

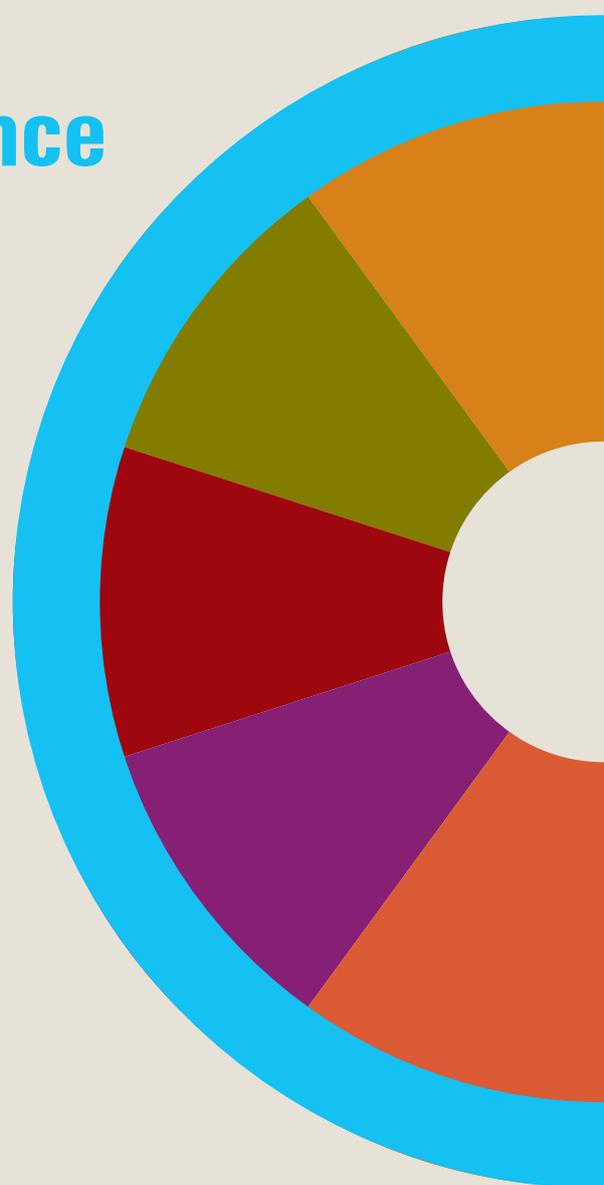
CONFINTEA VI

MID-TERM REVIEW

25–27 OCTOBER 2017

SUWON, REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Report of the conference



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MID-TERM REVIEW

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Prepared by Clinton Robinson, General Rapporteur



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
ALE	Adult learning and education
ANLCA	Morocco National Agency for the Fight Against Illiteracy
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASPBAE	Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education
BFA	Belém Framework for Action
CETA	Continuing Education and Training Act
CONFINTEA	International Conference on Adult Education
CREFAL	Regional Centre for Adult Education and Functional Literacy in Latin America
DVV International	Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association
EFA	Education for All
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GRALE	Global Report on Adult Learning and Education
ICAE	International Council for Adult Education
ICT	Information and communication technology
IDP	Internally displaced person
LLPS	Lifelong Learning Policies and Strategies
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RALE	Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research

INTRODUCTION

The CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review took place from 25 to 27 October 2017 and enjoyed the warm and generous hospitality of the historic cities of Suwon and Osan in the Republic of Korea. It was highly appropriate that the meeting was held in the country of King Sejong the Great, whose visionary development of the Hangeul alphabet more than 500 years ago was not only groundbreaking, but also expressed a fundamental commitment to ensuring that everyone, regardless of their background, could read and write. Adult learning in action!

To the two cities and to the Republic of Korea, our heartfelt and sincere thanks – 감사합니다.

The conference brought together 325 participants from 95 countries, as well as 50 representatives of the media. Gender representation was, however, out of balance, with only 30 per cent female participation.

