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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,  
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

## **WORLD CONFERENCE ON ADULT EDUCATION**

**Montreal, Canada, 21-31 August 1960**

**FINAL REPORT**

## **RESOLUTIONS**

### **A. ROLE AND CONTENT OF ADULT EDUCATION**

#### **HUMANISM AND TECHNOLOGY IN ADULT EDUCATION**

While adult education should contribute largely towards improving the professional qualifications of the individual, it should also allow scope for reflection on the values attaching to human life, which it is the duty of social progress to uphold, in every age, with a view to their ultimate triumph.

Accordingly, the Conference recommends that this type of education should provide an opportunity for free discussions, between participants with different educational, social or professional backgrounds, on the role of science and technology in the development of our society and on the idea that men should form of this role so as to ensure the continued advance of mankind.

#### **THE INSPIRATION OF ADULT EDUCATION**

Having regard to the fact that education must be realistic, scientific and related to present-day life, so as to contribute to the overall development of the modern man, to mutual knowledge and respect of peoples and their cultural values, and to the strengthening of peace throughout the world, and also to the fact that a similar role is played by art;

Considering that education and culture should be available to everyone, irrespective of race, sex, nationality and religion, thereby helping to ensure complete equality of rights to men and women in all walks of life;

The curricula and textbooks prescribed by the competent bodies should be such as to ensure that education is realistic and scientific, imbued with humanistic ideals, calculated to develop the intellectual faculties of citizens, their powers of judgement and reflection and their aesthetic sense, and thus to complete the ethical education of adults, with due regard to all the factors required to raise the status of the individual as a human being and a citizen respecting other human beings and their work;

Measures should be taken to remedy the disparity between rural education and urban education;

Education should embrace the great ideals of mankind and should foster mutual respect between the peoples, and mutual appreciation of their cultural values; it should break down racial hatred and make for brotherly understanding among the peoples; it should militate in favour of peace throughout the world.

#### **THE COLLABORATION OF SCIENTISTS AND ARTISTS**

Unesco and/or the National Commissions should make arrangements in the near future for the holding of a series of seminars, symposia or round-tables on the problems of popularizing science and art, with the co-operation and under the direct impetus of leading scientists and creative artists who have a special responsibility in this matter;

Unesco should appeal to all intellectuals and artists throughout the world reminding them of their responsibilities for the education of adults.

### **AID FOR CREATIVE ACTIVITIES**

With a view to developing the creative ability of adults, encouragement and support should be given to all their creative efforts in the spheres of art and culture, science and technology.

### **TRADITIONAL FORMS OF POPULAR CULTURE**

This Conference recognizes the value in Adult Education of the traditional media of entertainment such as the theatre, the puppet-show, dance-dramas, ballad recitals, etc., and,

While welcoming the few attempts being made in some countries for using drama in various forms, for Adult Education, expresses its concern over the fast disappearance of these traditional forms in communities which until recently used to be proud of this heritage, and

Calls upon Unesco to conduct a special and early investigation into the still surviving forms of traditional and folk drama and allied popular types of entertainment particularly in Asian and African countries, with a view to discovering those aspects of these forms which can be harnessed to meet the present-day educational needs of adults, and also with the object of devising practical methods of incorporating them in Adult Education and cultural development programmes of those countries.

## **B. FORMS AND METHODS OF ADULT EDUCATION**

### **CONTRIBUTION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION**

#### ***Introductory remarks***

There is no denying that it is becoming increasingly difficult to adjust Adult Education to the rapid and complex changes of civilization, which are continually giving rise to new problems. The cultural needs of individuals and of society as a whole, the aspirations of the urban and rural populations both in the advanced and the underdeveloped countries, together with the short- and long-term effects of their own work, tend more and more to baffle analysis by those concerned with Adult Education.

To gain more reliable knowledge of these factors, Adult Education workers need the assistance of scientific research. In every country, extensive research has already been carried out on ways and means of raising living standards, with the result that remarkable economic progress has been made over the past few years. It is no less important to raise the cultural level both of advanced and of underdeveloped societies - a process which involves yet more complex problems than the raising of material living standards. In order that these may be dealt with more effectively, it is to be hoped that there will be a vigorous development of research aimed at contributing to the cultural progress of all sectors of society.

