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**WHAT IS ADULT EDUCATION?
UNESCO ANSWERS**



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Introduction

The concept of adult education tends to be thought of as an educational process for adults. However, this is not the sphere in which adult education acts.

Education is adult education: for forming adults. Education is to become mature.

This principle is valid in any stage of one's life. Education is the education of children, youth, adults and seniors with the endless aim of forming a responsible being. Even though levels of responsibility may vary, what does not change is that the response must always be convincing and conveniently committed.

When UNESCO works to achieve their objectives, which is international education for peace, it does so urging that this aim be taken seriously, maturely and as an adult throughout all stages of life and as each circumstance demands.

For UNESCO there is not an educational process if there is not a slow acquiring of values that guarantee a peaceful coexistence.

Adult education is synonymous with education in general. Both expressions—“adult education” or “education” by itself- indicate their goal: the appropriation of a spirit capable of transforming minds in any place and time.

This book offers a vision of the resolutions and decisions of UNESCO’s general conferences and Executive Board meetings on adult education from 1946 to 2005.

I

The context of adult education

The adult education process drives towards the achievement of the capability to individually use reason on the subject matter in question.

Adult education is oriented at the use, at any age, of attitudes and skills prone to clarifying any distortions in communication, favouring “why,” “how,” “when” and “where” as well as the “what for” in all situations.

The Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education affirms that

civic, political, trade union and co-operative education activities should be aimed

particularly towards developing independent and critical judgement and implanting or enhancing the abilities required by each individual in order to cope with changes affecting living and working conditions, by effective participation in the management of social affairs at every level of the decision-making process¹.

In the process of achieving adulthood, we must perform the following actions: investigate, reflect, report, decide, receive information and organise it, plan, ask and study. These actions help us to acquire truthful and quality knowledge; to define the strategies and adjust them to reality; focus new options or offer alternative explanations to the information; and to unmask any distortions and deformations. The Recommendation supports these type of activities by saying,

¹ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volume I. Resolutions*, “Annex I. Recommendation on the development of adult education. Content of adult education”, resolution 19C/Annex I.III.10, Paris, 1976, p. 7.

generally speaking, the aims of adult education should be to contribute to: [...] developing a critical understanding of major contemporary problems and social changes and the ability to play an active part in the progress of society with a view to achieving social justice; [...] developing the aptitude for acquiring, either individually, in groups or in the context of organized study in educational establishments specially set up for this purpose, new knowledge, qualifications, attitudes or forms of behaviour conducive to the full maturity of the personality; ensuring the individuals' conscious and effective incorporation into working life by providing men and women with an advanced technical and vocational education and developing the ability to create, either individually or in groups, new material goods and new spiritual or aesthetic values; [...] developing the necessary discernment in using mass communication media, in particular radio, television, cinema and the press, and

*interpreting the various messages addressed to modern men and women by society*².

This is why it also says that

the education of young people should progressively be oriented towards life-long education and learning, taking into account the experience gained in regard to adult education, with a view to preparing young people, whatever their social origins, to take part in adult education or to contribute to providing it. To this end, measures should be taken with a view to: modifying school and training syllabuses with the aim of maintaining and stimulating intellectual curiosity, and also placing greater emphasis, alongside the acquisition of knowledge, on the development of self-teaching patterns of behaviour, a critical

² UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 1, “Objectives and strategy”, resolution 19C/Annex I.II.2.(b).(f).(g) and (j), pp. 4-5.

*outlook, a reflective attitude and creative abilities*³.

These theories have not been heavily modified, but they have been extended and specified. For example,

the term “adult education” denotes the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in the twofold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and

³ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 1 “Relations between adult education and youth education”, resolution 19C/ Annex I.VII.46.(c), p. 11.

*independent social, economic and cultural development*⁴.

In developing the concept of adult education we can classify three periods.

The first period is between 1946 and 1958. This period focuses on the idea of reconstructing the educational structures affected by World War II; the interest of establishing complete educational programmes; favouring free and obligatory education; and for universal education.

The ten general conferences celebrated in those first twelve years highlighted those worries and interests, which had repercussions in the valuation of the concept of adult education.

The second period is between 1960 and 1976. The use-for the first time in 1960-of the concept of a lifelong education is the beginning of a more explicit discourse in regards to adult education. It then acquires the characteristic of a

⁴ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 1, "Definition", resolution 19C/Annex I.I.1, p. 4.

defining and unifying concept in education for becoming adults, which is permanent.

UNESCO will greet it enthusiastically by considering it capable of framing and uniting the Organization's importance on education, and since it can organise all of the developed educational processes into a single common principle: grade school, out-of-school, primary school, secondary, school, higher, professional, formal and non-formal education.

If education is defined as lifelong education, and adult education includes all processes of education, adult education and lifelong education unite into a single reality. From this we can affirm that all educational processes must be carried out within the context of lifelong education or adult education.

This criterion on adult education, just like lifelong education, is found in the 1976 Recommendation and marks the end of this second period.

If

the full development of the human personality, particularly in view of the rapid pace of scientific, technical, economic and social change, education must be considered on a global basis and as a life-long process⁵, the development of adult education, in the context of life-long education, is necessary as a means of achieving a more rational and more equitable distribution of educational resources between young people and adults, and between different social groups, and of ensuring better understanding and more effective collaboration between the generations and greater political, social and economic equality between social groups and between the sexes⁶.

Lifelong education is the foundation of the complete educational process. And with it, the concept of adult education penetrates into all educational structures, which must all be specified as lifelong education:

⁵ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 1, resolution 19C/Annex I. Preface, p. 3.

⁶ *Ibidem.*

*Adult education as an integral part of life-long education [...] must constantly contribute to the renewal of educational methods, as well as to the reform of educational systems as a whole*⁷.

The third period began in 1980. This period is framed under the 1976 Recommendation in which we can see different areas of importance.

In 1983 the concept of adult education continued to be a concept that presides in all areas of education, and these must be developed within the context of a lifelong education. Then, in this year the concept of lifelong education would be expanded with the addition of “for all,” which required the highlighting of the concept of lifelong education, making clear that a lifelong education is for all.

Lifelong education for all would then meet its decisive moment in its admission in the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, 1990).

⁷ *Ibidem.*

Previously (1989), lifelong education had already been more precisely defined as *lifelong education for all*⁸. There are no substantial differences between these two concepts.

The same goes for the new term for lifelong education applied in 1995: *learning without frontiers*⁹; that is, without limiting age, time and space, as well as diversity.

⁸ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volume 1. Resolutions*, “Programme for 1990-1991. Major Programme Areas. Education and the future. World Conference on Education for All. With regard to the follow-up to the World Conference:”, resolution 25C/IV.A.1.8.B.5.(b), Paris, 1989, p. 76.

⁹ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volume 1. Resolutions*, “Programme for 1996-1997. Major Programmes and Transdisciplinary Projects. Towards lifelong education for all. Major Programme I: Towards lifelong education for all. Under Programme I.2, ‘Reform of education in the perspective of lifelong education’”, resolution 28C/IV.A.1.1.B.(b), Paris, 1995, p. 18.

II

Adult education (1946-1958)

The aim of education for children, youth, adult and seniors is to train them in a spirit which enables them to freely judge. It also has a practical aim, but its highest aim is more humanistic.

The main goal is to achieve its humanistic and ethical aims in recognising that understanding is more important than knowledge, since only this produces a responsibility towards morals and wisdom.

This leads it to highlight the social function of education especially in circumstances which stress the conviction that societies can change with

the help of a coordinated human effort. Education of social responsibility, a civic and political sense, the sense of justice, participation, international understanding and development is a single requirement.

All human training must promote aptitudes for social analysis and the ability to judge between plural values and contradictory ideologies. It would be necessary to train in cultural discernment, avoiding ethical uncertainty and the loss of identity; to learn how to permanently educate in the analysis of prevailing values and the impact on mentalities and behaviours which produce modes of appreciating them. This is why

participants agreed that UNESCO should take due account of the entire educational continuum, from preschool to higher education, including formal and non-formal approaches, technical and vocational education, the fight against illiteracy, adult and lifelong learning,

as is proclaimed in the General Conference in 2001¹; and repeated almost literally in 2003².

II.1. Adult education and universalisation

It is undeniable that all of this can be deduced from UNESCO's Constitution, including that the universalisation of education with these characteristics is an essential fundamental for peace. UNESCO will unequivocally confess:

The present educational inequality between nations represents a danger to the peace of the

¹ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volum 1. Resolutions*, "Reports of the Programme Commissions, the Administrative Commission and the Legal Committee. Report of Commission II. Part III-Debate on the Medium-Term Strategy for 2002-2007 and preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2004-2005 (Item 3.1-Major Programme I, Education)", resolution 31C/XV.B.III.28, Paris, 2001, p. 134.

² UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volume 1. Resolutions*, "Programme for 2004-2005. Programmes. Major Programme I-Education. UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE)", resolution 32C/IV.2.5, Paris, 2003, p. 20.

*world which cannot become ONE if half of it remains illiterate*³.

Peace is therefore an objective for education, as well as for a mature, adult and lifelong education for all. Therefore,

*the Director-General is instructed [...] to produce materials on international affairs suitable for adaptation an extensive use by adult study groups*⁴,

while we must also expand on some recommendations for an international civic spirit by noting the compared efficacy of various applicable methods for different educational fields, including

³ UNESCO, *General Conference. First session*, “Annexes. Annex I. Report of the Programme Commission as adopted by the General Conference. Introduction”, resolution 1C/Annexes.I, Paris, 1946, p. 220.

