

AWE

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CONFINTEA from Hamburg to Belém

By Jakob Erle

When AWE took part in CONFINTEA V in Hamburg, Germany in 1997, we enjoyed the atmosphere of optimism, the perspective of creating a better world - and the important role of adult education to help create the capacity for change.

CONFINTEA V and the preparatory conferences were organized by the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) in Hamburg under the leadership of Paul Belanger.

The CONFINTEA conferences are organised by UNESCO (CONFINTEA is short for CONFERENCE INternationale de Education des Adultes) and one of the recurring UN-system conferences on different subjects. This means that they are organised for National governments, and that decisions are taken by

unanimity of the government representatives.

It is normal that there is an NGO presence through a parallel conference organised by civil society actors interested in the theme trying to influence the parallel conference. But in Hamburg in 1997 it was decided to have one conference, integrating civil sector, governments, other agencies etc.

The agenda in Hamburg was very broad; at the same time its strength and weakness - stressing the role of adult education in almost all fields from workplace development to health promotion, from language learning to citizenship, conflict resolution and democratisation.

An indicator of the hopes for the future and the strong focus on adult learning was UNESCO's 1996 report "Learning, the treasure within". A major report prepared

The islands in front of Belém city, the entrance of Amazonian region. Photo: Kirsten Bruun



under the leadership of Jacques Delors who had just stopped as president of the European Commission. The report clearly weighted the broader learning agenda over the more narrow education agenda and focused on four main pillars of learning: Learning to be / Learning to know / Learning to do / Learning to live together.

For AWE this focus was not new of course, but it was new to have this thinking come up as part of more mainstream international politics, underlining learning over education, putting the learner and all aspects of life as the centrepiece instead of more narrow education of skills for the workplace.

Hopes and worries of '97

The backdrop of course was the enormous transformation of the world in the period from the previous CONFINTEA IV in Paris in 1985 until 1997. We had experienced the unification of Europe, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, Comecon and the Soviet Union, the technological change connected with Information and Communication Technologies, the radical change of work in the rich countries, the hope of a new world order with a stronger role for UN, Human Rights and international authority. We saw globalisation as a great changer of everything and were at the same time worried about the impact on democracy.

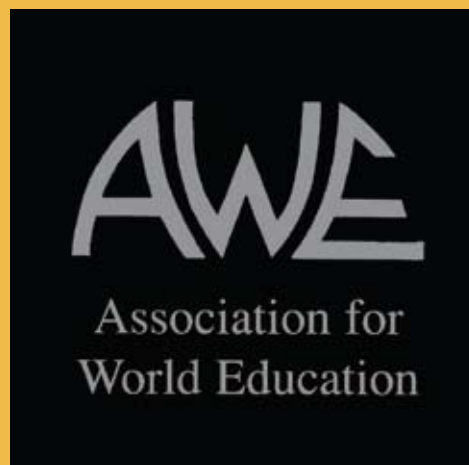
In Journal for World Education Vol. 25,2, Fall 1995 we could read:

“... In Denmark, until now, the civil society and the enlightenment of people have practically worked only on the local and the national level. But following the globalization the question arises if it is possible to develop a cooperation between the local and the global civil society - by the help of world education.

Is it then like this, that as adult education has a key role with regard to the renewal process of industry world education will have a similar role with regard to the renewal process of the civil society?”

Modestly stated by Ove Korsgaard (as usual); then newly elected president for AWE, but a big and ambitious idea.

CONFINTEA V in Hamburg ended with a major statement from the conference: the Hamburg declaration - that underlined the essential role of adult education for change in all fields, and the obligation of UNESCO



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member states to develop adult education as an indispensable tool.

When we left Hamburg in the summer of 1997 for AWE's post conference meetings at Rønshoved Højskole in southern Denmark it was with great optimism. It is not easy to come up with hard data to document the effect of the Hamburg agenda, and a four years later everything changed.

