REGIONAL REPORT
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION
TRYING TO WALK FASTER 2017
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Abbreviation list

AECID – Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
ALE – Adult learning and education
BFA – Belem Framework for Action
CEAAL - Council of Adult Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
CLADE – Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education.
CONALFA – Guatemalan National Commission for Literacy
CONFINTÉA - International Conference on Adult Education
CSO – Civil Society Organization
ECLAC - Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EFA – Education for All Initiative
EU – European Union
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
GIPE - Advocacy Group on Education Policy
GNP – Gross National Product
ICT – Information and Communication Technology
IDB – Inter-American Development Bank
ILO – International Labour Organization
INEA – Mexican National Institute for Adult Education
ISESCO - Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
LAC – Latin America and the Caribbean
LIBRAS – Brazilian Sign Language
MEVyT – Model of Education for Life and Work
NGO – Non-governmental Organization
NSYAE - National System of Youth and Adult Education
OAS – Organization of American States
OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OEI – Organization of Ibero-American States
OREALC – UNESCO Regional Workshop of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean
PIA – Ibero-American Plan for Literacy and Basic Education of Youth and Adults
PRELAC – Principal Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean
RALE - Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education
REDALF – Literacy Network
SDG – Sustainable Development Goal
UIL/UNESCO – UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
UIS – UNESCO Institute of Statistics
UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
YAE – Youth and Adult Education
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TRYING TO WALK FASTER

SITUATION ANALYSIS

The title of this report Trying to walk faster suggests a certain impatience given the scale of the challenges faced by Latin America and the Caribbean. Its focus are the commitments undertaken during the 6th International Conference on Adult Education held in Belem do Para, Brazil, in December 2009, set out in the Belem Framework for Action. The report possesses a similar architecture to that of the Belem Framework seeking to plot progress and obstacles encountered by the countries of the region as they confront the challenges faced by Adult Learning and Education. We ask ‘Is there evidence to suggest that adult learning has the power necessary to guarantee a viable future and who decides what is a viable future for Latin America and the Caribbean?’

The LAC Region is profoundly heterogeneous, and intensely rich in linguistic, cultural, ethnic and geographical diversity. It is composed of 41 countries and territories in which more than 600 languages are spoken, with a total population of 577 million people (less than 10 percent of the World Population - UN, 2004 data) including an indigenous population estimated at around 40 million, organized in over 400 ethnic groups. In addition, there exists an important afro-descendent population in several countries especially in the Caribbean and in Brazil and Colombia. At the same time, according to the OECD, LAC remains in 2017 the most unequal region in the world with the largest difference between rich and poor. The region has one of the highest concentrations of the ‘ultra-rich’ and, simultaneously, 34.1 per cent of the population were living in poverty and 12.6 per cent living in extreme poverty (CEPAL, 2008). Since 2011, there has been a general decline in GNP, which has impacted particularly the economies of Brazil and Venezuela. This has been strongly influenced by the de-acceleration of the Chinese economy, one of the principal buyers of LAC commodities.

The region’s drama is its incapacity to develop productive policies that will generate human and food security as well as integration to an employment structure that generates increased
welfare and well-being for the population. Its structural dependence on the export market (the logic of commodities) makes its economy highly vulnerable to global crises, such as the current one. The recessive cycles of the global economy prevent countries from effectively maintaining social protection systems and implementing childhood development and education policies. Politically, the existence of democratic regimes with varying levels of legitimacy and citizen participation stands out. Nevertheless, it is important to register the presence of regimes, which have systematically erased the social achievements of the so-called progressive governments, which preceded them.

The diverse socioeconomic, ethnic and cultural contexts of the region pose a broad set of challenges to literacy and other forms of learning for young people and adults in an educational context in which there are 35 million adult illiterates and 88 million who have not completed primary education. Evidence strongly suggests that limited access to schooling is broadly linked to structural poverty, as are unemployment, health care, social exclusion, migration, violence, the disparities between men and women. Seen through the lens of the Belem Framework for Action, and in the light of the more recent Sustainable Development Goals, adult learning and education faces a series of challenges with regard to coverage, gender, ethnicity, quality and participation.

**ALE POLICY**

Latin America and the Caribbean was one of the first regions to introduce the category of young people into the concept of adult education in the 1980s due to their growing presence in educational programmes designed for adults. Youth and Adult Education continues to be the most representative conceptual classification covering what is principally second-chance or compensatory schooling including literacy. The popular education movement’s pedagogic thinking has contributed strongly to the shape of youth and adult education in Latin America and the Caribbean and to the recent political history of the region. This was marked by resistance to authoritarian regimes and by a transition to democracy and national reconstruction after armed conflicts, in which civil society’s capacity for self-organization and mobilization played a prominent role. Although the profile and focus of social movements and organizations were substantially modified at the end of the 20th century, the popular education paradigm remains a fundamental reference point for forming democratic citizenship and the defence of human rights, particularly when those practices are promoted by civil society organizations. There is no doubt that despite its limitations, principally financial, YAE and Popular Education together have created programmes which are both highly creative as well as responsive to the rich diversity of the region.

The social phenomenon of low educational achievement and illiteracy reflects the complex relationship between the educational and social context of Latin American countries. It is directly related to social and economic inequalities, to the prevalent economic model of development in LAC countries, to the political culture in the region, to broader historical processes and to the quality of the education offered by schools in the region. Illiteracy and the difficulties of accessing and completing educational processes are linked to patterns of unequal power distribution. The issue of inclusion is particularly evident in the region. The
educational situation of indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants is one of the most critical cases of the violation of basic rights.

Hence, the challenge for the LAC countries is to advance from initial literacy to lifelong learning in a region in which adult literacy is currently over-emphasised, with a myriad of national and supranational initiatives and plans crossing the region and operating in a rather uncoordinated manner. Meanwhile the lifelong learning paradigm has not gained practical application and continues to be associated with adults only. Although mentioned in policies and legal instruments, lifelong learning remains a distant concept, associated with the North, lacking relevance and contextualisation in the South. Instead, under the slogan of skills for the "modern" life, there has been a greater alignment with approaches seeking to associate YAE with processes of adaptation to new economically globalized production and services systems, with mixed results.

**ALE GOVERNANCE**

On the positive side, the governance of adult education and literacy programmes has become more decentralized since the last CEAAL report (At a slow pace, 2013), which means that decisions on the specific demand for programmes and their implementation are being made at the local level. This means that YAE can potentially be more responsive to local needs. However, Youth and Adult Education continues to be a discriminated and marginalized sector of the wider educational field and this is clearly reflected in the issue of governance. However the main trends observed in our analysis of the country reports were: decisions which led to the allocation of insufficient resources to Youth and Adult Education; in most cases, learners do not participate in the discussion of national plans; a lack of coordination between actors due to political factors; a multiplicity of institutions involved, mainly, in the implementation of programmes; corruption; and spending on non-central aspects of educational processes, among others. NGOs have become important providers of basic services, and play a role of paramount importance to those who are harder to reach, especially where the State does not provide teaching services or where their quality is poor.

The reports inform that the majority of countries have a specific governmental body, which coordinates YAE but that management of schooling and literacy is frequently separate with several cases in which literacy activities are not coordinated by the Ministry of Education. The need to strengthen strategies and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes, as well as mechanisms allowing for greater social control (the term preferred in Latin America) and transparency continues to be pressing. Equally, mechanisms for the collection of data and information on educational processes tend to be more organized and reliable for literacy programmes than they do for schooling programmes. There is a highly visible lack of information about non-formal education programmes.

In a region like Latin America and the Caribbean, with a large indigenous and afro-descendent population, as well as other important minority groups, the question of learner participation in governance is of fundamental importance. The scarcity of formal channels leads us to emphasize the need to establish communication channels in order to guarantee that the learners’ voices are heard and have an impact on the way in which their learning needs are met.
ALE FINANCING

According to the UIS, the average investment in education in the Region was 5.2% relative to GDP and demonstrated a small increase between 2000 and 2012. This is a positive sign, which should not be ignored. However, public funding of education remains one of the critical issues in the region, and even more for ALE, traditionally relegated to the lowest percentages of budget allocation. It is a key issue that determines the possibilities of expanding opportunities for youth and adults who require educational attention and to broaden and deepen continuity programmes. Traditionally programmes for youth and adults are focused on the first stage of literacy and very little on continuity and succeeding levels.

It is evident that public investments in education in the region have not increased as would be desirable. In consequence, YAE financing has not improved substantially in real terms. The very diversity of provision, without focus or coordination, complicated the effort to identify the budgets or expenditure dedicated to adult education. In many cases, budgets that serve adult education are not in budget lines explicitly designated as adult education. Some ministries (e.g. Labour, Agriculture, and Health) promote adult or non-formal education activities. This expenditure is not declared as adult education. Moreover, government and non-government organizations are frequently reluctant to reveal detailed financial information. Add to this, the fact that the few lines dedicated to education by the Conference on Financing for Development (2015) do not mention ALE in any way, confirming its low place on the political agenda.

The contribution of international cooperation to the development of YAE activities is relatively small. Only one third of countries declared receiving external financial cooperation for this end. In these cases, funding came from the European Union (EU), the Organization of American States (OAS), UNESCO and the Spanish Agency for Development Cooperation (AECID), through the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI).

ALE PARTICIPATION, INCLUSION AND EQUITY

Analysis of country reports reveals that there has been progress related to urban-rural and ethnicity parity in access to education, both fundamental elements of the complex LAC conjuncture. Equally, there are important signs of coordination of local and regional development policies by different providers of literacy and YAE.

Access to high-quality adult learning plays a decisive role in developing better skills and competences that contribute to employability and the overall competitiveness of LAC. Moreover, learning brings equally important benefits for adults’ social inclusion and personal fulfilment. Although there exists an increasing diversity of adult learning and education programmes, currently their principle focus is on vocational education and training. More comprehensive adult learning and education approaches are needed to address development in all its dimensions (economic, sustainable, community and personal). Participation in learning helps people to secure a constructive and active role in their local communities and in society. It can help reduce health costs and the incidence of criminality, for instance, while also helping to reduce poverty.
Moreover, one cannot underestimate the importance of learning for personal development and well-being.

Adult learning and education programmes are rarely responsive to indigenous and rural populations, the disabled, prison inmates, and migrants. The diversity of indigenous communities and languages, and the little attention they receive reflect the situation of widespread inequity that affect indigenous peoples, entailing attitudes of discrimination from mainstream society and processes of language shift and ethnic disloyalty from the indigenous population. Insufficient attention is also paid to other ‘special groups’ – like disabled people, migrants and prison inmates despite the fact that the use of traditional and modern technologies has facilitated this task, especially with the disabled and with the migrant population.

In the last decade, the countries of the region have made an effort to incorporate ICT in education, with most countries reporting having initiated processes of modernization incorporating ICT, both in literacy and in YAE. However, progress is uneven and heterogeneous, in a general context of technical backwardness. In order to evaluate the degree of incorporation of ICT in education in the region it is necessary to look at access, use and outcomes associated with ICT. In this field, the initiatives of international cooperation and private sector have contributed.

**ALE QUALITY**

Quality is a polysemic term when applied to learning and education. On one level, we emphasize the primacy of relevance and flexibility for quality in adult learning and education. It is fundamental that the content of adult education responds, primarily, to the needs of adult learners, while keeping in mind the concerns of other stakeholders. Programmes are most relevant when they draw upon local and traditional sources of knowledge, especially those of migrant and tribal peoples. Flexibility in provision helps to ensure relevance.

At a second level, quality in adult learning and education is strongly related to the role of teachers/educators. Whilst many countries still rely on non-professional adult educators, others work with volunteers who are trained as adult educators. In general, government entities have the greatest weight in the training of educators both at the initial and subsequent in-service stages.

On a third level, there is a growing awareness of the need of data, data analysis and, particularly, for specific indicators on ALE which could contribute to improve quality of provision, results and policy. 71% of the ministries reported monitoring processes for literacy, while only 57% do so for the rest of the youth and adult education. Only 64% are performing evaluations of the literacy processes and just 36% are doing so for the youth and adult education processes. These figures indicate the alarming lack of a systematic approach to monitoring, assessment and evaluation and that, in many cases, attention is focused only on delivering services, and not on mechanisms designed to deliver information regarding how they are operated and whether they are producing the expected results.
ALE REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Regional and international cooperation in LAC, in the field of adult learning and education, has and continues to play an important role in stimulating and articulating diverse practices in YAE. This involves both government and civil society as well as international agencies. Cooperation has become increasingly more technical than financial as governments assume their responsibilities for the right of all citizens to education independent of age. Cooperation has also provided an important space for the circulation of southern epistemologies, which reflect the culture, history and cosmologies of the indigenous populations of the region.

Within this field of international and regional cooperation, it is possible to identify four different categories. Firstly, international agencies like UNESCO and OEI have played an important role. Youth and Adult Education policies in the region were leveraged by the Proyecto Principal de Educación en América Latina y el Caribe (PRELAC: 1980-2000) as well as the Literacy Network known as REDALF, created in 1985 as part of the PRELAC initiative. In Latin America, the Ibero-American Plan for Literacy and Basic Education of Youth and Adults (2007-2015), promoted by the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI), known as PIA seeks to articulate national plans and actions whilst offering principally technical support. In the specific field of Prison Education, the REDLECE created as part of the EUROsociAL project financed by the European Commission provided important opportunities for an exchange of experience between countries in the region.

Secondly, governments have made use of the mechanism of south-south cooperation as a means of furthering YAE. Cuba offers an important example of cooperation in the region particularly with Venezuela and Bolivia but also with Brazil and other countries.

In the field of non-governmental cooperation, regional NGOs like CEAAL and the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education – CLADE, have placed the affirmation and defence of education as a human right and the strengthening of active and participatory democracy in the countries of the region at the core of their political agenda. Both are strongly influenced by the paradigm of popular education.

Lastly, one of the proposals agreed at the LAC Post-CONFINTEA Regional Meeting in 2010, the Latin American Observatory of Youth and Adult Education, has the potential to facilitate processes of exchange between the countries involved as well as to stimulate the production of better data on YAE in general.