⁴ UNESCO, *Resolutions adopted by the General Conference during its second session*, “Resolutions adopted on the report of the Programme and Budget Commission. The Programme of Unesco in 1948. Chapter 3.-Education. Adult education. The Director-General is instructed:”, resolution 2C/VIII.A.3.5.2, Mexico, november-december 1947, p. 21.

adult education⁵. UNESCO knows that it must be responsible for adult education⁶ and

*attend to the needs of institutions and organizations concerned with the education of adults, such as trade unions and workers' educational movements*⁷.

Therefore,

the Director-General is instructed to collect and disseminate information on new techniques and

⁵ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its thirty-third session, Paris, 8-18 April 1953*, "Annex I. Terms of reference of the Expert Committee to study the principles and methods of education for living in a world community", decision 33EX/Annex I.7.(b), Paris, 7 may 1953, p. 17.

⁶ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 3, "Plenary meetings. Verbatim records of the plenary meetings. Second plenary meeting. Report and general discussion on the work of the preparatory commission", resolution 1C/9, p. 20.

⁷ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volume II. Resolutions*, "Resolutions adopted on the report of the Programme and Budget Commission. The Programme of Unesco. Chapter 1.-Reconstruction. Reconstruction Campaign", resolution 3C/IX.I.1.14, Beyrouth, 1948, p. 16.

*methods in adult education*⁸.

This task is based on the principle of universal education; A principle that does not allow for discrimination in the application nor modes of teaching:

*With regard to both ordinary education at the various levels and out-of-school education for young people and adults, Unesco helps its Member States to ensure the right to education for everybody whose education has been neglected, interrupted or impeded*⁹.

Adult education is a cultural programme that embraces the conditions that favour a responsible adaption to to the medium, a critical

⁸ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 4, resolution 2C/VIII.A.3.5.1, p. 20.

⁹ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its forty-ninth session, Paris, 18 November-6 December 1957*, “Annex. Statement by the Executive Board concerning Unesco’s contribution to the struggle against discrimination in the field of education”, decision 49EX/Anexo, Paris, 19 December de 1957, p. 26.

interaction with the media, the training of decision making, social participation, arts such as music¹⁰ and museums¹¹. In conclusion, something more than just material gain. UNESCO claims this when, for example, it notes

*in developing the Fundamental Education Programme in 1948, the Director-General shall give due regard to the following considerations: That in further study of the programme, the needs of the individual for the development of his native resources of intelligence, and not merely his economic betterment, be kept in mind*¹².

In carrying out Unesco's programme in

¹⁰ EXECUTIVE BOARD. *op. cit.* in note 5, "Programme questions. Cultural Activities. International Conference on the rôle and place of music in the education of young people and adults", decision 33EX/8.3.4, p. 9.

¹¹ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its thirty-fifth session, Paris, 30 June-9 July 1953*, "Execution of the Programme. Cultural Activities. Seminar for museum staff and educators", decision 35EX/4.3.1, Paris, 16 July 1953, p. 3.

¹² UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 4, resolution 2C/VIII.A.3.4.13.1, p. 19.

education, the Director-General will give first and equal priority in the educational programme to the proposals formulated at the Second Session of the General Conference respecting: 1. Fundamental Education; 2. Adult Education 3. Work with Universities; 4. Educational Seminars; 5. Education for International Understanding in Primary and Secondary Schools of Member States, including the competitions for young people; 6. Improvement of Text-books and Teaching Materials; and, 7. Consultative Educational Missions to such Member States as request them¹³.

This is why special documentation and audiovisual materials must be created for their use in schools, adult courses and universities aimed to develop education on the United Nations and specialized agencies¹⁴. And this is also why

¹³ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 4, resolution 2C/VIII.A.3.3, p. 17.

¹⁴ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its twenty-third session, 26 August*

seminars on fundamental education and adult education in the Middle East¹⁵ and in the Western Hemisphere¹⁶ must be organised.

The introduction of adult education is essential for discussing universal education. The universalisation of education is not only geographic, it includes all adults in general¹⁷ as well as individually, those in rural areas.¹⁸

to 2 September 1950, "Contribution of Unesco to the action of the United Nations and specialized agencies following the aggression against Korea", decision 23EX/4.II.B.2.(a), Paris, 8 September 1950, p. 5.

¹⁵ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its twenty-fifth session, 15 to 27 January 1951*, "Other questions. Regional seminar in the Middle East on fundamental and adult education", decision 25EX/12.5, Paris, 9 february 1951, p. 30.

¹⁶ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its twenty-ninth session, Paris, 13 March-7 April 1952*, "Execution of the Programme for 1952. Education. Cultural Activities. Regional seminar on adult education in the Western Hemisphere", decision 29EX/7.2.4, Paris, 23 April 1952, p. 6.

¹⁷ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its thirty-seventh session, Paris, 10 March-9 April 1954*, "Annex I. Draft Programme and Budget estimates for 1955-56. Education", decision 37EX/Annexe I. 1.322, Paris, 29 April 1954, p. 19.

¹⁸ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its thirty-sixth session, Paris, 30 November-9 December 1953*, "Execution of the Programme.

II.2. Characteristics of adult education

Adult education is what must be taught in all modules of education and all social sectors. Adult education is not “for” children, youth, adults or seniors: *The final object must be to equip man to play his part harmoniously in the modern world*¹⁹.

This final aim of education impedes any other delimiting slant. Simply because all those sectors are prepared to assume the responsibility of a free man or woman.

Adult education does not solely refer to educating adults and not including other sectors. Adult education is education; it does not pass

Education. Reports on meetings of Expert Committee (La Brévière, 8-15 August 1953) and of Advisory Committee on Adult Education (La Brévière, 12-14 August 1953)”, decision 36EX/5.1.2, Paris, 24 December 1953, p. 3.

¹⁹ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Resolutions*, “Resolutions adopted on the report of the Programme and Budget Commission and of the Joint Commission-Programme and Budget, Official and External Relations. Second Part: Preamble. Education”, resolution 5C/II.II.A, Florence, 1950, p. 17.

through essential changes in its aims because it is applied in one sector or the other:

In defining the purpose of Unesco as that of advancing, through the educational and scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world, the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind, they have declared that the wide diffusion of culture, and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace are indispensable to the dignity of man and constitute a sacred duty which all the nations must fulfil²⁰.

Adult education is education “with” children, youth, adults and seniors. It connotes the following reality: everybody—students and teachers—participates in it; everybody passes the educational process; and everybody is asked to educate by educating oneself, to learn by learning, to learn to

²⁰ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 19, resolution 5C/II.II, p. 15.

be, to learn to undertake and prepare to assume challenges in each historical moment:

The main tasks of Unesco are: [...]To obtain for each person an education conforming to his aptitudes and to the needs of society, including technological training and higher education²¹.

This is the spirit.

Unesco's task in education is to help Member States to ensure that their educational systems are' adequate in every way to meet the needs of society and of the individual. The world is changing so rapidly as to provoke one of the grave crises of history. Moral and spiritual factors are given insufficient play. Ways of thought and life have not been adjusted to the discoveries of science and technology. Methods of teaching need re-examination; educational facilities require expansion²².

²¹ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 19, resolution 5C/II.II.(2), p. 16.

²² UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 19.

The spirit that is heard when they say:

It is recommended to Member States that they provide fundamental education for all their people, in conformity with Article I, paragraph 2(b) of the Constitution of Unesco; including the establishment as soon as possible of universal free and compulsory primary education, and also education for adults²³,

and that they head towards adult education as the context for all education. Always, because

the main tasks of Unesco are: [...] To study the causes of tensions that may lead to war and to fight them through education²⁴;

and always because education should respond to the demands of a person and of society, and contribute to maintaining peace²⁵.

²³ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 7, “Chapter 2.–Education. Fundamental education”, resolution 3C/IX.2.41, p. 18.

²⁴ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 21, resolution 5C/II.II.(6).

²⁵ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 20.

Adult education is the expression that summarises all types of education. So when they say *everywhere there is a need for the development of adult education*, or that

in the modern world, all nations are interdependent, and they must learn to recognize it. The task we have described will call for action in all fields of education. For the purposes of a programme the following proposals are submitted as the most urgent²⁶,

adult education is being organised.

This sign of adult education is seen when updating the right for everybody to participate in the community's cultural life:

Unesco will assist Member States by providing information, carrying out studies, making recommendations and, where necessary, itself taking practical action in order to direct the education of both youth and adults towards a

²⁶ *Ibidem.*

better understanding of the culture of mankind²⁷.

This is an example of the common denominator in educational process in all ages and from which intercultural understanding and awareness of the evolution of civilisation is the final aim of the teachings given in all educational modes.

To be educated as an adult is not limited to an age, but is a criteria for all times and places:

Member States are invited to consider adult education, in its various forms and with its diversity of content, as an integral part of their educational systems and of their economic and social development plans, so that all men and women may, throughout their lives, have access to cultural media by means of which they can fill gaps in their knowledge, add to their own store of information, acquire attitudes

²⁷ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 19 “Cultural activities. Dissemination of Culture”, resolution 5C/II.II.D.3, p. 21.

*favourable to progress in all fields, participate usefully and actively in family, civic and cultural life and in economic and social development, enjoy their leisure more fully, and attain wider international understanding*²⁸.

In other words, adult education must be present in all types of teachings and must prepare students for progress, as is noted in the second period of the concept of adult education.

In the first period adult education is considered important in carrying out UNESCO's aims²⁹ and as an effective medium for executing its programme³⁰.

²⁸ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Resolutions*, "Programme and Budget for 1965-1966. Education. Priority fields of international action. Continuing education for adults", resolution 13C/II.1.261, Paris, 1964, p. 14.

²⁹ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Resolutions*, "Annexes. Report of the Programme Commission. Education", resolution 9C/Annexes.A.1.2, Paris, 1956, p. 89.

³⁰ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 28, resolution 9C/Annexes.A.1.9, p. 90.

