Ref.: CL/4067

Subject: Preliminary Report accompanied by a first draft of the Recommendation concerning Adult Learning and Education

Sir/Madam,

The General Conference of UNESCO decided at its 37th session in November 2013 (37 C/Resolution 16) that the Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education (1976) should be revised to reflect contemporary educational, cultural, political, social and economic challenges, as set out in the Belém Framework for Action adopted by the 6th International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI, (2009)), and to give renewed momentum to strengthening adult education.

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure concerning recommendations to Member States and international conventions covered by the terms of Article IV, paragraph 4, of the Constitution of UNESCO, please find herewith the Preliminary Report accompanied by a first draft of the Recommendation concerning Adult Learning and Education.

In conformity with these Rules of Procedure, Member States shall forward to the Secretariat of UNESCO their comments and observations at least ten months before the opening of the 38th session of the General Conference. Therefore, I would be grateful if these could be sent by 10 January 2015 to the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning at the following email address: confintea6@unesco.org.

Please accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Irina Bokova
Director-General

Enclosures: 2

1. Preliminary report of the Director-General on the draft Recommendation concerning Adult Learning and Education
2. First draft of the Recommendation concerning Adult Learning and Education

cc: National Commissions for UNESCO
Permanent Delegations to UNESCO
UNESCO Regional and field offices
ANNEX I

REVISION OF THE RECOMMENDATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION (1976)

Preliminary report prepared in accordance with Article 10, paragraph 1, of the Rules of Procedure concerning recommendations to Member States and international conventions covered by the terms of Article IV, paragraph 4, of the Constitution of UNESCO, on the draft Recommendation concerning Adult Learning and Education.

SUMMARY

The General Conference of UNESCO decided at its 37th session in November 2013 (37 C/Resolution 16) that the Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education (1976) should be revised to reflect contemporary educational, cultural, political, social and economic challenges, as set out in the Belém Framework for Action and to give renewed momentum to strengthening adult education.

In accordance with Article 10, paragraph 1, of the “Rules of Procedure concerning recommendations to Member States and international conventions covered by the terms of Article IV, paragraph 4, of the Constitution”, the Director-General has prepared the present preliminary report, to which a first draft of the revised Recommendation is annexed.

The preliminary report and the first draft of the revised Recommendation are submitted to Member States for their comments and observations to be forwarded to the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning by 10 January 2015. A final report containing one or more drafts of the revised Recommendation will be prepared on the basis of those comments and observations. It will be communicated to Member States by April 2015, with a view to its discussion at the 38th session of the General Conference.

I. Background


2. In 1997, the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) adopted The Agenda for the Future, which included a request that UNESCO take appropriate steps to update the 1976 Recommendation. In 2009, the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) adopted the Belém Framework for Action, which reiterated its call on UNESCO to review and update the 1976 Recommendation by 2012. It also requested that UNESCO “coordinate a monitoring process at the global level to take stock and report periodically on progress in adult education.”

http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001877/187789m.pdf
learning and education”. The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) monitors this through the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE).

3. In 2011, a consolidated report on the implementation by Member States of the 1976 Recommendation, prepared on the basis of the first GRALE, was submitted to the 36th session of the General Conference. The General Conference invited the Director-General of UNESCO to consider revising and updating the 1976 Recommendation to reflect contemporary educational, cultural, political, social and economic challenges as set out in Belém Framework for Action. Pursuant to 36 C/Resolution 13, a plan of action for revising and updating the 1976 Recommendation was presented to the 189th session of the Executive Board. By its 189 EX/Decision 13 (II), the Executive Board adopted the plan of action and requested the Director-General to submit a preliminary study on the technical and legal aspects of the desirability of revising the 1976 Recommendation.

4. As a first step to implementing the plan, an expert meeting (involving a group of five adult learning and education specialists from Africa, Asia, Europe and North America, and Latin America and the Caribbean) was held in July 2012 to prepare a first draft of the preliminary study. While the expert group remarked that the 1976 Recommendation is a visionary document that articulates a rights-based approach, they also underlined the need to re-formulate substantial parts of this document in light of the rapidly-changing context at local, national, regional and global levels.

