conference debated and discussed the particular adult learning and education situation of their region, and adopted a statement on progress, but also on the action that still needs to be taken at the regional level. The statements, in the form of outcome documents, also proposed recommendations to take forward to CONFINTEA VI.

While reflecting the specific needs and contexts of each region, there is a unity of purpose that prevails throughout these documents. They clearly recognise the role that adult learning and education have to play in agendas for sustainable development, citizenship, rights and equalities, work, poverty reduction, community development and social justice.

Most of the synthesis reports and outcome documents from the five CONFINTEA VI regional conferences are now ready for download at www.unesco.org/en/confintea. They are available in English; some are also in French and Spanish.

Francophone countries prepare for CONFINTEA VI



The Agence nationale de lutte contre l'illettrisme (ANLCI), the French National Commission for UNESCO, the Organisation internationale de la francophonie (OIF), the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning held a CONFINTEA VI preparatory thematic meeting on literacy from 11 to 13 February 2009, in Lyon, France. The theme of the meeting, "Enabling sustainable literacy: preventing and fighting illiteracy", brought together about 200 participants, including 16 Ministers, from the 41 OIF countries.

The aim was to reinforce the idea that knowledge is not acquired "in one go" but needs to be maintained, consolidated, enriched and renewed throughout life. The thematic focus was on sustainable literacy in everyday life, in working life, and in social and civic life. The outcome document of the meeting emphasised the need to view literacy as a human right and an integral part of lifelong learning. The quality of learning, the use of language, the creation of a literate environment and the recognition, validation and accreditation of learning are at the heart of the recommendations, which will be presented during CONFINTEA VI.

Online registration – All participants – including those who have already been confirmed as members of delegations – need to register online. The registration form can be accessed on the CONFINTEA VI website at www.unesco.org/en/confintea. Participants (delegates and invited observers) will receive an e-mail containing a registration code, which is required to begin the registration process. A single registration code will be sent for each Member State or invited institution, and must be used for all members of the delegation. Should you have any problems with your registration code, please contact the Local Organizing Committee at confinteaibrazil@unesco.org.br.



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Ministry
of Education



Africa is the second largest and one of the most diverse regions of the world. Its potential resides in its human, cultural, linguistic and ecological diversity, as well as its natural resources. The continent is challenged by the rapid growth and urbanisation of its population and the need to meet the educational and subsequent livelihood needs of young people. In spite of the economic and social efforts and progress made by several African countries, the continent continues to suffer from extreme poverty (three-quarters of the world's poorest people live in sub-Saharan Africa), recurrent armed conflict, political instability and the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Although African literacy rates have doubled in the last two decades, they are still the lowest in the world. Africa has the largest number of countries with a literacy rate below 50%. In the period 2000-2006, an estimated 161 million adults – 38% of the region's adult population – were unable to read or write.

In recent years, progress has been made in responding to the specific learning needs of youth and adult learners and in achieving greater gender equality. A number of countries, including South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Kenya, have developed adult education policies and legislations within wider development strategies and with the aim of establishing National Qualification Frameworks.

Programmes addressing HIV/AIDS have been promoted, while a variety of participatory approaches and methods have been adopted in order to integrate ICTs and Open and Distance Learning into literacy and basic education programmes as well as into many other areas of development, such as health and nutrition, micro-credit schemes, human rights and citizenship. Adult learning programmes are found in a wide range of formal, informal and non-formal settings. However, scaling these selective advances up through effective policies and implementation remains a challenge.

In the outcome document of the CONFINTEA VI Preparatory Conference in Africa, delegates declared their commitment to making youth and adult learning and education a right and a reality for all African people. 14 Ministers from Africa have already built on this commitment by confirming their participation in CONFINTEA VI. The regional synthesis report and the outcome document of the Regional Preparatory Conference can be downloaded from the CONFINTEA website.



Kha Ri Gude – South Africa

Kha Ri Gude ("Let us learn") is South Africa's biggest adult literacy campaign to date. The government of South Africa has committed more than 600 million USD to fund the campaign, which is designed to enable 4.7 million adults to become literate between 2008 and 2012.



The campaign was piloted in 2008, and in that year 640 000 adults who had missed out on schooling and were unable to read or write joined one of the 30 000 literacy classes held at locations across South Africa. The learners' materials developed for the Kha Ri Gude Campaign aim to enable adult learners to achieve basic and sustainable literacy in their first language. These materials are provided in all eleven official South African languages: Tshivenda, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sepedi, Setswana, Xitsonga, Sesotho, Afrikaans, siSwati, isiNdebele and English. The materials have been embossed in Braille in all eleven languages, and have been adapted for use by deaf educators using Sign Language. The campaign also introduces numeracy and oral English as an additive second language.

