



**EDUCATION 2030: FROM COMMITMENT TO ACTION
STATEMENT FROM CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM —
for the CONFINTEA 6 Mid-Term Review
24 October 2017, Suwon City, Korea**

Representatives of civil society from over 50 countries, members and partners of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), urge inclusion in the Mid-Term Review outcomes of the following considerations, agreed upon at the Civil Society Forum.

We recognize that the multiple crises, worsening and accelerating around the world, need attention and require an urgent response—for example, population displacement and migration, conflict and violence, educational sustainability, climate change and increasing inequalities.

We affirm the crucial role of adult learning and education (ALE) to address these crises.

Given that the next CONFINTEA conference is four years away, and the full implementation of the Belém Framework for Action (BFA) is still in process, we deliver the following message to representatives of governments, UN agencies and international organisations at the CONFINTEA 6 Mid-Term Review.

- Education and learning throughout life is a fundamental human right, and a public good that is key to promoting educational, social, economic, and environmental justice, democratic participation, citizenship values (like solidarity) and reducing widespread inequalities. It is a precondition for the realisation of all other human rights, and for the creation of a world worth living in - one where all women and men can live in dignity and democratic systems. It is essential to the implementation of SDG 4, as agreed by the United Nations in 2015, and more generally to all SDGs. This essential role of adult learning and education (ALE), which includes youth and older adults, across the SDG agenda should be amplified and supported.
- ALE is the least supported link in the lifelong learning chain and therefore its position should be strengthened, secured and fully recognised, in order to make sure that all adults are not left behind. The political commitment to promoting the fully inclusive understanding of lifelong learning is imperative.
- As stated in the Belém Framework for Action (BFA) “The planet will not survive unless it becomes a learning planet.” A focus on the future (children’s education) is of course essential, but the importance of continuous learning and development of adults is a prerequisite. Doing so will contribute to eradicating poverty, promoting decent work and employment, ending inequality in all its forms, ensuring gender quality, peaceful, inclusive, intercultural and democratic societies, and sustainable development in all its aspects.
- In terms of competencies, the challenges of our times call for ALE to be organised in an integrated and holistic manner. Such a comprehensive perspective would take into account formal, non-formal, and informal space. It would incorporate and connect basic education, training of skills and capacities for effective and decent work, and developing capacities for life and social and personal development. It would recognize a diversity of ways of learning and knowing, including indigenous knowledge. Quality adult education, training and learning must encompass the full



range of capacities that are needed for/in the world of work, in society, and everyday life. It should include Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education.

- Responding to these challenges implies a lifelong learning perspective that enables equality of opportunity for all, a learner-centered orientation, professionalisation of educators, and promotion of different pathways to learning to cater to diverse learning needs and contexts. Addressing the needs of known and less known (e.g. returning soldiers, refugees, prisoners) marginalised and vulnerable communities and groups is particularly crucial, as is the role of the State in identifying those at risk.
- ALE faces further cuts in funding at the national level in many countries, and is inadequately funded to implement activities and plans needed for the global agenda. Especially alarming is the lack of ALE in the development cooperation agendas. This requires urgent action on re-thinking the existing funding mechanisms and strategies. We urge the Global Partnership for Education, Education Financing Commission and Education to act on its mandate to secure development of the full SDG agenda and in particular the development of lifelong learning, including ALE.
- Public education is seriously underfunded - less than 1% of education budgets go to adult education and many governments are far from meeting the global benchmark of 6 % of GDP and 20% of spending for education. Even if it is not publicly provided ALE is a public good; in that regard, various partners should contribute to adult education provision, but quality, affordability and accessibility have to remain crucial principles. Although diversifying sources of funding and financial partnerships is necessary for ALE there is a danger of massive privatisation, commercialisation and the dominance of for profit interest in ALE which can undermine the right to education and learning of many adults worldwide.
- Civil society plays an important role in ALE worldwide. As one of the key players, it should also be recognized as a partner in policy creation, planning, monitoring, and evaluation of policy implementation. Adequate funding, however, is crucial.
- Monitoring should rely on relevant data about who participates in ALE and who is absent in order to identify under-represented groups and strategies to address their needs. Developing capacity to gather and analyse data is of key importance for governments and civil society.
- While the rates of basic adult literacy have reduced marginally, the number of people unable to communicate effectively through reading, writing, numeracy, digital and environmental literacies continues to be one of the most serious problems of the global world. In a context of rapid ICT development, newly illiterate people are emerging. The scope, complexity and importance of this task require urgent action, political commitment and sufficient allocation of resources, with the mobilisation of a broad range of partners. The commitment to universal adult literacy must be re-affirmed within the global agenda.
- ALE, in a lifelong, life-wide and life-deep perspective, is crucial to the empowerment for all women and men around the planet. It should be truly transformational, critical, empowering, participative and inclusive so it can support the development and transformation of individuals, communities, societies and economies, according to individual needs. An intersectoral approach is needed which acknowledges the urgent need for recognition and accreditation of increasingly mobile populations.