

## CONFINTEA VII preliminary draft Marrakech Framework for Action

### Preamble

1. We, the XXX Member States of UNESCO, and representatives of civil society organizations, social partners, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental agencies, and the private sector, gather in **Marrakech, Morocco**, and online, **from 15 to 17 June 2022**, as participants in the Seventh International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VII). The conference takes place during a pandemic that has profoundly impacted education systems worldwide, including adult learning and education (ALE).
2. We gather to take stock of important challenges and progress made in ALE since CONFINTEA VI in 2009, and to establish a roadmap for the advancement of ALE over the next 12 years – towards 2030 and beyond.
3. We recall the **achievements of CONFINTEA VI**, including recognition in the 2009 Belém Framework for Action (BFA) of ALE as an essential element of the right to education, and its identification of five areas of action for ALE, which remain relevant today: policy; governance; financing; participation, inclusion, and equity; and quality. We also emphasize the value of UNESCO's Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) which, mandated by the BFA in 2009, has regularly monitored developments in ALE across five editions.
4. Supported by data from GRALE, we reflect on **major global efforts in promoting lifelong learning since 2009** and their impact on ALE. These include the commitment of the international community to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, greater recognition by the international community of the need to promote lifelong learning, as exemplified by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 and the International Commission on the Futures of Education, improved global ALE monitoring through the five GRALEs, the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report and other efforts, and steps taken towards the integration of ALE in the global education agenda and education architecture. In these respects, much has been done but more work is needed.
5. We underline the long-term structural impact of the **COVID-19 pandemic** with its positive and negative consequences for ALE. By effecting structural changes and transformation across societies and economies, the pandemic has drawn additional attention to the need for governments and communities to develop and implement strategies for the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies and learning policies that support youth and adults to develop new competencies in the face of such change. Furthermore, in triggering complete and partial closures of education institutions, it has led to a blurring of the boundaries between formal, non-formal and informal learning. Reciprocal learning between

schoolchildren, siblings and parents has increased, bringing the value of family and intergenerational learning into sharp focus.

6. We recall the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 2015, and are committed to achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We recognize that lifelong learning is critical to all 17 goals and, as a core dimension of lifelong learning, ALE is indispensable to their achievement, thus supporting a learning society. We especially reaffirm our commitment to SDG 4, through which Member States have committed to ‘ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’. We recall the **Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development** adopted in May 2021 and invite adult learners to help achieve its 16 recommendations. We also acknowledge the report from the International Commission on the Futures of Education (UNESCO, 2021), *Re-imagining our futures together: A new social contract for education*, which asserts the right to quality education for every child, youth and adult, and advocates for the transformational potential of education and learning as a contribution to a sustainable future.
7. We uphold the **Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE)**, adopted by UNESCO’s General Conference in 2015, including its definition of ALE<sup>1</sup> and identification of three key fields of learning: literacy and basic skills; continuing education and vocational skills; and liberal, popular and community education and citizenship skills.
8. We reaffirm that **ALE is a key component of lifelong learning**<sup>2</sup>, noting that ALE policies and practices apply to a wide range of ages, education levels, learning spaces and modalities, and recognizing that lifelong learning is the major engine of a learning society at different levels, involving individuals, families, organizations, workplaces, neighbourhoods, cities, and regions.

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1. ‘Adult education is a core component of lifelong learning. It comprises all forms of education and learning that aim to ensure that all adults participate in their societies and the world of work. It denotes the entire body of learning processes, formal, non-formal and informal, whereby those regarded as adults by the society in which they live, develop and enrich their capabilities for living and working, both in their own interests and those of their communities, organizations and societies. Adult learning and education involve sustained activities and processes of acquiring, recognizing, exchanging, and adapting capabilities. Given that the boundaries of youth and adulthood are shifting in most cultures, in this text the term “adult” denotes all those who engage in adult learning and education, even if they have not reached the legal age of maturity’. (Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education, 2015, p. 6)

