



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



confintea VI

living and learning for a viable future:
the power of adult learning

sixth international conference on adult education
belém, brazil, 1 – 4 december 2009



Photo: UNESCO/Ana Guimaraes

GREETING FROM THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO

I am delighted to take this opportunity to relaunch the preparation process for CONFINTEA VI, which will be held in Belém do Pará, Brazil, from 1 to 4 December. After the unfortunate but necessary postponement of the conference, I would like to call upon Member States and all invited organizations and experts to invest the same level of enthusiasm and commitment in preparing for CONFINTEA VI as they did earlier this year, and to use the interval imposed by the postponement to broaden the process and deepen their preparatory work.

CONFINTEA VI concludes the cycle of four international education conferences organized by UNESCO in the current biennium, designed to provide a common vision for education policy that can guide Member States in adapting their education systems to the social, economic and human needs of today's world.

The conference cycle as a whole, and each individual conference – the 48th International Conference on Education, the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, and the World Conference on Higher Education – provided unique platforms to reaffirm the fact that education is a right, a foundation for sustainable human, social, economic and cultural development, and a significant factor for improving human well-being. Together, they emphasised the essential role of education in alleviating poverty. Each conference was preceded by a series of policy forums to reflect on new directions and to give education reforms a new impetus to achieve greater equity, inclusion, quality and innovation. Each of them underscored the imperative for high-quality education systems that lead to relevant learning outcomes for all.

CONFINTEA VI will, like the earlier UNESCO education conferences, highlight the need to enhance learning opportunities for all people throughout their lives through different channels and delivery modes. It will call for increased attention to non-formal and informal education, and point to the pathways that are needed to allow people to move in and out of formal systems at various stages of their home, work and community life-cycles. The earlier conferences encouraged the recognition of diverse learning achievements and work experiences. CONFINTEA VI will take up this call with vigour, presenting evidence and strategies for concrete policy action. UNESCO looks forward to welcoming you in Brazil and to your participation in this crucial conference.

Nicholas Burnett, *Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO*

NEWSFLASH! CONFINTEA VI registration process re-opened

As stated in the official communiqué of 15 June 2009, signed by the Brazilian Minister for Education and the Director-General of UNESCO, CONFINTEA VI is to take place in Belém do Pará, Brazil, from 1 to 4 December 2009. Invitations previously issued by UNESCO will remain valid. However, it is important to note that all participants, including those who had already registered earlier this year, must register again on the CONFINTEA VI website.

All members of National Delegations and the official representatives of invited institutions must register online in order to confirm their participation at the Conference: only participants who have registered online will be considered to have confirmed their attendance. The online registration

is also an important means of guaranteeing the accuracy and efficiency of logistical arrangements and to ensure the quality of services provided during the Conference.

Each Member State or invited institution will receive an e-mail containing a single registration code which must be used for each member of the delegation. This code is required for starting the registration process. Registration codes sent out prior to the postponement of the Conference in May will remain unchanged.

Should you have any problems with your registration code, please contact the Local Organising Committee at confintea-brazil@unesco.org.br.

Visa: Please bear in mind that you may need a visa a) for Brazil and b) for any countries through which you transit on your way to Brazil. We recommend that you check official information on entry visas to Brazil online at: http://www.portalconsular.mre.gov.br/antes/2009_08_26_qgrv_simples_ing.doc. A personal letter of invitation required for your application for an entry visa to Brazil can be requested through the online registration form. The name you provide should be identical to the one in the passport on which you will be travelling. Should you have any questions regarding visa, please contact UBO at confintea-brazil@unesco.org.br.



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Ministry
of Education



Asia and the Pacific

Home to four billion people, or 60 per cent of the world's population, Asia and the Pacific is a region rich in cultural and linguistic heritage. The constituent countries are defined as much by their differences and disparities as they are by the geographical space that they share. There are, for example, over 3,500 languages spoken in the region.

Asia incorporates five of the E-9 high-population developing countries of the world – Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia and Pakistan. According to the "Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2008", while the adult literacy rate for the Central Asian sub-region was 99 per cent during the period 1995-2004, it was only 60 per cent in South Asia, which is home to half of the world's illiterate adults, some 388 million people. Gender disparity also remains a persistent problem: of the 124 million adults in East Asia without basic literacy and numeracy skills, 71 per cent are women.

Migration and the displacement of populations, language diversity and structural shifts in the economy from farming to industry and services, as well as rapidly-changing labour markets, add to urgent social and individual needs for learning and upgrading occupational skills. Globalisation and the knowledge economy are exerting great pressure to adapt to new workplace environments. As there is an increasing proportion of older, retired or semi-retired people, in particular in Central and East Asia and in developed countries in the region, lifelong learning for the older age-group is assuming new significance.

Progress in adult literacy has been faster in the region than in any other. China has made the biggest progress in raising adult literacy levels – rural distance education has been one of the successful approaches to promoting adult learning. The Indian National Literacy Mission has also reached out to rural populations. Community Learning Centres – a grassroots approach that builds on community ownership and links literacy learning with income-generating activities – are common in some countries in the region. Lifelong learning has been integrated into national policies and legislations in a few countries (e.g. Republic of Korea, Thailand, Japan), but the majority of the region's states still lack policies that see adult learning as a broad, inclusive and multifaceted field.

The outcome document of the CONFINTEA VI regional preparatory conference in Asia and the Pacific calls for the establishment of a national high-level body in the form of an Adult and Lifelong Learning Council or Commission to mobilise and coordinate the efforts of all stakeholders in adult learning and education. Governments are asked to recommit themselves to the CONFINTEA V agreement whereby they would allocate 6 per cent of GNP to education and at least 6 per cent of the education budget to adult education and lifelong learning.