BASIC LITERACY

Literacy is a field in which Latin America and the Caribbean have exercised a profound influence on different regions of the world. The work of Paulo Freire and the praxis of Popular Education have changed not only the way literacy is thought and taught but also the very foundations of education.
Whilst literacy is an indispensable foundation that enables young people and adults to engage in learning opportunities at all stages of the learning continuum, LAC has suffered in recent years from a myriad of national and supranational initiatives and plans operating in a rather uncoordinated manner. The social phenomenon of illiteracy reflects the complex relationship between the educational and social context of Latin American countries. It is strongly linked to social and economic inequalities, to the prevalent economic model of development in LAC countries, to the political culture in the region, to broader historical processes and to the quality of the education offered in the schools of this continent. In this context, youth and adult literacy cannot be understood as a uniquely educational concern. It requires an integrated and coordinated multi-sectorial approach.

Compared to other regions of the world, the literacy issue is especially prevalent in LAC among the elderly. However, aggregated literacy data tends to conceal as much as it reveals. Hence, in addition to the age variable, illiteracy tends to affect those on the lowest incomes, the rural more than the urban population, people with disabilities and the indigenous populations. The rich linguistic diversity also poses a serious challenge for literacy work, as does the need to guarantee the continuity of the literacy process after the initial period offered by plans, campaigns, and projects of short duration. The issues of so-called functional illiteracy and the adult population, which has not concluded basic education, constitute a problem awaiting for responses from the public education system: it is clear that the instructional and merely compensatory functions of YAE are not sufficient to take care of what multilateral agencies call the new "skills for the XXI century".

Due to its high and somewhat autonomous political profile, governments tend to invest more in monitoring and evaluating literacy programmes than they do youth and adult education programmes. This was particularly so up until 2009 when adult literacy was part of a composite indicator included in the Human Development Index. Its removal served as a disincentive both to adult literacy and to its measurement.

THE IMPACT OF ALE ON HEALTH, WORK AND SOCIETY

Evidence from LAC on the impact of ALE on health and work is strong and should be further disseminated as a concrete means of arguing for a higher priority for ALE in public policy as well as for greater investment. The link with work is often explicit, with adult people seeing YAE as a means of achieving conditions required for better job opportunities. However, the links between YAE and job satisfaction, improved productivity, innovation at work and better financial income all demand better documentation by national governments.

The link between YAE and health is less visible. People do not regard YAE processes as a means of improving their health and well-being even though their participation in YAE has an impact on their health and that of their family. Regrettably only a quarter of the countries in the region declared having evidence of the positive impact of YAE on the health of the population.
The transcendence of YAE reaches both individual and family welfare as well as the national economy, reinforcing the importance of a public policy approach to YAE rather than a public expenditure approach. At the same time, Latin America and the Caribbean face the permanent deterioration of working conditions. National economies depend, largely, on so-called "informal" economies and on emigration (remittances). In both cases, working conditions have become precarious and the vulnerability of people has increased. The right to decent work and to better living conditions become part of the frame of reference for YAE as it prepares young people and adults to confront and overcome these conditions.

Main trends

Latin America and the Caribbean have an extremely rich heritage in the field of youth and adult education and popular education. The challenge for the region is to substitute neoliberal policies of modernization with policies that emphasize creating endogenous productive and technological capabilities that will redefine LAC's insertion in the global economic and cultural dynamics. To this end, it is mandatory to redefine the State's role as a coordinator of a new cycle of policies furthering equality, inclusion and citizen driven politics.

Challenges for education policy in general, and especially for ALE, include taking into account one of the most innovative approaches, the "Good Living /Buen Vivir". The concept of buen vivir does not represent an alternative development but an alternative to development based on the cosmology of the indigenous people. Buen Vivir is concerned with achieving a harmonious relationship between self, others and the environment. It influences the approaches adopted to national development in Latin America, as well as emphasizing the contribution of the indigenous people to the collective construction of an alternative society. A key for success in this arena is to strengthen the initiatives of non-governmental organizations, popular education centres and self-managed community education programmes.

At the same time, the imperative established by the need for planetary survival, assumed in the Sustainable Development Goals, points to the urgency of adult learning and education in Latin America and the Caribbean and in all regions of the world subscribing to three fundamental principles. The understanding that development must advance from that of an anthropocentric process to that of a biocentric process. Secondly, the recognition that learning is lifelong and life wide. And, thirdly, as Paul Bélanger affirmed in his keynote address to CONFINTEA VI in 2009, "The planet will only survive if it becomes a learning planet". The report shows that where there is political will, adult learning has the power to contribute to a viable future and that decisions on the shape of that future should be the democratic prerogative of all citizens.
1. INTRODUCTION
1. INTRODUCTION

The recognition of the right to adult learning and education (ALE) is one of the fundamental commitments contained in the Belém Framework for Action to which countries from Latin America and the Caribbean were signatories. The challenge for the LAC countries is to advance from initial literacy to lifelong learning (the title of the preparatory Regional Conference [Mexico, 10-13 September 2008]) in a region in which adult literacy is currently over-emphasised, with a myriad of national and supranational initiatives and plans crossing the region and operating in a rather uncoordinated manner. Meanwhile the lifelong learning paradigm has not been embraced and continues to be associated with adults only. Although mentioned in policies and legal instruments, lifelong learning remains a distant concept, associated with the North, lacking relevance and contextualisation in the South (UNESCO/Torres, 2009). Hence the urgency of responding to the exclusion of young people and adults, affecting their personal, social and cognitive development.

The diverse socioeconomic, ethnic and cultural contexts of the region pose a broad set of obstacles to literacy and other forms of learning for young people and adults. Among such factors we include unemployment, social exclusion, migration, violence, the disparities between men and women, all of which are broadly linked to structural poverty. Seen through the lens of the Belém Framework for Action, adult learning and education is faced by a series of challenges with regard to coverage, gender, ethnicity, quality and participation.

Throughout the 20th century, the countries in the region experienced a demographic transition, where reduced mortality rates, combined with high birth rates, intensified the pace of population growth, leading to a preponderance of a younger population. At the end of the millennium, however, a reduction in birth rate driven by changes in the roles performed by women in society and the family, combined with an increase in life expectancy, modified the age profile of the population, with adults predominating in the majority of countries of the region.
This new age profile, and the process redefining the social position of women, has important repercussions for the configuration of families, the labour market and the demand for social services, like health, social security and, evidently, education.

Another socio-demographic phenomenon with major impact on social policies, in general, and on educational policies in particular, was the extraordinary exodus from the countryside to cities observed in the second half of the 20th century, which led to the concentration of population in the large metropolises in the region. Despite the reduction in the rural population, both formal and non-formal education programmes continue to concentrate in urban and periurban areas, thus maintaining and even deepening the urban-rural educational gap rather than reducing it.

The educational systems in Latin American and Caribbean countries responded to these socio-demographic changes by expanding public and free elementary education in a significant way, with a recent trend towards universal access to elementary schools in infancy and adolescence, in urban areas. As a consequence, there has been a reduction in gender disparity discriminating against women when it came to access to education, so much so that differences between generations in terms of access to educational opportunities have increased, putting adults and old people at a disadvantage vis-à-vis young people.

The profound heterogeneity of the LAC region with great specificities, made up of 41 countries and territories, in which some 600 languages are spoken makes the adoption of common educational models problematic. The very different realities, including those of education and more specifically of adult and youth education and the diversity between and within countries, requires caution when generalizations are made and demands huge efforts in the diversification, elaboration and improvement of policies and programmes for very different contexts and specific groups, taking into consideration differences of age, gender, race, territory, language, culture and special learning needs.

The expansion of public education systems and other strategies of non-formal and informal learning, in social structures marked by pronounced cultural heterogeneity and deep economic inequality, took place within the context of restricted public investment and led to selective and anachronistic teaching models, which had a negative impact on learning and school results, meaning that a significant proportion of the poor young people of the continent had the course of their education interrupted and fell significantly behind, academically.

In this context, adult learning and education has fulfilled four main functions. First, it provides a welcoming environment for rural immigrants (many of whom are of indigenous origin and whose mother tongue is not the one that dominates), who need to reassess their knowledge and ways of life, to redefine their social and cultural identity and to learn new behaviours and acquire cultural codes, to become part of the literate urban society. In doing so they need to overcome the prejudices that restrict them from enjoying their rights and that marginalize them when it comes to access to the labour market and to social and political institutions.

Secondly, one of the traditional tasks of ALE has been to raise the educational level of the adult population who did not have the same opportunities as the younger generations, by developing their professional competences and providing them with the academic credentials required for the competitive and selective labour market.
Thirdly, ALE provides an environment where social problems and socio-cultural diversity, rejected by common education, are welcomed; it opens a channel for reintroducing adolescents and young people to educational processes from which they were excluded at an early age, accelerating the studies of those who have lagged far behind, academically.

Finally, in the globalized culture of societies in which information and knowledge have a position of prominence, and given the increase in life expectancy, youth and adult education is also responsible for providing opportunities for up-dating knowledge, obtaining qualifications and enjoying culture throughout life, regardless of the level of education achieved by individuals and communities.

The shape of youth and adult education in Latin America and the Caribbean has also been influenced by the contribution made by the popular education movement to pedagogic thinking, and to the recent political history of the region, which was marked by resistance to authoritarian regimes, and by a transition to democracy and national reconstruction after armed conflicts, where civil society’s capacity for self-organization and mobilization played a prominent role. Although the profile and actions of social movements and organizations were substantially modified at the end of the 20th century, the popular education paradigm continues to be the main reference point for forming democratic citizenship and defending rights, particularly when those practices are promoted by civil society organizations.

**Monitoring the Belem Framework**

The 2009 Belem Framework for Action (BFA) provided a set of recommendations to develop adult learning and education (ALE) in Member States of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) from a global perspective. Between 2011 and 2016, regional follow up meetings to the International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) were held in order to develop regional action plans. Latin America and the Caribbean was the first region to organise a Regional Follow-up Conference, held in Mexico City in September 2010. In June/July 2016, Ministers of Education, representatives of related ministries, education specialists and civil society representatives from seventeen countries in the Caribbean came together in Montego Bay, Jamaica, for a major sub-regional meeting on youth and adult learning and education. This was the first meeting of Caribbean States to take place as part of the follow-up to CONFINTEA VI.

In 2015 UNESCO adopted the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education, which complements the Framework for Action: Agenda 2030 and its counterpart the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The current report is prepared as a contribution to the Mid-Term Review of CONFINTEA VI, to be held in October 2017 in South Korea, at which progress since 2009 will be assessed and a strategy adopted to promote an articulation between the actions agreed in Belem in 2009 and those of the Global Education and Development Agendas, until CONFINTEA VII, in 2021.
Responsibility for adult learning and education has historically been divided between government and civil society. Hence the contribution of CEAAL to monitoring the Belem Framework for Action is one of the necessary strategies to move "from rhetoric to action". We believe that compliance with the BFA agreements should be undertaken as an ethical, political, educational and cultural commitment. It is unacceptable that millions of people remain without access to the right to education, because of economic status, gender, culture, ethnicity, migration and geographical location.

Within the framework of reference set out in Belem, the role of lifelong learning is critical in addressing global educational issues and challenges and in shifting the focus of policy from sectors and programmes to learning – its breadth, progression and linkages. Lifelong learning takes place during formal schooling and in other settings and at any age. Lifelong learning also directs attention to the “foundations”, to include basic literacy as well as such generic competences as communication skills, problem-solving skills, the ability to work in teams, ICT skills and learning to learn. Where policies promote near universal acquisition of the foundations, both equity interests and productivity imperatives are addressed. This broader concept of lifelong learning enshrined in the Belem Framework for Action is now widely promoted by other international agencies such as the OECD, the European Commission and the World Bank.

As a background for monitoring CONFINTEA, the Council of Adult Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CEAAL) produced a report entitled "At a Slow Pace", presenting a review of progress in Latin America and the Caribbean after the conclusion of the CONFINTEA VI in December 2009. It was based on national reports submitted by twenty-four countries to the UNESCO Regional Office – OREALC, in Santiago do Chile.

As a sequel to that document, CEAAL, with the support of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), presents this report whose focus is a mid-term review of progress since CONFINTEA VI that will complement the findings of the Third Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE III).

The report presents progress, critical nodes, experiences and recommendations regarding specific issues: policy, governance, financing, participation, inclusion, equity and quality. It is based upon consultations with officials from the ministries of education of several countries, as well as those responsible for networks and experts on the rights of youth and adults to education in Latin America and the Caribbean, whose opinions have enriched the analysis.

The title of our report Trying to walk faster suggests a certain impatience given the scale of the challenges. Hence our focus is to attempt to assess how much we have advanced and to explain the delays and deficits in relation to the commitments assumed at CONFINTEA VI.
2. CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES FOR ALE
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The Belem Framework for Action establishes a series of Recommendations starting from the recognition of the right to education for adults and young people which is conditioned by considerations of policy, governance, financing, participation, inclusion, equity and quality. It is within these terms that we look at the current challenges for ALE in LAC.

Studies by international agencies such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) agree that regarding trends, the region has managed to push back poverty through the implementation of social protection programmes that have had effective results. But the crucial unresolved and even further compounded issue, is inequality and the regressive re-distribution of income.

Inequality is manifested not only in the income structure, but also at the territorial level: the territories and populations that fall outside the re-structuring of the economies open to the global market, suffer degradation of their living conditions and face closed pathways to inclusion. In other cases, territories which are inhabited and of profound cultural relevance to peasant communities and indigenous peoples are affected by the irruption of large investments by transnational extractive industries, which not only alter the balance of local biodiversity but also produce forced displacement of communities or the loss of their livelihoods and traditional ways of relating to nature.

The region’s drama is its incapacity to develop productive policies that will generate human and food security as well as integration to an employment structure that generates increased welfare for the population. Its structural dependence on the export market (the logic of commodities) makes its economy highly vulnerable to global crises, such as the current one. The recession cycle of the global economy prevents countries from effectively maintaining social protection.
systems and implementing childhood development and education policies, for example. Cuts in educational budgets almost inevitably fall more heavily on ALE policies than on children’s education.