On the other hand, it is not difficult to understand that UNESCO is interested because

*the Director-General is authorized to assist Member States and the appropriate international organizations in the development of adult education, with particular reference to international understanding and co-operation*³¹.

It is its aim.

However, an adult education programme should expand its radius of activities and implicate new forms of education, *especially for adults*, relative to agriculture, hygiene and civil lessons.³²

The emphasis of *especially for adults* points out that the concept of adult education is not limited to those societies considered appropriate. The emphasis delimits a type of teaching-learning in areas typical of a mature age, but this does not

³¹ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 29, “Resolutions concerning the Programme and Budget. Programme of Unesco for 1957-58. Education. Adult Education”, resolution 9C/1.A.1.51, p. 13.

³² UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 3.

permit us to deduce that these teachings are to exclude other ages.

Adult education is more of a general motivation in an educational process than a dissection of separate characteristics, profiles, contents and specific students.

Adult education is the teaching-learning that should be applied to all types of teaching. And even though specific classes can be given to adults, this does not take away the right for adults to receive a complete education in accordance with the teaching-learning parameters of adult education in its training phases and education types. Adult education includes all educational fields:

Adult education activities, viewed as forming part of life-long education and learning, have no theoretical boundaries and should meet the particular situations created by the specific needs of development, of participation in community life and of individual self-fulfilment; they cover all aspects of life and all fields of

knowledge and are addressed to all people whatever their level of achievement. In defining the content of adult education activities priority should be given to the specific needs of the educationally most underprivileged groups³³.

The fields of knowledge are all of those in the educational system:

Generally speaking, the aims of adult education should be to contribute to: promoting work for peace, international understanding and co-operation; developing a critical understanding of major contemporary problems and social changes and the ability to play an active part in the progress of society with a view to achieving social justice; promoting increased awareness of the relationship between people and their physical and cultural environment, and fostering the desire to improve the environment and to respect and protect nature, the common

³³ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volume I. Resolutions*, “Annex I. Recommendation on the development of adult education. Content of adult education”, resolution 19C/Annex I.III.9, Paris, 1976, p. 7.

heritage and public property; creating an understanding of and respect for the diversity of customs and cultures, on both the national and the international planes; promoting increased awareness of, and giving effect to various forms of communication and solidarity at the family, local, national, regional and international levels; developing the aptitude for acquiring, either individually, in groups or in the context of organized study in educational establishments specially set up for this purpose, new knowledge, qualifications, attitudes or forms of behaviour conducive to the full maturity of the personality; ensuring the individuals' conscious and effective incorporation into working life by providing men and women with an advanced technical and vocational education and developing the ability to create, either individually or in groups, new material goods and new spiritual or aesthetic values; [...] developing the aptitude for making creative use of leisure and for acquiring any necessary or desired knowledge; developing the necessary discernment in using

*mass communication media, in particular radio, television, cinema and the press, and interpreting the various messages addressed to modern men and women by society; developing the aptitude for learning to learn*³⁴.

These aims of adult education are the same as for education in general. But due to the era's inherent problems, UNESCO would focus more on these shortages and propose the initiative to help countries develop their educational systems in response to the needs of certain populations that did not have the means for education,³⁵ while looking more specifically at those that could work to help in general improvements, foreseeing an education for them-which they call adult education- and to which the

³⁴ UNESCO, *op. cit.*, in note 33, "Objectives and strategy", resolution 19C/Annex I.II.2.(a).(b).(c).(d).(e).(f).(g).(i).(j) and (k), pp. 4-5.

³⁵ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 19.

Member States are invited: To undertake and to develop activities in adult education according to the needs of their populations, concentrating particularly on the education of working people of both sexes and, within the framework of their National Commissions or in agreement with them, to set up committees, or to encourage the establishment or the activities of associations, for collaboration with Unesco in this field³⁶.

It is worth highlighting that a rigorous reading of this UNESCO aim limits our ability to circumscribe the concept of adult education within a specific framework in which an educational process must be produced. The “including” of the UNESCO resolution:

³⁶ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Resolutions*, “Resolutions adopted on the report of the Programme Commission and of the Joint Commission-Programme Official and External Relations. Second part: The Programme for 1952. Education. Adult education”, resolution 6C/II.1.221, Paris, 1951, p. 18.

-Member States are invited to encourage the development of adult education, including workers' and women's education³⁷ -

demonstrates this.

In conclusion, in this first period, the most noteworthy characteristic of adult education is its hope to express the entire educational process with this single concept. The basic contents and aims of adult education follow the same line that does not vary throughout the years.

³⁷ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Resolutions*, "Chapter IV. Programme of Unesco for 1955-56. Education. Education out of School. Adult education", resolution 8C/IV.1.1.321, Paris, 1954, p. 26.

III

Lifelong education and adult education (1960-1980)

III.1. Lifelong education

When in 1960 UNESCO assumed the concept of lifelong education they considered it promising for their educational policy. Today it has been adopted by many mediums, syndicates, schools, universities, quality journalism, churches, cinemas, theatres and museums. With respect to the latter, for example, the Recommendation concerning the Most Effective Means of Rendering Museums Accessible to Everyone claims that

the contribution which museums can make to school and adult education should be recognized and encouraged¹.

Also understanding that

the new social conditions and needs which the museums must take into account in order to carry out their permanent educational mission and satisfy the cultural aspirations of the workers².

The new concept inspired such a strong interest and created such expectations that

the speakers stressed the importance of the concept of life-long education and praised the

¹ UNESCO, *Record of the General Conference. Resolutions*, “Convention and Recommendations adopted by the General Conference at its eleventh session. Recommendation concerning the most effective means of rendering museums accessible to everyone. Place and role of museums in the community”, resolution 11C/B.III.V.16, Paris, 1960, p. 126.

² UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 1, resolution 11C/B.III.Preface, p. 125.

Secretariat for its initiative in developing this new and global approach which was considered to be both timely and decisive in view of the rapid change taking place in present-day life. A number of delegates emphasized the importance of a harmonized integrated system of education for the preparation of the individual to social and civic responsibilities, and the necessity to clarify the implications of this new concept through interdisciplinary studies on basic needs of changing societies, on the distribution of responsibilities between formal and out-of-school education, and on the new structural forms, including legislative measures, required for developing an integrated educational system. Attention was also drawn to the necessity of considering lifelong education as a framework and perspective for the whole education programme³.

³ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Resolutions, "Annexes. Report of the Programme Commission. Part C. Detailed consideration of the Draft Programme and Budget for 1967-1968. Part II-Programme operations and services. Chapter 1. Education. General discussion. Adult education, literacy and youth activities. Section 1.41. Studies,*

Even though with the difficulties for harmonising interests, needs and possibilities within the notion of lifelong education, UNESCO felt obliged

to continue to devote substantial resources to education in order to: apply the principles of equality of opportunity for human development and democratization of education; give qualified personnel adequate training to enable them to assume responsibility for the development of their country; develop lifelong education to cover all sections of the population at all ages; adopt new educational methods with a content adapted to local requirements and to those of the modern world⁴.

publications and consultations”, resolution 14C/B.Annexes.II.C.1.41.273, Paris, 1966, p. 179.

⁴ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volume 1. Resolutions*, “General resolutions. Evaluation of the results of the First Development Decade in Unesco’s fields of competence and draft programme of the Organization for the Second Decade”, resolution 16C/III.9.11.(a), Paris, 1970, p. 83.

The change that this discovery caused directly affected universities and schools. Spaces which have traditionally been occupied by children and youth could derive from this message that education was their prerogative, or that education was the sum of the acquired knowledge throughout life. The eruption of lifelong education, however, brings along a new conception:

the term “life-long education and learning”, for its part, denotes an overall scheme aimed both at restructuring the existing education system and at developing the entire educational potential outside the education system; [...] education and learning, far from being limited to the period of attendance at school, should extend throughout life, include all skills and branches of knowledge, use all possible means, and give the opportunity to all people for full development of the personality⁵.

⁵ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volume 1. Resolutions*, “Annex I. Recommendation on the development

Thus, a proper structuring of the educational system within the perspective of lifelong education should create the essential conditions for all humans to be able to enjoy its benefits.

But there does exist

the need for a more precise definition of this concept before engaging in any large-scale action, carefully deciding in advance upon objectives, scope, and means⁶.

Saying that

Unesco should devote increasing attention to all aspects of life-long integrated education, both

of adult education. Definition”, resolution 19C/Annex II.1, Paris, 1976, p. 4.

⁶ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Resolutions*, “Annexes. Report of the Programme Commission. Part C. Detailed consideration of the Draft Programme and Budget for 1969-1970. Part II-Programme operations and services. Chapter 1-Education. General discussion. International co-operation for the advancement of education. Section 1. 15. Life-long integrated education”, resolution 15C/D.Annexes.II.C.1.01.1.15.183, Paris, 1968, p. 181.

*in industrialized and in developing countries; such education should enable men and women to be aware of their human dignity, to understand society and to take part in shaping it,*⁷

an objective is being formed: for growth and cultural improvement in people and at the same time, offering the possibility for professional perfection while promoting democracy.

Furthermore, the person must be trained for creating culture. And that is possible when

*men and women are the agents of their own education, through continual interaction between their thoughts and actions*⁸.

⁷ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 3, “General resolutions. Conclusions and directives arising out of the general debate. Priorities and Unesco’s principal fields of action. Literacy, educational planning and lifelong integrated education”, resolution 14C/IV.7.II.(b).8, p. 84.

⁸ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 5.

And since the challenge of education is in training people throughout their lives,

the Director-General is authorized to pursue and undertake activities designed to define a new conception of the curricula and structures of pre-primary, primary and secondary education with a view to ensuring interdisciplinary continuity in the spirit of lifelong education⁹,

and

to promote, in particular through the introduction of appropriate innovations and new approaches at all levels, the quantitative and qualitative development of school and

⁹ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volume 1. Resolutions. Recommendations*, “Programme. Resolutions concerning the programme for 1973-74 and Recommendations concerning future Programmes. Education. Resolutions concerning the programme for 1973-74. Curriculum, structures and methods of education. Curricula and structures”, resolution 17C/II.1.A.1.221, Paris, 1972, p. 23.