Municipal Literacy Coordinating Council / Municipality of Agoo, Philippines



The UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy 2009 went to the Municipal Literacy Coordinating Council, Municipality of Agoo, La Union, Philippines, for its Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning Programme. This programme makes available a vast array of education and training opportunities to the entire population, including the neediest. The municipal authority's leadership in coordinating activities is a key factor in eliminating illiteracy and sustaining lifelong learning in the area's 49 villages. Many of the programmes are conducted in the four Community Learning Centres which serve the region. Travelling teachers and mobile libraries ensure that the unreached are reached.

The services provided include literacy and post-literacy programmes, scholarships for bright children who might not otherwise pursue their studies, and income-generating programmes covering everything from welding to therapeutic massage, including several indigenous crafts. Education and training opportunities also include childcare, hygiene and prevention of infectious diseases. Farmers undertake capacity-building activities, enabling them to increase their yield and income. Teachers and municipal workers are encouraged to upgrade their skills, notably in computer literacy.

The programme's holistic vision is evident in the six learning strands within the Accreditation and Equivalency Sub-Programme, namely communication skills, critical thinking and problem-solving, the sustainable use of resources and productivity, self-development, a sense of community and the expansion of one's world vision. The diversity of the programme is mirrored by that of its funding sources. The Municipality of Agoo coordinates the activities of many national agencies and non-governmental organisations: local, provincial and national government agencies provide half of the funding, a dozen NGOs provide a further 25 per cent donors account for 20 per cent and the private sector gives 5 per cent. This variety reflects the support of all stakeholders and contributes to the project's sustainability.

NEW PUBLICATION: "Education and Learning for All: Views from the Five Regions"

The UNESCO Brasilia Office (UBO) has recently published a compendium in Portuguese about the status of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in the heterogeneous region of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The first part of the publication contains translations of the outcome documents of the five regional preparatory conferences to CONFINTEA VI held in 2008 and 2009. The second presents the Regional Synthesis Report "From literacy to lifelong learning: Trends, issues and challenges in youth and adult education in Latin America and the Caribbean" by Rosa María Torres. The documents present information on adult learning and education in the five regions, the advances and challenges faced and the strategies and recommendations put forward for Adult Learning and Education for the next decade.

The publication is available as PDF file in the Portuguese download section on the CONFINTEA VI website.

Consultation Meeting at the CONFINTEA VI venue in Belém

At the invitation of the Government of Brazil, a special Consultation Meeting in preparation for CONFINTEA VI was held from 10 – 11 September 2009 in the Hangar Amazon Convention Centre in Belém do Pará, the CONFINTEA VI venue. Organised by UIL and UBO, the meeting brought together members of the long-standing CONFINTEA VI Consultative Group as well as additional representatives from governments and civil society organisations. Brazil was represented by the Deputy-Minister of Education, the Director of Adult Education and several colleagues from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of External Relations.

Participants took stock of the CONFINTEA VI programme and examined the draft of the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE). The meeting resulted in a range of constructive suggestions regarding the finalisation of GRALE and enabled concrete criteria for the design of the post-CONFINTEA VI monitoring process to be gathered and compiled. Apart from generating valuable advice for UNESCO, the meeting enabled a first-hand insight into the local environment in Belém and the Conference facilities.

On the evening of 10th September, a public debate on the theme "The right to lifelong learning: the challenge of diversity" was held at the Federal University of Pará to mark International Literacy Day. A panel of five international guests from the Consultative Group opened the debate in which the general public participated actively. More than 700 adult educators, university students and staff from the State of Pará were present and the debate was broadcast on the internet.

Fostering discussion on adult and youth education

In September, Brazil was awarded another UNESCO Chair, this time in adult and youth education. There are 25 other Chairs at present. The new one brings together three Universities: the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB), the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE) and the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN).

All these Universities have a long tradition in extra-mural, research and postgraduate activities in adult and youth education and are localized in the Northeast region of Brazil, which has one of the highest illiteracy rates. According to the most recent data collected by the Brazilian government (PNAD 2008), the current rate is 19,65%. The Chair is coordinated by Dr. Afonso Celso Scocuglia, from the Centre of Education at UFPB.

In addition to contributing to the goal of universalizing adult and youth education, the Chair has already signed an agreement with CREFAL, in Mexico, with the aim of increasing regional collaboration and discussions on the theme. The Chair will also play an important role in the post-CONFINTEA VI process, in terms of implementing the monitoring mechanisms for adult and youth education in Brazil and in Latin America.

Not to be missed - Vero-Peso-Market

- Vero-Peso-Market is known as the largest free open-air market in Latin America and a famous tourist attraction in Belém do Pará. It is situated on the banks of the Guajará Bay, is 382 years old and in 1977 was registered by the IPHAN as part of the national heritage. More than 2,000 stalls and popular businesses offer everything from fish, meat, fruit and vegetables to regional articles and medicinal herbs on a site of more than 26,000 square meters.
- The name Ver-O-Peso originated in 1688 during the colonial period when the Portuguese created a tax collection post with the name of the House of Taking-the-Weight.
- Considered a "picture postcard" by the local population and by all those who visit it, the market is one of the most important icons of the city. Its distinct cultural and architectural presence embodies part of the history of its people in addition to the multicultural diversity which was created there when the native Indian inhabitants of the region were joined by Europeans and Africans.