Politically, the existence of democratic regimes with varying levels of legitimacy and citizen participation stands out. However, it should be noted that at this stage in Latin America and the Caribbean, regimes that erased the achievements of the so-called progressive governments, which furthered ALE, are advancing.

Latin America and the Caribbean is a vastly heterogeneous region made up of 41 countries and territories (19 and 22, respectively) 33 of which are UNESCO Member States. Each of its sub-regions —Latin America and the Caribbean—is also internally heterogeneous. Spanish and Portuguese are the two main official languages in Latin America and English and French in the Caribbean, but it has been reported that about 600 languages are spoken in the region (Torres, 2009). In general, programmes of adult education are developed and delivered in the official languages of the region ignoring the multilingual and multicultural contexts in which they must be implemented.

The challenge for the region is to substitute neoliberal policies of modernization with policies that emphasize creating endogenous productive and technological capabilities that will redefine LAC’s insertion in the global economic and cultural dynamics. To this end it is mandatory to redefine the State's role as a coordinator of a new cycle of policies furthering equality, inclusion and citizen driven politics. Also, to move towards governance regimes for natural resources, water particularly, and for public access commons.

Regarding working conditions, the countries should implement policies that universalize access of the population to public educational services, that ensure continuous training, from literacy to secondary and vocational education levels (as suggested by the Target 4 of the SDG 2030). This is a fundamental requirement for true "educational justice".

In line with the Belem Framework, there is a need for Adult Learning and Education to address the issue of quality segmentation of educational services in relation to populations and territories. Its role in strengthening equality policies is key, only if it ensures universal quality education, with special attention to the specific learning conditions and needs of culturally and linguistically diverse groups, including the rural population, refugees, prisoners, indigenous peoples and other minority groups.

This will require a significant investment in the implementation of adequate educational centres, equipped with pedagogical resources and qualified teaching staff.

Education and learning opportunities are key to providing Latin American citizens with access to knowledge, to the opportunity to participate in the creation of wealth and to the opportunity to prosper. As the economy becomes more global and knowledge-based, those with the greatest access to knowledge will benefit most from the opportunities resulting from integration into the world economy.

Whilst recognizing, as stated in the BFA, that literacy is an indispensable foundation that enables young people and adults to engage in learning opportunities at all stages of the
learning continuum, it is necessary to register, as noted in the Introduction to this report, that adult literacy in LAC is currently over-emphasised, with a myriad of national and supranational initiatives and plans crossing the region and operating in a rather uncoordinated manner. Other common traits of adult education in this heterogeneous region include an emphasis on quality and equity problems, related, for example, to gender, indigenous peoples and the urban-rural divide. However, the region is highly dynamic, with social and economic indicators recently improving despite the global economic crisis.

Challenges for education policy in general, and especially for ALE, include taking into account one of the most innovative approaches, the "Good Living /Buen Vivir", which influences the approaches adopted to national development in Latin America, as well as emphasizing the contribution of the indigenous people to the collective construction of an alternative society.

Other challenges exist, such as development policies integrated with diverse sectors of governmental action (social development, culture, healthcare, labour, among others) to strengthen the cultural capital of communities, through community and non-formal educational programmes, including people in activities of environmental care, participatory management of neighbourhood programmes and primary healthcare attention. A key for success in this arena is to strengthen the initiatives of non-governmental organizations, popular education centres and self-managed community education programmes.
3. RE-THINKING ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION
3. RE-THINKING ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION

The Belem Framework is unequivocal when it affirms that ALE “embraces a learning continuum ranging from formal to non-formal to informal learning”. However in the LAC region, the commitments assumed in Belem are trapped by a schooled vision subordinated to the hegemonic dominance of the current school paradigm. If such a paradigm is maintained, within a few decades we will continue lamenting the lack of progress and the increase in educational requirements.

The commitment of ALE is to recover the basic feature of any educational process, whose genuine expression is found in the ethnic education processes of indigenous peoples, consisting of a dialogue that allows the learner to learn by creating relationships open to all possibilities, instead of repeating contents without understanding them.

An urgent task is to agree on what the emphasis and the actions will be. It is urgent to avoid cultural deprivation with its implications for learning and even when installed to confront it vigorously. Actions must be germinal and generate synergies, so it is possible to create and consolidate nutritious and autonomous learning, along a spiral where there will be progress and setbacks, understandings and misunderstandings, successes and errors.

The challenge is not teaching contents that are not learned in school, but to help learners to regain their ability to establish unprecedented relationships, which definitively break the cultural deprivation to which they were submitted.

In its broadest terms, the lifelong learning approach as set out in the BFA calls for a sweeping shift in policy orientation, from schools and programmes to learners and learning. More than recurrent education or non-formal education and training for adults, lifelong learning is now
widely understood to mean learning activities and engagement that encompass all learning over the life span. It is the focus on learning - its breadth, progression, and continuity - that marks lifelong learning as a departure from other, sector-based policy orientations. Lifelong learning seeks to harness a wide range of learning activity - in schools, at enterprises and individual initiative - for the development of necessary skills and competences. It directs attention to foundation skills and knowledge - variously termed “new basic skills” or “personal competences,” to signal basic literacy and generic competences (the latter comprising communication skills, problem-solving skills, the ability to work in teams, ICT skills and learning to learn) - as essential building blocks. Lifelong learning broadly addresses civic and personal interests as well as labour market demands.

Adult Learning and Education as a significant component of the lifelong learning process, embraces the use of different strategies for the learner to regain his/her confidence as a learner and be encouraged to interact freely. This is important because at the start educational relations are just relations about possibilities, open to infinity, without limitation. The learner explores what can be and not what should be (a date or formula). Later, alone or in a group, the learner will explore which of all those relationships are likely, i.e., which has a greater chance of occurring or being true, according to experience and/or science. Thus, the countless relations suggested as possibilities will be considerably reduced to those that could occur if certain conditions are met. The student will flow from his/her own experience, analysis, teacher’s suggestions, reading or videos, towards decanting what can be done and what should not be discarded.

The foundation of ALE is the assumption that teaching consists in astounding with some mystery and confusing with love; while learning is to advance in the loving unveiling of the mystery, thanks to the creation of unprecedented relations, all possible, some probable, but none pre-established.
4. ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN WITH REGARDS TO THE BELÉM FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION (CONFINTEA VI)
4.
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4.1 POLICY

The approach of CONFINTEA VI

The Belem Framework for Action proposed that the States should advance the implementation of measures that were inclusive, integrated and substantiated by the paradigm of lifelong education, linking all dimensions of people’s learning with defined specific plans aligned with the targets of the then Development and Education agendas which have now been substituted by the Global Education and Development 2030 Agendas. This process was to be monitored at regular intervals in order to assess the implementation of the Commitments undertaken in Belem. Hence the importance of the three Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) for our understanding of progress achieved and challenges which still need to be faced since the first report launched during the Conference in Belem in 2009.

The current situation

In terms of Youth and Adult Education, the concept still most commonly used in LAC, the region has accumulated great experience over the last three decades. Even before the Jomtien
Conference on Education for All in 1990, which gave rise to the important concept of learning needs, Youth and Adult Education policies had been leveraged by the *Proyecto Principal de Educación en América Latina y el Caribe* (PRELAC: 1980-2000) as well as the Literacy Network known as REDALF, created in 1985 as part of the PRELAC initiative. Nevertheless, an analysis of the Jomtien insistence on an enlarged concept of basic education reveals that many educational reforms carried out in the region interpreted the call to meet the basic learning needs of the population by concentrating their attention on the basic education of children and youth in their school modalities and reducing support for Youth and Adult Education. While this interpretation was consistent with the deficient educational reality of our countries, data related to illiteracy and educational exclusion of the adult population should have suggested the urgent need to strengthen YAE. A logic of priorities that gradually reduced investment in YAE and its influence in current policies, was imposed.

However, more recently, inspired by the Education for All Initiative and later the UN Literacy Decade, there has been an increase in international, regional and national plans, campaigns and policies of adult basic education with a focus on literacy. In Latin America the most influential of these has been the Ibero-American Plan for Literacy and Basic Education of Youth and Adults (2007-2015), promoted by the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI) and approved in November 2006, during the XVI Ibero-American Summit held in Montevideo, Uruguay. PIA, as it was known, sought to articulate national plans and actions whilst offering principally technical support.

Literacy constitutes an integral part of the learning continuum. Whilst it continues to have a high and somewhat autonomous political profile, it constitutes what the Belem Framework calls the ‘indispensable foundation’ for all future learning. To this extent, it is a cross cutting theme which is present in all the sections of this report: policy, governance, funding, participation and quality. Despite this argument, as seen in the above paragraph, literacy continues to receive a specific treatment in nearly all the LAC countries whether we like it or not. The nature of these programmes varies as do their duration and their articulation with what are generally known as programmes of youth and adult education focused on schooling. Funding is frequently separate from the main education budget and it is a field where government and civil society have worked side by side for many years. This specific treatment is also the result of the visibility given to literacy statistics and their employment as an indicator of development. Until recently they were an essential part of the HDI. Whether or not we agree with the way in which literacy is measured is another issue. Hence, although part of the ALE spectrum, literacy is generally better documented than much of the more formal second chance YAE. It also allows us a broad picture of the base of the educational pyramid.

The third edition of UNESCO’s Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE III) points out that Latin America and the Caribbean has made great progress, with 98 per cent of the young population studying and with basic levels of education and literacy, well ahead of other regions such as South and East Asia. However, according to data from the Economic

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1 Although official documents for 2030 refer to the narrower “primary” concept.
Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 9 percent of the Latin American population is in absolute illiteracy.

The following table presents a picture of literacy in the World regions compared with Latin America and the Caribbean:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UIS Regions</th>
<th>15+</th>
<th>15-24 y</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>86.24</td>
<td>91.40</td>
<td>77.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab States</td>
<td>78.81</td>
<td>90.69</td>
<td>39.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe</td>
<td>98.85</td>
<td>99.59</td>
<td>96.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>99.79</td>
<td>99.86</td>
<td>99.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia and the Pacific</td>
<td>96.01</td>
<td>99.11</td>
<td>84.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>93.21</td>
<td>98.16</td>
<td>78.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America and Western Europe</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South and West Asia</td>
<td>70.12</td>
<td>87.06</td>
<td>40.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>64.72</td>
<td>75.35</td>
<td>36.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://uis.unesco.org/

Compared to other regions of the world, the literacy issue is especially present in LAC among the elderly. However, as we shall see, aggregated literacy data tends to conceal as much as it reveals. Hence, in addition to the age variable, illiteracy tends to affect those on the lowest incomes, the rural more than the urban population, people with disabilities, the indigenous populations.

The decrease in illiteracy levels during the last years especially amongst the young population is related to progress in democratizing access to primary education, the expansion of education systems, and the establishment of legal frameworks that expand compulsory schooling. (OREALC-UNESCO 2013) Despite evident achievements in primary education, considerable numbers of children did not complete primary education and the majority of these young people are from Brazil and Mexico, the two most populous countries in the region. The countries that are furthest from guaranteeing the completion of primary education are El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala.

The social phenomenon of illiteracy reflects the complex relationship between the educational and social context of Latin American countries. It is directly related to social and economic inequalities, to the prevalent economic model of development in LAC countries, to the political culture in the region, to broader historical processes and to the quality of the education offered in the schools of this continent. Illiteracy and the difficulties of accessing and completing educational processes are essentially related to patterns of unequal power distribution.

The issue of inclusion is particularly evident in the region. The educational situation of indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants is one of the most critical cases of the violation
of basic rights. While almost all Ministries of Education in the region recognize the right of indigenous children to receive an education in their mother tongue, coverage of bilingual primary education is limited, even in countries with a large monolingual indigenous population. This aspect influences the levels of illiteracy in the young and adult population, especially when it is also recognized that Afro-descendants and indigenous people enter school late and, mostly due to work reasons and to early motherhood in the case of women, leave early before completing their education.

The multiple forms of discrimination in the region – in relation to race, ethnicity, class, geographic location, sexual orientation, disability, migration, imprisonment - intersect with gender, producing and intensifying various situations of exclusion. However, there prevails a tendency to invisibility and denial of sexism and discriminatory practices, as well as of their consequences.

A series of gender stereotypes are still present in literacy practices, as in the whole YAE, but also in policies and programmes. Generally, these stereotypes are not mentioned, and therefore are not discussed, questioned or deconstructed. They remain in force and even strengthened.

We note that in several countries (Argentina, Colombia and Venezuela) the gender situation is also affecting men; as per a report by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2013), men leave school early for work situations, while women tend to stay longer in the education system. However, this does not imply that the prevalence of discrimination against women does not exist.

From the information provided by the States, the following developments can be identified:

- **Literacy levels**: According to ECLAC (Martinez, Trucco and Palma, 2015), more than 90% of the young population of the Latin American and Caribbean region had attained basic literacy by 2015. However, they also pointed out that 9% of the Latin American population was in a situation of absolute illiteracy.

- **Literacy Concept**: The concept of literacy has evolved, and although the 2030 documents do not always include this conceptual wealth, in academic and social spheres it is accepted that literacy goes beyond learning to read, write and calculate but now refers to the ability to communicate, socially connect and improve working life (Infante and Letelier, 2013). As recognized by the Belem Framework, literacy must be understood as a continuum rather than as a simple bipolar concept. It is recognized that illiteracy is associated with the structural conditions of society.

- **The contribution of Popular Education**: Paulo Freire repeats many times in his writings that literacy should be understood as a dimension of broader educational processes including adult basic education within a lifelong learning approach. This critical definition has imprinted it with specific social purposes, such as participation and the exercise of citizenship (Vargas, 2014). This is a substantive civil society contribution aimed at carrying out education policies and processes from the perspective of Popular Education, which seeks to achieve the empowerment of social actors, whether adults, youth or children and contribute to a just society without discrimination. Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Cuba, Bolivia, Venezuela and Brazil declare to adopt this approach partially in their education policies. Guaranteeing that all citizens
have access to literate cultures and have their right to relevant learning experiences effectively implemented involves much more complex, long-term and inter-sectoral strategies. It requires solid investment and determined political will. It is this vision that is in dispute and must be explicitly spelt out if we are to see change in the full implementation of the right of adults to education.