The Kha Ri Gude Literacy Campaign is an example of how the state can prioritise the needs of the poor and at the same time address the right of all citizens to basic education in their mother tongue. Moreover, the campaign aims to harness literacy in order to encourage people to participate more fully in South Africa's young democracy. The programme represents a means of achieving the EFA goal of reducing illiteracy by 50% by 2015, while enabling South Africa to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on poverty reduction, women's empowerment, HIV and AIDS eradication and environmental protection.



The current CONFINTEA logo was first adopted for the Hamburg Conference in 1997. It was designed by Michael Smitheram of Australia and represents the lines of the palm of a hand. These lines are universal and yet different for each subject. They represent cultural diversity and the human capacity to learn throughout life. For CONFINTEA VI the lines of the same hands are seen as responsible for realizing the current international education and development agendas, for creating that political momentum and commitment necessary for moving from rhetoric to action and for guaranteeing the foundations of a lifelong learning process.

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The last CONFINTEA, held in Hamburg, Germany, was considered a milestone for Adult Education, establishing a holistic understanding of the process of adult learning and education from the perspective of lifelong learning. Adult learning and education were recognised as key tools for facing current social and development challenges throughout the world.

However, the strong commitment and acknowledgement expressed in 1997 have not been converted into the necessary integration or prioritisation in terms of policies or resource allocation for adult education at the national and international levels. As hosts, we have the great responsibility, as well as the extraordinary opportunity, to leave our mark on the history of adult and youth education at a global level.

One of the major challenges of CONFINTEA VI is to renew the international agenda for adult learning and education in order to reduce the gap between discourse and systematic, effective policies. This is the first step towards guaranteeing financial resources for adult learning and education. It is time to move from rhetoric to action, and to fulfil the rights to education for young people and adults in all the world's regions.

Vincent Defourny, UNESCO Director in Brazil

Students of public universities are being prepared to welcome delegations

São Paulo – On 7 March, 210 students from public universities will start a 60-hour course to prepare them to welcome national delegations to Belém for CONFINTEA VI.

The students, selected from 420 candidates who applied for the course, will be on duty at Belém Airport, hotels and the Hangar Conference Centre, where the conference will be held. Amongst other things, they will provide the Conference participants with basic information about the city. The students will receive a grant sponsored by the Government of Pará.

Of the students taking part, 93 speak English, 67 are Spanish speakers and 50 will be able to help Frenchspeaking delegations. In addition to basic information about Belém, the students will be informed of the role played by UNESCO in the world, as well as about Adult Learning and Education (ALE).

Videos, CDs and conversation classes are just some of the tools that will be used to improve the students' fluency in English, Spanish and French. The course is coordinated by the Federal University of Pará and the State University of Pará.

CONFINTEA VI will bring together around 2,000 international participants from all over the world. The national delegations of Member States will include ministers, experts and representatives of civil society organizations.

Pará: a frontier economy

With almost 1.3 million square kilometres and a population of 7 million, the state of Pará faces the same challenge as other frontier economies: the need to strengthen the regulation of economic activities in order to promote a transition from predatory to sustainable development. Belém, where the CONFINTEA VI will be held, is the capital of this state, which faces complex obstacles to changing its pattern of human and economic development.

On the one hand, conservation of the Amazon biodiversity will influence the quality of life of future generations. On the other, its natural resources make it the source and means of survival for native peoples and the essential base of resources for other productive segments. The more visible faces of this conflict are land ownership disputes and deforestation. Between August 2007 and July 2008, the index of deforestation in the Amazon region increased by 3.8% in relation to the previous period. Plantations and grazing land account for the majority of the 11.9 thousand square kilometres devastated.

In this context, access to quality education for all, including the adult population, plays a fundamental role. The search for sustainable development in the Amazon region begins with a strengthening of the knowledge of local communities, so that they are able to rescue their traditional extractivist activities.

Not to be missed

Handicraft: Pottery, gourds and miriti toys (miriti is an extremely light wood which looks like styrofoam). The state of Pará produces a wide range of handicrafts. The gourds with their exquisite drawings are famous. Miriti toys, made of wood of a similar consistency and lightness to styrofoam, use vivid colours to portray the characters and animals typical to this area of the Amazon. In the district of Icoaraci, 18 km from Belém, craftsmen make both decora-

tive and home pottery based on the techniques used by the Marajoara Indians.

Furos e Igarapés (brooks and small streams):

From the river banks of Belém, it is possible to learn about Guajará Bay, which is full of brooks and small streams that function like channels. In this region, there are many riverbank communities who subsist on natural resources, as well as on fishing, hunting and extracting food. There is also a great diversity of aquatic and land vegetation.