

5. UNESCO Guidelines on recognising all forms of learning

In the *Belém Framework for Action*, the outcome document of the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) in Brazil, December 2009, UNESCO Member States represented by 144 delegations committed themselves to 'developing or improving structures and mechanisms for the recognition of all forms of learning by establishing equivalency frameworks' and called for UNESCO 'to develop guidelines on all learning outcomes, including those acquired through non-formal and informal learning, so that these may be recognised and validated' (*Belém Framework for Action*, 2009).

Against this background, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) has taken the initiative to work with Member States to develop the UNESCO Guidelines on recognition of all forms of learning with a focus on non-formal and informal learning. The guidelines aim to constitute an international framework, providing an orientation for developing national policy and international cooperation in this area.

This initiative builds on 33C/Resolution 10 of the 33rd session of UNESCO's General Conference (2005), entrusting UIL to conduct studies and promote the sharing of information and mutual learning through international meetings. Emerging results show that the recognition of non-formal and informal learning has relevance not only with regard to education and training policies but also to the related challenges of poverty-reduction, job-creation, employment and social inclusion.

All Member States are asked to participate actively in the drafting process by: organising broad national consultation with all stakeholders, including relevant ministries, education and training institutions, social partners (employers and trade unions) and voluntary and community organisations; providing relevant inputs to the consultation questions on the recognition policy and practices in their countries; and appointing a focal point in their countries for communicating with UIL on the drafting of the Guidelines.

UIL has prepared a set of consultation questions that will be sent to UNESCO Member States. With the responses, and with the insights drawn from previous research, UIL will produce the first draft UNESCO Guidelines, to be validated by an expert group consisting of national specialists and representatives of international agencies.

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