There have been no neo-paradigmatic changes in YAE policies at the continent level where the concept of adult lifelong learning and education has not gained practical application. Instead, under the slogan of skills for the "modern" life, there has been a greater alignment with approaches that sought to associate YAE with processes of adaptation to new economically globalized production and services systems, with mixed results. Outputs of these projects have been the progress in the creation of national training systems and the labour competences certification, obtained both by means of regular and non-formal modalities.

**Policy options for YAE:** the BFA stresses the importance of policies to be comprehensive, inclusive and integrated as well as based on sector-wide and inter-sectoral approaches. To this end, there exist certain important trends in the adult learning and education field:

- Existence of a global policy framework as a reference for the implementation of lifelong education as a human right (Sustainable Development Goals, Framework of Action Education 2030, amongst others).
- Demands from civil society to advance new inclusive education policies.
- The recognition that education systems must meet the requirements posed by diversity, with curriculum flexibility, relevant teaching materials and teachers trained for these new ways of structuring public education services.
- The existence of programmes and good practices of inclusion and participation of adult populations in comprehensive learning processes (regular studies, job training, citizen participation, cultural self-expression) implemented and supported by the State and civil society organizations, popular education centres and self-organized networks of community schools, with innovative work methodologies and trained teachers.

**Critical nodes**

Whilst the right to education is affirmed in the constitutions of all LAC countries, there still exists a distance between the legal right and its practical implementation. National reports prepared for GRALE III point to some significant problematic areas: a) the paradigm of lifelong education-learning has not been considered as part of the foundation of the design of national educational systems with the result that YAE remains a modality within such systems, without strategic coordination with other areas of government action; b) investment levels have not undergone significant changes to reverse the financial lag between YAE and other fields of education policy; c) many countries have been unable to provide the data necessary for analyzing the impact of their YAE policies; d) the countries’ socio-cultural realities have been undergoing intense
processes of transformation, particularly in relation to the impact of new globalizing economic dynamics and the requirements they pose for education in terms of new literacies, particularly digital and technological; e) the growth of school coverage for children and youth, which constitutes substantial progress for the development of the region, has not been accompanied by improvements in the quality of educational services and provisions, as evidenced, according to the predominant orthodox canons, in the results of international standardized tests; f) the countries' response is to adopt "effective schools" that focus on teaching language and mathematics and on the "modernization" of school management through highly demanding monitoring models, incentives to results via monetary compensation for teachers and the inclusion of new teaching technologies, characteristic of the "digital times"; h) the efforts of educational policies have failed to stop dropout, and school systems' retention rates are not promising, resulting in a problem that directly affects YAE because young people see in YAE a modality that can satisfy their training expectations, creating a situation of uncertainty among teachers, who face, in a short span of time, students bringing cultural codes, expectations and social problems that were not present in traditional adult education; i) the devaluation of material conditions and professional resources for YAE's public services without governmental reaction to strengthen and renew them in accordance with the existing challenges, both at the "second chance schools" and the "school reintegration" programmes, which start to transform the face of adult education; j) the issues of so-called functional illiteracy and the adult population which has not concluded basic education are a problem awaiting for responses from the public education system: it is clear that the instructional and merely compensatory functions of YAE are not enough to take care of what multilateral agencies call the new "skills for the XXI century"; there is a growing belief that the adult population's rights are at grave risk of infringement, condemning adults to live in conditions of exclusion if countries do not implement policies that give public systems the capacity to respond to this "educational violence" and that promote widespread access to and enjoyment of knowledge, the development of communities' cultural capital and conscious and active participation in political and economic life.

Good policy practice. In Chile, the process of making New Curricular Bases for Youth and Adult Education is in progress. The Ministry of Education has promoted a participatory process with the teachers, through group discussions and dialogue with YAE regional networks.

The foundations for these new Bases are: the centrality of the subjects of the learning process; the renewal of teaching, the valorization of the cultural contexts of those involved in the educational process; curriculum design based on a competency approach; civic education, and the implementation of diverse and plural training pathways that respond to the students' social and labour demands and needs.

The ongoing project is part of the new priorities of the YAE educational authorities, integrating training centres infrastructure improvements, linking these with cultural and productive realities of the regions and localities, including young people who dropped out from the school system and strengthening the identity and recognition of YAE teachers, all with the vision of socially validating the value of learning as a condition of human development.

2 For further information see the document CEAAL (2013) A PASO LENTO: ANÁLISIS DE LOS AVANCES EN EL CUMPLIMIENTO DE LA CONFINTEA VI, CEAAL, Lima UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education, 2015 which was adopted during the 38th UNESCO General Conference in November 2015.
For LAC countries, a lifelong learning framework gives less attention to public investment and oversight of formal education and training programmes. Rather, new policies in this area seek to break traditional boundaries between policy portfolios, to stimulate creative initiative, to respond better to demand, and to leverage private investment and initiative – both by enterprises and by individual learners.

On a positive note, during the LAC regional meeting of Ministers of Education on the new Education 2030 Agenda, held in Buenos Aires (Argentina) in January 2017, participants achieved a common vision for education with reference to, in particular, SDG4, recognizing “the importance behind the education targets outlined in SDG 4, which consider education and lifelong learning, from early childhood to higher and adult education, in conjunction with the cross-cutting issues of the Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly those directly related to education (E2030)”: a consensus that was summarized in the Buenos Aires Declaration - E2030: Education and skills for the 21st Century.

With regard to the specificity of literacy policies, these are contemplated in legislation in all countries of the region. In most of these it is the initial part of a comprehensive vision of education policies for youth and adults. Nevertheless:

- Policies in many countries are not developed inter-institutionally, nor are they articulated with comprehensive social programmes, leading to duplication of human resources and efforts.
- Not all countries link literacy to the development of citizenship, human rights and the relationship with the social and environmental context; in relation to work, an instrumental vision dominates, and not a vision of dignified work.

**Best Practices:** The government efforts to address the situation of literacy have been noted in Latin America and the Caribbean, while other initiatives are driven by civil society organizations, especially in the field of community education. This diversity of experiences has been recorded in UNESCO’s volume on “Literacy and Education. Lessons from innovative practices in Latin America and the Caribbean” (2013). Amongst diverse examples we highlight: in Argentina, the National “Meeting” Literacy Programme which has been developed since 2014, having expanded its offer to other programmes for people over 18, interested in the completion of primary education (http://www.me.gov.ar/alfabetizacion/); in Paraguay, which recognizes Guarani and Spanish as official languages, through the “Paraguay Reads and Writes” programme, promoting a strategy of comprehensive and bilingual intercultural literacy, with a focus on respect for the cultural identity of each group to which it is directed. Through the programme, the pleasure of learning is fostered as a value in itself, thus questioning the traditional “learning for” paradigm. (http://www.oei.es/historico/noticias/spip.php?article9175&debut_5ultimasOEI=180). Since 2006, Peru has developed an Alternative Basic Education modality with a first level on literacy, to continue with the first and second levels of primary and secondary education. Ecuador promotes the National Programme for Literacy and Basic Education which offers alternatives for continuing studies in native languages and in Spanish (http://gead.minedu.gob.pe/ebadist/); and Bolivia promotes Quechua - Spanish, a Bi-Literacy Programme recognized by the simultaneous teaching treatment of the two languages (http://www.minedu.gob.bo/index.php/publicaciones/item/31-alfabetizacion-y-post-alfabetizacion).
• A short-term vision for treating illiteracy has not been overcome. A situation which will resist change unless there is quality education accessible to everyone, local systems for the timely protection of the right to education, mechanisms of school reinsertion, educational programmes to strengthen basic learning linked to youth and adult life, public libraries, and opportunities for access to new media.

• Critical and transformative approaches such as popular education are not visible in the policies, despite their importance for linking training with personal and social transformation.

• There are few examples of the recognition and accreditation of knowledge even if by means of this process, learning developed at the community level would be recognized.

• All this is combined with the fact that the Agenda 2030 proposed an ambiguous and unambitious goal regarding literacy, which detracts from efforts to demand significantly better progress worldwide. The specific goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, refers to: “By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy”. (Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015, SDG 4.6) which is insufficient.

An experience of great impact in the Dominican Republic: The National Literacy Plan Quisqueya Learns with You. The executive power issued the Presidential Decree 546-12 (September 10, 2012), which declared “high national priority” literacy for youth and adults (15 years and over). As part of the National Literacy Plan “Quisqueya Learns with You,” the President presented the country’s initiative as a component of poverty reduction, “Quisqueya without Poverty”. The accumulated country experience was considered and the programme was formulated with a rights-based, socio-cultural and inclusion approach, focused on learning. The implementation was guided by principles of inclusion and participation, achieving the integration of all sectors of Dominican society, providing literacy to those sectors of the population traditionally excluded, and massively integrating the illiterate population aged 15 years and over, like no former plan had managed to do.

For the implementation, a national alliance between the State and society was forged, which was embodied in the National Literacy Board and a technical team.

A promotion and communication strategy led to the voluntary participation of more than 61,000 people who were trained as literacy teachers and assumed the defined learning lines. Great efforts were made to document the experience, with three separate systematizations carried out with a view to recovering the participants’ learning, the management plan and the literacy personnel training processes. There is a broad production of video testimonials about the participants’ experiences.

Among the current challenges of Quisqueya Learns with You, after covering nearly 10% of the total population, are the continuity of education through basic education and job training, entrepreneurship and social integration for at least 50% of young people and adults who have achieved literacy, strengthening a new institutionalism for the subsystem.
Recommendations

In the LAC region, the development and implementation of a lifelong learning policy will not be easy. Traditions and governance, regulatory and finance arrangements combine to produce public provision that is fragmented and insulated, and a range of other learning activities and outcomes that are undocumented and therefore unknown and unrecognized, apart from the immediate provider or sponsor. Breaking down the walls between segments, sectors, policy portfolios and stakeholder interests is a necessary first step, one that already has been taken in Chile and more recently in Mexico. Such efforts warrant support.

Whilst, on the one hand, it is fundamental to implement the UNESCO General Conference recommendation 4. on adult learning and education (38th session, November 2015), which - taking into account the CONFINTEA Framework for Action - aligns the UNESCO proposal for ALE policy design and implementation with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and seeks to put into practice the proposed strategies contained in the UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (2015), such as, for example, “11. Member States, according to their specific conditions, governing structures and constitutional provisions, should develop comprehensive, inclusive and integrated policies for adult learning and education in its various forms”; on the other, it is equally important to point to specific recommendations for the Latin American and the Caribbean Region.

1. To recognize Adult and Youth Education (AYE) as a human and citizen right, which implies more commitment and political will from national and local governments for the creation and reinforcement of quality learning provision throughout life, guaranteeing that AYE policies take account of cultural, linguistic, racial, ethnic and gender diversities and include programmes which are linked to training for decent work, active citizenship and peace, in order to strengthen and promote community empowerment.

2. To promote policies and legislation which integrate AYE into public education systems and guarantee its application while encouraging changes to make the systems more flexible and to adjust standards to goals and challenges. This should be supported by the creation of public watchdogs to monitor policies and the use of resources.

3. To construct coordination mechanisms at national level which help to establish an integrated policy to promote inter-sectoral and inter-institutional efforts which articulate the actions of the state with those of civil society (organized social movements, churches, trade unions, employers amongst others) and make possible a holistic approach in addition to follow-up and social control.

4. To continue seeking approaches which strengthen and guarantee lifelong learning which include literacy and basic education; the promotion of reading and a written culture as the basis for the creation of literate environments, with different tools for overcoming inequality and poverty in the region and for constructing alternative forms of development. In this sense, the valuing of popular and non-formal education is fundamental.
5. To elaborate policies for the initial and continuing training of teachers of young people and adults with the participation of universities, systems of education and social movements, in order to raise the quality of educational processes and to guarantee an improvement in the working and professional conditions of educators and school staff.

6. To promote active and transforming citizenship, which is built upon the practices of participatory democracy, with the goal of a comprehensive development model that promotes social justice, inclusion with equity, sustainability and overcoming all forms of violence and discrimination.

7. To articulate systems of various educational paths: Creation in each country of a National System of Youth and Adult Education (NSYAE) (Picon, 2016) including literacy that recognizes the different learning spaces, with an effective and representative management in correspondence with its complexity and diversity, within the scenarios of the State and civil society. The NSYAE would be the body that promotes, encourages and develops lifelong education in a cross-cutting manner.

8. To develop rich learning from the communities. It is proposed to establish a committed relationship between the educator and the community, and to strengthen the direct links with the reality that contextualizes capacity building. The methodological strategy implies that teacher and students problematize a concrete and objective situation, and grasping it critically, act upon it. In this process, thought, language and context interrelate permanently, because thinking is primarily a collective act (Freire, 1984).

9. To integrate literacy and information technology: since this is an ongoing process, independent of age and articulated with the context, the acquisition and development of literacy takes place both within and outside explicitly educational environments and throughout life. Increasingly, reading, writing, language and numeracy are seen as part of a broader conception of key competencies, including ICT skills, which require sustained and updated learning. However, there are many people who still have no access to these technologies, so the challenge will be to democratize information as part of educational justice, enabling lifelong learning.

10. To develop programmes aimed at solid training of educators, associated with personal and professional skills, context and culture knowledge and professional skills related to pedagogical knowledge, skills and attitudes required in teaching and learning situations. More than a single model of training, it is necessary to gather quality criteria associated with profiles, depending on the context and purpose of the educational action. It is also necessary to have the support of universities and higher education institutions.

11. To create a movement of educators since literacy is an interest of all members of society because it allows us to overcome inequality and exclusion and contributes to enhancing the participation of the population.
4.2 GOVERNANCE

a. The approach of CONFINTEA VI

The Belem Framework for Action established, in relation to governance, that it should facilitate the implementation of adult learning and education policy, in an effective, transparent, accountable and equitable manner. The representation and participation of all stakeholders are essential to ensure that it is responsive to the needs of all learners, especially the most disadvantaged.

b. The current situation

It is important to point out that for Latin America and the Caribbean, promoting the participation of the different actors in the policies and programmes of Youth and Adult Education, as well as intersectoral and interinstitutional cooperation, were defined as priority actions.

