



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

10/04/2015

Ref.: CL/4108

Subject: **Final Report containing a draft text of the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education**

Sir/Madam,

The UNESCO General Conference decided, at its 37th session in November 2013 (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 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. It invited me, therefore, at the same session, to prepare such a revision in consultation with Member States and other stakeholders, and to submit to it at its 38th session a draft revised Recommendation on the Development of 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, please find herewith the Final Report containing a draft text of the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education, which I have prepared on the basis of comments and observations submitted by Member States on my Preliminary Report (CL/4067).

Given that the General Conference also decided that the special committee referred to in Article 10, paragraphs 4 and 5, of these Rules of Procedure shall not be convened, the Final Report containing a draft text, herein enclosed, is communicated to Member States with a view to its submission to the General Conference at its 38th session.

Accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration

Irina Bokova  
Director-General

Enclosure: Final Report of the Director-General containing a draft Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education

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



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

Final report containing a draft text of the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education prepared in accordance with Article 10.3 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

### 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 3, 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 final report, containing, as annex, a draft text of the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education.

The General Conference having decided that the special committee referred to in Article 10, paragraphs 4 and 5, of these Rules of Procedures shall not be convened, the draft text herein contained is communicated to Member States with a view to its submission to the General Conference at its 38th session.

### I. Background

1. Following a proposal from UNESCO’s Third International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA III, Tokyo, 1972), UNESCO’s General Conference at its 19th session (Nairobi, 1976) adopted the *Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education* (henceforth the “1976 Recommendation”). As UNESCO’s key normative document concerning adult education policy and practice in its Member States, it lays out guiding principles and a comprehensive approach to promoting and developing adult education.

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*,<sup>1</sup> 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 learning and education”. The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) coordinates this monitoring process 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.<sup>2</sup> The General Conference invited the Director-General of UNESCO to

<sup>1</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001877/187789m.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002150/215084e.pdf>

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,<sup>3</sup> 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)<sup>4</sup>, 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-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)),<sup>5</sup> 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)).<sup>6</sup>

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).<sup>7</sup>

8. Having examined this preliminary study, the General Conference decided at its 37th session in November 2013 (37 C/Resolution 16)<sup>8</sup> 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 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 an online consultation process, taking into account the global trends and issues in adult learning and education as described in GRALE I,

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002151/215182e.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002198/219823e.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002207/220725e.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002226/222602e.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002261/226162e.pdf>

while applying a participatory approach and intensive consultation with relevant experts and organizations.

10. To minimize costs and maximize synergies, the consultation process was to take advantage of the triennial reporting process for the next issue of GRALE in 2015. It also relates to other relevant processes, such as discussions on the place of skills, competencies and lifelong learning in the post-2015 international education and development agenda and concerning education for sustainable development.

11. The consultation and drafting process took place in coordination with the process for the revision of the 2001 Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education to ensure that the instruments are mutually reinforcing in addressing key policy issues, in particular on lifelong learning and adult continuing training and professional development, as well as other contemporary issues, in a consistent manner.

12. Based on the outcomes of the 2012 expert meeting and the following 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.

13. 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 at the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning in Hamburg on 27 and 28 May 2014 to ensure 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 formed the basis for an open online consultation with Member States and other stakeholders held from 16 to 29 June 2014.

14. 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”. The 503 participants in the online consultation included experts on ALE and stakeholders from all regions. During the fourteen days, 82 contributions were received in the trilingual (English, French and Spanish) exchange forum.

15. These written inputs were used to inform the further elaboration by the Secretariat of the first draft text of the Recommendation, which was sent to Member States by Circular Letter (CL/4067)<sup>9</sup> on 10 September 2014, in accordance with the above-mentioned Rules of Procedure, for their comments and observations.

16. Comments and observations from 47 Member States from all regions were received, ranging from detailed responses based on national consultations to the mere expression of agreement with the first draft text. Principal agreement with the draft text was expressed repeatedly and especially the enlarged concept of adult learning and education, the shift to a demand-driven paradigm and the integration with the post-2015 agenda was welcomed. While the overall content was seen as entirely comprehensive, the wish to remain focused on the most relevant aspects was also expressed.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002296/229647e.pdf>

### **Broad support was expressed towards**

- following a rights-based, participatory and discrimination-free approach to policy and programme design and implementation,
- underlining the relevance of adult learning and education for the economy and the labour market,
- expressing the need to increase the reputation of adult learning and education and strengthen its function as an indispensable component of contemporary education systems,
- situating ALE in the heart of lifelong learning while highlighting the foundational role of literacy,
- stressing the relevance of recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning, and
- reiterating the importance of strengthened capacity-building together with enhanced international cooperation.