2. ‘In essence, lifelong learning is rooted in the integration of learning and living, covering learning activities for people of all ages (children, young people, adults and elderly, girls and boys, women and men) in all life-wide contexts (family, school, community, workplace and so on) and through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal and informal) which together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands. Education systems which promote lifelong learning adopt a holistic and sector-wide approach involving all sub-sectors and levels to ensure the provision of learning opportunities for all individuals’. (Education 2030 Framework for Action, UNESCO 2015, p. 30, footnote 5)

9. We strongly affirm education, including ALE, as a human right, a commitment which is critical in understanding and framing education as a public endeavour and a common good, as asserted by the International Commission on the Futures of Education.
10. We also recognize the continued, rich, and diverse contributions of the **international ALE community**, including a broad set of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, and recent efforts to support the organization of CONFINTEA VII, including participation in regional and sub-regional preparatory conferences, the outcome documents of which, alongside the BFA, GRALE, RALE, and UNESCO's *Re-imagining our futures together* report, have provided the basis for this framework for action.

### Principles and priority areas

11. While recognizing that the priority areas of the Belém Framework for Action remain relevant, we have a unique opportunity to reflect on emerging challenges and new opportunities to promote **ALE within a lifelong learning perspective** in order to achieve sustainable development and fulfil the promise of peace that lies in UNESCO's constitution.
12. Building a new social contract: Inspired by the findings and proposals of *Reimagining our futures together*, we recognize the key **role of ALE in creating humanistic responses** based on human rights, ethical principles, the mobilization of collective intelligence and an open dialogue informed by interdisciplinary knowledge. At a time when societies are threatened by rising fanaticism and violent extremism, growing distrust in science and rising inequalities within and between countries, ALE can constitute a powerful policy response to consolidate social cohesion, secure peace, improve cultural understanding, eliminate all types of discrimination and promote peaceful living together and active and global citizenship.
13. **Recognizing literacy as** the foundation of lifelong learning: In spite of remarkable progress during the past decades, including in women's literacy, many countries still struggle to reach adequate literacy levels, including digital literacy. While the benefits of literacy for individuals, families, communities, societies, and the planet are well documented, adult literacy has not received sufficient policy attention and financial support. We are therefore determined to establish legal and policy frameworks that promote participatory governance and coordinated partnerships, at all levels and across sectors, that uphold the right to participation in literacy provision, especially for women and those who have been excluded, with increased emphasis on addressing low levels of literacy through a range of support measures starting in early childhood.
14. Preparing adults for the **future of work**: Demographic shifts, the fourth industrial revolution, globalization and climate change are deeply transforming the economy and the labour market.

These transformations have major implications for the nature of work, the employment structure, the content of jobs and the competencies and skills required. The linear education-work transition that was the dominant pattern for decades is becoming less relevant as, increasingly, adults follow complex trajectories over their working life. In this context, the task of ALE, through the shared responsibility of stakeholders, is to provide, in a flexible way, equitable acquisition of relevant knowledge, competencies and skills throughout the life course, including through online personalized learning. Demographic trends also indicate that the life-expectancy of people across the globe continues to rise, contributing to the emergence of an ageing world. As, in an increasing number of countries, a large portion of the population will not be in work, we must adapt the nature of ALE, with more focus on preparing older adults for socially rewarded post-work activities, and more emphasis on well-being and enjoyment of personal and social life. Moreover, the transformation of the economy required to achieve carbon neutrality and protect the environment will create an urgent need to reskill adults who are already in the labour market.

15. Promoting adult learning in **digital environments**: Technology is introducing important changes in the ways in which adults learn and are taught, as well as in the competencies and skills needed. It has become a powerful facilitator and a catalyst of individual learning. While technology can be a driver of progress in education, it can also create new barriers to access make social or collective learning more challenging, widen existing social divides and create new ones. This has implications for how adults engage as active members of society, and increases the importance of critical thinking, communication, empathy and social skills when navigating online environments to counteract misinformation, disinformation and 'fake' news. Building effective strategies, policies and instruments, bridging the digital gaps, increasing access, addressing power relations in the web, and preventing the abuse of technology, are all critical in establishing the transformative and emancipatory power of ALE. Effective digital pedagogies also require new models of teaching and learning in presence, at distance and in blended formats.
16. Unlocking the potential of adult learning and education for **climate action**: Climate change represents a huge threat for humanity as well as for other species. It forces us to question current production models, invent new industries and accept moral responsibility for future generations, recognizing that caring for the planet must become a global imperative. ALE must be part of this green transformation. It gives youth, adults and older people an understanding of the issue, raises their awareness and equips them with the knowledge and agency needed to adapt to climate change and mitigate its impact. Hence, ALE can play an important role in empowering adult and older citizens so that they become role models for children and change agents at local, national and global levels.