The main trends observed at the time of conducting the governability analysis were: decisions which led to the allocation of insufficient resources to Youth and Adult Education; in most cases, learners have not participated in the discussion of national plans; disarticulation of actors due to political factors; a multiplicity of institutions involved, mainly, in the implementation of programmes; corruption; and spending on non-central aspects of educational processes, among others.

The participation of several government actors which define and implement national education and adult literacy policies is noted in the countries analyzed. It is informative to analyze the reported participation and coordination between various ministries and secretaries, in the definition and implementation of these policies that respond to their specific areas of action, showing a significant step forward regarding contexts and groups that require special attention.

On average, at least five government agencies participate in the processes of education and adult literacy. At sub-national or regional level, where there exists a national orientation with little regional adaptation, the participation of these actors is smaller.

At the same time, civil society, including NGOs and community organizations, and the for profit private sector, except for Cuba where the government is the sole provider, are active in the provision of youth and adult education and literacy. Only Chile, Paraguay and Suriname do not report the private sector as literacy provider, although engaged with education programmes for youth and adults in all areas devoted to labour skills, technical training, healthcare and use of information and communications technology. NGOs have become important providers of basic services, and play a role of paramount importance to those who are harder to reach, especially where the State does not provide teaching services or where their quality is poor. NGOs make an important contribution to provision but this cannot be used as an excuse for reducing the duty of States to ensure the provision and quality of literacy and YAE.

The size of this contribution by non-governmental organisations can be gauged from the following more detailed information. With regard to their participation, there is a greater geographic balance between national and sub-national/regional levels (50/50), with at least 47
non-governmental organizations participating in the 14 countries. There is a greater proportion of NGOs participating in adult education programmes (56.4%), compared to literacy programmes (43.5%). The diverse participation of these actors is important and includes social movements, collectives, networks, NGOs, universities, churches and federations, among others.

In all countries, the existence of a governmental body, which coordinates adult education and literacy programmes, is reported; what varies is the level assigned to it: direction, secretariat, coordination committee or department.

As for the coordination of actions, only two countries report not having it. The remainder identifies diverse coordination mechanisms, such as: meetings, consultations, training, seminars, vocational training workshops, definition of agendas and plans, monitoring and follow-up plans, and even establishing advisory councils (Brazil), forming a multi-stakeholder network and joint project implementation (Dominican Republic and Peru). Equally significant is the consideration of various actors and the recognition or valorization of their knowledge and skills in their areas of action, which are incorporated into the programmes (the case of Paraguay with women and prison inmates).

Regarding capacity development, three countries do not identify actions to develop adult education and literacy and two countries do not report on one of these areas. The main capacity building actions developed by the countries consist in defining priorities, agendas and plans, and implementing training, coordination and spaces for dialogue. Some countries acknowledge their limitations or weaknesses and identify actions that should be strengthened or are still nonexistent, as in the case of Dominican Republic which identifies: the need for greater institutionalization of YAE programmes, greater continuity in state policies, the identification of YAE as a priority education option, and the need for greater participation and positioning of civil society in YAE. In the case of Mexico, issues identified include the inadequate social control mechanisms of programmes and the need for a more efficient approach to grassroots organizations.

On the issue of participation of local communities in the programmes, five countries do not apply it, or do not include these communities in YAE programmes. There is no further information to generate an analysis of the indicator. Additional comments and observations that stand out in particular cases and which could be inspiration or models for other countries are: significant YAE institutional development compared to other countries in the region (Dominican Republic), local authorities planning, implementing and evaluating programmes (Colombia), strengthening and recognition of local dimension as necessary in the definition of adapted public policies (Dominican Republic and El Salvador). The importance of programme monitoring and follow-up spaces and instances and their alignment to macro plans and objectives defined in international bodies (Paraguay). Significant experiences with specific populations, such as prison inmates, peasants and women, among others, tailoring programmes to their contexts and realities (Paraguay). In literacy, greater links with and support to social organizations in the implementation of the programmes’ actions and the evaluation of results (Dominican Republic). Training strategies implemented to strengthen teachers and instructors (Peru). Signing agreements for literacy intervention with municipalities (Peru).
Recalling that governance facilitates policy implementation to the extent that it is effective, transparent, accountable and equitable, and where representation and participation of all stakeholders responds to the needs of all recipients, especially those with the least power. According to the reports, major mechanisms are described for the involvement of public authorities from various bodies (promoting intersectoral and interdepartmental cooperation), as well as of civil society organizations, in the development, implementation and evaluation of ALE policies and programmes.

The need to strengthen strategies and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes, as well as mechanisms allowing for greater accountability and transparency (in Latin America the term most commonly used is ‘social control’) continues to be pressing. Reports from some countries (14 of 25) mention that even for processes where governments are committed to reporting, this is not happening, which makes the follow-up on plans and goals unreliable.

The governance of adult education and literacy programmes has become more decentralized since the last report, which means that decisions on specific demand for the programmes and their implementation are being made at the local level. This raises certain challenges, such as the need for different levels of government to strengthen the capacities of local teams, to allow proper assessment of learning needs and adequate provision to meet them.

The efforts of countries that encourage learners’ participation are very valuable, to the extent that they make possible a substantive and conscious participation. These efforts are in the right direction and should be intensified and regularized to become common forms of participation.

**Good practices.** In Uruguay, the programme “Always Learning” (PAS) is a national initiative driven from the Non-Formal Education area of the Ministry of Education and Culture, which operates since 2008. This programme promotes lifelong access to education proposals, in flexible learning spaces, different environmental and cultural contexts, and with a strong territorial enclave. The proposals contemplate diverse interests and issues arising from a variety of socio-cultural spaces that integrate various population groups. The educational action unfolds based on two general lines of work: activities in contexts of imprisonment and activities in spaces emerging from the community. Year by year, the PAS develops semiannual or annual educational activities carried out by pairs of educators trying various topics, in various teaching formats. The proposals are installed throughout the national territory and are aimed at people from 14 years of age and onwards, trying to reach all citizens regardless of economic, gender, legal, race or creed status, aiming to promote lifelong education. The subject areas are referenced to the General Law of Education, and are grouped into: healthcare and healthy environments (health, first aid, gender, sexuality and the environment); Art, language and communication (identity and culture, communication, use of XO, science and technology); Participation, education and work (work, education and employment, citizen participation); and play, recreation and sport (recreation, childhood and adolescence). The idea is to encourage in people the experience of lifelong learning. To this end, they consider the participants’ interests and diverse entry points, facilitating processes that promote participation, integration, access to new knowledge, skill development and exercise of citizenship.

Actions from different countries in the region give a dimension of concrete progress:
• In Bolivia: The creation of basic alternative and special education for adult education, based on partnerships between state and civil society organizations.

• In Paraguay: The Directorate of Continuing Education, which articulates adult educational offerings on the basis of collaborative work between different institutions.

• In Guatemala: Through CONALFA, a 2009-2015 strategic plan was developed with participation of representatives from departmental coordinations and central units.

• South-South Cooperation: Cooperation agreements between Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, it is important to highlight the role of CEAAL and the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education. CLADE is a plural civil society articulation (since 2000) having at the core of its political agenda the affirmation and defence of education as a human right and the strengthening of active and participatory democracy in the countries of the region.

CLADE has active National Forums on Public Advocacy for the Right to Education in 16 countries of the Region, as well as broad actions thanks to Regional Forums and strategic alliances.

CEAAL is a Popular Education movement, and accompanies processes of educational, social, political, cultural and economic transformation of Latin American and Caribbean societies, in local, national and regional settings, in dialogue with the world; favouring the sovereignty and integration of peoples, social justice and democracy, from the perspectives of human rights, gender equity, critical intercultural, an ethical view, pedagogical and emancipatory political option. It works in 21 countries with young people and adults in formal and informal education, with the communities contributing in: Capacity building, political incidence, systematization, materials production.

In this respect, it is important to identify and present a summary of some experiences developed in the region, which allow us to envision the exercise of governance, according to the priority objectives and actions.

c. Critical nodes

» Many countries are yet to design or create spaces to facilitate the participation of learners in dialogue and discussion of adult literacy and education policies and plans. This reflects a vertical management of public policy and the traditional absence of mechanisms for social participation.

» Governments must promote a shared social responsibility in education, without undermining its own role as guarantor of the right to lifelong education for all. This implies a strong political will to create mechanisms for participation at all levels of the system - the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies.

» Shared action with civil society, academia, private sector, etc. is still very incipient or inexistent in some countries; this is vital considering the growing demand for transparency, participation and respect for social diversity, and for the recognition of these sectors’ knowledge and input
on specific issues. Such alliances would allow for studying successful experiences that can be converted into public policy.

» Coordination between the central and regional government when planning and implementing education initiatives also remains a challenge. The regionally adapted curriculum, considering local realities and diverse population groups, requires a linkage and coordination between national and regional levels.

» The design and monitoring of indicators to weigh the progress and/or setbacks regarding the right to education requires special attention, considering structural, process, and outcome dimensions.

d. Recommendations

The 2015 UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE) provides a useful guide to some of the most important dimensions of governance with regard to the specific field of Youth and Adult Education and Literacy. As a result of our analyses we consider that despite the progress made in many countries of the Latin American and Caribbean Region, YAE continues to be a discriminated and marginalized sector of the wider educational field and this is clearly reflected in the issue of governance. For these reasons we make the following recommendations

1. Overall there is an urgent need to strengthen different levels of coordination:

   a. Between different ministries and secretaries within national government
   
   b. Between National, regional and local government to guarantee the planning, implementation and evaluation necessary for the development of consistent policies on the ground
   
   c. Between government and non-government institutions: in a field such as YAE in which the role of NGOs, social and popular movements is fundamental. This is particularly true of Latin America where the involvement of social and popular movements has been historically vital to the health of the field
   
   d. Between governments which make use of mechanisms of south-south cooperation. Cuba offers an important example of cooperation in the region particularly with Venezuela and Bolivia but also with Brazil and other countries

2. Capacity building and training programmes need to be better coordinated in order to harness the potential of local partners especially the universities, training centres and national NGOs, as, for example, Fé y Alegría in Colombia and CREFAL in Mexico.

3. Social control mechanisms are fundamental for all programmes at all levels in order to guarantee effective, transparent, accountable and equitable governance.

4. Equally important are strategies and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating YAE programmes. The OEI PIA project contributed to discussions on the need for the collection of data and the elaboration of indicators for the region. The need for a culture of evaluation as a basis for governance has still not been fully assumed by national governments.
5. In a region like LAC with a large indigenous and afro-descendent population as well as other important minority groups, the question of learner participation in governance is of fundamental importance. Formal channels need to be established in order to guarantee that the learners’ voices are heard and have an impact on the way in which their learning needs are met.

### 4.3 FINANCING ALE

The financing of Adult Learning and Education is an area in which intentions are frequently stronger than concrete actions. Data and information on percentages of the educational budget dedicated to literacy and basic continuing education generally exist but are not always reliable whilst those on non-formal education and educational and learning programmes promoted by popular and social movements tend to be non-existent. The Buenos Aires Declaration (2017), as the most recent public expression of intent on the part of Ministers of Education from Latin America and the Caribbean, stated:

We commit to the strengthening and modernization of the institutional frameworks and governance of educational systems in our countries, so that they may promote accountability and transparency, and strengthen the participation of all partners involved at all levels of the education system. We commit ourselves to advocating for the strengthening of quality public education as a guarantor for building democracy and fairer societies, adopting lifelong learning as the organizing principle of education. We will maintain, optimize, and, progressively increase funding for education in our countries, in accordance with the national context, and in keeping with the economic, social and cultural rights of our citizens (No. 19, 2017).

No specific reference is made to ALE and the promise to “maintain, optimize, and, progressively increase funding for education” is open to interpretations. This is perhaps a reflection of the difficulty of obtaining governmental funding for the SDG and, in our specific case, for SDG4.

Within the specific field of ALE we would like to call attention to the report The Bonn Declaration on Financing Adult Education for Development approved during the International Conference on Financing Adult Education for Development held in June 2009, prior to CONFINTA VI. This constitutes one of the rare documents dedicated specifically to the financing of ALE and whilst it does not comment on Latin America and the Caribbean specifically some of its recommendations when taken together with those of the Belem Framework for Action offer broad orientations for the need for governments and civil society to increase investment in ALE.

#### a. The approach of CONFINTA VI

In the Belem Framework for Action, the following ALE funding commitments were defined:

“Adult learning and education are a valuable investment which brings social benefits by creating more democratic, peaceful, inclusive, productive, healthy and sustainable societies. Significant financial investment is essential, to ensure quality provision of adult learning and education.
To these ends, we commit ourselves to:

a) accelerating progress towards achieving the CONFINTEA VI recommendation to seek investment of at least 6% of GNP in education, and working towards increased investment in adult learning and education;

b) expanding existing educational resources and budgets across all government departments to meet the objectives of an integrated adult learning and education strategy;

c) considering new, and opening up existing, transnational funding programmes for literacy and adult education, along the lines of the actions taken under the EU Lifelong Learning Programme;

d) creating incentives to promote new sources of funding, e.g. from the private sector, NGOs, communities and individuals, without prejudicing the principles of equity and inclusion;

e) prioritising investment in lifelong learning for women, rural populations and people with disabilities.

The Bonn Declaration highlights the need:

3. to allocate a minimum of 6% of GNP to education within which a minimum of 6% is for adult education, reserving half of this for adult literacy programmes where required;

12. to find the links between financing adult education and health and sustainable development; to achieve effective coordination between public sector departments; and to monitor how well activities across all departments enable learning.

24. to accord at least equal importance to building social and cultural capital as to income and financial capital, in investing in adult education, literacy and lifelong learning for sustainable community and national well-being.