ANTECEDENTS

The Mid-Term Review takes as its point of departure the Belém Framework for Action (BFA), adopted at CONFINTEA VI in December 2009. The 15-year period allotted for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All goals came to an end in 2015. Intensive international dialogue and debate provided a basis for envisioning the next phase of global development, articulated in the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 adopted by the United Nations in 2015. In the same year, the *Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action* spelled out the international agenda for education, and UNESCO adopted its *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE)*, replacing the *Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education of 1976*.

Alongside the development of this international consensus on development and educational goals, UIL initiated a CONFINTEA VI follow-up process, producing three editions of the *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)* to date, with a fourth due in 2019 in the run-up to CONFINTEA VII in 2021. These reports, now supplemented by regional reports produced specially for this Mid-Term Review, are the first of their kind in the field of ALE.

The Mid-Term Review had, therefore, a rich set of inputs and frameworks with which to assess progress and envisage the future. *GRALE III* and the regional reports provided the latest data against which to assess implementation of the BFA.

PURPOSES

According to the concept note, the Mid-Term Review aimed to:

- take stock of progress, activities and trends since 2009, sharing lessons and analysing the comprehensive findings and recommendations of the three *Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education*, specifically those of *GRALE III*;
- evaluate the latest research on adult learning and education (ALE), particularly on the inter-sectoral benefits of ALE, finding powerful new arguments to raise awareness of ALE and to strengthen the case for greater investment;
- learn about innovations, good practices and successful examples of how to improve ALE, as well as what did not work and the challenges faced, based on the progress made in implementing the regional action plans to follow up on CONFINTEA VI;
- strengthen existing partnerships and create new ones, at the global, regional and national level, in order to develop joint actions for ALE in the run-up to CONFINTEA VII (in 2021) and beyond, based on new regional surveys of developments in the field;
- explore the potential of stronger associations between ALE providers and users;
- explore new ideas on how ALE can fit into broader policy reforms in order to promote lifelong learning (Education 2030 Framework for Action) and sustainable development (SDGs).

This report serves as a way for participants to assess the extent to which these aims have been fulfilled.

OPENING SESSION

Following an impressive reception featuring traditional Korean music and dance, the Mayor of Suwon, Mr Tae-young Yeom, welcomed participants to the conference and expressed his delight in hosting the meeting. He stressed the importance that Suwon, as a 'human city', accords to lifelong learning – an aspect further developed

in the multi-media presentation given later on the first day. As a recognized 'global learning city', Suwon sees lifelong learning as an instrument to promote democratic values and hope.

Mr Kabir Shaikh, interim Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), traced the origins of the current event back to CONFINTEA VI, held in Belém, Brazil, in 2009, and noted that ALE is an essential element of the right to education. He highlighted important changes in society since 2009 – in the definition of functional literacy, digitalization, work patterns, new stakeholders and new target groups (including migrants, working mothers, prison inmates and people with disabilities). Situating ALE within Agenda 2030 and as a key component of the SDGs would be a central purpose of this conference, he emphasized, looking towards CONFINTEA VII in 2021.

The Korean Vice-Minister of Education, Ms Chun-ran Park, thanked the host cities and noted the importance of lifelong learning for the country, which has already launched initiatives to support vulnerable families and the elderly. Ms Park looked forward to the connections that this conference would build between lifelong learning and sustainable development.

The Director General for Planning and Coordination, Gyeonggi province, Mr Cheung Sik Jo, underlined that ALE should bring hope to a world in which emotion and anger tend to predominate, while Mr Sang-wook Kwak, Mayor of Osan, informed participants that the city has developed a full ALE system accessible to all and is striving to become a recognized 'learning city'.

Mr Kabir Shaikh concluded the opening session by setting out the agenda and nominating the conference bureau and drafting committee. These were accepted unanimously by the audience. The bureau consisted of:

- Co-chair: the Mayor of Suwon
- Co-chair: the Mayor of Osan
- Secretary: the Director a.i. of UIL
- General Rapporteur : Mr Clinton Robinson, consultant

The regionally balanced drafting committee comprised Mr Ahlin Byll-Catarina (Togo), Mr Heribert Hinzen (Germany), Ms Maria Khan (ASPBAE), Mr Raafat Radwan (Egypt), Ms Sylvia Schmelkes (Mexico), and Mr Ilseon Choi, representing the host country (Republic of Korea). This report is intended to present the key issues that emerged during

the conference and to capture the essence of the conference sessions. The recommendations from the parallel groups are not included here; they will to be included in the outcome document.

