



IX ICAE WORLD ASSEMBLY

Declaration

Montreal 14 June 2015

We, adult educators and learners of the world and members of the International Council for Adult Education, reaffirm, together with the 2015 World Education Forum, that education throughout life is a fundamental human right, a basis for guaranteeing the attainment of all other human rights, and a public good.

We reaffirm our global, regional and local commitments and our passion for the full realization of the right to education for peace. This right is required to build the world we want for all, especially for young and adult people, regardless of age, gender, ability or circumstances. This right is the foundation of a world based on democratic participation, justice, equality, respect, care and solidarity among our diverse people. We must be in harmony with our cultural and environmental rights.

The world is now experiencing a very complex environmental, socio-cultural and economic crisis. We need new paradigms for developing policies and practices that sustain people with a life of quality on a healthy planet. We need to critically examine and challenge the actions of states and economical organizations in their agreements on climate change. In addition we need to support educators and civil society organisations to raise awareness among people to play an active role in impacting climate change positively.

In the multicultural world we are now living in, intolerance and discrimination must be combatted by policies and practices underpinned by the goals of inclusion, equality, equity and diversity.

The worldwide economic crisis has intensified poverty, restructured labour relations and the world of work with disastrous impacts on women and disadvantaged groups. While the informal sector has expanded, most workplace education and skill development policies and programs remain focused on the formal sector and on higher skills and permanent jobs, denying learning opportunities especially to women and other marginalised groups. We, adult educators and learners, will continue to advocate for a vision where the right to decent work is recognized as a fundamental right and where the right to learn throughout adult life is now an essential enabling right for all.

The crisis we are experiencing, is a crisis of education for young and adult people, where market forces are dominant. To realize the right to learning throughout life, relevant government policies, which recognize the diversity of adult learning (formal, non-formal and informal) must be put in place by national governments. These policies must take into account and allocate sufficient funding to achieve these goals.

It is essential to give new meaning to the purposes and practices of education from human and critical perspectives, including popular education. We must approach the right to education from an ethical, political, social and cultural perspective. It is important to recognize the multi-dimensional role of learning as a necessity to exercise the right to work and as a means of engaging actively in family, community, cultural, and political/civic life. It is therefore of crucial importance that a broad range of 21st Century processes and

pedagogies, including appropriate training for adult educators, resources and adequate support, to engage a diverse range of learners, especially those most marginalized, not forgetting older people and people in prison.

The right of all women and men to learn includes, but goes far beyond the right to “read and write”. It means: the right to question and analyse, to imagine and create, to “read one’s own world”, to rewrite history, and the right of all, to use and master new technology. It must provide the opportunity to go on learning throughout our life in order to develop individual and collective skills, recognizing and validating informal learning, which in turn guides policy development. Education for sustainable development is therefore integral for the future.

We support the proposed Sustainable Development Goal on education (SDG 4), its targets and means of implementation. We call on the Third International Conference for Financing and Development (July 2015, Addis Ababa) and the UN Summit on the Post 2015 Development Agenda (September 2015, New York) to affirm support to this full education agenda and accord much needed priority to universal adult literacy, and to adult education. We agree that the fundamental responsibility for successfully implementing this education agenda is the responsibility of governments with citizens having the right to actively participate in the decision-making process. We will monitor and follow the legal and policy frameworks, enlarging the current narrow vision of young and adult education, and will require accountability and transparency.

We believe in “a world worth living in”, and a world worth living in is one where all women and men can live in dignity. A “world worth living in” is a planet conscious of its fragility, aware of the need to change its ways of living, and one which is ready to act. It is a world where the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is valid for all men and women regardless of their circumstances. A “world worth living in” is a multicultural world whose richness resides in its diversity. It is a world where universal access to inclusive quality education is a basic right and an essential dimension of lifelong learning for all.

To achieve a dynamic learning world we need an active civil society with creative participation. The task ahead for ICAE and its networks is to ensure that these goals are translated into regional and local policies and practices, working collaboratively with regional and national civil society organizations and allied partners in government, intergovernmental agencies and the social and private sectors. Such tasks require capacity-building with and within civil society organizations in order for these organizations to ensure that these goals are contextualized, implemented, monitored and achieved. We also recognize that ICAE should enhance its own capacity to contribute to the global voice that draws from the rich experiences and the diverse contextual challenges of its membership and networks.

ICAE has the challenge to become a focused educational movement working to guarantee that the fundamental human right to education for young people and adults becomes a reality. ICAE will work strategically alongside other social movements whose aims are to ensure the implementation of all other human rights.

We, the International Council for Adult Education, re-affirm our collective determination to act and ensure that the right to lifelong, life-wide and life-deep education and learning will be recognized publically and become a continuing tool for empowerment for all women and men around the planet.