17. The first draft text was further revised to take into account Member States' observations and comments, including suggestions to clarify and enhance consistency of terminology used throughout the text, suggested additions of new recommendations, rewording of paragraphs and possible deletions when repetition or overlaps occurred.

### **III. Focus of the revision**

18. The present draft text, as refined through the procedural consultation mentioned above, 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 revised 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.

19. The draft text strongly refers to the concept of lifelong learning and underlines the overall aim of ALE, namely to ensure that that all adults participate in their societies and the world of work. It takes into account the three key domains of adult learning and education: literacy and basic skills; continuing training and professional development; and education and learning opportunities for active citizenship, variously known as community, popular or liberal education, to empower people to engage with a wide range of social issues. The strong potential and supportive function of information and communication technologies (ICT) is underlined.

20. The foundational role of literacy as a continuum of learning and proficiency levels, providing the essential building block for a learning society, is reiterated strongly together with its function for solving problems in an increasingly technological environment.

21. The need for a cross-sectoral approach to adult learning and education is underlined, requiring cooperation between various ministries beyond education.

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

23. The areas of action described in the set of concrete recommendations follow the logic of the *Belém Framework for Action*. This is helpful for its 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 (see also below, Section IV).

24. 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)).

25. The draft text is considerably more concise than the *1976 Recommendation*. Instead of ten it consists of five main sections: (1) Preamble, (2) Definition and scope, (3) Aims and objectives, (4) Areas of action, including policy, governance, financing, participation, inclusion and equity, quality, and (5) International cooperation. While the focus of the *1976 Recommendation* was on establishing adult education worldwide as a relevant field of education, the revised Recommendation intends to further consolidate and strengthen its function within existing education systems while respecting regional and national differences, and to advocate for the role of adult learning and education with regard to provision of capabilities in view of current challenges without discrimination.

26. Consequently, the draft combines a strong concern for neglected and vulnerable groups with the will to respond to requirements of sustainable development. It also emphasizes the empowering function of learning and education and recognizes lifelong learning for all as the key instrument to that end. Adult learning and education deliberately includes but goes beyond skills development and enhancing employability, and aims at promoting personal and professional development, thereby supporting more active engagement by adults with their societies, communities and environments, to allow them to exercise and realize their rights and take control of their destinies.

#### **IV. Implementation and monitoring of the instrument**

27. With a view to rendering this standard-setting instrument more effective and to facilitate its implementation and monitoring, the draft text adopts the approach of the Belém Framework for Action adopted by 144 Member States in 2009 and builds on the mechanisms established for its monitoring. Implementation of the Recommendation could be monitored in the framework of the triennial reporting for the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE).

28. Given that the General Conference decided that the special committee referred to in Article 10, paragraphs 4 and 5 of the above-mentioned Rules of Procedures shall not be convened, the draft text hereto annexed is submitted to Member States with a view to its discussion and possible adoption at the 38th session of the General Conference.





## ANNEX

### 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,

**Recalling** the principles set forth in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), Article 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), Article 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), and the principles contained in the Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960),

**Reaffirming** that in the framework of lifelong learning, literacy constitutes an indispensable foundation and adult learning and education an integral part. Literacy and adult learning and education contribute to the realization of the right to education that enables adults to exercise other economic, political, 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 citizens face simultaneous challenges which prompt us to review the conditions for realizing the right to education for all adults,

**Reiterating** the significant 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 noting the commitment of the international community to the promotion of social development, sustained and inclusive economic growth and environmental protection 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 (World Conference on EFA, Jomtien 1990 and World Education Forum, 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),

**Referring to** the International Standard Classification of Education 2011,

**Underlining** the relevance of improving technical and vocational education and training as expressed in the UNESCO Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training (2015), which contains specific provisions for continuing training and professional development,

**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,

**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;
4. Further recommends that Member States report to the General Conference, 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 participate in their societies and the world of work. It denotes the entire body of learning processes, formal, non-formal and informal, 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, organisations and societies. Adult learning and education involves sustained activities and processes of acquiring, recognizing, exchanging, and adapting capabilities. Given that the boundaries of youth and adulthood are shifting in most cultures, in this text the term “adult” denotes all those who engage in adult learning and education, even if they have not reached the legal age of maturity.

2. Adult learning and education constitutes a major building block of a learning society and for the creation of learning communities, cities and regions as they foster a culture of learning throughout life and revitalize learning in families, communities and other learning spaces, and in the workplace.