A different perspective was taken on each of the three days of the conference: Day 1 took stock of progress to date; Day 2 examined various dimensions and areas of action of ALE within the framework of Agenda 2030; and Day 3 addressed ways of mobilizing, implementing and measuring effective ALE in the run-up to 2030.

PLENARY 1

CONFINTEA VI: DEVELOPMENTS 2009–2017

Ms Leona English, Professor of Adult Education, St Francis Xavier University, Canada, set the stage for taking stock of progress by summarizing the key findings of *GRALE III* as they relate to the BFA's five areas of action. She noted that extensive changes have taken place since its publication in 2016, in terms of demographics, economics, the environment, migration, inequalities and technology. Looking forward, she emphasized that *GRALE IV* would need, in particular, to address participation, instruments for measuring progress, and outcomes.

Two experts then presented their perspectives on *GRALE III*: Ms Shirley Walters, Vice-President of ICAE (Africa/Gender Education Office), and Mr Christoph Jost, Director of DVV International (Germany). Both recognized the importance of *GRALE* in defining the role of ALE using evidence-based data and as a tool for advocacy and policy dialogue. They further expressed a shared desire to expand the range of data to include case studies and input from popular education and civil society and to work towards a common definition of ALE across countries. Increased resources, further field-based research and more widespread dissemination, they contended, would further add to the impact of *GRALE*.

Alongside *GRALE*, UNESCO's 2015 *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE)* provides a comprehensive framework for decision-makers, researchers and practitioners. Mr Werner Mauch, ALE Programme Coordinator at UIL, highlighted five key dimensions of *RALE*, arguing that it: 1) sees ALE as integral to the fulfilment of the right to education; 2) is complementary to a recommendation on TVET; 3) defines ALE; 4) aims to

strengthen international cooperation; and 5) will serve alongside the BFA to develop national ALE policies and to improve ALE conditions in Member States.

Mr Jose Roberto Guevara, Vice-President of ICAE (Asia-Pacific), presented a civil society response to *RALE*, perceiving it as an instrument of dialogue and communication. He stressed that civil society has a role not merely in delivery but at all stages of policy-making, enriching the latter through the inclusion of learner-centred perspectives and a focus on context-specific responses. He further noted that local partnerships based on solidarity and human values would support the principle of 'leaving no-one behind', expressed in the SDGs.

PLENARY 2

REGIONAL REVIEWS: PROGRESS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This session, moderated by Ms Katarina Popovic, Secretary General of ICAE, began with a presentation of the statement from the Civil Society Forum before moving on to the regional reviews of progress in ALE.

STATEMENT FROM THE CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

Mr Alan Tuckett, Professor of Education at the University of Wolverhampton in the UK, presented the statement from the Civil Society Forum held on 24 October, immediately prior to the conference. The statement stresses the importance of ALE as an integral part of the right to education and an essential means of implementing the SDGs. It further recognizes the need to listen to learners and to include marginalized groups, concluding that ALE must be lifelong, life-wide and life-deep in order to realize its transformative power.

REGIONAL REVIEWS

In preparation for this conference, five regional reports on progress, challenges and opportunities were produced in order to shed light on context-specific aspects of ALE. The five reports, along with a summary document, were available to participants. In this session, a representative reported on progress, challenges and recommendations for each region – a rich diet of information and analysis to which this report can hardly do justice. Selected features captured the essence of the unique context of and challenges facing each region – the reports themselves present a fuller picture.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Mr John Aitchison, Professor Emeritus, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa: While asserting progress across the five areas of the BFA, countries of the region are short on evidence and thus reliable data, leading to strong recommendations on the need to develop greater capacity in the areas of information-gathering, research, quality assurance and partnership-building. Embedding ALE in the framework of lifelong learning is still a distant goal.