5. Subsequently, UIL organized an online consultation forum (24 September to 5 October 2012) to enrich and complement the results of the expert meeting, attracting opinions from 374 participants from more than 30 countries. The forum advised that a revised version of the 1976 Recommendation comprise an up-to-date international standard-setting instrument on adult learning and education, providing relevant guidance to meet current challenges.

6. Having examined this preliminary study (document 191 EX/20 (Part II)), the Executive Board reiterated the need to revise the 1976 Recommendation and decided to include this item in the provisional agenda of the 37th session of the General Conference, while inviting the Director-General to submit to the 37th session of the General Conference the preliminary study on the legal and technical aspects of revisions to the 1976 Recommendation, together with the relevant observations, comments and decisions of the Executive Board (191 EX/Dec.20 (II)).

7. Pursuant to 191 EX/Decision 20 (II) and in accordance with the Rules of Procedure concerning recommendations to Member States and international conventions covered by the terms of Article IV, paragraph 4 of the Constitution, the Director-General submitted a preliminary study on the technical and legal aspects of the desirability of revising the 1976 Recommendation to the 37th session of the General Conference in November 2013 (Document 37 C/43).

8. Having examined this preliminary study, the General Conference of UNESCO decided at its 37th session in November 2013 (37 C/Resolution 16) that the 1976 Recommendation should be revised to reflect contemporary educational, cultural, political, social and economic challenges; and invited the Director-General to prepare such a revision in consultation with the Member States and other stakeholders through various cost-effective measures, without convening the special committee referred to in Article 10, paragraphs 4 and 5, of the Rules of Procedure concerning recommendations to Member States and international conventions covered by the terms of Article IV, paragraph 4, of the

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2 http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002150/215084e.pdf, p.25
3 Ibid.
4 http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002151/215182e.pdf
5 http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002198/219823e.pdf
6 http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002207/220725e.pdf
7 http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002226/222602e.pdf
8 http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002261/226162e.pdf
Constitution. The General Conference also invited the Director-General to submit to it, at its 38th session, a draft revised Recommendation.

II. Revision process

9. The preliminary study on the technical and legal aspects of the desirability of revising the 1976 Recommendation recommended that the 1976 Recommendation be revised based on the review undertaken by the 2012 expert meeting and the online consultation process, taking into account the global trends and issues in adult learning and education as described in GRALE I, while applying a participatory approach and intensive consultation with relevant experts and organizations.

10. To minimize costs and maximize synergies, the consultation process would take advantage of the triennial reporting process for the next issue of GRALE in 2015. It would also draw upon other relevant processes, such as discussions on the place of skills, competences and lifelong learning in the post-2015 international education and development agenda, education for sustainable development, and consultations on the possible revision of the 2001 Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education.

11. Based on the outcomes of the expert meeting and the online consultation, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) developed a working draft that was shared for feedback with an Expert Group on Adult Learning and Education (ALE) established for advising UIL on the revision. The Expert Group on ALE comprised representatives of governmental, intergovernmental, non-governmental, academic and private organizations. The revision of the Recommendation has been put into the context of the debate on the international development agenda beyond 2015.

12. A Joint Expert Meeting, comprised of the Expert Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and the Expert Group on Adult Education, was held in Hamburg on 27 and 28 May 2014. The Joint Expert Meeting on the UNESCO Recommendations concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Adult Learning and Education, which was held at the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, aimed at ensuring that the revised instruments will be mutually reinforcing and address contemporary issues in a harmonious manner. One of the outcomes of the Joint Expert Meeting was a revised draft text, which was in turn the main focus of an open online consultation with Member States and other stakeholders held from 16 to 29 June 2014.

13. The objective of this online consultation was to review the working draft of the revised Recommendation and provide concrete suggestions for further refinement prior to its submission to Member States, in accordance with Article 10, paragraph 1, of the “Rules of Procedure concerning recommendations to Member States and international conventions covered by the terms of Article IV, paragraph 4 of the Constitution”. Participants in the online consultation included experts on ALE and stakeholders from all regions, amounting to an overall number of 503 participants. During the fourteen days, 82 contributions were received in the trilingual (English, French and Spanish) exchange forum. These written inputs were used to inform the further elaboration by the Secretariat of the first draft text of the Recommendation, which is hereto annexed for Member States’ comments and observations.