Changes framing CONFINTEA VI

On September 11, 2001 a new agenda was suddenly forced upon us - with the terrorist attacks on World Trade Centre and the following "War on terrorism" and the Iraq war. United Nations was considered almost irrelevant by important actors like the president of USA. The globalisation process continued full speed ahead, but with little scope for civil society impact. The learning agenda somehow stayed, but now more focused on workplace needs - learning to be and learning to live together was only interesting for official policies insofar it could help short term competitiveness in the marketplace.

When we got to CONFINTEA VI in Belém in Brazil, December 2009, the world had started to change again. The war on terror had proven to be a dead end; the world had entered a state of major economic crisis and new emerging economies such as China, India, Brazil and Russia obviously were on their way to centre stage.

At the European / North American preparatory conference in Budapest in December 2008 many participants worried whether it was at all possible to get any focus on development of adult education in a situation with major global economic crisis and climate change taking all of the attention.

The conference in Belém was a "normal" conference compared to Hamburg. Civil society had its parallel conference FISC (Fórum Internacional da Sociedade Civil) before the official conference, CONFINTEA VI itself was a conference of representatives of states, and civil society was present only as members of official delegations - and was not listened to very much, neither in the conference nor within the national delegations.

The agenda of the conference also was more limited than the Hamburg conference 12 years earlier. The broad concept of adult

education as a fundamental component of change processes in general, be it health, social security, development had disappeared almost entirely. And the proposal for final document and the resulting document was reduced accordingly.

Apart from the change in the global context another reason for this was a criticism of the Hamburg agenda of being too many nice words that lead to too little action. It seems that part of the reasoning behind the decisions in Belém was that it would be better with more limited, but operational goals that will have a practical impact.

Belém Framework for Action stays focused

Still the Belém Framework for Action maintains support for the Hamburg Agenda in the text and refers to a broad understanding of adult education:

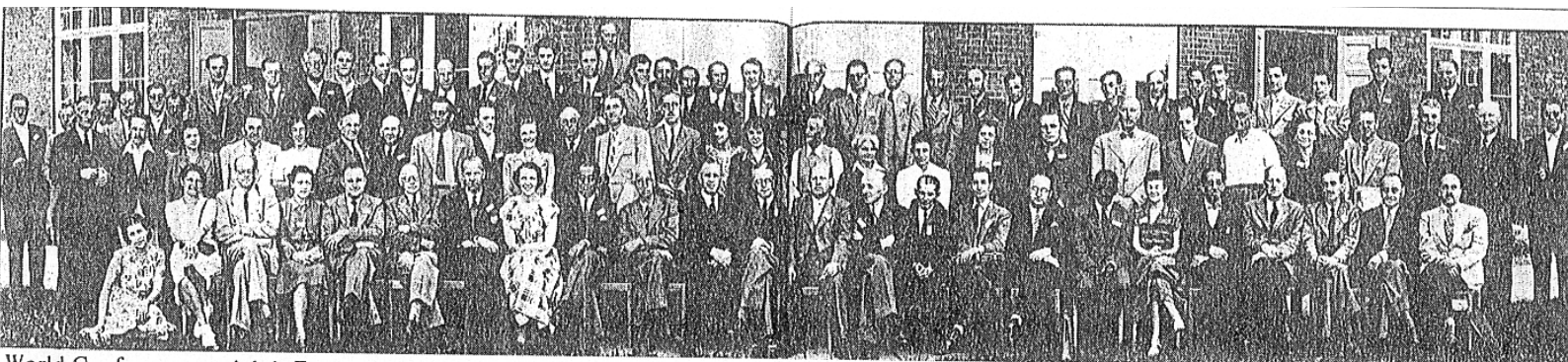
"The role of lifelong learning is critical in addressing global educational issues and challenges. Lifelong learning "from cradle to grave" is a philosophy, a conceptual framework and an organising principle of all forms of education, based on inclusive, emancipatory, humanistic and democratic values; it is all-encompassing and integral to the vision of a knowledge-based society. We reaffirm the four pillars of learning as recommended by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, namely learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together."

The participation of civil society - including AWE - in the CONFINTEA process keeps up the pressure to maintain the broad inclusive humanistic agenda of adult education and the according governmental policies.