ARAB STATES

Mr Samir Jarrar, Educational Development Group, Lebanon: Marked by emergency and post-conflict situations and reduced confidence in the state, the region has not moved forward to embrace new concepts of literacy. Lifelong learning has yet to become the focal point of the region's vision for education. Commitment expressed through strong partnerships between government, civil society and others represents the only robust basis for ALE to contribute to peace, social cohesion and democratic practices.

ASIA/PACIFIC

Mr Rangachar Govinda, former Vice-Chancellor, National University of Educational Planning and Administration, India: This vast region is home to two-thirds of the world's out-of-school children, nearly 900 million of the world's poor and almost two-thirds of adult illiterates. In this context, literacy progress is positive, and the region's very significant needs have given rise to a diverse array of ALE initiatives with increasingly strong policy and governance frameworks. Converging trends across the region may lead to standardization, but caution is required in order not to overlook the issue of contextual relevance.

EUROPE/NORTH AMERICA

Ms Gina Ebner, Secretary General, European Association for the Education of Adults: Countries in the region benefit from European and OECD frameworks on adult learning that enable benchmarking, comparison and international cooperation. Consistent funding remains a challenge, and the integration of new delivery methods and new learning pathways are key concerns for the future.

LATIN AMERICA/CARIBBEAN

Mr Timothy Ireland, Professor and UNESCO Chair, Federal University of Paraíba, Brazil: The report stressed the ethnic and linguistic diversity of the region and noted that it has the highest levels of inequality in

the world, making the right to education more of an intention than a reality. In this regard, ALE has a role to play in contributing to democratic citizenship, but requires greater focus on learners' voices and a stronger commitment to lifelong learning which is, at present, an unfamiliar concept lacking relevance to the regional context.

Themes common to all regions included the need for adequate funding and data, and the importance of reaching the most marginalized in a context-sensitive way. Another cross-cutting theme was the importance of integrating ALE in a comprehensive education system.

PLENARY 3

IMPROVING ACTION: EFFECTIVE PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The last session of Day 1 expanded on the effective practices and lessons learned from the implementation of the BFA. Moderated by Ms Nani Zulminarni, President of ASPBAE, four presentations addressed lessons of governance, policy and quality in ALE.

Mr Abdsamih Mahmoud, Director of ANLCA in Morocco, gave an overview of the evolving structure of the agency, stressing that its countrywide expansion required the reinforcement of management procedures and supervision. He stressed that clear and functional governance processes must be established if the agency is to fulfil its responsibility to learners and forge effective inter-sectoral partnerships for the promotion of literacy. Management structures, still being put in place, focus on a strategic and results-based approach.

Mr Sergio Cárdenas of CREFAL (Mexico) and Ms Andrea Ernst of the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation, addressed the development of ALE policies. In the context of policy formulation, Mr Cárdenas drew on the BFA and *RALE*, noting that both called for integrated policies that included a wide range of stakeholders and were based on inter-ministerial cooperation. However, gaps between policies and laws, as well as the unequal distribution of funding, continue to impede effective and appropriate responses to current literacy and ALE needs. Data on the impact of ALE programmes is lacking, but such data would provide powerful arguments with which to promote ALE.

Ms Ernst described recent developments in Swiss ALE policy, noting the decentralized nature of decision-making and the largely private provision of ALE based on individual learner demand. However, the need to promote basic skills calls for a common, national policy to support local providers of ALE. The resulting Continuing Education and Training Act is the first national initiative to promote the acquisition of basic skills by vulnerable and excluded groups.

Mr Ahlin Byll-Cataria, former Executive Secretary of ADEA, set his discussion of quality in ALE in the African context, observing that strong economic progress and resulting investment in social domains had not had the desired impact because of a large number of development challenges. Both international and African frameworks provide impetus for ALE, but demographic growth is pushing the achievement of educational goals ever further into the future. If Africa is to implement more consistent and efficient ALE programmes, it must address the diversity of its learners, as well as individual and community learning needs. At the same time, efforts to establish such programmes must be underpinned by high-level political will and inter-sectoral cooperation and funding.