III. Focus of the revision

14. This first draft reflects the conceptual paradigm shift from supply-oriented adult education to more demand-driven adult learning and education, while recognizing the overall framework of lifelong learning as its backbone. Consequently, the new definition reflects this shift while preserving key elements of the previous definition; e.g. concerning the different understandings of the concrete age that defines adulthood in different cultures.
15. This first draft text has a strong reference to the concept of lifelong learning and takes into account the two key purposes of adult learning and education, focusing on capabilities relevant for both: lifelong learning in its various domains and in its principal modes (formal, non-formal and informal learning), and for the world of work.

16. The foundational role of literacy is reiterated strongly and its function as a condition to realize the right to education is highlighted.

17. The need for a cross-sectoral approach to adult learning and education is underlined, requiring cooperation between various ministries beyond education. Such an approach will result, among other things, in learning achievements of broader population groups, including vulnerable and disadvantaged groups which are often difficult to reach.

18. The areas of action described in the set of concrete recommendations follow the logic of the Belém Framework for Action. This is helpful for further monitoring since the established mechanisms of the CONFINTEA process, including the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education based on triennial national reports, will serve as the principal instrument to monitor implementation of the Recommendation.

19. The consultation process clearly revealed that the Recommendation is understood as a crucial instrument to highlight the role of adult learning and education in the post-2015 agenda of the United Nations. The draft reflects this key purpose by relating clearly to the principles of sustainable development, as already underlined by the previous World Conferences on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V (1997) and VI (2009)).

20. The Recommendation also reflects principles of adult learning in its rationale that learning should be based on partnership relations, respect bottom-up relations, represent a crucial means for inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups, and apply participatory approaches.

21. The draft text is considerably more concise than the 1976 Recommendation. It consists of five main sections:

   (1) Preamble
   (2) Definition and scope
   (3) Objectives
   (4) Areas of action, including policy, governance, financing, participation and quality
   (5) International cooperation

22. Member States are now invited to forward their comments and observations on this preliminary report and the first draft text annexed hereto to the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning by 10 January 2015. A final report containing one or more draft texts of the Recommendation will be prepared on the basis of those comments and observations and communicated to Member States by April 2015, with a view to its discussion at the 38th session of the General Conference.
ANNEX II

FIRST DRAFT TEXT

RECOMMENDATION ON ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION (2015)

Preamble

The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), meeting in Paris, (…), at its 38th session,


Reaffirming that in the context of lifelong learning, adult learning and education is an integral part of the right to education that enables adults to exercise other economic, social and cultural rights, and which should meet the key criteria of acceptability, adaptability, availability and accessibility in conformity with General Observation No. 13 of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (21st session) referring to Article 13 of the International Covenant mentioned above,

Acknowledging that we live in a rapidly changing world in which governments and their citizens face simultaneous challenges related to demography, employment, poverty, migration, gender equality, cultural diversity, social cohesion, health, nutrition, scientific and technological advances, climate change, and human and food security,

Considering that these global changes prompt us to review the conditions for realizing the right to education for all adults, and that continuing enhancement of peoples’ knowledge and skills in all areas of human activity has become a requirement both for environmental, economic, social and cultural development, a new Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education is needed,

Recognizing that adult learning and education equips learners with capabilities (in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes) that empower them to actively participate in the transformation of their communities and societies, and that particularly with regard to improving well-being, supporting social mobility and facilitating intergenerational learning, it has become a decisive factor for social inclusion in the context of the learning society,

Further recognizing that literacy is the foundation of continuing adult education and that too many people, the majority of them women, remain deprived of this foundation,

Identifying the joy of learning as a constantly renewable but underexploited resource,

Reiterating the key role of adult learning and education in supporting the United Nations’ sustainable development agenda in the context of States striving for a world that is just, equitable and inclusive, and their commitment to the promotion of social development, shared economic growth and environmental sustainability, and thereby to benefit all,

Acknowledging both the achievements made in the development of adult learning and education since 1976, as discussed during the 1985, 1997 and 2009 International Conferences on Adult
Education (CONFINTEA IV, V and VI) and at the Education for All conferences (Jomtien 1990 and Dakar 2000), as well as the need to further strengthen adult learning and education, as documented in the 2009 and 2013 Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE),

Underlining the relevance of improving technical and vocational education and training as expressed in the UNESCO Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training,

