

Adult Education and Lifelong Learning Strategies in the Caribbean:
Sub-regional CONFINTEA VI Follow-up Meeting

Autumn 2012 or spring 2013

In cooperation with:

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)/UNESCO Kingston

1) Rationale and Background

The agenda of **CONFINTEA VI** is to develop the broad spectrum of adult literacy and adult education in a lifelong learning perspective, thus harnessing the power and potential of continuing learning throughout life for personal fulfillment, sustainable socio-economic and cultural development and for a viable future for all.

Six International Conferences on Adult Education (CONFINTEAs) have already been convened by UNESCO since 1949. The latest, CONFINTEA VI, was hosted by Brazil in December 2009 in Belém with the participation of 144 UNESCO Member States (including 10 Caribbean Member States), representatives of civil society and learners. CONFINTEA VI adopted the **Belém Framework for Action**, which constitutes the most recent international policy document guiding the development of adult education, in order to move from “rhetoric to action”.

As an action-oriented policy document, the **Belém Framework for Action** prioritizes key areas and concerns in adult education. It contains countries’ commitments and recommendations to design effective and integrated policies, widen participation and improve quality and equity in adult literacy and adult education in a lifelong learning perspective. To ensure follow-up and implementation, the **Belém Framework for Action** includes mechanisms for countries to collect data and report on progress and challenges. Moreover, a mandate is given to UNESCO to coordinate the “monitoring process at the global level to take stock and report periodically on progress in adult learning and education”.

UNESCO’s systematic and strategic approach to monitoring the implementation of the **Belém Framework for Action** comprises three levels: national, regional and global.

- To prepare national progress reports, reporting templates have been sent to UNESCO Member States to help them assess and report on the progress in adult literacy and adult education policies and practice three years after CONFINTEA VI. Countries have been asked to submit their national progress reports by the end of February.
- The national progress reports will be important monitoring tools in themselves; but they will also help to generate regional overviews of the trends and challenges in adult literacy and adult education. To support the monitoring and exchange at regional level, UNESCO is currently exploring partnerships and scenarios for regional or sub-regional meetings where priority concerns and action points to strengthen adult education and lifelong learning can be discussed.

- A first regional CONFINTEA VI follow-up meeting for the whole region of Latin America and the Caribbean “From Commitment to Action: Taking the CONFINTEA Agenda Forward” was hosted by Mexico from 25 to 27 May 2011. With the participation of 11 Caribbean countries, the aim was to take stock of and present concrete initiatives introduced since CONFINTEA VI in policy, governance, financing, participation and quality in and for adult literacy, adult education and lifelong learning. The meeting resulted in a “Regional Implementation and Monitoring Matrix” with 55 regional and national action points.
- A Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) will be prepared, integrating the results from all national progress reports as well as findings from commissioned papers on selected topics, with a particular focus on adult literacy. The publication of GRALE is foreseen at the end of 2012.

2) Objectives of the Sub-regional CONFINTEA VI Follow-up Conference in the Caribbean

Against this background, the overall aims of the sub-regional CONFINTEA VI Follow-up Conference are to create a forum to discuss and support the specific concerns in adult literacy and adult education as part of lifelong learning in the countries of the Caribbean, to monitor the related progress and challenges and to support the implementation of selected concrete action points proposed in the “Regional Implementation and Monitoring Matrix” during the Mexico meeting. A particular focus will be put on comprehensive, inclusive and strategic lifelong learning policy approaches, and on increasing participation and quality in adult literacy and adult education.

Concretely, the main objectives of the Conference are:

- To assess the implementation of the **Belém Framework for Action** in the Caribbean, mainly on the basis of data and knowledge collected through the national CONFINTEA progress reports and through the presentation, review and analysis of successful adult learning policy and practice from the sub-region;
- To develop Caribbean-specific action points with a view to developing comprehensive, inclusive and strategic lifelong learning policy approaches, e.g. articulating different forms of education and development programmes in a lifelong learning perspective and enhanced cooperation with adult education stakeholders;
- To develop Caribbean-specific action points with a view to increasing participation in adult literacy and adult education, e.g. facilitating access to learning opportunities and expanding recognition and validation mechanisms;
- To develop Caribbean-specific action points with a view to improving the quality of adult literacy and adult education, e.g. the professional development of trainers/facilitators, relevant and effective teaching and learning methods and content;
- To reinforce cooperation among the Caribbean countries.

3) Procedure

The Caribbean CONFINTEA VI Follow-up Conference will be jointly planned, prepared and implemented by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and UNESCO Kingston, in cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC).

UIL and UNESCO Kingston will:

- Prepare, mainly drawing on the data and knowledge collected through the national CONFINTEA progress reports currently under preparation, a regional assessment of the progress in implementing the **Belém Framework for Action** and the challenges in adult literacy, adult education and lifelong learning in the Caribbean as the key input for the Conference;
- Identify examples of successful adult learning policy and practice in the sub-region;
- Develop, in consultation with the host country, the programme of the Conference and identify key note speakers;
- Support the conceptualization of Caribbean-specific follow-up action points on the selected thematic focus; and
- Co-author the report/document emanating from the Conference.

Participants to the Conference will include adult education experts from governments, representatives of adult education associations from civil society (in particular the Caribbean Council on Adult Education CARCAE), partners from other sectors, researchers and adult learners from the Caribbean Member States as well as from the Caribbean associated states.

4) Expected Outcomes

The main outcomes of the Conference will include:

- Progress, gaps and challenges in adult literacy and adult learning and education in the Caribbean assessed to design comprehensive, inclusive and strategic lifelong learning policy approaches;
- Successful adult learning policy and practice shared and factors that are conducive to successful adult learning policy and practice identified;
- Action-oriented elements developed to increase participation through accessible, affordable and adequate learning opportunities which are horizontally and vertically linked across different learning modalities;
- Action-oriented elements developed to improve the quality of adult literacy and education through the professional development of trainers/facilitators and high-quality learner-oriented teaching and learning methods;
- Advocacy and momentum for adult literacy and education in a lifelong learning perspective created; and
- Cooperation and new partnerships in the Caribbean reinforced.