PLENARY 4

PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS 2030: ALE, LIFELONG LEARNING AND, SDG 4 AND THE BROADER SDG AGENDA

Day 2 was devoted to exploring the links between ALE and broader agendas, in particular the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Moderated by Mr Heribert Hinzen, UIL Honorary Fellow and former Director, DVV International, the first session examined SDG approaches, identifying broader links with the SDGs, as well as specific links with health, regional cooperation, out-of-school children, and capacity development.

Ms Camilla Croso, President of GCE, introduced the discussion by making explicit the connections between the SDG agenda and ALE, the BFA and *RALE*. Adult learning is central to the full range of SDGs, and Ms Croso argued that ALE has a 'structural, enabling and pivotal role' in implementing them. She observed that the BFA stressed that ALE equips people to exercise their rights and advance their lives, while *RALE* takes a comprehensive

and systematic approach to ALE, the objectives of which touch on individual capability as well as collective responsibilities and relationships. SDG 4 does not articulate this comprehensive view of ALE, nor do all of its targets relate directly to adults. Other institutions and frameworks in education and development similarly fail to acknowledge ALE. The low priority of ALE in these forums led Ms Croso to propose eight recommendations, which the drafting committee took into consideration.

Mr Henrique Lopes, Scientific Research Coordinator of Public Health at the Catholic University of Portugal, argued strongly that risks to health are combatted more effectively through education than through curative processes. Thus, health education, leading to behavioural changes, is a critical investment, too often underplayed. ALE may therefore be seen as a strategic health tool that can address a diversity of health problems, result in lower healthcare costs, reduce risky behaviours and empower individuals and families to care better and more consciously for their health.

Introducing the regional role of ASEAN in education, Ms Abigail Lanceta, Assistant Director/Head of Education, Youth and Sports Division, itemized the organization's eight sub-goals, which include TVET and lifelong learning. In the framework of the SDG agenda and in partnership with the UN, ASEAN has adopted a Plan of Action, the aims of which include promoting 'lifelong learning, pathways, equivalencies and skills development' and which seeks to align its actions with other regional and international frameworks. Addressing the problem of out-of-school children ranks high among ASEAN's concerns. In the subsequent discussion session, Ms Lanceta agreed that ALE is not explicitly referenced in ASEAN's declarations, and appealed to UIL for assistance in strengthening this aspect.

The role of the FAWE in addressing the issue of out-of-school children in Africa was the subject of the presentation given by Ms Hendrina Doroba, FAWE Executive Director. Girls' schooling is a priority, given the 28 million girls who are not in school in West and Central Africa alone; a figure attributable in part to failings of the school systems. In this context, ALE represents a means of offering girls educational choices, with the proviso that technical education for girls must lead to economically productive opportunities.

Representing the Korean division of the United Nations' Institute for Training and Research Global Network

(UNITAR CIFAL Jeju), Programme Officer Ms Ji Ye Hyun introduced a capacity-development programme addressing issues of economic development, urban governance and planning, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. Aimed at government officials as well as stakeholders in the private sector and civil society, UNITAR CIFAL organizes workshops, including a 'City Share' programme that facilitates partnerships and improved strategic urban planning. Promoting leadership skills among youth is a particular focus in the context of the sustainable development agenda.

Questions from the audience pushed the panellists to clarify how they see ALE being further integrated into the SDG agenda, how to address levels of engagement both internationally and locally, how to define the role played by higher education, and how to strengthen intergenerational learning.

PLENARY 5

PARALLEL THEMATIC GROUPS AND FEEDBACK

On Day 2, thematic groups met in two parallel sessions, with five groups per session, followed by feedback in a plenary session, moderated by Ms Sylvia Schmelkes, President of the Mexican National Institute for the Evaluation of Education. The groups were tasked with drafting two recommendations each on their respective theme. These recommendations were then processed by the drafting committee as a major input into the outcome document.

Insofar as groups provided feedback on the nature and focus of their discussions, the gist is summarized below.