Having decided by 37 C/Resolution 16 that the 1976 Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education should be revised to reflect contemporary educational, cultural, political, social and economic challenges, as set out in the Hamburg Declaration and the Belém Framework for Action, and to give renewed momentum to adult education,

Considering that this Recommendation sets out general principles, goals and guidelines that each Member State should apply according to its socio-economic context, governing structures and available resources, with a view to enhancing the status of adult learning and education at national, regional and international levels,

and having examined document 38 C/… and the draft Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education annexed thereto,

1. Adopts the present Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education, which supersedes the 1976 Recommendation, on this xx day of November 2015;

2. Recommends that Member States apply the following provisions by taking appropriate steps, including whatever legislative or other steps may be required, in conformity with the constitutional practice and governing structures of each State, to give effect within their territories to the principles of this Recommendation;

3. Also recommends that Member States bring this Recommendation to the attention of the authorities and bodies responsible for adult learning and education and other stakeholders concerned with adult learning and education; and

4. Further recommends that Member States report to it, at such dates and in such manner as shall be determined by it, on the action taken by them in pursuance of this Recommendation.

I. Definition and scope

1. Adult learning and education is a core component of lifelong learning. It comprises all forms of education and learning that aim to ensure that all adults can access to and participate in lifelong learning and the world of work. It denotes the entire body of organized learning processes, formal and non-formal, whereby those regarded as adults by the society in which they live develop and enrich their capabilities for living and working, both in their own interests and those of their communities and societies. Taking place in formal, non-formal and informal settings, adult learning involves sustained activities and processes of acquiring, exchanging, creating and adapting capabilities. In this text, the term “adult” denotes those who engage in adult learning and education, even if they have not reached the legal age of majority. Given that the boundaries of youth and adulthood are shifting in most cultures, there should be no difference in the quality of educational provision for young and older adults.

2. In this context, lifelong learning involves people of all ages in all life-wide contexts (the family, school, community, workplace and others) and a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal and
informal) meeting a wide range of learning needs and aspirations in the three key domains of adult learning and education: literacy and general education; continuing development of technical and vocational competencies; and community/"popular" education. Moreover, it represents a principle that allows for people's continuing learning through different education pathways. By “right to lifelong learning” as part of the right to education, it is understood the right to read and write, to question and analyse, to have access to resources, and to develop and practice individual and collective skills and competences.

3. Literacy as a component of adult learning and education constitutes a continuum of capabilities and provides the indispensable foundation that permits those who have access to it to engage with a world that is increasingly dependent on written communication and the use of information and communication technologies. It denotes the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials, as well as the capacity to solve problems in an increasingly technological environment. Access to post-literacy, basic and secondary education contributes to the realization of the right to education.

4. Continuing training and professional development undertaken as part of in-service arrangements or individual or collective initiatives are components of adult learning and education, and a fundamental element in a continuum of learning that equips adults with the capabilities to fully participate in rapidly-changing societal and working environments.

5. Adult learning and education also includes community/"popular" education and learning opportunities that allow citizens to actively engage with social issues such as poverty alleviation, intergenerational solidarity, social mobility, justice, equity, exclusion, violence, unemployment, environmental protection and climate change. It also helps people to lead a decent life, with well-being in terms of health, culture, spirituality and all other domains that contribute to personal development and dignity.

II. Objectives

6. In general, adult learning and education provides a means of equipping people with the necessary capabilities to exercise and advance their rights and take control of their destinies. It promotes personal and professional development, thereby supporting more active engagement by adults with their societies and communities. It should have the flexibility required to foster the changing skills needed by adults throughout their working lives, in formal and informal contexts, and in both young and aging societies. It is therefore a crucial tool in alleviating poverty, improving health, and building equitable, gender-just, tolerant and sustainable learning societies.

7. The objectives of adult learning and education are to (a) develop the autonomy and sense of responsibility and solidarity of people and communities; (b) reinforce the capacity to deal with and shape the developments taking place in the economy, including employability and entrepreneurship, in culture and in society as a whole; (c) promote coexistence, tolerance and the informed and creative participation of citizens in their communities and societies; (d) foster resilience from young to senior adults in post-conflict and post-disaster contexts; (e) promote critical thinking and the full realization of human rights and liberties.