Accordingly, the Conference puts forward the following recommendations:

- (1) Adult Education specialists should have at their disposal an effective system of information on the initial results of economic, sociological, psychological and educational studies likely to help them in defining the needs, aspirations, aims, programmes, methods and general machinery of adult education;

- (2) In every country they should encourage the *specific research* necessary for the progress of their work and – more generally – for the framing of a more effective educational policy for raising cultural standards in the light of the needs of the individual and of society as a whole. They should associate research workers not only in the checking of results but in all stages of their work;
- (3) In every country they should assist in the establishment or development of *research institutes* in which economists, sociologists, psychologists and other social scientists would co-operate with Adult Education leaders and workers in conducting research for, on and by cultural action;
- (4) Unesco should give its support to *international associations, meetings or working parties* organized for the development of a sociology of Adult Education. They would consist of specialists in sociological, economic, psychological and educational research and of specialists in Adult Education. They would co-ordinate national research. They would, from time to time, carry out comparative research on the most important problems involved in providing more extensive knowledge and culture for adults (leisure and popular culture, development of the personality among young people, co-ordination of the constructive work of the mass media and of cultural groups, relationship between the raising of living standards and the raising of cultural standards, etc.).

#### **FILM, RADIO AND TELEVISION**

Considering the constant and widespread impact on adults, all over the world, of popular entertainment through the media of feature films, television and radio programmes;

Appreciating the value of entertainment as the way to the hearts and minds of men, and as the promoter and preserver of the artistic and cultural heritage of communities; and

Keeping in view the formative or destructive effect that entertainment through the mass media can have upon people in societies emerging into new social and economic environment and facing cultural crises;

This Conference calls upon:

- (a) bodies and organizations comprising those who control the media of popular entertainment, such as films, television and radio, to consider how they can effectively incorporate into some of their programmes (films, radio and television) a constructive outlook and an incentive for a richer, better and more informed life;
- (b) Unesco, to take steps to bring educators and cultural leaders into friendly contact with those who control the media of popular entertainment and facilitate exchange of ideas between the two, as a preliminary to the working out of concrete suggestions for the production of a new type of entertainment programme that will retain popular appeal and, at the same time, enrich the thought and way of life of the average man.

## **C. STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF ADULT EDUCATION**

### **ADULT EDUCATION AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF EVERY EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

Recognizing that the wider provision of education for children and young persons which has taken place in most countries during the last century has been accompanied by the development of an increasing demand for education by adults, this Conference urges governments to regard Adult Education not as an addition, but as an integral part of their national system of education.

The Conference recommends that it be declared as a fundamental principle of this Conference that Adult Education is an integral and organic part of every national system of education, and that it should therefore receive within the system the attention and economic resources which this status justifies, in proportion to the necessities of each country.

The Conference recognizes that, amongst the needs of various countries, the highest priority should be given by governments and United Nations agencies to economic development, particularly in the underdeveloped countries. The Conference invites the attention of governments and United Nations agencies to the urgency of preparing the minds of adults in these regions to take full advantage of and participate in these measures for furthering economic development. It further urges governments and United Nations agencies to treat Adult Education as a part of economic and multipurpose development and of the United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance for economic development.

### **PLANNING OF AND RESOURCES FOR ADULT EDUCATION**

The Conference considers that the task of furthering the progress of countries undergoing a process of development, particularly in the educational field, demands integral planning of purposes and programmes, and requires that an organism which represents the society as a whole shall direct, co-ordinate and supervise their execution. For this task the most suitable institution is obviously the State.

Although, in the case of democratic States, there is no cause for reservation, the Conference considers that this problem concerns educational traditions, customs and cultural habits of the various countries; nevertheless, we consider it essential for successful results that all resources be put to use according to a plan, for the benefit of all, and particularly of those sectors of the population whose need is the greatest.

### **R RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION**

Recognizing that the nature of governments' participation in Adult Education provision will vary according to the different stages of development and educational traditions in countries, this Conference nevertheless affirms that it is the duty of governments to create the conditions, both financial and administrative, in which satisfactory Adult Education can be carried out.

### **ADULT EDUCATION AND THE STANDARD OF LIVING**

Taking into account the fact that the use of educational opportunities is conditioned by an adequate economic standard of subsistence among the population to whom these opportunities are offered, and that it is completely vain to determine pedagogical principles, norms and techniques while ignoring the basic conditions of life which make it possible to take advantage of educational services; the Conference

considers that it is indispensable to complement all the technical recommendations, with the fundamental recommendation that the Member States concern themselves with enabling the masses of the population to enjoy a minimum level of economic subsistence.

#### **NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND ADULT EDUCATION**

Active participation in a voluntary organization is an educational experience in its own right and helps to develop the qualities of individual and social responsibility and leadership. The Conference therefore urges governments to encourage voluntary organizations, since without the freedom, the creative resources, and the experimental approach which should characterize such bodies, an essential element in the education of adults is lacking.