1. FIRST ROUND OF GROUP SESSIONS: THE INTER-SECTORAL DIMENSIONS OF ALE AND IMPLEMENTATION AT COUNTRY LEVEL

a. ALE and basic skills

Discussions addressed definitions of literacy and ALE, with a consensus that no single definition is shared by all and that literacy is a continuum of competency levels. The concept evolves, dependent on the context in which it is used. All agreed that literacy is integral to development. Political will and financing were given strong emphasis, with the proviso that political will does not necessarily lead to sustainable funding. Enabling equitable access to ALE/literacy entails making adults aware of the opportunities available to them; not all adults, however, want to

participate. Targeting specific groups is rendered difficult if data are not disaggregated. Literacy is best acquired in the mother tongue, leading people to learn the national language. Connections between literacy/basic skills and non-formal and informal learning need to be made.

b. ALE and vocational skills (ALE for the world of work, entrepreneurship, TVET)

TVET is frequently provided exclusively to boys and men, while girls and women receive only domestically oriented training. There is a need to build awareness among stakeholders, and increase investment, particularly in non-formal TVET. Recognition, validation, certification and accreditation are crucial for all types of TVET within a national qualifications framework. TVET must not be limited to training for the labour market, i.e. for formal employment, but must also include entrepreneurship and livelihood training. In terms of approaches, distinctions between formal, non-formal and informal training must be broken down so that trainers interact with communities to assess their specific needs and tailor their training provision accordingly.

c. ALE and active citizenship skills

The concept of active citizenship needs careful definition, as some countries may use it as an instrument of control, or as a way of expressing a need only of 'others', such as migrants. Put positively, active citizenship includes exercising rights and responsibilities, engaging with the community, enhancing solidarity, and experiencing a mutual sense of belonging expressed through sharing similar concerns, such as the desire to protect the environment. It is important to include citizens who are not being reached, and to create safe spaces for dialogue, for example with regard to the exercise of rights.

d. ALE for health, well-being and environmental sustainability

The group identified multiple challenges relating to lack of knowledge, the predominance of powerful interests and structures, and the need to build bridges between contextual knowledge and health. New developments must be taken into account, such as growing inequalities, easy access to information, new and cheap technological solutions, and innovative approaches to education. In the light of these broad factors, efforts to link ALE and health must address the diversity of learners by breaking down institutional and intellectual silos, and fostering multi-stakeholder mechanisms.

e. ALE in conflict and post-conflict situations

The group asserted the value of ALE in conflict and post-conflict situations, noting also its value as a preventive measure. ALE offers a means to continue – or restart – learning for internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees and migrants, potentially opening up opportunities to obtain work in the host community. ALE is a mechanism of humanitarian action – structured as accelerated learning, e-learning and community-based programmes, among others. Legislative frameworks, accreditation structures, and funding are often lacking at national and regional levels.

2. SECOND ROUND OF GROUP SESSIONS: IMPLEMENTING THE BELÉM FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION IN THE LIGHT OF SDG 4/EDUCATION 2030

a. Policy

Everyone knows that we need good policy, but either ministries of finance do not understand this need, or other ministries neglect ALE or wish to pursue it in isolation. ALE suffers from the abandonment of previously determined goals (e.g. EFA), although these goals remain relevant. As 2021 approaches, we once again risk losing our focus on the BFA, which has yet to be fully implemented. A number of generalist government officials were present in the group, and discussions revealed that the wider promotion of ALE across government departments can be a struggle.

b. Governance

The group shared different models of ALE governance, noting a distinction between centralized approaches (e.g. Japan, Slovenia) and decentralized approaches (e.g. Canada). The need to include the voices of learners in governance was stressed – ALE needs democratic decision-making, as well as an inter-sectoral and cooperative approach between ministries and institutions.

c. Financing

The diversity of ALE provision means that, frequently, there is insufficient data on which to base financing measures, which makes it difficult to justify ALE to government ministries. However, it is clear that ALE is not merely a cost – and certainly not a form of social welfare – but rather an investment in the future of communities.

d. Participation

Participation varies greatly across countries and contexts, and some population groups find it more difficult or even impossible to participate in ALE. Women in rural areas,

for example, are often too overloaded with work to take up ALE opportunities.

e. Quality

Quality comprises elements of relevance, equity, efficiency and effectiveness. Ensuring quality in ALE needs a comprehensive policy in a sector-wide context – sector planning may leave ALE out. Human and financial resources must also be adequate, with pre- and in-service training that leads to a professionalization of adult educators. Multi-agency coordination is essential, with effective mechanisms to monitor ALE and assess its outcomes. There is thus a need to define quality and standards for ALE by means of a national qualifications framework.