III. Areas of action

8. Efforts to improve adult learning and education practice are conditioned by considerations of policy, governance, financing, participation and quality, as outlined in the Hamburg Declaration from CONFINTEA V and the Belém Framework for Action that was adopted by CONFINTEA VI. Consequently, these areas are critical to enhancing the further development of adult learning
and education in Member States. These areas of action will also benefit from regional and international cooperation.

9. One of the main global challenges in education is to empower women and men, thereby promoting equity and inclusion. Therefore, disadvantaged groups (e.g. those with low levels of literacy, vulnerable youth, migrant workers, unemployed workers, members of ethnic minorities, indigenous groups, the physically and/or mentally challenged, prisoners, the elderly, people affected by conflict, the stateless and displaced persons) should be given priority. In addressing their needs and aspirations, adult learning approaches should be based on people’s own heritage, culture and values.

10. Each area of action is explained in terms of its goal, its underlying principles and the specific interventions recommended.

A. Policy

11. To enable adult learning and education to play a critical role in transforming societies, and to enhance people’s capacity to act (learning to know, do, live together and be), a favourable and forward-looking policy environment should be nurtured. Particular attention should be given to developing and implementing comprehensive, inclusive and integrated policies from a lifelong and life-wide learning perspective, that are flexible and able to address emerging challenges and developments of the 21st century and involve multi-disciplinary groups (e.g. sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, educators and environmentalists, among others).

(a) Comprehensive policies address learning in a wide range of spheres, from the economic and political to the social, cultural and environmental spheres.

(b) Inclusive policies need to meet the learning needs and aspirations of all adults by providing equitable access to learning opportunities, without restriction on grounds of sex, age, ethnicity, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status.

(c) Integrated policies denote inter-ministerial approaches between explicit education and training policies and indirect policies from the other ministries (e.g. economic development, labour, health, environment, justice, work, agriculture, culture).

12. Member States should strengthen their commitment to the development of adult education through legislation and institutions, and the formulation and implementation of international, regional and subregional agreements and commitments. This should be achieved through the following means:

(a) Development of comprehensive, inclusive and integrated policies implies:

   (i) creating and strengthening existing inter- and intra-ministerial forums to understand and recognize the role of adult learning and education within a lifelong learning framework, as well as its contribution to the development of societies;

   (ii) taking measures to involve all relevant stakeholders – from public authorities (institutions or bodies engaged in education) to civil society (e.g. workers’ organizations, learners’ associations, non-governmental organizations) and the private sector (e.g. employers’ organizations, chambers of commerce and industries) – as partners in policy design; and
(iii) providing sustainable structures and mechanisms that will ensure the institutionalization of the concerns of adult learning and education.

(b) Advocacy for the indispensable demand-driven function of adult education implies:

(i) developing an advocacy strategy that highlights the contribution of adult learning and education to equitable and sustainable development in accordance with the principles of a learning society, as well as its wider benefits, for example in terms of social cohesion;

(ii) raising awareness of adult education as an essential component of the right to education;

(iii) taking measures to improve the public recognition of adult education; and

(iv) collecting, analysing and disseminating effective practices and lessons learnt.

(c) Implementation of these policies, backed by national ownership and commitment, reliable and sustainable financial resources, and people-centred and multi-stakeholder partnerships entails:

(i) creating structures and fostering participatory processes that facilitate the implementation of policies with respect to principles of “good governance” (see section B below);

(ii) allocating significant financial investment (see section C below);

(iii) securing appropriate provision and infrastructure to support enhanced participation (see section D below) and successful learning;

(iv) ensuring quality in the provision of adult learning and education (see section E below).

(d) Monitoring and evaluating policies and programme outcomes implies:

(i) establishing mechanisms and/or structures that apply appropriate criteria and standards, subject to periodic review;

(ii) taking appropriate measures to follow up on the results of the monitoring and evaluation;

(iii) collecting, analysing and disseminating timely, reliable and disaggregated data;

(iv) documenting and sharing effective and innovative practices in monitoring and evaluation.

B. Governance

13. To ensure good governance, Member States should establish mechanisms and manage institutions and processes at the local, national, regional and global levels that are transparent, accountable, democratic, and effective, and foster multi-stakeholder partnerships:
(a) Transparent and accountable governance entails the informed and constructive involvement of all relevant stakeholders in policy and programme development, guaranteeing the regular dissemination of the developments and achievements in this field, so that they can be used as benchmarks.