*higher education as a part of lifelong education*¹⁰.

Adopting this project of lifelong education would bring about a revolution. A good way of establishing this would be to *develop lifelong education to cover all sections of the population at all ages*¹¹.

However, it does not ignore that lifelong education is a difficult subject,¹² both because there are divides between developed and developing countries on how it should be conceived, and how it should be present in each of the education modules, and the conversion to concrete programmes; suitable educational materials; interdisciplinary relations and educational

¹⁰ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 4, “Programme and Budget for 1971-1972. Education. School and higher education”, resolution 16C/II.1.201.(a), pp. 22-23.

¹¹ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 4.

¹² UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 6 “Part B. General. General, the following wording was unanimously approved for this paragraph: Evaluation of the work and the functioning of the Programme Commission and its Sub-Commissions”, resolution 15C/D.Annexes.II.B.4.99, p. 173.

exchanges joined with the necessary knowledge to guarantee a harmonised development of the personality and attitudes and aptitudes inclined to for socioeconomic growth, human development, the progress of nations, relationships with the media; and an open attitude towards solidarity and international understanding-this being throughout life.

In a context like this, adult education works as a referent that may serve as a base for starting the search for this global project that proposes lifelong education.

Being born with it, it was able to take an attribute from it to designate itself as a *global scheme for life-long education and learning*. But it did it because

the term “life-long education and learning” [...] denotes an overall scheme aimed both at restructuring the existing education system and

*at developing the entire educational potential outside the education system*¹³.

A mutual coming together that is able to inflate the principle of lifelong education in adult education would transform education into the lifelong education perspective. Elementary education, out-of-school education, superior, formal, non-formal, technical and professional, as well as all types of education that work in the framework of adult education, will benefit from the resulting definition of education: a process that leads to a type of adult and mature behaviour and interaction with reality.

This supposes that we accept the concept of adult education as an itinerary that begins in pre-primary school and is developed throughout life.

It is unthinkable to implement this general educational system with these characteristics from day to another. But it would be unacceptable for

¹³ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 5.

any type of education's passivity to impede the steps necessary for it.

Lifelong education *-harmonized integrated system of education*¹⁴- injects a single aim in all educational processes: to allow a human to learn how to be, to learn how to learn, to learn how to take action, to continually learn and that matures learning. In conclusion, the aims of adult education and the reason why UNESCO placed it *in the general context of life-long integrated education*.¹⁵

An adult education that includes the set of personal and professional elements that give consistency to a responsible, participative and creative human being in society and that goes beyond simple literacy.

Several delegates observed that literacy was only the first stage in the process of individual and vocational education and accordingly

¹⁴ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 3, p. 179.

¹⁵ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 3, "Programme for 1967-1968. Education. Adult education, literacy and youth activities", resolution 14C/II.1.43, p. 26.

*recommended that it be incorporated in lifelong integrated education*¹⁶.

Lifelong education does not exclude any possible training format and should be *the master concept for educational policies*.¹⁷ We see in the statement

*that lifelong education is becoming the keystone not only of cultural and educational policies but of the entire educational system from the primary to the higher level*¹⁸;

And as is noted in the Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education,

the educational and learning processes in which children, young people and adults of all ages

¹⁶ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 3, “Section 1.44. Literacy”, resolution 14C/B.Annexes.II.C.1.4.312, p. 182.

¹⁷ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 9, “International Commission on the Development of Education”, resolution 17C/II.1.A.1.00.II.6.(c), p. 19.

¹⁸ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volume 1. Resolutions*, “Programme. Education. Curricula, structures and methods of education. Structures and content of lifelong education”, resolution 18C/II.1.223, Paris, 1974, p. 23.

are involved in the course of their lives, in whatever form, should be considered as a whole¹⁹.

Lifelong education, extending throughout the whole of life, will enable every individual to develop his own personality, to achieve his ambitions and to serve the community. Conceived as a continuous process which is no longer confined within the walls of the school, lifelong education should take advantage of all means of communication and cultural development for developing the potentialities of modern man. In this respect it is highly desirable that the methods and procedures of pre-school education, education in the family and adult education should be defined more precisely within the context of a lifelong education policy adapted to each country²⁰.

¹⁹ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 5.

²⁰ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 9, “General resolutions. Conclusions of the general policy debate. The Programme. Education”, resolution 17C/IV.9.II.9, p. 103.

UNESCO will aim to establish programmes of lifelong education. This is why

The Director-General is authorized to pursue or to undertake activities designed to promote the planning and establishment of structures and curricula for education which will make it possible for everyone to continue his education throughout life, in accordance with his aspirations and needs, and in the light of the requirements of the economic, social and cultural development of the community, and of the principles laid down in the Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, paying particular attention²¹.

²¹ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 18, resolution 18C/II.1.2221, p. 22.

III.2. Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education (1976)

The Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education is the point of reference in UNESCO's discourse on materials. As a starting point,

*the principles set forth in Articles 26 and 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, guaranteeing and specifying the right of everyone to education and to participate freely in cultural, artistic and scientific life and the principles set forth in Articles 13 and 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*²².

With the aim of providing a

contribution to putting into effect the principles set forth in the recommendations addressed by

²² UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 5, "Preface", resolution 19C/Annex I.Preface, p. 3.

*the International Conference on Public Education to the Ministries of Education concerning the access of women to education (Recommendation No. 34, 1952). Facilities for education in rural areas (Recommendation No. 47, 1958). and literacy and adult education (Recommendation No. 58, 1965), in the Declaration adopted at the International Symposium for Literacy in Persepolis (1975) and in the Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace, and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms adopted by the General Conference at its eighteenth session (1974)*²³.

For UNESCO, the ultimate aim of education is to achieve understanding and international cooperation.

Together, international understanding and cooperation working along with the idea of education as one with democracy, autonomy,

²³ *Ibidem.*

responsibility and dialogue; convinced that adult education is a means to facilitate participation in cultural, political, artistic and scientific life; convinced that it must be a permanent process if it is to strive for full development of a personality; the security that adult education guarantees the rational distribution of educational resources between different social groups along with an improved understanding between generations and greater equality between groups and sexes; convinced that adult education contributes to progress, peace and development of educational systems; trusting that adult education will contribute to the renovation of educational methods and reform educational systems as a whole, making a framework for which UNESCO believes adult education should be based upon.²⁴

According to this, adult education designates all educational process through which individuals and collectives can expand their abilities, attitudes, aptitudes and knowledge;

²⁴ *Ibidem.*

contribute to resolving world problems for individuals and communities; developing intellectually and affectively; developing the sense of social responsibility, solidarity and a critical spirit; assuming their obligations in maintaining peace, development, progress and respect for the values and lifestyles of other cultures and civilisations; improving and re-orientating their professional abilities; participating in socio-economic and cultural balance and independence.

All of this within the framework of a process of lifelong education that includes all branches of knowledge and understanding:

The term “adult education” denotes the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their

*abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in the twofold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development*²⁵.

In other words, adult education must contribute to the peace process; to a critical capacity; to improving relationships with the environment; to inter-cultural respect; to inter-personal and group communication; to new abilities and skills; to a technical and professional training; to the creative use of free-time; to be able to discern the medias messages; and the ability to learn how to learn.

This means that

adult education activities, viewed as forming part of life-long education and learning, have

²⁵ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 5.

no theoretical boundaries and should meet the particular situations created by the specific needs of development, of participation in community life and of individual self-fulfilment; they cover all aspects of life and all fields of knowledge and are addressed to all people whatever their level of achievement. In defining the content of adult education activities priority should be given to the specific needs of the educationally most underprivileged groups. [...] Participation in adult education should not be restricted on grounds of sex, race, geographical origin, culture, age, social status, experience, belief and prior educational standard²⁶.

These activities and contents must be conceived as a function of the needs and experiences of the participants; they must start from the initial trust in the will for progress and development of the students; they should create and maintain interest, reinforce self-esteem and ease the

²⁶ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 5, “Content of adult education”, resolution 19C/Annex I.III.9 y 13, p. 7.

educational process; they should adapt to the people's real situation and life; and they should contribute to economic and social development.

The place of adult education in each education system should be defined with a view to achieving: [...] the assurance of a scientific basis for life-long education and learning as well as greater flexibility in the way in which people divide their lives between education and work, and, in particular, providing for the alternation of periods of education and work throughout the life span, and facilitating the integration of continuing education into the activity of work itself; [...] greater interaction between the education system and its social, cultural and economic setting²⁷.

²⁷ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 5, "Objectives and strategy", resolution 19C/Annex I.II.5.(b) and (e), p. 6.

It should be possible to acquire and accumulate learning, experiences and qualifications through intermittent participation²⁸.

Civic, political, trade union and co-operative education activities should be aimed particularly towards developing independent and critical judgement and implanting or enhancing the abilities required by each individual in order to cope with changes affecting living and working conditions, by effective participation in the management of social affairs at every level of the decision-making process²⁹

While not excluding approaches intended to achieve a short-term solution in a particular situation, technical and vocational education activities should as a general rule emphasize the acquisition of qualifications which are sufficiently broad to allow of subsequent

²⁸ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 5, “Methods, means, research and evaluation”, resolution 19C/Annex I.IV.31, p. 9.

²⁹ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 26, resolution 19C/Annex I.III.10, p. 7.

*changes of occupation and a critical understanding of the problems of working life. It is necessary to integrate general and civic education with technical and vocational education*³⁰.