PLENARY 6

MONITORING AND MEASUREMENT OF ALE AT COUNTRY AND GLOBAL LEVEL

Moderator Ms Un Shil Choi, Professor at Ajou University, Republic of Korea, introduced the five presenters examining the theme of monitoring and measuring ALE at country and global level.

Mr Aaron Benavot, Professor at the University at Albany, State University of New York, USA, addressed four thematic aspects: definitions, existing instruments, limitations of those instruments, and why we know so little about ALE. Definitions of ALE exist in various international sources, but have been constructed to reflect scholarly and political consensus, rather than for the purposes of measurement. Measurement of non-formal learning and education often derive their criteria from formal education; however, there is a need to develop targeted approaches for non-formal and, eventually, informal learning. A number of instruments and measurement strategies exist, such as those used by OECD, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and Eurostat, and various countries, but surveys often collect only partial information. Thus, no comprehensive international pool of ALE or lifelong learning data exists. Why do we know so little? The diverse, voluntary and complex nature of ALE, with its lack of standardization, makes measurement particularly challenging.

Mr Werner Mauch, ALE Programme Coordinator at UIL, explained the aims and proposed structure of *GRALE IV*, to be produced in 2019. The first part will

review action and progress on the BFA and *RALE*, while the second part will address the question of participation in ALE – i.e. methods of measurement, indicators, and the ways in which ALE contributes to achieving the SDG targets.

Launching the Observatory on Youth and Adult Learning and Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mr Raúl Valdés-Cotera, LLPS Programme Coordinator at UIL, explained its origins and purpose, namely to access and exchange information across the region. He then presented the Observatory's new online resource, which is structured around a combination of the five key areas of the BFA and regional data on Education 2030.

Representing UIS, Mr Shailendra Sidgel, Statistical Cluster Advisor, reviewed the current categories in which data on ALE, and more particularly on literacy, are collected. He went on to outline difficulties in this process, such as defining common understandings of ALE, moving towards a level-based rather than a dichotomous assessment of literacy, and how to define categories for applying the SDG 4 indicators.

Ms Margarete Sachs-Israel, UIL's Chief Programme Coordinator, presented the measurement strategy for SDG target 4.6, noting that the target itself required further formulation in order to make its scope explicit. A key challenge is to develop new literacy and numeracy scales to enable a continuum-based understanding of these competencies. The data required will be drawn from a number of existing sources, but they will not be sufficient and work is ongoing to define and source the necessary additional data. Current questions include whether to approach literacy only as reading or also as writing; how to define levels of proficiency; and how to structure reporting on indicator 4.6.1.

In a brief response, Mr Benavot observed that the current monitoring and assessment architecture for ALE is inadequate and proposed a list of data categories. He proposed an ALE 'Wikipedia', whereby actors would contribute globally via an open online platform vetted by experts, which is both dynamic and capable of presenting the broad areas that an assessment of ALE requires.

PLENARY 7

TOWARDS CONFINTEA VII IN LIGHT OF SDG 4/ EDUCATION 2030: REFLECTION ON KEY INPUTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNTRY-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

The five speakers in the last plenary session of the conference reflected on the key inputs and implications of SDG 4 and Education 2030 as CONFINTEA VII approaches. The session was moderated by Mr Alan Tuckett.

Mr Raafat Radwan, former First Undersecretary of Egypt's Ministry of Education, presented an overview of the dilemmas facing the Arab region. He emphasized the need for a paradigm shift that would break with existing institutional and political patterns, for example by moving from basic literacy to lifelong learning, from a one-sector to a multi-sector collaborative approach, from centralized to decentralized processes, and – crucially and tellingly – from killing people to investing in people. He concluded by suggesting that ALE must work closely with the media in today's world.