It is a set of general commitments that highlights the importance of ensuring resources to make progress on equity and quality, among others.

**b. The current situation**

Public funding of education remains one of the critical issues in the region, and even more for ALE, traditionally relegated to the lowest percentages of budget allocation. It is a key issue that determines the possibilities of expanding opportunities for youth and adults who require educational attention and to broaden and deepen continuity programmes. Traditionally programmes for youth and adults are focused on the first stage of literacy and very little on continuity and succeeding levels.

In reality, flexible programmes are replaced by school programmes. School is at the centre of educational systems and open, flexible or non-formal modalities are in the marginal area of government efforts. This situation translates into financing schemes. In Latin America youth and adult programmes do not receive a sufficient share of the budget.
With specific reference to funding for adult education, the following findings can be reported concerning the evolution of financing for YAE in Latin America and the Caribbean, after CONFINTEA VI:

» According to the UIS, in 2010 the average investment in education in Latin America and the Caribbean was 5.2% relative to GDP (UNESCO, 2013).

» According to GRALE III, in Latin America and the Caribbean only 26% of countries have made investments in education reaching 6% of the gross domestic product (GDP). This implies that most do not have an adequate investment, which means that all their educational activities are under-funded (2016). These countries are: Aruba, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Honduras, Jamaica and Venezuela.

» According to information reported by the governments in the region, most of them fund YAE with their own resources. Only 36% reported external financing for YAE. In these cases, funding comes from the European Union (EU), the Organization of American States (OAS), UNESCO and the Spanish Agency for Development Cooperation (AECID), through the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI).

» Hence it is very clear that international cooperation in this area is in a situation of poverty, with only one third of countries receiving external financial cooperation for this end.

» In addition, no government reported having financial contributions by private companies. This does not mean that companies, especially large companies, are not investing in their own projects aimed at YAE, but confirms that where this happens, private companies prefer to invest directly or through their own foundations, before delivering funds to government institutions by tax mechanisms that strengthen the State. In the logic of tax justice, companies should pay their taxes, so that the state and its institutions can fulfill their responsibilities.

» Regarding alternative financing mechanisms for YAE, Colombia and Brazil have created new mechanisms after CONFINTEA VI. Both countries allocated oil exploitation resources to finance education. It is part of the so-called "royalties" that oil exploitation produces and are administered
by sub-national governments. Other countries have not created new mechanisms for financing. In many cases, public investment funds come from investment by the central and/or federal government, and other subnational or municipal governments. In any case, these are public funds invested in various ways.

» The financing of education between 2000 and 2012 improved in relation to the gross national product (GNP) in Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole. The following chart shows how much the region improved compared to other regions of the world:

Graph 1

Investment in education as a percentage of GNP


c. Critical nodes

It is evident that public investments in education in the region have not increased as would be desirable. In consequence, YAE financing has not improved substantially in real terms. The very diversity of provision, without focus or coordination, complicated the effort to identify the budgets or expenditure dedicated to adult education. In many cases, budgets that serve adult education are not in budget lines explicitly designated as adult education. Some ministries (e.g. Labour, Agriculture, Health) promote adult or non-formal education activities. This expenditure is not declared as adult education. Moreover, government and non-government organizations are frequently reluctant to reveal detailed financial information. Add to this, the fact that the few lines dedicated to education by the Conference on Financing for Development (2015) do not mention ALE in any way, confirming its low place on the political agenda.

Section 14 of BFA established a set of specific commitments that states should achieve in compliance with their responsibility to give attention to ALE, which if not solving all problems at least should produce substantive progress:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Signs of progress in the region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accelerating progress towards achieving the CONFINTEA VI recommendation to seek investment of at least 6% of GNP in education, and working towards increased investment in adult learning and education;</td>
<td>Scarce. Only one third of the countries of the region reached 6% of GDP and there is no evidence that YAE allocations are better in real terms, relative to GDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding existing educational resources and budgets across all government departments to meet the objectives of an integrated adult learning and education strategy;</td>
<td>Progress unknown. States do not report progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considering new, and opening up existing, transnational funding programmes for literacy and adult education, along the lines of the actions taken under the EU Lifelong Learning Programme;</td>
<td>There is the Ibero-American Literacy Plan (PIA) initiative fostered by the Organization of Ibero-American States, but official reports do not declare, except for one case, to be receiving financial support from PIA to advance their goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating incentives to promote new sources of funding, e.g. from the private sector, NGOs, communities and individuals, without prejudicing the principles of equity and inclusion;</td>
<td>No progress was reported. All countries indicated that there is no financial support from the private sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritizing investment in lifelong learning for women, rural populations and people with disabilities.</td>
<td>Discrete progress. Several countries are giving priority access to women and rural populations. Efforts are still unable to solve the problem of inequality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet their commitment to filling the financial gaps that prevent the achievement of all EFA Goals, in particular Goals 3 and 4 (youth and adult learning, adult literacy);</td>
<td>EFA goals were not met in most cases, the CONFINTEA VI call was not enough to change the regional trajectory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase funds and technical support for adult literacy, learning and education, and explore the feasibility of using alternative financing mechanisms, such as debt swap or cancellation;</td>
<td>Only one country reports has created alternative mechanisms. In no case a debt swap for education has been reported.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require education sector plans submitted to the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) to include credible action on, and investment in, adult literacy.</td>
<td>Official reports do not record this information as an accomplished fact.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Elaborated with information from GRALE III and country reports.

As can be seen from the table above, the commitments undertaken in relation to financing ALE are not only weak and ambiguous in the Belem Framework, but also have not been met and, in most cases, progress has not even been reported to suggest that there are ongoing processes...
and that this situation can be improved. Strictly speaking, the commitments undertaken in BFA have been ignored by the States thus denying YAE the conditions required for its development in the region. YAE financing represents a limitation for achieving any of its goals.

Latin America and the Caribbean are moving towards a situation of greater disadvantage in this respect, compared to other regions in the world and this limits the opportunities for its population to enjoy one of the most basic human rights necessary for a dignified life.

d. Recommendations

With regards to YAE financing, and considering the modest progress made since 2009, it is recommended:

i. National governments should establish their own YAE financing goals, consistent with the commitments made in the framework of CONFINTÉA VI. The annual programming of assignments would make it possible to reach a larger population of young people and adults who are currently not covered and to achieve improvements in quality. It is advisable to work using projections that quantify the number of people to be served and those that remain unattended.

ii. Regional and local governments also have a responsibility to support YAE, allocating their own financing, particularly to build the infrastructure to help improve learning opportunities and to bring opportunities closer to young people and adults.

iii. Civil society has a duty to make visible the created or remaining deficits and inequities. To continue playing a role of social audit that reminds those responsible for allocating and executing public funds, that investing in young people and adults is a priority.

iv. Civil society can be particularly influential in verifying the quality of spending and making recommendations on geographical and social areas where it is necessary to prioritize investment.

v. Civil society should disseminate the right to lifelong education and to having free and relevant access to YAE and, at the same time, to propose calculations that show the need for increased investment.

vi. Civil society should contribute to raise the awareness of society in general, regarding the importance of investing public resources in the continuing education of young people and adults, and to generate public awareness concerning the critical role of ALE in the attainment of wider targets – such as improving health, reducing poverty, building stronger communities. According to the BFA, the major task now is for governments to “expand existing educational resources and budgets across all government departments to meet the objectives of an integrated adult learning and education strategy.”
4.4 PARTICIPATION, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

a. The approach of CONFINTA VI

The Belem Framework for Action states that “Inclusive education is fundamental to the achievement of human, social and economic development. Equipping all individuals to develop their potential contributes significantly to encouraging them to live together in harmony and with dignity. There can be no exclusion arising from age, gender, ethnicity, migrant status, language, religion, disability, rurality, sexual identity or orientation, poverty, displacement or imprisonment. Combating the cumulative effects of multiple disadvantage is of particular importance. Measures should be taken to enhance motivation and access for all.”

To achieve these purposes, the following commitments were made by the governments of the world at CONFINTA VI:

a) Promoting and facilitating more equitable access to, and participation in, adult learning and education by enhancing a culture of learning and by eliminating barriers to participation;

b) Promoting and supporting more equitable access to, and participation in, adult learning and education through well-designed and targeted guidance and information, as well as activities and programmes such as Adult Learners’ Weeks and learning festivals;

c) Anticipating and responding to identifiable groups entering trajectories of multiple disadvantage, particularly in early adulthood, and remediating this situation;

d) Creating multi-purpose community learning spaces and centres and improving access to, and participation in, the full range of adult learning and education programmes for women, taking in consideration the particular requirements of women’s specific life cycle;

e) Supporting the development of writing and literacy in the various indigenous languages by developing relevant programmes, methods and materials that recognise and value the indigenous cultures, knowledge and methodologies

b. The current situation

Access to high-quality adult learning plays a decisive role in developing better skills and competences that contribute to employability and the overall competitiveness of LAC. At the same time, learning brings equally important benefits for adults’ social inclusion and personal fulfilment. Participation in learning helps people to secure a constructive and active role in their local communities and in society at large. It can help reduce health costs and the incidence of criminality, for instance, while also helping to reduce poverty. Moreover, one cannot underestimate the importance of learning for personal development and well-being.

• An important feature of modern societies is rapid economic change, which in recent years has been associated with the development of knowledge economies and knowledge societies. In order to catch up with these developments, people need to constantly advance their knowledge
and skills. This refers especially to low-educated people. Equity is an indispensable dimension of the widening of access to adult education.

- An analysis of CONFINTEA VI progress reports from 14 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, differentiates literacy programmes from youth and adult education, linking the former to reading, writing and numeracy and the latter to skills for daily life and elements of healthcare and use of information and communications technology; most countries emphasize technical training related to income generation, especially when it is offered by the private sector. While there is an emphasis on training related to human rights and civic education, very few countries mention learning for personal, cultural and artistic growth, nor history or social sciences.

- With regard to barriers to participation, equity and inclusion, it is important to mention socio-political factors like poverty, conflict, cost of programmes, gender, migration/mobility, stigma, health and physical status of participants, etc. as well as sectoral factors – lack of appropriate infrastructure, quality of learning, legal / policy barriers, limited number of YAE opportunities. In this respect, it is important to remember that Latin America is one of the most unequal regions in the world.

- Although there exists an increasing diversity of adult learning and education programmes, currently their principle focus is on vocational education and training. More comprehensive adult learning and education approaches are

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**Good practices.** Brazil develops the “Língua Brasileira de Sinais” method (LIBRAS), a visual and spatial language articulated through the hands, facial expressions and body. This language is used by deaf communities and is recognized by law as a means of communication and expression. In addition, it is included as an integral part of the curriculum in the training of speech therapists. There are also specific strategies for people with motor and cognitive impairments in the country.

Mexico, which received the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize in 2011, for the Indigenous Literacy Programme that INEA fosters in 45 languages. “The educational materials should be directed to be short and simple, it is important to systematize the results of its use to propose and make adjustments” (GRALE, 2011).

In Guatemala, free choice for speakers of indigenous languages and Spanish was established by law since 1986. Currently literacy is provided in 15 indigenous languages.

Bolivia fosters the Bi-literacy Quechua-Spanish Programme, recognized by the simultaneous treatment of teaching in two languages.

Ecuador, through the “Dolores Cacuango” project promotes a literacy method for the indigenous population of Kichway speakers.

Paraguay, a country that recognizes Guarani and Spanish as official languages, promotes a strategy of comprehensive and bilingual intercultural literacy, involving an approach of respect for the cultural identity of each group to which it is directed through the “Paraguay Reads and Writes” programme.

In the Dominican Republic, radio Santa Maria fosters radio schools since the 70s.

Costa Rica, in coordination with the Ministry of Education and the Costa Rican Radio Institute, promotes YAE programmes.

In 2011, the IDB and the Fe y Alegría Association signed a cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Finance, Paraguay, to promote the “intercultural bilingual education by radio.”

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Argentina, Brazil, Belize, Colombia, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Peru, Paraguay, Surinam.
needed, to address development in all its dimensions (economic, sustainable, community and personal). This can be seen in most Latin American countries.

- A major institutional and educational challenge is to make the content of educational programmes more relevant to the life experiences of students. The school tradition tends to homogenize the learners’ profiles and does not attempt to identify the learning needs of individuals and communities nor their commitment to education itself. What becomes apparent is a certain crisis on the education "horizon", as well as with regard to ways of configuring training pathways.

- There has been progress related to urban-rural and ethnicity parity in access to education; however, equity is far from being achieved, and the quality of the implementation of public policies presents great disparities in countries with cultural diversity, due to the difficulties which indigenous peoples encounter to complete primary education, and to problems in access and conclusion of secondary and tertiary education.

- It is positive to note the joint efforts of different literacy and YAE programme providers if they are coordinated with local or regional development policies. However, this coordination and the implemented programmes are not always the result of tri-sectoral agreements (government, business and civil society), but the expression of centralized political definitions and, therefore, are not always able to connect with projects of local social stakeholders. In many governments, important civil society organizations have been excluded. The role of civil society in influential positions, such as the permanent parliamentary committees on education, has not been formalized (Torres, 2001).

- In the last decade, the countries of the region have made an effort to incorporate ICT in education, with most countries reporting having initiated processes of modernization incorporating ICT, both in literacy and in YAE. However, progress is uneven and heterogeneous, in a general context of technical backwardness. In order to evaluate the degree of incorporation of ICT in education in the region it is necessary to look at access, use and outcomes associated with ICT; in this field the initiatives of international cooperation and private sector have contributed.

### c. Critical nodes

- Country reports prepared for the GRALE III evaluation process do not permit us to assess to what degree the agreements and policies derived from CONFINTIA VI have been fully implemented nor whether youth and adult education’s central concern is with the learning subjects, their cultures, languages, gender, age, territories, knowledge, organizations and educational needs. Several systemic factors -for example, the legal situation, segregation, funding for education and linguistics policy – affect access to formal and informal education (Bartlett,K. 2015).