3. The types of adult learning and education activities vary widely. Adult learning and education includes many learning opportunities for equipping adults with literacy and basic skills; for continuing training and professional development, and for active citizenship, through what is variously known as community, popular or liberal education. Adult learning and education provides a variety of learning pathways and flexible learning opportunities including second chance programmes to make up for lack of initial schooling, including for people who have never been to school, early school leavers and drop outs.

4. Literacy is a key component of adult learning and education. It involves a continuum of learning and proficiency levels which allows citizens to engage in lifelong learning and participate fully in community, workplace and wider society. It includes the ability to read and write, to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials, as well as the ability to solve problems in an increasingly technological and information-rich environment. Literacy is an essential means of building people’s knowledge, skills and

competencies to cope with the evolving challenges and complexities of life, culture, economy and society.

5. Continuing training and professional development is a fundamental element in a continuum of learning that equips adults with the knowledge, skills and competencies to fully engage in rapidly-changing societal and working environments. The UNESCO Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training (2015) contains relevant provisions in this area.

6. Adult learning and education also includes education and learning opportunities for active citizenship, variously known as community, popular or liberal education. It empowers people to actively engage with social issues such as poverty, gender, intergenerational solidarity, social mobility, justice, equity, exclusion, violence, unemployment, environmental protection and climate change. It also helps people to lead a decent life, in terms of health and well-being, culture, spirituality and in all other ways that contribute to personal development and dignity.

7. Information and communication technologies (ICT) are seen as holding great potential for improving access by adults to a variety of learning opportunities and promoting equity and inclusion. They offer various innovative possibilities for realizing lifelong learning, reducing the dependence on traditional formal structures of education and permitting individualized learning. Through mobile devices, electronic networking, social media and on-line courses adult learners can have access to opportunities to learn anytime and anywhere. Information and communication technologies have also considerable capacity for facilitating access to education for people with disabilities permitting their fuller integration into society, as well as for other marginalized or disadvantaged groups.

## **II. Aims and Objectives**

8. The aim of adult learning and education is to equip people with the necessary capabilities to exercise and realize their rights and take control of their destinies. It promotes personal and professional development, thereby supporting more active engagement by adults with their societies, communities and environments. It fosters sustainable and inclusive economic growth and decent work prospects of individuals. It is therefore a crucial tool in alleviating poverty, improving health and well-being and contributing to sustainable learning societies.

9. The objectives of adult learning and education are to (a) develop the capacity of individuals to think critically and to act with autonomy and a sense of responsibility; (b) reinforce the capacity to deal with and shape the developments taking place in the economy and the world of work; (c) contribute to the creation of a learning society where every individual has an opportunity to learn and fully participate in sustainable development processes and enhance solidarity of people and communities; (d) promote peaceful coexistence and human rights; (e) foster resilience in young and older adults; (f) enhance awareness for the protection of the environment.

## **III. Areas of action**

10. This Recommendation specifically addresses the following areas from the Belém Framework for Action adopted by CONFINTEA VI: policy, governance, financing, participation, inclusion and equity, and quality.

### **Policy**

11. Member States, according to their specific conditions, governing structures and constitutional provisions, should develop comprehensive, inclusive and integrated policies for adult learning and education in its various forms.

- (a) Member States should develop comprehensive policies that address learning in a wide range of spheres, including the economic, political, social, cultural, technological and environmental.
  - (b) Member States should develop inclusive policies that address the learning needs of all adults by providing equitable access to learning opportunities, and differentiated strategies without discrimination on any grounds.
  - (c) Member States should develop integrated policies using inter-disciplinary and inter-sectoral knowledge and expertise, encompassing education and training policies and related policy areas, such as economic development, human resource development, labour, health, environment, justice, agriculture and culture.
12. To develop adult learning and education policies, Member States should consider:
- (a) strengthening or creating inter-ministerial forums to articulate across sectors the roles of adult learning and education in the lifelong learning spectrum, as well as its contributions to the development of societies;
  - (b) involving all relevant stakeholders, including parliamentarians, public authorities, academia, civil society organizations, and the private sector as partners in policy development;
  - (c) providing suitable structures and mechanisms for the development of adult learning and education policies, whilst ensuring that the policies developed are flexible enough to adapt to future needs, issues and challenges.
13. To nurture a favourable policy environment, Member States should consider:
- (a) raising awareness, through legislation, institutions and sustained political commitment, of adult learning and education as an essential component of the right to education and a key pillar in the education system;
  - (b) taking measures to provide information, motivate learners and guide them towards relevant learning opportunities;
  - (c) demonstrating, including through the collection, analysis and dissemination of effective policies and practices, the wider benefits of literacy, adult learning and education to society, such as social cohesion, health and well-being, community development, employment and environmental protection, as aspects of inclusive, equitable and sustainable development.