17. Creating a **culture of lifelong learning**: Lifelong learning will be key to addressing the challenges faced by humanity, from the climate crisis to technological and demographic change, not to mention those posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the inequalities it has exacerbated. To achieve this, a holistic approach is needed, encompassing all types of ALE (formal, non-formal and informal), and all sectors and fields, various learning sites and diverse learners' groups. Thus, a learning environment needs to be created, where education and lifelong learning for young and old, are established as a public endeavour that serves not only the world of work but also individual wellbeing and the common good.

### **Action recommendations for transformative ALE**

#### Establishing frameworks and governance arrangements

18. Recognizing the need for a renewed social contract for education, we commit to taking steps to establish individual learning entitlements and invite UNESCO to explore ways to establish a right to lifelong learning. This new right will require specific legislation, the development and implementation of comprehensive and gender-responsive policies, and sufficient funding. Policymaking geared towards the right to lifelong learning should be led by national governments, creating the conditions for a culture of lifelong learning that is adapted to each Member State.
19. We commit to supporting the creation of multi-sectoral national platforms for the governance of ALE, with shared responsibility in delivering education and in facilitating these spaces. Actors include relevant government ministries, civil society organizations, private sector, academia and ALE providers to facilitate coordination across sectors and agencies, develop inclusive lifelong learning policies and improve access to learning, including through the recognition of a wide range of skills and competencies as learning outcomes. Better access to and recognition of programmes will encourage youth, adults and older citizens to participate in learning. We also underline the importance of dialogue with social partners, which constitutes a critical dimension of governance in many countries, particularly in terms of continuing professional development.

#### Redesigning systems for ALE

20. Recognizing the increasing diversity of ALE providers resulting from the emergence of complex learning ecosystems, we commit to strengthening the role of governments in establishing mechanisms and allocating financial and human resources to support structures for ALE and to regulate, incentivize, stimulate, coordinate and monitor ALE as a public and common good.

21. We commit to strengthening ALE at the local level, as a strategic dimension for planning, design and implementation for learning programmes, and for supporting and (co-)funding training and learning initiatives such as community learning centres. We recognize the diversity of learning spaces, such as those in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education institutions, libraries, museums, workplaces, public spaces, art and cultural institutions, sport and recreation, peer groups, family and others. This means reinforcing the role of sub-national governments in promoting lifelong learning for all at the local level by, for example, pursuing learning city development, as well as fostering the involvement of local stakeholders, including learners.
22. Furthermore, in keeping with our commitment to create flexible learning pathways within and between types of vocation, we commit to implementing the validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning wherever appropriate and relevant to integrate broader sections of the population into an open and flexible education and training system. Establishing flexible learning pathways is key to allow mobility between different programmes and for learners to choose their learning trajectories according to their talents and interests, taking advantage of the opening up of bridges across sub-systems.

#### Ensuring quality of learning

23. We stress the key role of teachers and educators in adult learning and education. We therefore commit to implementing policies and strategies to further professionalise ALE through initial, in-service and continuing training for adult educators – teachers, facilitators, instructors, guides and others – and by improving their working conditions and status, including professional development trajectory. Doing so will be vital in tackling the current lack of qualified teachers in ALE and the scarcity of programmes and institutions to train professionals. We further identify the development of ALE teacher standards as a strategic avenue for professionalization and enhanced quality.
24. In line with the Futures of Education report, we commit to valuing pedagogies of cooperation, which highlight the importance of learning as a social process, and, in light of the SDGs, increasingly also, between people and the planet. While the use of technologies in ALE is increasingly important, such use always needs to be critically assessed to ensure that it meets the needs of individuals and society.
25. We will also commit to continuing to promote relevant, non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive curricula and learning materials that will incorporate emerging fields of learning such as citizenship education, education for sustainable development, education for health and well-being, and digital skills.
26. To enhance the quality of ALE we commit to supporting forms of research and evaluation that are congruent with ALE's participatory principles in that they involve learners in activities that