In order to create the structures for adult education, measures must be taken. These measures should fully use the existing educational resources and create those that lack; measures for creating methods and educational materials; for fomenting the exchange of experiences; and for training educators and technicians.

Member States should encourage schools, vocational education establishments, colleges and institutions of higher education to regard adult education programmes as an integral part of their own activities and to participate in action designed to promote the development of such programmes provided by other institutions,

³⁰ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 26, resolution 19C/Annex I.III.10, p. 7.

*in particular by making available their own teaching staff, conducting research and training the necessary personnel*³¹.

Adult education's final aim is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and aptitudes applied in the workplace, with the aim of being a source for self-realisation, personal progress and stimulating the creative effort.

In order to achieve this, elements and resources should be taken from the workplace and brought into adult education; work conditions must be improved; paid training periods must be foreseen; the new abilities obtained from the employment training must be kept in mind; worker participation in the creation of work-study programmes must be facilitated; as well as the

³¹ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 5, "The structures of adult education", resolution 19C/Annex I.V.40, p. 11.

creation of elements that show others the training received or abilities learned³².

In terms of the management, administration, coordination and financing of adult education, the 1976 Recommendation developed various aspects that could be summarised in the following statement:

*The necessary measures should be taken to obtain optimum use of resources made available for adult education. All available resources, both material and human, should be mobilized to this end*³³.

Furthermore,

Member States should strengthen their co-operation, whether on a bilateral or multilateral

³² UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 5, “The relations between adult education and work; Relations between adult education and youth education”, resolution 19C/Annex I.VIII.49 and 47, p. 12.

³³ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 5, “Management, administration, co-ordination and financing of adult education”, resolution 19C/Annex I.IX.59, p. 14.

*basis, with a view to promoting the development of adult education, the improvement of its content and methods, and efforts to find new educational strategies*³⁴.

Cooperation, however, should not be part of the simple transfer of structures, programs and external methods, instead it should aspire to stimulate the external development and adapt coherently to the particular conditions of each country and community.

Information and documentation exchanges must come with the creation of structures that favour the training of teachers capable of acting abroad, specially in those that have the same problems and where the same solutions can be applied:

Member States should regard adult education as a matter of global and universal concern,

³⁴ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 5, “International co-operation”, resolution 19C/Annex I.X.61, p. 14.

*and should deal with the practical consequences which arise there from, furthering the establishment of a new international order, to which Unesco, as an expression of the world community in educational, scientific and cultural matters, is committed*³⁵.

In conclusion, adult education is a process of lifelong education that affects all people and that prepares them for assuming social responsibilities armed with tools to develop their personality in the sphere of humane solidarity and competent abilities.

There is an adult education specifically for adults; but adult education, understood in a deeper sense, is the whole of the educational system oriented towards a single aim: the achievement of being a human adult capable of exercising reason autonomously and being able to apply it on the object in question.

³⁵ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 34, resolution 19C/Annexe I.X.67, p. 15.

To this end, measures should be taken with a view to: [...] modifying school and training syllabuses with the aim of maintaining and stimulating intellectual curiosity, and also placing greater emphasis, alongside the acquisition of knowledge, on the development of self-teaching patterns of behaviour, a critical outlook, a reflective attitude and creative abilities³⁶.

In a single word, adult education is demanding equality in access to education and equal opportunities for success. Which supposes that all schools or universities, formal or non-formal education establishments, besides being open to their surroundings, must offer adult education adapted to the student's individual circumstances, but only when the aims are to create an adult human who permanently matures.

³⁶ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 5, "Relations between adult education and youth education", resolution 19C/Annex I.VII.46.(c), p. 11.

IV

Adult education (since 1980)

Since the end of 1980 the concept of lifelong education and adult education experienced some changes. Basically for two reasons: the 1990 World Conference on Education for All and the possibilities derived from new information and communication technologies.

In this third period UNESCO invited people

To encourage efforts to give full effect to the different aspects of the democratization of education by stimulating research, reflection and reforms with a view to introducing into education systems the changes required to

provide lifelong education for all which meets the foreseeable needs of societies in the twenty-first century¹.

This is why they pay special *attention to adult education activities, in the context of lifelong education.*² This perspective would make them make note

of the recommendation of the Executive Board's ad hoc Forum of Reflection to devise open learning systems enabling all people to obtain access to all forms and levels of education within the context of lifelong education with a

¹ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volume 1. Resolutions*, "Programme for 1988-1989 Major Programmes. Education for all. Major Programme II: 'Education for all'. Under Programme II.2, 'Democratization of education", resolution 24C/III.A.2.1.2.(b).(ii), Paris, 1987, p. 24.

² EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its 131st session, Paris, 17 May-22 June 1989*, "Draft Third Medium-Term Plan and Draft Programme and Budget for 1990-1991. Consideration of the draft third Medium-Term Plan and the Administrative Plan. Major Programme. Area I and mobilizing project n° 1", decision 131EX/4.1.Para. 67, Paris, 21 July 1989, p. 29.

*view to fostering global and comprehensive education,*³

This would demand a *reform of education in the perspective of lifelong education.*⁴

So it is the duty of adult education to include all modules, formulas, systems or types of education, and this is why they would have *to promote adult education as an essential component of lifelong education.*⁵

On the other hand, UNESCO knows that the new information and communication technologies can help in creating a culture of education for all throughout life; they offer possibilities for education; and their integration respond to those challenges for an effective learning throughout life:

³ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volume 1. Resolutions*, “Programme for 1996-1997. Major Programmes and Transdisciplinary Projects. Towards lifelong education for all. Major Programme I: Towards lifelong education for all”, resolution 28C/IV.A.1.1, Paris, 1995, p. 17.

⁴ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 3, “Under Programme I.2, ‘Reform of education in the perspective of lifelong education”, resolution 28C/IV.A.1.1.2.B, p. 18.

⁵ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 3, “Under Programme I.1, ‘Basic education for all”, resolution 28C/IV.A.1.1.2.A.(g), p. 18.

The application of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) a major challenge for the reform and renewal of education systems during the twenty-first century⁶.

Furthermore, UNESCO understands

the value of the recommendations of the Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education (Seoul, Republic of Korea, April 1999), reflecting the emerging challenges of the twenty-first century, an era of globalization and the revolution in the field of information/communication technology, and that these recommendations will therefore guide a new orientation: “Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) for all throughout life” so as to meet the new demands of achieving the objectives of a culture of peace,

⁶ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volume 1. Resolutions*, “Programme for 2000-2001. Major programmes. UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE)”, resolution 30C/IV.6, Paris, 1999, p. 30.

*environmentally sound sustainable development, social cohesion and international citizenship*⁷.

IV.1. Education for all throughout life

A proper appreciation of the concept of lifelong education can be deduced from its name, relative to time and its universal dimension. In this point the concept does not change in meaning; instead it only adds “throughout life” and “for all” to make it clear.

The Executive Board

recalls the fundamental importance of Major Programme II, which is designed to contribute, in association with Major Programme III, to the

⁷ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 6, “Third consultation of Member States on the implementation of the Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education (1974)”, resolution 30C/IV.14, pp. 36-37.

achievement of Unesco's second main task as defined in the second Medium-Term Plan, which is 'to help to pave the way for the widest participation by individuals and groups in the life of the societies to which they belong and in that of the world community'⁸,

and

considers that Programme II.3 (Adult education) provides the focal point for the activities of the Organization in the field of adult education, and stresses the great importance of this programme'⁹.

This is why

⁸ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its 126th session, Paris, 13 May-19 June 1987*, "Draft Programme and Budget for 1988-1989. Examination of the Draft Programme and Budget for 1988-1989 and recommendations by the Executive Board. Major Programme II-Education for all", decision 126EX/4.1.A.III.27, Paris, 10 July 1987, p. 7.

⁹ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *op. cit.* in note 8, decision 126EX/4.1.3.35, p. 8.

recommends the continuation of activities aimed at fostering co-operation among Member States in this field and the implementation of regional programmes for the eradication of illiteracy through a co-ordinated effort, including the support and stimulation of national initiatives, to promote the universalization of primary education and adult literacy, priority being given to projects for girls and women, and stresses the paramount role Member States are called upon to play in this respect¹⁰.

Concerning literacy, they note the need

to promote the development of lifelong reading habits and lasting literacy, through the production of reading materials in the relevant languages, the promotion of an interest in reading and of research on the role of books in

¹⁰ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *op. cit.* in note 9, decision 126EX/4.1.3.32.

*the enrichment of cultures, and the launching of a new African strategy for books*¹¹

and

*absolute priority should be given to the struggle against illiteracy through dual-track action designed to achieve universal primary education and functional literacy for adults*¹².

They also

welcome the activities planned under the Mobilizing Project No. 1, which should be entitled 'Combating illiteracy' and recommends

¹¹ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volume 1. Resolutions*, "Programme for 1990–1991. Major Programme Areas. Culture: past, present and future. Major Programme Area III: 'Culture: past, present and future'. under Programme III.2, 'Culture for development'. With a view to promoting the role of books and reading and the production of cultural goods", resolution 25C/IV.A.3.1.2.C.(b).(i), Paris, 1989, p. 108.

¹² EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its 129th session, Paris, 25 May-10 June 1988*, "Medium-Term Plan. Preparation of the third Medium-Term Plan: Report by the Director-General. Annex. Major programme areas. Education and the future", decision 129EX/4.1.Annex.I.1, Paris, 4 July 1988, p. 8.