- The coverage of YAE programmes offered by local and national governments, continue to be very limited in relation to potential needs. A study based on household and population surveys in 17 Latin American countries showed that the governmental offer of formal and non-formal youth education for youngsters who never went to school or dropped out, is very limited.
Despite being a priority age group, less than 10% of those aged 20 to 29 years with incomplete secondary education attend some educational programme (UNESCO-OREALC, 2007).

- Adult learning and education programmes are rarely responsive to indigenous and rural populations, the disabled, prison inmates, and migrants. The diversity of indigenous communities and languages, and the little attention they receive reflect the situation of widespread inequity that affect indigenous peoples, entailing attitudes of discrimination from mainstream society and processes of language shift and ethnic disloyalty from the indigenous population. Insufficient attention is also paid to other ‘special groups’ – like disabled people, migrants and prison inmates despite the fact that the use of traditional and modern technologies has facilitated this task, especially with the disabled and with the migrant population. Prison education has been enhanced since 2006 in the framework of the EUROsociAL programme of the European Commission. Initiatives aimed at the blind, the visually challenged and hearing impaired have been developed in recent years in many countries.

- From a gender perspective initiatives to generate greater equality between women and men have not always led to more appropriate programmes nor to greater participation of women. Gender discrimination is evident in the field of YAE when we find that women are the majority in literacy programmes and centres, while men predominate in higher levels of education, in technical and vocational training, in training linked to the use of ICT, and in non-formal educational opportunities that go beyond simple tasks and the domestic world (Infante, 2009).

- Public offerings and the expectations of emerging YAE audiences (youth, women, social adults, unemployed, graduates with no job prospects requiring recycling) do not always coincide. Therefore, the definitions and declarations that support policies and investment in YAE set new incentives for educational participation, from the requirement to continue studies or join training programmes as a condition for social subsidies, to funding by the private sector where governments outsource educational services, relying on the private sector’s ability to develop successful marketing to provide educational opportunities. The business sector, in turn, chooses to develop their own training agencies linked to their direct business needs or to disseminate their own conceptions of the world.

- The diversity of the participants in terms of age, sex, cultural background, economic status, unique needs (including disabilities) and language, is not reflected in the content of programmes or in the practice. Few countries have consistent multilingual policies promoting mother tongues, though they are often essential to create a literate environment, especially for indigenous and/or minority languages.

- Teaching materials are generally elaborated at headquarters, with very few countries reporting decentralization in its preparation.

- Companies tend to offer adult education to employed people more than to unemployed or underemployed people, in the case of technical and vocational skills; employers and other providers of continuing and adult education do not provide information on the number of participants or results of those programmes.
d. Recommendations

i. Build educational projects that recognize, make explicit and promote the expression of particularities and differences of young people and adults, and from such particularities develop and strengthen educational programmes for citizenship.

ii. Strengthen the coordination of efforts between various sectors to improve the relevance of training programmes in relation to the current and projected productive structure, starting from the local level.

iii. Urge employers to support and promote literacy in the workplace.

iv. Develop mechanisms and methodologies of social participation to allow indigenous peoples and peasant communities to participate in the formulation of their own future projects and the establishment of policies to achieve them.

v. Ensure access to and use of the media for indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants, establish spaces and mechanisms for the recovery and systematization of the sociolinguistic realities of the various indigenous communities.

vi. Promote the creation of de-schooled educational models that provide official recognition and equivalence to the knowledge and experience of young people and adults of indigenous peoples and peasant groups.

vii. Design and implement flexible educational programmes tailored for groups of young people in situations of social vulnerability, with the goal of strengthening their links with educational communities through both programme and extra-curricular activities (e.g., football schools, book clubs, music workshops), to generate alternatives for social inclusion.

viii. Ensuring the rights of migrants, displaced populations, refugees and people with disabilities to participate in adult education: providing migrants and refugees with comprehensive education and providing training opportunities that promote their political, economic and social participation and increase their competences and cultural base.

ix. Recognize the right of all prison inmates to learn.

x. Consider strategies to address the barriers, from both demand and supply side, especially in terms of management, capacity building, access and quality.

xi. Consider a multidimensional and comprehensive view in the design of policies aimed at youth, covering the areas of education, employment, healthcare, violence, culture and political participation; propose this comprehensive vision of youth’s lives.
4.5 QUALITY OF YAE

a. The approach of CONFINTEA VI

Quality is a polysemic term when applied to learning and education. According to the Belem Framework “(it) is a holistic, multidimensional concept and practice that demands constant attention and continuous development. Fostering a culture of quality in adult learning requires relevant content and modes of delivery, learner- centered needs assessment, the acquisition of multiple competences and knowledge, the professionalization of educators, the enrichment of learning environments and the empowerment of individuals and communities”.

This is further detailed in the final CONFINTEA VI report which underlined certain dimensions of the concept:

i) The primacy of relevance and flexibility for quality in adult learning and education. The need for the content of adult education to respond, first and foremost, to the needs of adult learners, while keeping in mind the concerns of other stakeholders. Programmes are most relevant when they draw upon local and traditional sources of knowledge, especially those of migrant and tribal peoples. Flexibility in provision helps to ensure relevance. ISESCO pointed out that when adult education is sensitive to the surrounding social and cultural context, including religious institutions and sensibilities, then quality and relevance in adult learning are enhanced.

ii) The role of teacher-educators: Quality in adult learning and education is deeply linked to the role of teachers/educators. Whilst many countries still rely on non-professional adult educators, others work with volunteers that are trained as adult educators. Overall there is a clear preoccupation with finding ways to improve the professional training of adult teacher educators.

iii) Monitoring, assessment and evaluation: the growing awareness of the need of data, data analysis and, particularly, for specific indicators on ALE which could contribute to improve quality of provision, results and policy.

For these motives the commitments set out in the BFA continue to be relevant for the search for quality in ALE in the LAC region:

a) developing quality criteria for curricula, learning materials and teaching methodologies in adult education programmes, taking account of outcomes and impact measures;

b) recognising the diversity and plurality of providers;

c) improving training, capacity-building, employment conditions and the professionalization of adult educators, e.g. through the establishment of partnerships with higher education institutions, teacher associations and civil society organisations;

d) elaborating criteria to assess the learning outcomes of adults at various levels;

e) putting in place precise quality indicators;
f) lending greater support to systematic interdisciplinary research in adult learning and education, complemented by knowledge management systems for the collection, analysis and dissemination of data and good practice." (UNESCO, 2009).

**b. The current situation**

National reports, prepared between 2011 and 2012, raise issues related to the quality of education in the following terms:

- 50% (7 of the 14 national reports consulted) reported having quality criteria in the curriculum and that the results are evaluated. The quality criteria which serve as references and indicate directionality are variable and respond to concepts that each country has established.

- 43% reported having criteria for the production of teaching materials, training of trainers and methods of teaching and learning.

In both cases, the absence of quality criteria in 50% or more of the countries is an indicator of the limited importance given to the education/literacy of young people and adults. One of the key aspects for quality is the formation of educators. In this respect, at least half of the governments reported to be developing training of trainers processes. The lack of training processes or capacity building is a critical issue. More than half of governments report no efforts in this regard.

The results are the following:

**Graph 2**

![Initial training of teachers for ALE](image)


The graph shows that the initial training of literacy teachers is largely carried out by government institutions. Universities have a smaller share and businesses and NGOs none. Universities have the leadership in the initial training of educators for youth and adult education, without considering literacy.
As can be deduced from the above Graph, the greater part of in-service training for youth and adult educators is carried out by government institutions, with the participation of universities and NGOs.

Government institutions continue to retain a dominant role in the training of youth and adult educators, with the support of other sectors, including the private sector, whose share in training is just over 50%. In general, government entities have the greatest weight in the training of educators both at the initial stage and for those who are in-service. Clearly there is a strong correlation between the educators’ capacities and the quality of the process.

On the use of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms: 71% of the ministries reported monitoring processes for literacy, while only 57% do so for the rest of the youth and adult education. This means that about one third of the ministries are not performing any monitoring action of the processes on the ground, which is a cause for concern. Where carried out, monitoring is a key tool for obtaining timely information to correct action on the go.

In the same vein, there are even fewer countries conducting evaluation processes. Only 64% are performing evaluations of the literacy processes and just 36% are doing so for the youth and adult education processes.

These figures indicate the alarming lack of a systematic approach to these processes and that, in many cases, attention is focused only on delivering services, and not on mechanisms designed to deliver information regarding how they are operated and **whether they are producing the expected results**.

In addition, only 57% of the countries studied has carried out some survey on youth and adult education, and only 50% for literacy and 14% for lifelong learning.
c. Critical nodes

CEAAL is interested in the quality of education from several perspectives. It is understood as inappropriate that a single view of education quality is imposed, particularly when reduced to purely quantitative and decontextualized expressions. To that end, in partnership with CLADE, the Council organized a virtual debate to discuss different conceptions and experiences related to quality in education and, in particular, in YAE.

In terms of the quality of YAE several issues can be identified:

- Quality has different meanings, which can lead to very different interpretations. In that space of uncertainty, the dominating concepts are based solely on standardized quality measurements, coming from formal schooling, where such concepts have been previously installed. In that sense, more qualitative concepts are being displaced by a purely quantitative perspective.

- Quality needs to develop complementary aspects such as the updating of curricula and production of educational materials and resources, and this requires funding that is not available in most cases.

- A key aspect for the quality of education is the training of educators. In many cases, training is based on experience as training systems provided by government institutions or universities are not yet sufficiently developed.

In most cases, youth and adult education takes a poor second place within public educational policies and activities. Hence, the capacity to meet the needs of quality improvements diminishes and the chances of implementing such policies become scarce.

4. Learning of regular use:
   - Learning about personal identity documents
   - Learning about staying healthy
   - Learning about the environment and its protection

(Francisco Cabrera for the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Presidency, Dominican Republic, with the support of OEI 2016)

- In most cases, youth and adult education takes a poor second place within public educational policies and activities. Hence, the capacity to meet the needs of quality improvements diminishes and the chances of implementing such policies become scarce.

**d. Recommendations**

Move towards a concept of YAE quality that meets two basic criteria: the sense of equity and the transformative sense.
1. **The sense of equity**: equity, as a balance of opportunities and conditions, involves generating similar conditions for all.

The sense of equity means that anyone, anywhere, no matter how far and inaccessible he/she is, has the conditions and opportunities to exercise his/her right to education, regardless of age. Thus the sense of equity demands seeking similar opportunities for:

- Having a safe learning centre.
- Having trained and committed educators.
- Having the necessary material resources, including technological.
- Having continuity in the opportunities.

But equity has also another dimension from which it is necessary to consider it. It refers to the treatment given to the differences between individuals, be they natural or cultural, within the educational processes.

- Gender equity. Even today many YAE experiences are not free from sexist patterns, and different values and limits for men and women. Quality has no chance without the breakdown of these schemes.
- Equity between cultural identities and languages. The valorization of cultures and their expressions implies respect and open coexistence. People should learn in their own language, an issue especially important in adulthood.
- Equity between people with special needs and capabilities. Everyone has special needs and capabilities, but some are more pronounced, and their limitations affect aspects that for the rest are resolved (vision, hearing, etc.) but also some have other faculties more developed than those of the common group. There is no quality if there is no specific attention to the special needs.

2. **The transformative sense**: Quality YAE inevitably implies a vocation for transformation and renewal of the state of things. To educate is to transform. In its basic sense, education is a means for transforming the world. This makes sense from the point of view of the critical pedagogy that comes from the theory and practice of popular education, with long term experiences, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Quality implies acknowledging its transformative sense. This deals with the learning expectations of young people and adults as they approach an educational process. Their motivations provide paths for transforming reality. This implies that quality, rather than being determined by certain standards of knowledge acquired, is made meaningful by the possibility of transforming the lives of individuals and peoples. This is an indispensable part of the interpretation of quality and not just an added aspect.

Quality also finds its meaning in the contributions from the pedagogy of tenderness and the ecopedagogy. To the extent that education seeks quality, quality also involves the sustainability of life and of human development processes. The transformation of the world does not seek rapidly to consume more resources, but on the contrary, to be socially responsible. That is, transform to conserve and rationally and ethically exploit the resources available, to which everyone is entitled.
5. YOUTH AND ADULT EDUCATION (YAE): IMPACT ON WORK AND HEALTH
5. YOUTH AND ADULT EDUCATION (YAE): IMPACT ON WORK AND HEALTH

Education at any stage of life and in any of its modalities has an impact on people’s lives. Youth and Adult Education is characterised by positively affecting not only conditions of life but also life expectancy. There are two important areas linked to YAE: work and health.

These two sensitive areas are related to YAE from different angles. The link with work is often explicit, with adult people seeing YAE as a means of achieving conditions required for better job opportunities. The systematization of learning carried out in the Dominican Republic’s “Quisqueya Learns with You” National Literacy Plan, identified that among the three main reasons for young or adult people to join the programme, two were directly associated with work improvement: "Signing or putting your name on documents" and "finding a job or a better job" (Cabrera / MINERD / OEI, 2016).

This reinforces the fact that improving material living conditions through dependent work or self-employment is one of the most common motivations, showing a clear link between YAE and work.

Unlike the above, the link of YAE with health exists even when being unforeseeable. People generally do not see YAE processes as a means of improving their health but without realizing it, participating in YAE has an impact on their health and on their family’s health.

Many people learn not only to read and understand doctors’ and medicine prescriptions, but also learn about diseases and how they can be prevented with basic practices. While YAE rarely has an explicit goal in that regard, this is an area it influences.
Impacts of YAE on the world of work

Critical nodes

Official information provided by relevant governmental agencies in countries from the Latin American and Caribbean region, allows us to establish key elements of the link between YAE and the world of work. There is a clear relationship between these two phenomena, hence it is useful to know how governments in the region are interpreting this link and how they are bringing together both aspects.

However, only a third of the countries in the region (Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua and Surinam) reported evidence on the benefits of the link between YAE and improving the quality of work. This shows the lack of efforts in the region to present a link that has long been known. To the extent that the positive effects of YAE are not visible, the possibilities of promoting it are reduced.