Ms Marcella Milana, Associate Professor at the University of Verona (Italy), drew on the European context to situate progress in ALE. European Union frameworks and coordination mechanisms enable the sharing of knowledge and the creation of cross-border working groups in ALE, although European action is only partially linked to the BFA. There is a need to focus on people's life courses and the difference that ALE can make. At a time when there is a mounting fear of the 'other' and a perception that the 'other' puts lives and livelihoods at risk, ALE has a crucial role to play in fostering peace and social cohesion; a fact reflected in SDG target 4.7.

Representing the Ministry of Education and Culture in Indonesia, Ms Ella Yulaelawati focused on the links between the five key areas of the BFA and five targets of SDG 4. She demonstrated the relevance of each area to the targets, in both conceptual and practical terms, drawing on examples from Indonesia. Ms Yulaelawati further expressed the hope that CONFINTEA VII would reaffirm ALE as a core element of Education 2030, as well as being of value in itself. Changes to take forward include stressing literacy as social practice, increasing public trust in ALE, emphasizing the need for ALE to address complex social challenges, and striving to maintain the visibility

of ALE in UNESCO publications and through continued publication of *GRALE*.

Ms Misitilde Jonas Iita, Chief Education Officer in Namibia's Ministry of Education, presented Namibia's experience and the challenges it had encountered in the context of ALE, particularly in adult literacy. Building on good practice in the provision of materials and literacy promotion, one challenge is now to identify the roles of stakeholders – government, civil society and community groups. A management and information system for adult education has been in place since 2016, and community learning and development centres have been established in all 14 regions, with a focus on the use of ICTs. Meeting the expectations of learners is a key concern, as is the forging of strong links with development partners to ensure greater financial support.

The Vice-Minister of Education of Bolivia, Mr Noel Ricardo Aguirre Ledezema, called for a reading of the past to inform the future, and for a move away from viewing ALE as a remedial or welfare measure. Instead, he defined it as a socio-cultural issue linked to identity; hence, learners' profiles, their rights and contexts are critical factors. ALE must aim to be part of the education system, provide continuity of learning, foster the production of materials and ideas in local contexts – not merely for the purposes of employment – and enable people to transform their environment.

The session closed with one final question from the moderator: what one thing would participants want to see changed through CONFINTEA VII? The answers included funding from many sources, new attitudes to ALE, more government participation in conferences of this kind, and a move away from viewing ALE as a form of social welfare.

CLOSING SESSION

Chaired by Mr Kabir Shaikh, interim Director of UIL, the closing session opened with the presentation of the oral report by Mr Clinton Robinson, General Rapporteur of the conference.

Mr Ahlin Byll-Cataria, chair of the conference drafting committee, then introduced the outcome document, which resulted from an extensive process of input and discussion. Basing their work on a draft document

available at the beginning of the conference, the drafting committee met four times during the three days of the conference to revise the draft and to align it more closely with the outcomes of the debates. In particular, the committee took into account the recommendations formulated by 10 group sessions, as well as further input from individual participants submitted in writing on the final day of the conference.

The resulting outcome document, the *Suwon-Osan CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review Statement*, was presented orally to the closing session by Ms Maria Khan, a member of the drafting committee, and adopted unanimously.

The Mayor of Suwon, Mr Tae-young Yeom, and the Mayor of Osan, Mr Sang-wook Kwak, in their capacity as mayors of the co-hosting cities, congratulated participants on the successful outcome of the conference.

Mr Kabir Shaikh closed the conference by thanking the hosts, the speakers and presenters, as well as the participants, for making the event a success, and observed that the conference outcomes would serve to structure further work in the field ALE and to lay the foundations for CONFINTEA VII in 2021.

The Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI), held in Brazil in 2009, closed with the adoption of the Belém Framework for Action (BFA), which recorded the commitments of Member States and presented a strategic guide for the global development of adult learning and education. The third *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE 3)*, published in 2016, drew on survey data to evaluate progress made by countries in fulfilling the commitments made in Brazil. The CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review, held in Suwon, Republic of Korea, in October 2017, took stock of progress made by Member States in the past eight years, looking ahead to *GRALE 4* in 2019 and CONFINTEA VII in 2021. This report summarizes the discussions that animated the Mid-Term Review conference and gives readers a brief survey of the key issues concerning progress against the BFA, across all world regions.