*that this project should be based on a twofold strategy of literacy education for adults within the context of lifelong education, and of the universalization, democratization and renewal of primary education, and that it should receive support from the regional programmes combating illiteracy and that it should endeavour to mobilize and co-ordinate increased resources for literacy education, by appealing to public and private financing sources*¹³

Just like the 1962 General Conference stated when

in order to promote and stimulate the development and improvement of programmes of education for adults and young people out of school, the Director-General is authorized: [...] To study conditions for the provision of continuing education for adults and young

¹³ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *op. cit.* in note 2, decision 131EX/4.1.26, p. 12.

people: by undertaking studies on techniques of continuing education, such as the use of correspondence courses, museums, radio, television and other mass communication media for adult education; and by participating, at the request of Member States, in activities for the continuing education of adults, such as the organization of regional conferences, in South East Asia on the rôle of universities and schools in adult education, and in Europe on adult education for the productive use of leisure time¹⁴.

Which intends for

all men and women, throughout their lives, may have opportunities for pursuing education conducive alike to their individual advancement and to their active participation in civic life and

¹⁴ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Resolutions*, “Programme and Budget for 1963-1964. Education. Adult education and youth activities”, resolution 12C/II.1.252.(c).(i) and (ii), Paris, 1962, pp. 20-21.

*in the social and economic development of their country.*¹⁵

In this perspective, we must remember that the Executive Board noted, by highlighting

*the importance of education for the elderly, as an integral part of Unesco's adult education programme, and of the utilization of the asset which the elderly represent from the point of view of the Organization's programmes in education, science, culture and communication, so that education may be a lifelong reality*¹⁶.

With the denomination of education for all throughout life, UNESCO would comprise the 2000-2001 educational programme, which integrates basic education, secondary and higher education, technical and professional, and formal

¹⁵ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 14, resolution 12C/II.1.251, p. 20.

¹⁶ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *op. cit.* in note 8, decision 126EX/4.1.IV.B.2, p. 27.

and informal, literacy, lifelong education and adult education.

IV.2. Learning without Frontiers

The UNESCO programme Learning without Frontiers aims to reduce the obstacles for education and learning will; affecting everybody possible by educating all ages; applying education to all levels; and transcending the separation between academic and professional education.

The programme is created to boost innovative strategies with special attention to the learning needs of the less fortunate; to respond to the challenges of lifelong education; and to offer learning opportunities to each person at all times, everywhere, at any age and in any circumstance.

This objective requires an open teaching environment, flexible and adaptable to the diverse needs of learning and easily attainable by all. With this programme they seek

to carry out pilot projects involving new applications of information and communication technologies with a view to facilitating access to telematic services in developing countries, and in particular, to promote the use of these technologies for open learning and diversified lifelong education in support of 'Learning without frontiers'¹⁷.

For the Learning without Frontiers programme, everybody at any age has access to education and that the teaching accommodate their specific circumstance. UNESCO tries

to intensify support, in the context of the Learning Without Frontiers initiative, for the development of diversified open and distance learning modalities at all levels of education -

¹⁷ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 3, “Communication, information and informatics. Major Programme IV: Communication, information and informatics. under Programme IV.2, ‘Capacity-building in communication, information and informatics’”, resolution 28C/IV.A.4.1.2.B.(1), p. 53.

both formal and non-formal - in order to reach the 'unreached' and to meet the changing learning needs of all throughout life, and to promote to this end the appropriate use of new information and communication technologies¹⁸.

Even though it has no formal relationship with the programme, though it is connected to the spirit that animates it, the General Conference of 2001 does reveal this, even though in a peculiar aspect of education. In the Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education it states

programmes of continuing technical and vocational education should be designed and

¹⁸ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volume 1. Resolutions*, "Programme for 1998-1999. Major programmes. Major Programme I: Education for all throughout life. Under Programme I.2, 'Reform of education in the perspective of education throughout life', which is intended to renew, diversify and expand education systems, programmes and processes, in the perspective of education throughout life and render them more responsive to social transformations and to the challenges of the twenty-first century", resolution 29C/III.1.2.B.(c), Paris, 1997, p. 16.

*delivered to suit the special requirements of adults using flexible teaching methods that recognize already acquired expertise*¹⁹;

moreover,

*guidance should take into account the needs of industry, the individual and the family while preparing students and adults for the real possibility of frequent career changes, which could include periods of unemployment and employment in the informal sector, to be achieved through*²⁰.

In any case,

teachers in technical and vocational education as continuing education should, in addition to

¹⁹ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volume 1. Resolutions*, “Programme for 2002-2003. Programmes. Annexe. Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education (2001). Technical and vocational education as continuing education”, resolution 31C/V.12.VI.51.(a), Paris, 2001, p. 35.

²⁰ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 19, “Guidance”, resolution 31C/12.VII.55.

the special preparation for teaching adults, have an adequate knowledge of the working environment of the learners, and be able to provide distance and individually paced education and training²¹.

²¹ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 19, “Staff. Teaching staff”, resolution 31C/V.12.IX.78, p. 37.

V

Adult education and other educational systems

The use of “system” considers all types of education as a group of ordered and coherent elements that contribute to the same object: education as preparation to assume the responsibilities of freedom.

This is precisely the final aim of adult education, to include all systems under the mark of a single education-learning framework: compatible and forming part of the elements that conform and interrelate, in order to achieve each system and modules desired aim.

Education for adults has been an integral part of these systems due to various circumstances. Social ramifications forced the search to place education for adults in hopes of the optimization of underused human resources.

Educational shortages and age impeded their placement into the formal educational system, and was obliged to locate it external to this system. Which did not mean that education for adults was to be considered as a second-class education, nor education's final aim reduced.

Either way, adult education has never been considered as an appendix to these educational systems. Moreover, education has always been for the creation of adults.

V.1. Adult education and fundamental education

In the historical circumstances of the forties,

the idea of reconstructing educational structures was an urgent objective.

It was essential to create a programme that would give way to the situation. And UNESCO approached this convinced that

as the programme advances, follow-up work will carry the new skills of reading and writing to a fuller implementation of everyday life and, further, to a growing recognition of international problems¹.

The programme would be known as a project of fundamental education. This programme would have to join the education of various materials and international understanding, as well as an orientation that keeps in mind that it must favour and guarantee peace and safety.

¹ UNESCO, *General Conference. First session*, “Annexes. Report of the Programme Commission as adopted by the Conference. Introduction”, resolution 1C/Annexes.1. Introduction, Paris, 1946, p. 220.

When detailing the points in which fundamental education was founded, UNESCO would say:

It is a many sided undertaking ranging from primary education to work with adult illiterates. It includes education for better health and agriculture, for economic improvement, for artistic and cultural development, for citizenship and for international understanding. It is the concern of schools and many other agencies, and requires the use of the new media of mass communication².

It is worth noting that the concept of fundamental education could be expanded and applied in each moment of life. The many vicissitudes of life often place human beings in states of ignorance and in need of basic learning.

² UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 1, “Appendix. The Programme of Unesco for 1947. Part I-General projects and activities. Fundamental education”, resolution 1C/Appendix.I.B, p. 270.

However, in the forties UNESCO does not pose this question in this matter. When reconstructing education, they opted to concentrate their efforts in the basics:

Encourage Member States to expand and improve their primary education facilities in order to make provision for all children of school age. Encourage governments to launch fundamental education projects. Collect information on current campaigns against adult illiteracy and facilitate its distribution among specialists and Member States. Encourage research and stimulate the use of new techniques for teaching both children and adults. Make a survey of the best kinds of literature for new literates according to their needs, and distribute the information obtained. Assist in the preparation and distribution of suggestions for field workers and of materials for use in fundamental education campaigns. Maintain close liaison with persons,

*organizations and governments interested in fundamental education work with adults*³.

However, the concentration of focus on basic aspects did not ignore the principles of education, nor did they close their doors to later changes and the need for adaptation. They maintained that fundamental education and adult education should aim for international understanding. UNESCO was so convinced of this, that they emphasized that

*in order to create a public opinion favourable to international understanding, Unesco will, in 1947, assist organizations working with adults education*⁴.

They, however, did not ignore the unifying mean that all education has its expression in adult

³ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 2, resolution 1C/Appendix.I.B.a)-g), pp. 282-283.

⁴ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 2, “Education for international understanding. International understanding among adults”, resolution 1C/Appendix.I.C.4, p. 271.

education, which is perceptible with respect to the development of adult education when they claim:

*In 1947, Unesco will: [...] Study the sociological background of adult education and its relation to school education*⁵.

It is in 1953 when the Executive Board adopts its definition of fundamental education which was elaborated in a workgroup in its first reunion in 1950:

Fundamental education is that kind of minimum and general education which aims to help children and adults who do not have the advantages of formal education, to understand the problems of their immediate environment and their rights and duties as citizens and individuals, and to participate more effectively in the economic and social progress of their

⁵ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 1, “Part II-Other projects and activities. Education. Adult education”, resolution 1C/Appendix.II.A.1.(c), p. 273.

community. It is “fundamental” in the sense that it gives the minimum knowledge and skills which are an essential condition for attaining an adequate standard of living. It is a prerequisite to the full effectiveness of work in health, agriculture and similar skilled services. It is “general” in the sense that this knowledge and these skills are not imparted for their own sake only. It uses active methods, it focuses interest on practical problems in the environment, and in this way it seeks to develop both individual and social life. It is concerned with children for whom there is no adequate system of primary schooling and with adults deprived of educational opportunity; it utilizes all suitable media for their development through individual effort and through community life. Fundamental education must awaken a consciousness of human dignity and develop a sense of the cultural and moral solidarity of mankind⁶.

⁶ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its thirty-fourth session, Paris, 8-15*

Its preoccupation with basic education would be maintained throughout the years. As a result, the Executive Board in 1990,

*urges the development of strategies at national level aimed at meeting the basic learning needs of young people and adults as well as of children, recognizing the importance of achieving equality by significantly reducing adult illiteracy rates, particularly those of women, the poor and disadvantaged groups, and of providing opportunities for all to acquire essential knowledge and life skills (e.g. environmental and scientific literacy, facts for life, family life education, social education)*⁷;

in 1995,

June 1953, “Annex II. Definition of fundamental education”, decision 34EX/Annex II, Paris, 30 June 1953, p. 15.