Making the link between YAE and improved quality of work visible is key for YAE to achieve greater momentum in public policy priorities and more public resources. Not doing it wastes a very important argument. Even the budgets of governments interested in further supporting YAE are being cut. The employers’ sector commonly considers investing in adult education only as an expense. This is a relevant fact that should be highlighted in the future.

Similarly, evidence that YAE affects the capacity of innovation in the work field is insufficiently documented, and, worryingly, most countries have no evidence of YAE resulting in better financial income. These results do not indicate that there is no link between these facts, only that it has not been documented by governments or other actors.

In the same line, the link between YAE and job satisfaction, motivation and commitment to work has only been documented by 36% countries.
Regarding the numbers and degree of knowledge or perception of political decision-makers with regards to the link between YAE and improved productivity, most of them reported a strong awareness of it.

47% of respondents considered that there is a "strong" link between these two variables, 17% considered the link "modest", 12% considered that there was no link and 24% did not respond. This is a key indicator if a future greater investment in YAE is expected. It conveys the need to document the effect of YAE on productivity and consequently on the economy.

Work is one of the priority dimensions of youth and adult life, so it is not possible to prepare YAE policies without considering what is happening there and the effects that YAE processes can have on it. The transcendence of YAE reaches both individual and family welfare as well as the national economy, reinforcing the importance of a public policy approach to YAE rather than a public expenditure approach.
There is, however, a critical node concerning the fragmentation of public intervention. Frequently there is a lack of coordination and even of common goals between ministries of labour, economy, production, productivity institutes and others, which allocate resources for the training of young and adult people.

This situation requires the creation of links and synergies. The ministries of education can lead these actions and contribute to providing them with the desired coherence.

**Good practice**

Mexico’s National Institute for Adult Education has worked on the Model of Education for Life and Work (MEVyT, in Spanish), based on a modular structure that does not follow a rigid sequence. It is built on significant and relevant issues. Modules include books, magazines, brochures, maps, games or whatever the subjects require.

Emphasis on work is the element that characterizes the model, which has the double function of offering the equivalent of the ninth grade, and opens possibilities for a better incorporation into the world of work.

**Impacts of YAE on health**

**Critical nodes**

The information provided by Latin American and Caribbean governments for GRALE, presents some relevant aspects. One of them is the countries’ recognition of the link between YAE, health and well-being.
Most countries in the region formally recognize this link, which implies that objectives and contents related to health and well-being are being considered in the formulation of YAE programmes and plans. Despite this, only 42% of countries in the region (Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua) reported having evidence that their programmes improve knowledge, attitudes and values that allow caring for or improving health.

In a similar vein, only a little more than half (57%) indicated being close to the concept of integral health of the World Health Organization (WHO) which includes mental and physical health from a holistic perspective (Argentína, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curacao, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Uruguay and Venezuela).

It is regrettable that only a quarter of the countries (Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Cuba and Honduras) declared having evidence of the positive impact of YAE on the health of the population. This is very important considering the link between education and better quality of life and confirms that insufficient efforts are being made to document the known impacts of YAE in the field of health and well-being.

Regarding the link between YAE, HIV prevention and treatment, only 29% of the countries (Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, and Mexico) declared having evidence of the positive impact of YAE. The results are very similar when they refer to cases of viral diseases, epidemics, sexuality and reproductive health, diabetes, exercise and stress reduction. Hence, the evidence collected by the different governments in the region is not enough to verify the positive impact that YAE can achieve in an area as important and transversal as attention to and improvement of health.

The lack of governmental recognition of these links is very important because it does not allow the YAE programmes to become more complete and to adopt an integral perspective. Not to mention the wider impact of a young or adult person’s learning on these aspects, since they can reach their family nucleus and often the whole community.
In addition, the lack of coordination between relevant governmental agencies is a way of not exploiting synergies and wasting efforts and resources.

Very few countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Cuba and Honduras) indicated that they have a coordinating body that ensures the links between YAE and the agencies responsible for managing health programmes.

Regarding the contribution of different sectors in the definition and execution of public programmes, participation is not great, but it exists. As shown in the following graph, participation scenarios are modest but increasing, although still insufficient with respect to the mandates of greater participation, accountability and results. The articulation of efforts between different forces of society is an important value and a means that contributes to better results.

![Chart 6: Participation of other actors, including NGOs, in design and execution of action](image)

**The context of job insecurity**

Latin America and the Caribbean face, in addition to the above-mentioned issues, the permanent deterioration of working conditions. National economies depend to a large extent on so-called "informal" economies and on emigration (remittances). For both cases, working conditions have become precarious and the vulnerability of people has increased.

Although labour and worker protection legislation is still in force, in practice liberal (or neoliberal) government policies have done much to circumvent them and to set up hiring modalities that reduce labour rights and the right to work itself.

The World Bank reports that half of the region's workers are in the informal economy (48% in 2014), which according to the same source is an improvement on previous years ([http://www.bancomundial.org/Es/news/feature/2014/04/01/informality-labor-america-latina](http://www.bancomundial.org/Es/news/feature/2014/04/01/informality-labor-america-latina)). This results in a large segment of the population without any social protection or income security, totally exposed to any circumstance.
This situation affects directly the conditions of physical and emotional health, turning a labour issue into a public health factor, when it affects large sectors of the population.

Hence, YAE is also challenged to face these conditions and to provide training to overcome them. Work and basic social achievements such as social security, labour benefits and others have been seriously affected and are becoming less and less common. Therefore, YAE processes must also be inscribed in the framework of the right to decent work and of the demand for better living conditions.

**Recommendations**

1. Governments, in collaboration with civil society entities and other actors, should make efforts to document YAE experiences and to record the positive impacts it has on the world of work, health and welfare.

   Documenting such benefits will serve to better and more fully explain the positive effects of YAE and how it can impact other areas beyond education itself. Documenting these effects can provide other actors, including public policy decision-makers, with elements to support significantly the YAE processes being carried out in the countries of the region.

2. YAE programmes should be planned from a comprehensive approach that considers their very diverse effects, either explicit or not, so it is understood that an intervention in the educational processes of young and adult people goes far beyond documentation and certification of classroom learning. Such processes are linked to effective changes in the lives of individuals, families, communities and the countries themselves. This will help change the perspective of public spending under which YAE is commonly seen and from which its possibilities of expansion are scarce.
6. CONCLUSIONS:
TOWARDS A “NEW GENERATION” OF YAE POLICIES
### 6. CONCLUSIONS: TOWARDS A “NEW GENERATION” OF YAE POLICIES

Having reviewed the accepted conceptual frameworks and the progress and critical nodes documented by the States in their national reports, what follows are our general conclusions:

1. The Belem Framework for Action should be re-read and re-launched based on the logic set by the SDGs, Education 2030, and GRALE III. An overview of YAE in Latin America and the Caribbean yields unsatisfactory results. If the States adhere to the commitments set out in the frameworks, they should carry out programmatic actions to meet them.

2. The conception of Youth and Adult Education remains narrow and with a strong compensatory bias. In spite of this, some government and CSO programmes have achieved limited positive impacts. These not only organize educational processes that allow people to conclude regular studies or participate in vocational or technical training, but also help to improve the conditions of community healthcare, to increase the cultural capital of the popular sectors, and to create cultural and political conditions for overcoming discrimination on grounds of gender, ethnicity, language and territory of habitability.

3. It is necessary that States, civil society organizations and social movements that promote YAE, create conditions and priority agreements. This is to ensure a socially intelligent and fair public investment and a political leadership that stresses the value of lifelong education-learning in society, as a right that must be guaranteed through public, inclusive, and participatory educational offerings. At the same time, it is fundamental that such programmes are culturally relevant and responsive to the learning needs of communities and that they democratize the effective access to currently available general and technological knowledge, as a condition of sustainability for just societies.

4. It is necessary to design and implement modes of YAE governance founded on principles of educational justice, recognition of cultural diversity and citizen participation, which
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PROCURANDO ACCELERAR EL PASO 2017

5. The most important findings of the report lead to the conclusion that it is urgent to make a major shift in YAE policies on the continent, considering:

a) Re-signifying YAE as transformative and approach it from the popular education and critical perspectives. In its basic sense, education is a means for transforming the world. And linking it to education for citizenship, non-discrimination and accountability to comprehensive sustainability of the planet.

b) The need to recognize, value and strengthen the various modalities of YAE.

c) Strengthening intercultural programmes that effectively promote the inclusion and political, cultural and linguistic recognition of indigenous peoples and communities and of rural populations. Latin America has a rich paradigmatic proposal in "the good living", which contributes to analyse our anthropocentric vision from a biocentric one.

d) The need to reaffirm the value of community education, which can encourage alternative social and educational projects to the material and subjective impoverishment that the global capitalist model imposes today, assuming various socio educational perspectives.

e) Ensuring that national policies that mobilize responses to illiteracy, create strategies that allow people to develop educational trajectories from literacy and basic calculation to the mastering of complex technological, labour and citizen action skills.

f) Be open to new demands, taking into account the elderly, as demographically population is aging and requiring more and better healthcare, education and quality of life. Other demands from vulnerable groups, include prison inmates, people with special needs and migrants.

g) Establishing structures for the coordination, leadership and evaluation of YAE policies, where public education authorities and civil society organizations have a role, through their representative platforms or alliances.

h) Identifying cognitive, technological and instrumental needs of local and regional economies to develop training systems for work and for active participation of people in productive and services units. In this field, universities, companies committed to the SDGs and workers organizations implementing training pathways that make effective the lifelong learning-education opportunities for all and in all areas of human life may compete.
Taking into consideration their specific conditions, Member States should propitiate governing structures and constitutional provisions which: (a) align the provision of adult learning and education, through contextualized and learner-centred, culturally and linguistically appropriate programmes; (b) ensure fair access to adult learning and education, and sustained participation and learning without discrimination; (c) assess the effectiveness and efficiency of programmes by measuring the extent to which they achieve the desired objectives, including in relation to their outcomes.

i) National, regional and local governments, should set their own YAE financing goals, consistent with the commitments and programme assignments annually to make it possible to reach a larger population of young people and adults, currently uncovered, but also allow for improvements in quality. It is advisable to work based on projections that quantify the number of people to be served and those that remain unattended. Special attention should be given to South-South partnerships, not only for funding but for various aspects of improving a transformative YAE.

j) Prepare a new institutional relation of YAE, with schooling, demonstrating in conceptual terms that schooled and infantilized education which is often offered in the name of YAE does not correspond to the learning needs of the target population of YAE processes, in a world that has changed significantly. This includes management, assessment and teacher training systems, among others.

k) Identify evidence of the results of policies prioritized to respond to the learning needs of excluded young people and adults.

l) At the same time commit all public agencies involved in the development of holistic, inclusive perspectives, integrating youth and adult education fulfilling the lifelong learning right.

m) Include good practices of civil society, especially those that show articulation between the State and civil society, particularly with the ministries of education, to highlight that progress is possible when coordination is effective.

n) It is important to emphasize aspects of science and technology in YAE. Turning learning into an experience for change and transformation of people and their context, for a more humane and sustainable world. Recover aspects of neuro-science and neuro-education, about how the adult brain behaves and learns and about how to transform into successful experiences of adult learning, the spaces of learning, whether formal, non-formal and informal, through a specific curriculum and all that this entails when assumed in conditions of dignity and respect for human rights in the broadest sense.

o) It is strategic to consider changes in the dissemination, communication and information management of all matters relating to youth and adult education.

p) International cooperation: To promote the development and strengthening of the right to education for youth and adults, Member States should consider increasing cooperation between all relevant stakeholders, including governmental bodies, research institutions,
civil society organizations, unions, development assistance agencies, the private sector and the media, whether on a bilateral or multilateral basis, and enhance United Nations interagency cooperation. Sustained international cooperation implies: (a) promoting and stimulating development within the countries concerned, through appropriate institutions and structures adapted to the particular circumstances of those countries; (b) creating a climate favourable to international cooperation with a view to capacity building in developing countries, in different areas of adult learning and education and encouraging mutual cooperative assistance between all countries regardless of their state of development, as well as making full use of the advantage presented by mechanisms of regional integration to facilitate and strengthen this process; (c) ensuring that international cooperation does not merely involve the transfer of structures, curricula, methods and techniques that have originated elsewhere: d) enhancing South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation, giving priority to countries where the education deficits are the widest, by applying findings from international reports and research; (c) collecting and presenting data on adult learning and education, through and with the support of UNESCO, including the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), and the established mechanisms to produce relevant reports, such as the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE). This implies the further enhancement of international data collection mechanisms based on agreed indicators and definitions, building on countries’ capacities to produce data, and the dissemination of such data at various levels; (d) encouraging governments and development cooperation agencies to support the enhancement of local, regional and global cooperation and networking between all relevant stakeholders. Exploring how regional and global funding mechanisms for literacy and adult education could be established and strengthened and how existing mechanisms can support the international, regional and national efforts mentioned above.

q) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The importance of education and its multifaceted nature is demonstrated by the fact that the States commit to it in a number of ways and for a number of purposes. In addition to the States’ legal commitment to the right to education, States have also politically committed to education as an integral part of achieving sustainable development through the newly adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

r) Sustainable development aims at ‘eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, combating inequality within and among countries, preserving the planet, creating sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and fostering social inclusion’

s) Overcome the reduction in the 2030 agenda with regard to youth and adults. We were concerned at the reduction in the goals and targets for youth and adult education at the World Education Forum held in Incheon, Korea 2015, and in the Framework for Action of the Sustainable Development Objectives, which appear disarticulated with the commitments and aspirations agreed at CONFINTEA VI.

t) We consider that it is important to design an alternative route to the present "work" or "professional" vision in our continent, linked to the needs of the market, one that is
linked to sustainable human development, where subjects’ competencies and capacities are formed not only to respond to the demand of the market economy, but mainly to the requirements of "good living". One which prioritizes the requirements of citizen participation and of the development of the human capacity to act, think, imagine and communicate in society, as a condition for the development of a "Society of subjects" and not one of objects for the consumer market in disharmony with nature.

u) Despite the fact that CONFINTEA VI took place in Latin America in 2009, the region continues to advance slowly in the implementation of the BFA.
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