are meaningful and relevant to their day-to-day lives. Co-construction processes and participatory research are particularly suitable to enabling ALE teachers, designers and participants to jointly assess the effects, strengths and areas of improvement of the programmes developed.

### Increasing funding

27. We commit to increasing public funding and resource mobilization for ALE. As a component of lifelong learning, ALE funding must involve the contribution of a wide diversity of stakeholders, various ministries, employers and other private actors, local governments and learners. Such funding formulae must combine regular budgetary commitments with other forms of funding, including blended financing, and mechanisms to provide individual entitlements to lifelong learning, particularly financial support to marginalized groups. We are determined to increase public spending on education in accordance with country contexts to meet the international benchmarks of allocating 4–6% of GDP and/or 15–20% of total public expenditure to education, including at least 4% for ALE.
28. Considering the role that international cooperation plays in reaching an appropriate level of funding for ALE and bearing in mind the potential contribution of ALE to all 17 SDGs, we call for a broadening of the scope of global mechanisms for financing development cooperation in education, so that they include ALE. Following the spirit of the 2030 Agenda, we also call on existing global funds for education, specifically the Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait, to include ALE in strategies, priorities and financing, and in the support, they provide to their partner countries.

### Promoting inclusion

29. We commit to placing diversity, including linguistic diversity, inclusion and equity at the heart of our endeavours, recognizing them as a priority in increasing motivation and participation in and access to ALE among marginalized or disadvantaged individuals, vulnerable groups and communities. This commitment derives from the reaffirmation of education as a human right, which includes the right to participation as an enabler of empowerment, and active and global citizenship.
30. We commit to establishing and implementing reliable, valid, transparent and accessible gender-sensitive information systems for ALE, allowing the tracking of progress in participation with a focus on under-served populations, as well as facilitating the exchange of knowledge between government and non-governmental institutions, academia, civil society and, at the international level, between Member States.



### Expanding learning domains

31. We commit to redoubling our efforts to envision and implement literacy as a foundation for adult learning and education for the future, by identifying persistent literacy challenges, calling for expanded notions of literacy as key to the future of humanity, and identifying areas for action and improvement for youth and adult literacy. These areas include establishing comprehensive gender-responsive, cross-sectoral and inclusive literacy policies and policy implementation strategies, understanding why and how to develop literacy and numeracy skills and competencies, as well as other foundational skills, and using comprehensive and reliable evidence and data to justify public and other investments in literacy.
32. We recognize the workplace as an important learning site. Establishing a culture of lifelong learning at work is imperative in helping workers to secure and maintain decent work, adapt to new job requirements, and achieve personal development and fulfilment. We also recognize that workplace learning must contribute to building more inclusive and just societies. We therefore commit to promoting social dialogue and to establishing incentive structures for increasing the participation of adults, men and women, in workplace learning.
33. With our recent shared experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, we assert the importance of learning for individual and public health. We commit to strengthening these dimensions, thus ensuring that youth and adults are better able to protect their health and improve their individual mental and physical well-being and the health and well-being of their local communities. We further highlight the role of active and global citizenship and media literacy in tackling a range of profound challenges and, therefore, further commit to strengthening citizenship education for adults. In response to the many risks societies are facing around the world (pandemics, violent extremism, armed conflicts, extreme poverty, natural disasters), citizenship education opportunities will cultivate learners' capacities to critically evaluate information (especially fake news, science denial, and misuse of social networks), make informed decisions, develop their agency and contribute significantly to their local communities. Citizenship education also makes learners more resilient in the face of disruptions.
34. Recognizing the urgency and centrality of climate action for sustainability, we commit to advancing awareness and knowledge production on the effects of climate change, so that adults can better understand urgent issues of sustainable development and are better able to act as empowered citizens, adapt their consumption pattern and lifestyle and engage actively in initiatives to protect and preserve the environment.
35. Recognising the powerful role technology plays in ALE, Member States commit to identifying ways to reduce the digital gap and to promote digital skills, as well as formulating new