#### **FACILITIES FOR ADULT EDUCATION**

Recognizing the right of all men and women to adequate and equal access to both vocational and general Adult Education, this Conference urges all Member States to make provision for the necessary facilities – for example, payment of salaries and expenses for travel and subsistence – for the part-time and temporary full-time release of adults in all occupational groups in order to participate in the Adult Education provision made by public and voluntary bodies in the fields of vocational, civic, social and cultural education.

#### **VOLUNTARY SERVICE CORPS FOR ADULT EDUCATION**

The Conference recommends that Unesco consider the establishment of a United Nations voluntary service corps, which would provide opportunities for people of all ages, nations and beliefs to give one year of work in the world battle against poverty, disease and illiteracy; such volunteers would supplement the efforts of non-governmental work camp organizations, and provide dramatic action for international understanding and co-operation.

#### **YOUTH AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND ADULT EDUCATION**

Considering that not only adult organizations are interested in Adult Education, but that student and youth organizations are also concerned with this programme;

Considering that many international youth organizations have proved themselves responsible and capable in the field of education, as is witnessed by the numerous efforts they have made in this field;

Considering that student and youth organizations can strengthen the Unesco Adult Education programme, for a number of reasons, such as that:

- (i) they study a variety of subjects,
- (ii) they are aware of the needs of their own people,
- (iii) they will be the future leaders of their countries,
- (iv) they know students and young people capable of contributing to the Unesco programme;

The Conference recommends that, in the Unesco programme for Adult Education, there be a mobilization of students and young people to aid in that programme, and that the appropriate non-governmental organizations be associated in this action.

#### **WORKING LANGUAGES OF FUTURE WORLD CONFERENCES<sup>1</sup>**

Having regard to the broad representation of Member States of Unesco, at the Second International Conference on Adult Education in Montreal, Canada, and in view of the obstacles which limited translation and interpretation facilities present to the free flow and exchange of ideas among the delegates;

The Montreal Conference recommends to the Executive Board and the Secretariat of Unesco that provision be made in future world conferences on Adult Education for the use of the four working languages of sessions of the General Conference and the Executive Board of Unesco, and the provision in all meetings of such future conferences of interpretation facilities adequate to permit the simultaneous interpretation of speeches made in English, French, Russian and Spanish.

#### **R E G I O N A L M E E T I N G S O N A D U L T E D U C A T I O N A N D L I T E R A C Y**

The Conference proposes that within the next two years Unesco hold, in Latin America, Asia and Africa, regional seminars of countries having common problems in regard to Adult Education in general, and illiteracy in particular, so that in these meetings practical solutions for raising the cultural level of the said regions may be studied and agreed upon.

#### **P E R M A N E N T C O M M I T T E E O N A D U L T E D U C A T I O N**

The Conference was unanimous in stressing the greatly increased significance of Adult Education in a rapidly changing world, and the obligation incumbent on Member States to give practical recognition to this fact. Consequently, it *recommends* that Unesco should increase its own budgetary appropriations for Adult Education to an extent sufficient to provide adequate resources and staff to deal effectively with the tasks to which it is committed in the field of Adult Education.

1. There should be established within the framework of Unesco a committee with a permanent status and a known basis of membership, to continue and extend the work done by the Consultative Committee on Adult Education since 1949.
2. Within the limits of the possibilities set by the Constitution of Unesco, the Director-General should have regard to securing the services, in the first place, of persons with specific experience:
  - (a) in governmental activities of Member States in the field of Adult Education;
  - (b) in major agencies of Adult Education, e.g. workers' education, public and voluntary evening school programmes, university extension, residential folk high schools, centres, and agencies for the production of the instruments and means needed in the development of Adult Education, including those particularly concerned with the mass media of communication;

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<sup>1</sup> Reservation expressed by one delegation.

- (c) in non-governmental organizations not included in (b) above which demonstrate in their programmes and actions a high degree of educational purposefulness and which provide ways through which Unesco can communicate with the peoples of the world;
  - (d) in national and regional organizations established to encourage co-ordination of effort between different Adult Education agencies.
3. The Director-General may wish to invite additional members to serve on the proposed committee when particular problems or projects are under consideration.
  4. The committee, in addition to advising Unesco, should have as an essential purpose the further development of communication and exchange of experience between Member States and amongst those professionally engaged in Adult Education.

#### **SPECIAL FUND FOR LITERACY<sup>2</sup>**

Action should be taken to create within the competent organizations of the United Nations, including Unesco, a special fund, derived from increased contributions from Member States, for the specific purpose of eliminating illiteracy in the developing and newly independent countries.

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<sup>2</sup> Reservation expressed by one delegation.