(b) Democratic governance means representation by and participation of all stakeholders, in order to guarantee responsiveness to the needs of all learners, in particular the most disadvantaged.

(c) Multi-stakeholder partnerships should include public authorities, civil society organizations and the private sector at local, regional, national and international levels.

(d) Ensuring good governance further entails creating mechanisms and processes at national and local level that are flexible, responsive and decentralized.

14. Member States should foster good governance by offering an enabling environment. This means:

(a) involving all relevant actors in adult learning and education requires comprehensive mapping of stakeholders in public authorities, civil society organizations and the private sector (specifically from ministries, civil society, learners’ associations, the media, private foundations, chambers of commerce and industry, international and regional organizations, volunteer groups, local authorities, parliaments, trade unions, research institutes and academia);

(b) enhancing constructive cooperation and decision-making among involved actors, while also encouraging the exchange of plans, budgets and expenditures. In this regard, it is essential to work towards improved access to and use of information and communication technologies, especially broadband networks and services.

(c) ensuring fruitful cooperation that allows for equitable use of resources among all stakeholders by means of effective coordination mechanisms (e.g. through a coordinating body such as a board, council or committee) should be created and strengthened. The success of these mechanisms depends on assigning clear roles and responsibilities. In this regard, sustained and regular interaction among relevant stakeholders should be encouraged.

(d) complementing and facilitating the effective translation of adult learning and education policies into concrete action, the establishment and use of countries’ decentralization processes and regional frameworks should be encouraged. To that end, learning cities, towns, villages, local communities and regions should be promoted.

(e) to strengthen democratic processes, especially in the context of decentralization, the capacities of all stakeholders, from inter-ministerial to the local and national levels, should be enhanced. The importance of the contribution of civil society organizations as well as the voices of learners should be recognized by putting into place flexible, accessible and participatory governance structures.

C. Financing

15. To realize the right of adults to education and to ensure quality provision, sufficient financial investment is essential, recognizing the fundamental role of governments in budgeting and allocation according to each state’s social priorities (education, health and food security, among
others) and respecting the principle of shared responsibility between government, the private sector and individuals. Literacy as basic education is the key condition for realizing the right to education and therefore should be provided free of charge. The necessary measures should be taken to use the resources available in a sustainable, effective, efficient and accountable way.

(a) All efforts should be made to mobilize resources across all government departments and from different stakeholders.

(b) For the individual learner, lack of funds should not be an obstacle to participation in adult learning and education programmes. Investment in continuing adult education should be prioritized.

(c) Inter-ministerial articulation and coordination between areas of action (e.g. employment and health) is essential in optimizing the use of resources (cost-effectiveness and cost-sharing) and maximizing learning outcomes.

(d) The allocation and use of resources should be made transparent and reflect the priorities that have been established; after conducting research on the current situation of adult education.

16. Member States should mobilize and allocate sufficient resources to adult education in accordance with national needs. This implies the following:

(a) Public investments in adult learning and education should fully reflect its vital contribution to social, cultural and economic development, as recognized by each Member State endorsing this Recommendation.

(b) To generate and use convincing evidence to facilitate stakeholders’ investment in adult learning and education, the wider benefits of learning (in areas such as health, security, economic development and democratic participation) should be communicated to different government departments to demonstrate that investment in adult learning and education can save costs and improve outcomes in other policy areas.

(c) To mobilize sufficient funding for adult learning and education, a variety of sources should be considered and pursued: (a) public authorities; (b) employers, the private sector and civil society organizations; (c) learners themselves, according to their financial capacities; and (d) multilateral and bilateral partners. The social, economic and cultural values of education should be seen as complementary.

(d) Effective and flexible funding mechanisms should be used, including (a) partnerships and cost sharing; (b) tax deduction; (c) paid and unpaid educational or training leave; (d) vouchers; and (e) loans. New and diversified sources of funding and incentives should be explored, while respecting the principles of equity and inclusion.