And even though we would love for the agenda to have moved forward much more it is of great value to be able to go to our governments and use their official agreement to promote and support lifelong learning from cradle to grave based on inclusive, emancipatory, humanistic and democratic values.

In this number of Journal we print the Belém framework for action - and encourage you to read it and use the text as it is intended: an obligation for governments to support and promote adult learning and education.

CONFINTEA in retrospect



CONFINTEA I - The first International Adult Education Conference took place in 1949, at the International People's College, in Elsinore, Denmark, after the war, in a context where peace-oriented decisions were taken.

**UNDER THE
PREMISE OF
A CHANGING
WORLD**

106 delegates gathered, 21 international organizations and 27 countries; four delegate committees recommended:

- the contents of Youth and Adult Education have to adapt to the specific features and functionalities of youth and adults;
- it has to be an open education, without conditionalities;
- the problems of institutions and organizations regarding the provision of this education have to be discussed;
- methods, techniques and permanent assistance have to be found out;
- Youth and Adults Education has to be developed based on a spirit of tolerance and has to bring peoples (not only governments) together;
- and it has to take into account the living conditions of peoples in order to create contexts of peace and understanding.

CONFINTEA II - The second CONFINTEA took place in 1960 in Montreal, Canada. Under the premise of a changing world, with an accelerated economic growth and intense

discussion about the role of the state in Youth and Adult Education, 47 member States of UNESCO, two states as observers, two associate states and 46 NGOs gathered in this conference.

Each member state prepared a national report based on the following points:

1. Nature, purpose and content of Youth and Adult Education;
2. Citizenship education;
3. Leisure and cultural activities;
4. Museums and libraries
5. Universities;
6. Responsibility with Youth and Adult Education;
7. Urbanization;
8. Women's education.

**YOUTH
AND ADULT
EDUCATION
IS A CRUCIAL
FACTOR IN THE
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DEMOCRATI-
ZATION**

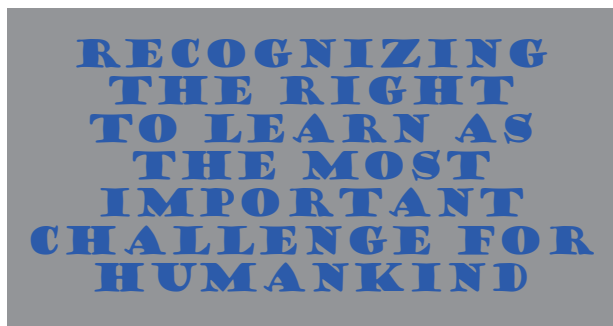
The main outcome of this second conference was the consolidation of the **Declaration of the World Youth and Adult Education Conference** that included a debate on population growth, new technologies, industrialization, challenges of new generations and learning as worldwide task where the richest countries should cooperate with the least developed ones.

CONFINTEA III - In 1972, in the city of Tokyo, Japan, the third edition of CONFINTEA gathered 82 member States, three as observers (including Cuba), three United Nations organizations, 37 international organizations.

This conference dealt with the issues of Adult Education and Literacy, Media and Culture, reinforcing the premise that lifelong learning is an essential component of Youth and Adult Education and that it would be important to make efforts to strengthen democracy and prepare to confront, at global level, the challenge of decreasing illiteracy rates.

Considering the fact that it was found that school does not ensure an integral education, the concept of education systems is broadened so as to include the categories of school and out-of-school learning, involving students of all ages.

The final report concluded that Youth and Adult Education is a crucial factor in the process of democratization and in the educational, economic, social and cultural development of nations, being the lifelong learning perspective an integral part of the education system.

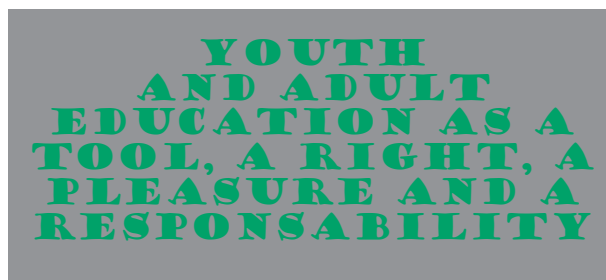


CONFINTEA IV - Under the theme “Learning is the key to the world”, in 1985, 841 participants from 112 member States, UN agencies and NGOs gathered in Paris, France.

