



Welcome to the second edition of 'Let'sTalk' – the update from the Global Adult Learners' Network (GLN). This edition will cover:

- what was agreed at CONFINTEA V1
- an up-date from attendees, including the Global Learners' Network at the second meeting of the CONFINTEA V1 Advisory Group
- a questionnaire for member states for a first post-CONFINTEA follow-up
- what we have achieved so far
- our future
- Breakthrough

The newsheet will also look at the progress of learners' networks at a local, national, regional and global level. The nature of adult learners' networks will, by definition, be evolving. New people will become involved, new countries will take up the challenge and new governments may become interested. It may sometimes be necessary to repeat some of the processes to ensure that all are included and can easily understand what has gone before.

Second meeting of CONFINTEA V1 Advisory Group

CONFINTEA is the name given to the international conference held every 10-12 years that submits recommendations about actions for lifelong learning for all member states.

The CONFINTEA Advisory Group was constituted by UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) in 2010. The second meeting was held on 28 May 2011 in Mexico City. The meeting was attended by 25 representatives from the following groups:

- International stakeholder organisations: Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), Organisation of Ibero-American States (OEI)
- International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)
- UNESCO: Headquarters, Regional and Field Offices and Institutes
- Global Learners' Network – elected representative, Winifred Hignell.



The Advisory Group members gave an up-date on what had happened in their countries or organisations as a follow-up to CONFINTEA V1:

- Several participants reported that they had translated and widely distributed the *Belém Framework for Action* in their national languages. They had also organised national and cross-national events with the same purpose.
- In Brazil, a summary version of the *Framework* was made available to government representatives.
- A joint meeting of representatives Morocco and Mauritania adopted resolutions for specific CONFINTEA follow-up actions.
- In Africa, ADEA and the UNESCO Regional Office have teamed up to develop a number of activities in line with CONFINTEA VI recommendations.
- While many efforts to advance adult education in Latin America and the Caribbean are in progress, it was argued that there is a need for better coordination.



GLN gave an up-date about what has been happening:

- Learner representatives in 23 countries have been talking to their national policy makers about CONFINTEA VI and have been raising awareness within their membership of the follow-up and actions.
- 12 learner representatives ??) are planning conferences to progress discussions on the *Belém Framework for Action* after the ICAE conference in June.
- 17 countries have organised seminars for their members to discuss the Action Plan
- 6 countries have already translated and shared the Action Plan in appropriate languages
- the GLN has applied for 3 sources of funding to develop the learner ambassadors programme: EU Funding (Grundtvig); BIG Lottery in the UK; and is currently seeking a sponsorship deal with an international donor for the Asia Pacific area.
- Kenya reported that the Learners' Charter has been officially adopted.

The outcomes of the meeting included:

- A discussion of concrete proposals for joint action such as the establishment of a regional observatory of communication and cooperation to implement and monitor the *Belém Framework for Action* in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Using the upcoming regional and international events, such as the Ibero-American Forum for Permanent Education, to make a case for adult education and lifelong learning.
- Providing platforms for the voice of the learners by, for example, requesting each Member State to nominate a "Learners' Ambassador".
- Creating a network of universities which focus on lifelong learning.
- Organising regional or sub-regional networks and meetings to follow up on the CONFINTEA VI process.

Questionnaire

A major outcome of the Advisory Group meeting was advice on the draft questionnaire prepared by UIL in consultation with several stakeholders for the first national post-CONFINTEA progress reporting as a result of the *Belém Framework for Action*. The questionnaire will be sent by UNESCO for completion on behalf of the government of each member state.

The draft was available and discussed by learner representatives who were able to attend the ICAE V111 World Assembly in Malmö, Sweden from 14-17 June 2011.

Those sections of the questionnaire which were appropriate for a question around learners were:

1. Under the Policy and Planning section we asked to be included:

- Were adult learners and/or adult literacy learners involved in discussions about your policy or plans? If so, what was put in place?
- Are policy documents provided in plain languages for your communities?
- Do you have a learners' voice policy and/or programme?

2. Under the Governance section we asked to be included:

- Are learners involved in planning, implementation and evaluating your policies?

3. Under the Participation section we asked to be included:

- Do you have an adult learners' week or learner-led festival of learning in your country?
- Do you have opportunities for adult learners/literacy learners to have a voice at a national level?

4. Under the Quality section we asked to be included:

- Do you have learning ambassadors in your country?



During the second session of the meeting, everyone fed back their views and recommendations for UIL to re-draft. The questionnaire will be presented and discussed in the next meeting of the Editorial Board of the post-CONFINTEA *Global Report of Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)*.

The inclusion of questions in the GRALE questionnaire about learners is a timely reminder of how far we have come. At one time individual countries were only working in isolation or with near partners/neighbours to establish learners' networks.

We have come a long way. Achievements within the last ten years include:

- Training for learners from several EU countries about setting up a learners' group, network or forum
- Publication by UNESCO/NIACE that looked at progress in setting up a learners' network in EU countries
- Links made between EU countries, African and Canadian networks
- International conferences of learners, providers and government representatives
- Learner- only conferences
- Learner ambassador/activist working at a local, regional and national level
- Discussions about the creation and adoption of a Learners' Charter. International collaboration to produce an acceptable final version that could be adapted for each individual country
- Learner voice representative on the ICAE
- Establishment of the Global Learners' Network, with headquarters in Scotland's Learning Partnership
- Invitation, attendance and presentations at CONFINTEA V1
- Invitation for a representative of the Global Learners' Network to attend UIL CONFINTEA Advisory Group
- A commitment to include learners in future CONFINTEA conferences.



Our Future

We should celebrate what we have achieved but know there is still a long way to go. One of the difficulties is funding as, more often than not, the potential sources of funding have specifications that this work cannot meet. It has always been a very difficult 'concept' to put across to those responsible for making decisions about money, particularly in a written application. We are not in a position to charge learners a fee and have relied on the goodwill of organisations. There is a need to open a debate about how and where we can secure funding, and to support individual countries to seek funding to support their own work.

For the Advisory Group, the timeframe for the distribution, collection and collation of the questionnaire is:

July 2011

- *questionnaire sent out to each member state.*

End of 2011

- *completed national reports (questionnaires) to UNESCO*

2012

- *completion of the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education*

Breakthrough

For some years, we have sought to be 'co-designers, co-deliverers and co-evaluators'. For the very first time questions are being asked of policy makers and decision makers about learner involvement in:

- Feedback and evaluation
- Planning
- Implementation
- Decision making and policy.

The third meeting of the CONFINTEA Advisory Group will be held in the autumn 2012.

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