(e) Funding for adult learning and education should cover the costs of: (a) provision of suitable facilities or adaptation of existing facilities; (b) production of necessary learning materials; (c) developing capacities of educational personnel, including decent working conditions, adequate and timely remuneration of qualified educators, and their further training; (d) research and information expenses; (e) guidance and counselling; (f) tuition; (g) information and communication technologies; and (h) indirect costs, including those incurred at local level, and, where necessary and if possible, the accommodation and travel costs of trainees.
(f) To prove that all funding is used appropriately, coordination and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be put in place. Outcomes and impacts for individuals and societies at the global and country levels should also be measured. Presentation and documentation of the costs versus the benefits of investment in adult learning and education is highly encouraged.

D. Participation

17. To promote access and broader participation among adult learners, effective educational responses should be developed, especially to address equity and inclusion issues. Particular attention should be given to specific target groups, with a view to acknowledging their contribution to societal development while respecting cultural and other forms of diversity, including multilingualism.

(a) There should be no exclusion on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, migrant status, language, religion, disability, illness, rurality, sexual identity or orientation, poverty, displacement, imprisonment or occupation/profession. It is particularly important to address the effects of multiple disadvantages.

(b) Special attention should be given to programmes that support gender equality, taking into account women’s role as educators in families.

18. Member States should guarantee equitable access to adult learning and education, and promote broader and sustained participation by fostering a culture of learning and by minimizing barriers to participation. This implies that they:

(a) explore the factors that inhibit or prevent participation by identifying and mapping barriers for different target groups (i.e. those with low levels of literacy, vulnerable youth, groups with multiple disadvantages, migrant workers and refugees, unemployed people, members of ethnic minorities, indigenous groups, the physically or mentally challenged, prisoners, the elderly, the stateless, groups affected by conflict and displaced families), for example through periodic surveys and monitoring of learner participation with the support of reliable national statistic systems and strong involvement of local authorities, and by developing and applying appropriate indicators;

(b) put in place mechanisms to ensure the active participation of learners in decision-making at all stages of programme design and implementation, including analysis of needs, curriculum development and evaluation. Involvement of hard-to-reach populations can be fostered through media campaigns that strengthen inclusion and equity;

(c) enhance motivation and access for all, being based on the needs and aspirations of the participants and drawing on their experiences, making adult learning more culturally-relevant and reinforcing women’s roles in the communities where programmes are run. This will improve interest in early childhood care and education programmes involving parents, ensuring the inclusion of children with special needs in a culturally sensitive manner. Additional supporting services such as transportation and childcare may be offered to ensure equitable and consistent participation;

(d) provide guidance, counselling and other supportive services as a continuous process spanning the entire education system, and directed towards helping all adult learners to make conscious and positive educational and occupational choices. Particular attention
should be given to guidance that is gender-transformative and covers the whole range of education and training opportunities with a view to the world of life and work;

(e) offer sufficient learning opportunities through the establishment and strengthening of multi-purpose community learning spaces and centres, museums, and libraries. Activities that foster a culture of learning, such as learning festivals or campaigns as practiced in learning cities and regions, should be conducted, and information and communication technologies should be used to maximum effect to promote participation;

(f) integrate adult learning and education components into relevant programmes on health, employment, the environment, sustainable development, food security, human security, active citizenship, peace, multiculturalism and other issues, and broaden adult education messages and targets;

(g) enable learners to acquire further qualifications in order to pursue their learning pathways within the education system. The UNESCO Guidelines for the Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of the Outcomes of Non-Formal and Informal Learning should be applied to that end;

(h) increase access to learning opportunities through innovative didactics and ICT-based approaches, including Open Educational Resources (OERs) and appropriate use of social media for learning purposes;

(i) design a monitoring framework that serves the purposes of national policies (see section A) and governance structure (see section B). Such monitoring frameworks should ideally include a wide range of providers, be compatible with global or regional frameworks, and adopt a rights-based approach. To promote and support this process, further strengthening of statistical and analytical capacity in adult education should be provided through regional and international cooperation.

E. Quality

19. To ensure quality in adult education and its potential for transformation in all relevant spheres, attention should be paid to the four dimensions of relevance, equity, effectiveness and efficiency. Special attention should be given to promoting flexible and permeable learning pathways between formal and non-formal components of the education system, and to building necessary capacities for policy and programme evaluation to that end.