## **Governance**

14. According to their specific conditions, governing structures and constitutional provisions, Member States should consider enhancing the governance of adult learning and education, including through strengthening or creating cooperative structures and participatory processes, such as multi-stakeholder partnerships, at local, national, regional and international levels.

15. Member States should establish mechanisms and manage institutions and processes at the local, national, regional and global levels that are effective, transparent, accountable and democratic, and foster multi-stakeholder partnerships. Member States should consider:

- (a) ensuring suitable representation by and participation of relevant stakeholders in the development of policies and programmes in order to ensure democratic governance and responsiveness to the needs of all learners, in particular the most disadvantaged;

- (b) developing multi-stakeholder partnerships, contributing to offering an enabling environment for good governance, which should involve all relevant actors in adult learning and education from public authorities, civil society organizations and the private sector (such as ministries, local authorities, parliaments, learners' associations, the media, volunteer groups, research institutes and academia, private foundations, chambers of commerce and industry, trade unions, international and regional organizations) including those who organize teaching and learning processes and validate competencies at local, regional, national and international levels;
- (c) disseminating developments and achievements of wider interest, so that they can be used as benchmarks.

16. Member States should consider establishing mechanisms and processes at national and local levels that are flexible, responsive and decentralized. Rural and urban areas should have inclusive and sustainable strategies where every individual shall have opportunities to learn and fully participate in development processes.

17. Member States should consider developing learning cities, towns and villages, by:

- (a) mobilizing resources to promote inclusive learning;
- (b) revitalizing learning in families and communities;
- (c) facilitating learning for and in the workplace;
- (d) extending the use of modern learning technologies;
- (e) enhancing quality and excellence in learning;
- (f) fostering a culture of learning throughout life.

## **Financing**

18. Member States should mobilize and allocate sufficient financial resources to support enhanced and successful participation in adult learning and education, through appropriate mechanisms, including inter-ministerial coordination, partnerships and cost-sharing.

19. Governments have a fundamental role in budgeting and allocation according to each State's social priorities (education, health food security, among others) and respecting the principle of shared responsibility between governments, the private sector and individuals. Member States should mobilize and allocate sufficient resources to adult education in accordance with national needs. The necessary measures should be taken to use the resources available in a sustainable, effective, efficient, democratic and accountable way.

20. All efforts should be made to put in place a strategy for mobilizing resources across all relevant government departments and from different stakeholders. Literacy, as the foundation for lifelong learning and a key condition for realizing the right to education, should be universally accessible and freely available. For the individual learner, lack of funds should not be an obstacle to participation in adult learning and education programmes. Member States should consider:

- (a) prioritizing investment in literacy and basic skills, and continuing adult learning and education;
- (b) fostering inter-ministerial coordination between policy areas (e.g. economic development, human resource, labour, health, agriculture, and environment) is essential in optimizing the use of resources (cost-effectiveness and cost-sharing) and maximizing learning outcomes;

- (c) making the allocation and use of resources transparent to reflect the priorities that have been established according to research results on the current situation of adult education.

21. Member States, may consider offering co-financing and setting incentives to facilitate learning. For example, individual learning accounts (ILAs), subsidies (vouchers and allowances) and support for training leave for workers might be considered.

### **Participation, inclusion and equity**

22. Member States should consider, according to their specific conditions, governing structures and constitutional provisions, promoting participation, inclusion and equity so that no individual is excluded from adult learning and education and that quality learning opportunities are available to all women and men of diverse social, cultural, linguistic, economic, educational and other backgrounds.

23. To promote access and broader participation, Member States should consider, according to their specific conditions, governing structures and constitutional provisions, developing effective educational responses, especially to address accessibility, autonomy, 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, and ensure that further qualifications are not only validated but valued with regard to income and status. This implies:

- (a) establishing appropriate strategies to promote adults' access to and participation in learning activities and to enhance incentives for them to undertake such activities;
- (b) tolerating no discrimination on any grounds, including age, gender, ethnicity, migrant status, language, religion, disability, illness, rurality, sexual identity or orientation, poverty, displacement, imprisonment, occupation or profession;
- (c) devoting special attention and action to enhance access to quality learning for disadvantaged or vulnerable groups such as individuals with low levels of or no literacy and numeracy and schooling, vulnerable youth, migrant workers, unemployed workers, members of ethnic minorities, indigenous groups, individuals with disability, prisoners, the elderly, people affected by conflict or disasters, refugees, stateless or displaced persons;
- (d) addressing learners' needs and aspirations with adult learning approaches which respect and reflect the diversity of learners' languages and heritage, including indigenous culture and values, create bridges between different groups and reinforce integrative capacities within communities;
- (e) giving special attention to programmes or initiatives that promote gender equality;
- (f) creating or strengthening appropriate institutional structures, like community learning centres, for delivering adult learning and education and encouraging adults to use these as hubs for individual learning as well as community development;
- (g) developing high-quality information and guidance services, which facilitate access to participation, help improve the visibility of the gains resulting from adult learning, and ensure a better match between the demands of individuals and learning opportunities.

24. Member States should guarantee equitable access to adult learning and education, and promote broader and sustained participation by fostering a culture of learning throughout life and by minimizing barriers to participation.

## Quality

25. To ensure effective policy and programme implementation through periodical monitoring and evaluation of adult learning and education policies and programmes, Member States should consider, according to their specific conditions, governing structures and constitutional provisions:

- (a) establishing mechanisms and/or structures that utilize appropriate quality criteria and standards, subject to periodic review;
- (b) taking appropriate measures to follow up on the results of the monitoring and evaluation;
- (c) collecting and analysing disaggregated data in a timely, reliable, and valid manner and share effective and innovative practices in monitoring and evaluation.

26. To ensure quality in adult education and its potential for transformation in all relevant spheres, attention should be paid to the relevance, equity, effectiveness and efficiency of adult learning and education. To this end, Member States should consider, according to their specific conditions, governing structures and constitutional provisions:

- (a) aligning the provision of adult learning and education, through contextualized and learner-centred culturally and linguistically appropriate programmes, with the needs of all stakeholders, including those of the labour market;
- (b) ensuring fair access to, and sustained participation and learning without discrimination in adult learning and education;
- (c) assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of programmes by measuring the extent to which they achieve the desired objectives, including in relation to their outcomes.

27. Member States should promote, according to their specific conditions, governing structures and constitutional provisions, flexible and seamless learning pathways between formal and non-formal education and training, and build necessary capacities for policy and programme evaluation to that end.

28. Member States should foster an environment where quality adult learning and education is provided through measures such as:

- (a) developing appropriate content and modes of delivery, preferably using mother-tongue as the language of instruction, and adopting learner-centred pedagogy, supported by ICT and open educational resources;
- (b) providing decent infrastructure, including safe learning spaces;
- (c) establishing tools and mechanisms and building necessary capacities for monitoring and evaluation in the field of adult learning and education, taking into account the depth and breadth of participation, learning processes, outcomes and impact measures;
- (d) developing suitable literacy measurement tools;
- (e) establishing quality assurance mechanisms and programme monitoring and evaluation as integral components of adult learning and education systems; setting quality standards, certifying adherence to these standards and disseminating, to the general public, information about providers adhering to the standards;
- (f) improving training, capacity-building, employment conditions and the professionalization of adult educators;

- (g) enabling learners to acquire and accumulate learning, experiences and qualifications through flexible participation and accumulation of learning outcomes at different stages. Learning outcomes from participation in non-formal and informal adult learning and education should be recognized, validated and accredited as having equivalent values to those granted by formal education (e.g. in accordance with National Qualification Frameworks) to allow for continuing education and access to labour market, without facing discrimination barriers.

#### **IV. International cooperation**

29. To promote the development and strengthening of adult learning and education, Member States should consider increasing 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. Sustained international cooperation implies:

- (a) promoting and stimulating development within the countries concerned through appropriate institutions and structures adapted to the particular circumstances of those countries;
- (b) creating a climate favourable to international cooperation with a view to capacity-building in developing countries in different areas of adult learning and education and encouraging mutual cooperative assistance between all countries regardless of their state of development, as well as making full use of the advantage presented by mechanisms of regional integration to facilitate and strengthen this process;
- (c) ensuring that international cooperation does not merely involve the transfer of structures, curricula, methods and techniques that have originated elsewhere.

30. Member States, as part of the international community, should consider sharing their experiences, increasing and improving 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 information, documentation and materials on policies, concepts and practices and relevant research, as well as 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, by applying findings from international reports and research;
- (c) collecting and presenting data on adult learning and education, through and with the support of UNESCO, including the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), and the established mechanisms to produce relevant reports, such as the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE). This implies the further enhancement of international data collection mechanisms 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, where appropriate, 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 United Nations' sustainable development goals.