



# CONFINTEA VI Arab Regional Conference

*“Investing in Adult Learning: Building Knowledge and Learning Societies in the Arab Region”*

Tunis, Tunisia 5 – 7 January 2009



# CONFINTEA VI Arab Regional Conference

- Hosted by the Government of Tunisia, held in Tunis 5 – 7 January 2009
- 16 countries represented;



- Over 110 participants, 5 Ministers and 13 directors, multilateral agencies and international NGOs, as well as experts and stakeholders from the private sector and universities.

# Regional Socio-economic context

- Arab States region: 21 countries spread over two continents of Asia and Africa, with a population of 320 million people;
- 23% of the population live on less than US \$2 a day;
- Relative lack of political stability in some countries;
- Women are disadvantaged in terms of citizenship, legal rights, and professional, parliamentary and ministerial representation;
- Freedom of speech and democracy are limited;
- Digital divide exists.



# Adult education context and challenges

- Concept of adult education is too narrowly defined;
- Lack of coordination between ministries and different policy sectors;
- Funding by governments, the private sector and civil society organisations is still too low;
- Many obstacles hinder access to and participation in education by females, including tradition, poverty, distance to school and insecure school environment;
- 6 million children aged 6–15 do not attend school (two-thirds are girls);
- 60 million illiterate (two-thirds of them women);
- 11 countries are in an intermediate position, with EDI; 4 countries are far from achieving the EFA goals.

# Recommendations

## Participation and Inclusion

- Target populations need to be involved at all levels of education and learning activities by making learning environments safe, attractive, relevant and accessible for all;

## Policies and strategies

- Adult education national plans should be developed within lifelong learning framework;
- Policies, methodologies and quality frameworks on recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal education should be developed;
- Governments should guarantee that out-of-school children, young girls, women and vulnerable members of society equal access to education, especially literacy and adult education.

# Recommendations

## Financing

- Adequate resources for the implementation of adult education programmes need to be mobilised;
- An Arab fund to finance literacy and adult education projects should be created;
- Private sector funding of literacy and adult education programmes should be encouraged;

## Literacy

- Literacy should be conceived as the first step in a continuum of learning that grows with the length and of breadth of life;
- Focus should be on the role of literacy in development/ individuals must be active agents in literacy learning, not passive recipients of externally-defined and introduced techniques;
- Literacy methodology must shift from the pre-fixed model of primer to a model in which the learner is involved.

# Recommendations

## Quality

- Learning output of adult education programmes should meet quality standards supported by relevant curricula and content;
- System of accreditation should assure quality of all providers of literacy and adult education;
- Universities and training institutions should establish professional training for adult educators and create centres specialising in studies and research;
- Laws and training systems should improve professional and social status of adult educators;
- Strategies need to be adopted for the use of ICT tools in adult education.

# Recommendations

## Monitoring and Ways Forward

- Incorporate monitoring and follow-up activities into adult education policies and strategies;
- Set up a database for planning, monitoring and evaluation purposes;
- Create a common framework of reference for the observation, monitoring and evaluation of adult education programmes in line with international criteria and indicators;
- Establish national mechanisms for the monitoring and implementation of decisions and recommendations from CONFINTEA VI;
- Call on regional and international organisations to create a common mechanism for monitoring and implementation of recommendations from adult education conferences;

# Recommendations

## Monitoring and Ways Forward (continued)

- Regional and international organisations (UNESCO, ISESCO, ALECSO and the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States) should create a common mechanism for implementing recommendations from conferences;
- Countries should develop capacity-building programmes to intensify partnerships with civil society and private sector;
- Regional, international and South-South cooperation should be fostered in order to share good practice.