(a) Relevance means that provision through contextualized and learner-centred programmes is aligned with the needs of all stakeholders, including those of the labour market, so as to achieve personal, sociocultural, economic and educational goals.

(b) Equity is about fair access to and sustained participation in adult education, without discrimination.

(c) Effectiveness expresses the capability of the programme to achieve the desired objectives.

(d) Efficiency concerns both the capacity of a system to achieve its aims and the relationship of financial and other inputs to benefits.

20. Member States should foster an environment where high-quality adult education is provided. This means:
(a) developing appropriate content and modes of delivery, including use of ICT and mother-tongue-based language of instruction, and learner-centred needs assessment;

(b) elaborating and applying quality criteria for curricula, learning materials and teaching/learning methodologies in adult education programmes, as well as for the process of selecting teachers/educators for adult education, taking into account learning processes, outcomes and impact measures;

(c) providing appropriate infrastructure, including safe learning spaces;

(d) improving training, capacity-building, employment conditions and the professionalization of adult educators, for example through the establishment of partnerships with higher education institutions, teacher associations and civil society organizations;

(e) enabling learners to acquire and accumulate learning, experiences and qualifications through intermittent participation. Qualifications obtained in this way should be equivalent to those granted by formal education (e.g. in accordance with National Qualification Frameworks) to allow for continued education;

(f) responding to the internationalization of skills development, in particular with regard to the mobility of learners and workers;

(g) fostering and strengthening systematic interdisciplinary and practitioner-oriented research and innovation in adult education, to promote better-informed policy decisions and to improve quality, covering all dimensions and allowing for synergies by connecting different sets of data and by comparing practices in UNESCO Member States. Knowledge management systems for the collection, analysis and dissemination of data and good practice should be established through research centres, research communities and consortia at either national, regional or local levels. The latest evidence from various fields, including cognitive neuroscience, should be taken into account and translated into educational practice;

(h) building in systematic monitoring and evaluation of adult learning and education activities at all levels, and mutual accountability mechanisms for all stakeholders;

(i) establishing tools and mechanisms and building necessary capacities for quality control in the field of adult learning and education.

F. International cooperation

21. To promote the development and strengthening of adult learning and education, Member States should increase cooperation between all relevant stakeholders, including governmental bodies, research institutions, civil society organizations, unions, development assistance agencies, the private sector and the media, whether on a bilateral or multilateral basis, and enhance United Nations interagency cooperation.

(a) Sustained international cooperation means promoting and stimulating development within the countries concerned through the establishment of appropriate institutions and structures adapted to the particular circumstances of those countries.

(b) To create a climate favourable to international cooperation with a view to capacity-building in developing countries in different areas of adult learning and education, mutual cooperative assistance between all countries should be encouraged regardless of their
state of development. Mechanisms of regional integration are essential to facilitate and strengthen this process. International agreements such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness provide principles and guidelines to that end.

(c) Care should be taken to ensure that international cooperation does not merely involve the transfer of structures, curricula, methods and techniques that have originated elsewhere.

22. Member States, as part of the international community, should share their experiences, increase and improve mutual cooperative assistance, and help build each other’s capacities in adult education, taking into account their national priorities. This implies:

(a) fostering the regular exchange of (1) information, documentation and materials on policies, concepts and practices and relevant research; (2) adult learning and education professionals at national, regional and international levels. The use and transfer of new information and communication technologies should be maximized and the mobility of learners between Member States should be facilitated;

(b) enhancing South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation, giving priority to countries where the education deficits are the widest;

(c) collecting and presenting data on adult learning and education, through and with the support of UNESCO and the established mechanisms to produce the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE). This implies the further development of an international data collection mechanism based on agreed indicators and definitions, building on countries’ capacities to produce data, and the dissemination of such data at various levels.

(d) encouraging governments and development cooperation agencies to support the enhancement of local, regional and global cooperation and networking between all relevant stakeholders. Exploring how regional and global funding mechanisms for literacy and adult education could be established and strengthened, and how existing mechanisms can support the international, regional and national efforts mentioned above.

(e) incorporating specific clauses relating to adult learning and education in international agreements concerned with cooperation in the fields of education, science and culture, and promoting the development and strengthening of adult learning and education efforts in the United Nations and UNESCO, and in the attainment of the international development goals.