



MEDIA RELEASE

BACKGROUND: CONFINTEA VI {Brazil '09}

History & Background

UNESCO has organised the CONFINTEA series of international meetings, which take place every 12 - 13 years, since the late 1940s (Denmark in 1949, Canada 1960, Japan 1972 and France 1985, Germany 1997). The German conference, CONFINTEA V, marked a turning point in the global recognition of and commitment to adult learning and non-formal education

It called attention to adult learning and non-formal education as indispensable elements of lifelong learning. Adopting two landmark documents at the end of the Conference, the delegates emphasized that adult and lifelong learning were key tools in addressing the global challenges of the 21st century in relation to democracy, peace and human rights, respect for diversity and conflict resolution, economic and ecological sustainability and workforce development.

This holistic understanding of adult learning and non-formal education established by **CONFINTEA V** is the ground upon which **CONFINTEA VI** will build. It will strengthen the recognition of adult learning and non-formal education within the perspective of life-wide and lifelong learning. The comprehensive agenda will be inclusive of the diversity and range of existing adult and non-formal learning forms, modes, places and themes. However, the overarching goal of CONFINTEA VI will be the harmonisation of adult learning and non-formal education with other international education and development agendas (EFA, UNLD, LIFE, MDGs) and the integration of adult learning and non-formal education within national sector-wide strategies. The Brazil conference will also assess how commitments made in 1997 have been implemented and, most importantly, it will produce the tools (e.g. benchmarks) to ensure that previous and current commitments on adult learning and non-formal education are put in place, in order to move from theory to action.

The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), has been coordinating the preparatory process leading to CONFINTEA VI, in close cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters, UNESCO Regional Bureaux and the Ministry of Education in the CONFINTEA VI Host Country, Brazil. UIL is supported by the CONFINTEA VI Consultative Group, an advisory group of experts in adult and non-formal education, which is guiding the conceptual preparation of the conference. Following established procedures, the preparatory process includes national reports and regional review meetings, as well as reviews and consultations on specific themes. Central to the process will be the development of internationally applicable and adaptable benchmarks in adult learning and non-formal education, which will be steered by a small international core group under the coordination of UIL.



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Facts and figures: Latin America and the Caribbean

In the context of 'Developing Regions', Latin America and the Caribbean have relatively high adult literacy rates.

| | 1985-1994 | 2000-2006 | Projections to 2015 |
|--|-----------|-----------|---------------------|
| Latin America and the Caribbean | 87% | 91% | 93% |
| Latin America | 87% | 91% | 94% |
| The Caribbean | 66% | 74% | 78% |
| Developing countries | 68% | 79% | 84% |
| World | 76% | 84% | 87% |

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009

Out of 561 million people in the Latin America region, around 40 million are from the 400 or so indigenous groups. Mexico, Bolivia, Guatemala, Ecuador and Peru have the highest numbers of indigenous people.

Latin America has the greatest disparity in the world between rich and poor. The region has the highest number of those with over 30 million dollars in cash. By comparison, in 2007 some 34.1% of the population (184 million) lived in poverty (CEPAL, 2008).

Facts and figures: Brazil

Brazil, the largest country in the region and the 6th largest economy in the world, has a total population of 189.6 million people, of whom roughly 14.1 million, over 15 years, are unable to read or write.

There is little difference between male (10.2%) and female (9.81%) illiteracy. 66.9 million Brazilians over 15 years have not completed initial compulsory education (2007 data), representing 47.3% of the total youth and adult population. 9.5 million youth aged 15-24 have not concluded primary education and 750,160 are illiterate.

Brazil's illiteracy rate, 10% of the adult population, is very unequally distributed: 20% in the North-east and 5.4% in the South. 94% of illiterate people (youth and adult) are over 25 years of age.

Source: World Bank and PNAD-IBGE 2007 (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics).



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Message from the Ministry of Education - Brazil

By holding the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education in Brazil, the Ministry of Education hopes to learn about public policies and actions which, in different countries, represent concrete steps towards lifelong learning and to share the efforts of Brazilian institutions to achieve the goals of CONFINTEA V.

Brazil has achieved relevant results in this field including the important step of developing and implementing a policy of adult and youth education. After the launching of the Education Development Plan (PDE) in April 2007, adult and youth education, as well as other modalities, types and levels of education received a systemic treatment, giving a clear signal to the systems of education that the offer of adult and youth education for this segment of society is a right and that investing in adult education is investing in the quality of basic education.

Financial resources for adult and youth education in Brazil are guaranteed by the Fund for the Maintenance of Basic Education (FUNDEB) with the same rules which apply to the financing of all public education in Brazil. Adult and Youth Education is not an appendix to educational policy but is an integral part of government actions for all education. The school networks which offer adult and youth education at primary, secondary and vocational levels will benefit from Fundeb to the tune of R\$ 5 billion reais in 2009.

As Paulo Freire, the great Brazilian educator, said, ***“Nobody is completely ignorant. Nobody knows everything. All of us lack knowledge of something. That is why we continue to need to learn”.***

It is in this spirit of the principle of lifelong learning that Brazil invites all countries to participate in CONFINTEA VI. We will receive with open arms in Belém everyone who is engaged in guaranteeing the right to education and who wants to contribute to the elaboration of those guidelines which will direct our work during the next decade.

Fernando Haddad, Minister of Education of Brazil

The host city:

Belém, in northern Brazil is located near the mouth of the Amazon River basin, in one of the world's most environmentally-significant areas, Belém is the capital of the state of Pará. With a population of over a million people, it is situated in a predominantly rural area, and is a melting-pot for many ethnic and linguistic groups and cultures. It has a strong interest in promoting access for all its people, to education for sustainability, not only in ecological terms but also for human development.

The city is said to be an example of one of the greatest global challenges – how to promote human development based on the paradigms of sustainability. Like many other Brazilian cities, Belém also faces the challenge of ensuring quality Education for all its diverse population.

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