⁷ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its 134th session, Paris, 9-18 May 1990*, “Execution of the Programme. Education. Joint Unesco–UNICEF Committee on Education: Report of the first meeting”, decision 134EX/4.2.3.7, Paris, 15 June 1990, pp. 11-12.

*recommends that activities in the field of basic non-formal education for out-of-school youth and adults be strengthened*⁸;

in 1996, saying:

*There should be a renewed commitment by UNESCO to basic education for all - both young people, from early childhood, and adults - as being the highest priority; the conclusions and recommendations of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All (Amman, June 1996), which conducted a review of the progress made since the Jomtien Conference (1990), should be duly taken into account, with emphasis on 'reaching the unreached'*⁹;

⁸ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its 146th session: Paris, 16 May-2 June 1995; Fez, 3-4 June 1995*, "Draft Medium-Term strategy for 1996-2001, and Draft Programme and Budget for 1996-1997. Consideration of the Draft Programme and Budget for 1996-1997 and recommendations of the Executive Board. Major Programme I-Towards lifelong education for all", decision 146EX/4.2.I.11, Paris, 29 June 1995, p. 16.

⁹ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its 150th session, Paris, 14-31 October 1996*, "Draft Programme and Budget for 1998-1999. Preliminary proposals

in 1997,

recommends that innovative actions, employing, inter alia, distance education, be undertaken to reinforce literacy, post-literacy and basic adult education as well as skills training and continuing education, taking into account the conclusions and recommendations of the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (Hamburg, July 1997)¹⁰;

and in 1998,

the Executive Board Welcomes General Assembly resolution 52/84, which reaffirms the international community's resolve to eradicate

concerning the Draft Programme and Budget for 1998-1999. Proposed programme. Major Programme I", decision 150EX/5.1.II.30, Paris, 27 November 1996, p. 22.

¹⁰ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its 151st session, Paris, 26 May-12 June 1997*, "Draft Programme and Budget for 1998-1999. Consideration of the Draft Programme and Budget for 1998-1999. Recommendations by the Executive Board on the Draft Programme and Budget for 1998-1999. Major Programme I-Education for all throughout life", decision 151EX/5.1.A.I.12, Paris, 3 July 1997, p. 21.

*adult illiteracy and to ensure that everyone acquires a basic education*¹¹.

However, we must highlight that the formula for fundamental education is sent to an educational system in which a type of teaching-learning that joins aspects related to basic teaching, but by also taking an additional step. With this in mind, UNESCO asked itself

should fundamental education be designed exclusively for adults, or for children as well? Should it, indeed, be confined to adults who have not received the rudiments of primary education, or should it also strive, besides combating illiteracy, to keep intellectual curiosity alive in adults, so as to pave the way

¹¹ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its 154th session, Paris, 27 April-7 May 1998*, "Relations with Member States and international organizations. Recent decisions and activities of the organizations of the United Nations system of relevance to the work of UNESCO. Education for All", decision 154EX/7.1.2.1, Paris, 3 June 1998, p. 27.

*for a continuation of the elementary education received in the primary schools?*¹²

Fundamental education expands the aim of basic education and comprises a type of more advanced education.

The formula for fundamental education offers supplementary interests: to define this education clearly within the base of society itself, and to be able to serve as a base for evolution in communities and in the training of individuals to which it is aimed at.

In the past the proposed reforms were to inspire collectives and individuals to be conscious of their needs and pass; to be active in requesting for cooperation that would benefit them; to act in collaboration with those interested in not limited to action for themselves; orientate improvements in

¹² UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Resolutions*, “Annexes. Report of the Programme Commission. Appendix 3. Report of Working party No. 3: Fundamental education”, resolution 9C/Annexes.A.Appendix 3.8, Paris, 1956, p. 110.

health; raised economic level; fight against illiteracy; create the consciousness of being both a citizen and producer in each individual; promote feelings of solidarity with the community in which they form part of; and create a consciousness of personal dignity.

These tasks, considering their amplitude and diversity of circumstances in which they are developed, made it difficult to establish a common definition that was satisfactory for this educational format:

As it differs both from primary education and from 'further education' for adults and is a vital factor in community development, fundamental education should not be confused either with schooling or with merely technical development¹³.

¹³ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 12, resolution 9C/Annexes.A.Appendix 3.10, p. 110.

In spite of these problems, they risked a definition of fundamental education:

Fundamental education aims to help people who have not obtained such help from established educational institutions to understand the problems of their environment and their rights and duties as citizens and individuals, to acquire a body of knowledge and skill for the progressive improvement of their living conditions and to participate more effectively in the economic and social development of their community. Fundamental education seeks, with due regard for religious beliefs, to develop moral values and a sense of the solidarity of mankind. While the object of the school is to educate children, and while “further education” continues the education previously acquired in schools, fundamental education is designed to supplement an

*incomplete school system in economically underdeveloped areas both rural and urban*¹⁴.

This definition, with an unquestionable value from the perspective of what an educational process should be, was seen as a “complement,” and for the less fortunate. With time, the formula was to be abandoned.

Even though the formula for fundamental education would never end up within the framework of adult education-due to its dependence on the concept of basic education-its aim towards the meaning of adult education was present.

The formula for fundamental education would favour the in-depth knowledge of the community, adapting to the means by which trained men would become both citizens and producers, with a moral, responsible and truthful will.

¹⁴ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 12, “Education”, resolution 9C/Annexes.A.1.6, p. 90.

In particular, it was felt that such education should not give rise to any deterioration of traditional standards. Education of the feelings, fostering of the sense of interdependence, respect for others and civic sense-those are the moral aims which some delegates felt should be sought in fundamental education. Others considered it vital to have an understanding of the religious factor, which is closely bound up with the life of certain communities¹⁵.

However, we cannot deny that its appearance is produced within the context of a more elemental education, and related to efforts to fight against illiteracy. So,

the particular contribution of Unesco to the work of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies should consist in: perfecting suitable methods of fundamental education to assist the assimilation of skills and ideas and the

¹⁵ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 12, resolution 9C/Annexes.A.Appendix 3.31, p. 113.

*understanding of rights and duties which condition individual and social progress*¹⁶.

This, along with the proposal of the publication of the *Bulletin of Fundamental and Adult Education*,¹⁷ allows them to maintain their closeness in meaning to both types of “educations,” or suppose that the formula of fundamental education is open towards adult education, and not only in the education of adults.

However, the expression “fundamental education” was discarded, because it was confusing, and it was, above all, because of its preconception of basic education for adults. For what ever the reason,

¹⁶ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Resolutions*, “Resolutions adopted on the report of the Programme Commission and of the Joint Commission-Programme Official and External Relations. Second part: The Programme for 1952. Education. Extension of education. Fundamental education”, resolution 6C/II.1.213.(a), Paris, 1951, p. 18.

¹⁷ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 16, “Improvement of Education through Exchange of Information”, resolution 6C/II.1.121, p. 17.

In the course of further discussion on Project 1.5 various delegates (Ceylon, India, Philippines, Sweden, U.S.S.R.) pointed out that the meaning of the term 'fundamental education' was not immediately clear; it would be preferable for Unesco gradually to discontinue its usage, and to find a better term for the activities it designated¹⁸.

With reference to out-of-school education (paras. 238-48) and Project 1.5 (Fundamental education, paras. 249-307) a number of delegates (Ceylon, France, Italy, Morocco, Sweden) said they were not happy about the distinction between adult education and fundamental education. The proposed activities under out-of-school education suggested that fundamental education was intended for

¹⁸ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Resolutions*, "Annexes. Reports of the Working Parties of the Programme Commission. Education", resolution 10C/C.Annexes.VII.1.41, Paris, 1958, p. 153.

*economically underdeveloped countries and adult education for more advanced countries*¹⁹.

In any case, we can say that, maybe due to recalling this unauthorization of fundamental education, the Executive Board established in 1963, that the members of the International Committee of Experts on Literacy not only have the competence

*in the several fields pertinent to adult literacy instruction, but equally for outstanding depth of knowledge and experience in relating basic education to the growth and development of individuals, of social and economic systems, and of communities of peoples*²⁰.

¹⁹ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 18, resolution 10C/C.Annexes.VII.1.36.

²⁰ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its sixty-fifth session, Paris, 29 April-17 May 1963*, “Annex II. Statutes of the International Committee of Experts on Literacy”, decision 65EX/Article III. 1., Paris, 5 June 1963, p. 25.

As we can see, we were very close to establishing a single formula for education that would keep in mind the facts that were capable of forming morally developed as well as technically capable humans to boost progress and international understanding.

By this date, they had already chiselled out the concept of lifelong education as a formula applicable to all and in all educational processes, as well as being considered a source of a free human, capable, participative and in solidarity.

The Executive Board demonstrates this in both its Recommendation and, years back, in the suggestion that it tighten *the relationship between culture and adult education programmes*²¹.

The expansion along these lines is an Executive Board decision of 1993. Among other

²¹ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its seventy-first session, Paris, 28 September-6 November 1965*, “Draft Programme and Budget for 1967-1968. The Programme. Social sciences, human sciences and culture”, decision 71EX/4.I.4.1.2.C.16, Paris, 29 November 1965, p. 19.

things, they underline that education is adult education. So the Executive Board

expresses its satisfaction at the favourable direction, in many countries, of certain major trends in adult education, both formal and non-formal, including: the recognized role of adult education as an essential component of the overall education system and the harmonization of adult education programmes with programmes intended for children; the integration of adult education plans and projects into national development plans; awareness of its role in the social integration of certain socially marginalized and economically disadvantaged groups, especially rural populations, women and the unemployed - both adults and young people; reactivation of the concept of lifelong education²².

²² EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its 141st session, Paris, 10-28 May 1993*, "Execution of the Programme. Education. Report by the Director-General concerning the implementation of the Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education", decision 141EX/5.2.5.2.7, Paris, 17 June 1993, p. 27.

V.2. Adult education and out-of-school education

The formula “out-of-school education” is another of the expressions that UNESCO testifies to in establishing a definition for adult education.

At first, the formula of out-of-school-education was affected by the supposition that adult education is adult education-or “for adults”-instead of for participants in educational processes. That is, an education with a more professional character, while also being more pragmatic by being intended to favour economic and social progress.

In spite of this criteria, UNESCO would not reduce the formula to this sphere, and would leave the doors open for the concept of adult education to have a life of its own, free from adherences and limitations on its most transcending purpose.

This is how we should understand the 1958 UNESCO resolution:

Member States are invited: To institute or develop [...] a system of education for young people and adults which, supplementing and continuing school activities or fundamental education work, places main emphasis on international understanding and co-operation while preparing the users for the exercise of their social responsibilities, particularly in connexion with concerted programmes of community development, due regard being taken of the cultural individuality of each country or territory; To take the necessary measures, especially as regards training and professional status, to ensure that women gradually come to occupy their due place in the direction and execution of programmes of out-of-school education for young people and adults²³.

Independent of its orientation towards international understanding and cooperation, we must expand out-of-school education to other

²³ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 18, “Programme and Budget for 1959-60. Education. Out-of-school Education for Young People and Adults”, resolution 10C/II.1.61.(a) and (b), p. 19.

students: it is no longer only for adults, but also for youth and women.

This expansion of the type of students would later on favour the idea of out-of-school education as an educational space for all social sectors. As we can see in the 1959 Executive Board decision, they foresaw that

*the function of the Committee will be to advise the Director-General in drawing up and implementing Unesco's programme in the field of out-of-school education, in the related fields of adult education and adult literacy*²⁴.

As well as in the 2001 General Conference which

authorizes the Director-General: to implement the corresponding plan of action in order to:

²⁴ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its 83rd session, Paris, 15 September-10 October 1969*, "Execution of the Programme. Education. Amendment of the Statutes and Composition of the International Advisory Committee for Out-of-School Education. ANNEX. Statutes of the International Advisory Committee for out-of-school education", decision 83EX/4.2.7.Article II, Paris, 25 October 1969, p. 18.

*[...] support national literacy programmes, including their vocational education components, and non-formal education, in order to reach marginalized children, youth and adults, especially girls and women, to ensure that they enjoy the right to education and acquire the life skills needed to overcome poverty and exclusion*²⁵.

This same Conference invites the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) in

mobilizing inter-agency cooperation and partnerships for the implementation of adult learning policies as an integral component of national development plans; enhancing national capacities to provide diverse opportunities for formal and non-formal adult education and continuing education for all; stimulating studies

²⁵ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volume 1. Resolutions*, “Programme for 2002-2003. Programmes. Major Programme I: Education. Subprogramme I.1.2 ‘Strengthening inclusive approaches to education and diversifying delivery systems’”, resolution 31C/V.3.A.1.I.1.2.2.(a).(ii), Paris, 2001, p. 22.

*and research designed to foster innovative approaches to attaining the goal of learning throughout life and strengthening its linkage to learning at the basic level; further developing its clearing-house services in the field of adult and lifelong learning*²⁶.

In 1970 we finally see a resolution which breaks down the formula out-of-school education as correlative to adult education:

*The Director-General is authorized to promote the development and the improvement of out-of-school education, particularly through adult education, youth activities and adult literacy, as part of an over-all educational policy for lifelong education adapted to the needs of individuals of all ages and to the development purposes of the whole community*²⁷.

²⁶ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 25, “UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE)”, resolution 31C/V.6.1.(a)-(d), p. 24.

²⁷ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volume 1. Resolutions*, “Programme and Budget for 1971-1972. Education. Out-of-school education”, resolution 16C/II.1.3, Paris, 1970, p. 27.

Adult education now has some qualities which surpassed that of out-of-school education. Even though the latter could be improved understanding the rules and superiority of adult education.

V.3. Adult education and literacy

We cannot ignore the importance of literacy in adult education. We have always underlined the importance and need of including it in adult education. Without a doubt, we must consider this a process which goes beyond the simple teaching of reading and writing in order to place it within the aims of achieving a functional illiteracy, capable of adapting to social changes.

This is how we must understand the affirmation of the 1976 Recommendation:

*Considering the universal concern for literacy as being a crucial factor in political and economic development, in technological progress and in social and cultural change, SO that its promotion should therefore form an integral part of any plan for adult education*²⁸.

*The Executive Board [...] notes the statement made by the Managing Director of the Special Fund at the Governing Council's thirteenth session, recognizing that a substantial proportion of illiterate adults in the manpower potential of a country can be a bottleneck to its economic development and indicating the Special Fund's willingness to consider supporting requests for pilot projects in the field of literacy*²⁹.

²⁸ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Volume 1. Resolutions*, "Annex I. Recommendation on the development of adult education. Preface", resolution 19C/Anexo I.Preface, Paris, 1976, p. 122.

²⁹ EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its seventieth session, Paris, 26 April-19 May 1965*, "Execution of the Programme for 1965-1966. Cooperación con el Fondo Especial", decision 70EX/5.5.1.2, Paris 4 June 1965, p. 18.

The task of literacy does not include any specific social sector, or any type of elementary, higher, formal or informal education, since adult education already comprises all of these. This is why UNESCO's

*Member States are invited to intensify their national efforts for the eradication of illiteracy and for the promotion of adult education in their countries*³⁰.

Literacy must always be one of the assignments of this unique educational process that summarizes and expresses the concept of adult education:

³⁰ UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference. Resolutions*, "Programme and Budget for 1963-1964. Education. Specific contribution to the planned development of education in its various forms. Adult education and youth activities. World literacy campaign", resolution 12C/II.1.II.1.2532, Paris, 1962, p. 23.

The campaign against illiteracy must not be something isolated, but must be integrated into the programme of adult education and into the total educational programme³¹.

The object of the mobilizing project “Combating illiteracy” is to stem illiteracy at the source by providing universal elementary education and improving its quality, particularly the first few years of it, and by getting more girls in rural areas and underprivileged groups into school. It will also pay particular attention to adult education activities, in the context of lifelong education³².

³¹ UNESCO, *op. cit.* in note 30, “Annexes. I. Report of the Programme Commission. Part C. Proposed Programme and Budget for 1963-1964. Chapter 1: Education. Section 1 .25. Adult education and youth activities. Item 17.1.3 of the Agenda. World literacy campaign”, resolution 12C/E.Anexos.I.C.1.1.25.17.1.3.192, p. 179.

³² EXECUTIVE BOARD, *Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its 131st session, Paris, 17 May-22 June 1989*, “Draft Third Medium-Term Plan and Draft Programme and Budget for 1990-1991. Consideration of the draft third Medium-Term Plan and the Administrative Plan. Major Programme area I and mobilizing project No. 1”, decision 131EX/4.1.28.Para. 67, Paris, 21 July 1989, p. 14.

VI

Corollary

VI.1. Adult education

Adult education is a multidisciplinary process oriented to favour lifelong education for all, as well as efficient learning throughout life.

It aims to provide the knowledge that improves professional qualifications and to achieve civic, social, moral and cultural attitudes and skills for performing responsibilities and for progress in all spheres of life.

It is based on justice, on the disposition to favour the understanding of cultural aspects in human evolution and the cooperation of

international peace, carrying out a process of teaching-learning that tends to harvest an open mind, a way of understanding human relations, a way of seeing the world, a spirit, an attitude, a mental disposition and an ethical character.

It tries to balance the importance of technical knowledge and professional requirements with the full development of the personality.

It pursues improvements in education to provide knowledge and to favour training that guarantees equal opportunities to life, adapting to the needs of individuals of all ages, with the aim of arming them with the capacity for a critical understanding of the world and its changes.

It pursues fomenting the positive valuation of active participation in civic life and in social and economic development, adapting to the aims of development within the community in line with satisfying the needs of contemporary societies.

It tries to enable the relations that unites man with their environment and culture; to favour the respect towards diversity of cultures and

customs; to foment the interest of creating new material goods and new spiritual and aesthetic values; to raise the cultural level in developing the critical understanding of the principal social problems; to improve the capacity of self-esteem, by facilitating individual survival and the ability to be happy.

It attempts to prepare individuals so that they may perform multiple functions participating in the life of their community and in the international community with the spirit of mutual appreciation of cultural values of the East and the West. It also searches to favour the progress of UNESCO.

All while keeping in mind international problems; encouraging the knowledge of the United Nation's activities; applying human rights, while assuming the ideals of a culture of peace and mutual understanding between nations; favouring democracy in the right to education, the fortification of values of democracy, international understanding and tolerance, while using all of the

branches of knowledge and the possibilities offered by museums, libraries, artistic creation, and information and communication technology.

VI.2. Lifelong education

Lifelong education is a process aimed at effective learning throughout life that comprises all ages, all levels of teaching, all forms of education and all educational policies.

It approaches all dimensions of human life, all branches of knowledge, and all practical skills.

It is aimed to foment an integral and global education as the basic principle for all educational systems within the context of an educational society.

It tries to favour that man and woman understand the society in which they live, that they participate in the formation of it , and in the spirit of social progress, responding to the demands of development and the needs of society, forming in

continual interdisciplinary fashion in accordance with the economic, cultural and social development of the community.

It is oriented to achieve participation in reforms, educational measures and projects, preparing the individual for their civic and social responsibilities and responding to their requirements, needs and aspirations, while offering opportunities and ways to develop their personality, embracing an individual, cultural, artistic, creative and sensible development to dominate their changes.

All of this in agreement with the Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.