directions for learning alliances building on UNESCO normative instruments that frame access to knowledge (the 2019 *Recommendation on Open Educational Resources* and the 2021 *Recommendation on Open Science*), use of AI (the 2021 *Recommendation on the Ethics of AI*) and connectivity for learning (the 2021 *Rewired Global Declaration on Connectivity for Education*). Hence, alongside promoting blended learning, which is an effective means of reaching out to marginalized people and communities most in need of ALE, we will also provide open education resources for the common and public good and address concerns over equity and inclusion, privacy and ethics in relation to the use of technology for learning.

36. We commit to using the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a roadmap for the development of transversal skills, recognizing how this agenda brings cohesion and synergy to multifaceted goals of ALE for the years to come. Quality education and lifelong learning, as an integral part of SDG 4, are important mechanisms for implementing not just SDG 4 but many of the other SDGs as well. It is the prerequisite for poverty reduction (SDG 1), health and well-being (SDG 3), gender equality (SDG 5) and reduced inequalities (SDG 10), gainful employment and decent jobs (SDG 8), for inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities (SDG 11), for just, peaceful, inclusive, violence-free societies (SDG 16) and for climate action (SDG 13). Furthermore, quality education and lifelong learning are crucial for the realization of other human rights.

#### **International cooperation for enactment and monitoring**

37. In enacting the commitments contained within this framework for action, and in order to continuously exchange knowledge and good practices and foster peer learning, we commit to ongoing international solidarity and co-operation aimed at improving ALE and promoting lifelong learning.
38. We commit to paying specific attention to the following categories of Member State, which are facing particular challenges in achieving SDG 4 and other SDGs:
- Conflict-affected Member States, considering their specific needs in terms of participation in ALE, including for refugees and displaced populations, and for capacity building;
  - small Island Developing States (SIDS), considering their structural vulnerability, exacerbated by climate change;
  - african Member States, which face persistent education challenges and offer large opportunities for future development.
39. We commit to promoting collaboration, partnerships and networks, which are fundamental to implementing the Marrakech Framework for Action. These include cross-sectoral partnerships and collaboration as well as dynamic knowledge-sharing between Member

States. Multi-sectoral partnerships and collaborations, including with civil society, will be supported and promoted at local, national, regional, sub-regional and global levels.

40. We commit to mandating an institution or focal point at national level for data collection on ALE provision and to monitoring the implementation of the Marrakech Framework for Action.
41. We invite UNESCO, as the lead United Nations agency for education, to support the enactment of this framework for action in cooperation with Member States, ensuring periodic reviews of progress made.
42. We commit to taking this Framework for Action forward through relevant mechanisms at global, regional, national and local levels, drawing on the global architecture of SDG 4, which includes mechanisms and platforms such as GRALE, the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML), the Global Alliance for Literacy (GAL), the Global Education Monitoring report, the SDG 4-Education 2030 High Level Steering Committee, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the work of international partners, including non-governmental organizations, and country-level monitoring.
43. In the tradition of GRALE, we commit to establishing and implementing reliable, valid, transparent and accessible information and gender-sensitive monitoring systems that can both produce relevant and accurate data for monitoring the enactment of the MFA and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices between Member States.
44. We call on UNESCO to coordinate, through the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, a monitoring process at the global level to take stock and report periodically on progress in ALE, through dedicated instruments, including a Global Report, and a CONFINTEA mid-term review in 2028 to assess the progress made.
45. We therefore adopt the **Marrakech Framework for Action** to guide us in harnessing the power and transformational potential of ALE within a lifelong learning perspective for a socially cohesive, fulfilling and sustainable future for all.