This conference highlighted the importance of recognizing the right to learn as the most important challenge for humankind. In the understanding of the right to learn as the right to read and write, to question and analyze, to imagine and create, to read the world and write the story, to have access to education resources and develop collective and individual capacities, the conference focused on government failure to fulfill the right of thousands of people to go to school through adequate and quality proposals.

At the same time, the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) creates, simultaneous to the Conference, a Caucus formed by NGOs and progressive governments that gathered to formalize the support to the Declaration on the right to learn.

CONFINTEA V- This conference was held in 1997 in Hamburg, Germany, in a context of continuity of other ongoing international conferences.



This conference is part of the history of Youth and Adult Education in a unique way, because it set in motion an intense worldwide preparatory process.

It starts with a broad preparatory process of consultations (Ireland, 2000:15) conducted in the five major world regions considered by UNESCO, plus a Collective NGO Consultation where the reports for the International Conference were consolidated.

Under the theme of Youth and Adult Learning as a tool, a right, a pleasure and a responsibility, the event was attended by over 170 States, 500 NGOs and around 1300 participants.

It was a conference where mobilization crossed thematic and action borders: through the leadership of ICAE and alliances with progressive governments, there was an intense mobilization of NGOs and the women’s movement (Popular Education Network of Women from Latin America and the Caribbean, REPEM) and the Gender and Education Office (GEO/ ICAE), even though they did not have voting rights.

Appetizers of the latest AWE News

Find the continuations on www.AWE-International.com



AWE opens for online donations

Forty years work for World Education must continue. This is why the Association for World Education has decided to open for online donations (10/12/23).



Honoring 10 December

The struggle for the respect of human rights transcends all frontiers, stresses Rene Wadlow in this December 10 reminder. Wadlow also reminds of the importance of human rights education (10/12/11).



AWE Council approves many new members

The AWE International Council has approved eight new institutional members. Global Director for Capacity, Noël Bonam, believes it witnesses a growing interest in World Education (10/12/05).



First AWE News compilation issued

On November 22nd the first issue of AWE News was distributed. World Education stakeholders do now have the possibility to follow how AWE and its members perform and advocate for World Education (10/12/04).



Jakob Erle is new DEDI director in Cairo

AWE President Jakob Erle is going to be the next director of the Danish Egyptian Dialogue Institute (DEDI). The position is based in Cairo. Jakob continues as AWE President (10/11/22).



AWE and Bibliotheca Alexandrina sign Memorandum

The Association for World Education (AWE) and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina of Egypt signed a Memorandum of Understanding on October 10th. The intention is to strengthen professional relations between the two (10/11/21).



New UNESCO publication shows learning examples for sustainable development

"Tomorrow Today" gives examples of learning for sustainable development from all over the world. The publication was issued at the occasion of the UN ten years anniversary of learning for sustainable development (10/11/14).



Earth is our common home: The U.N. Desert Decade

The linked article was written by Rene Wadlow for the start of the new UN Decade. Rene Wadlow is the AWE representative to the UN in Geneva. 2010 to 2020 is the UN International Decade of Deserts and Desertification (10/11/14).



Millenium Development Goals bring World Education into the Classroom

"Millennium Development Goals are easy to understand, they are measurable and they tie the world together without reducing complexity," wrap up AWE teachers (10/10/30).



Anthology bridges Folk, People's and World Education

"Lifted by the Heart" is an anthology edited by AWE vice-president Chris Spicer. It presents North-America's folk and people's education and links to a future possible refocusing on world education (10/10/29).

Belém Framework

Harnessing the power and potential of adult learning and education for a viable future

1. We, the 156 Member States of UNESCO, representatives of civil society organizations, social partners, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental agencies and the private sector, have gathered in Belém do Pará in Brazil in December 2009 as participants in the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) to take stock of the progress made in adult learning and education since CONFINTEA V. Adult education is recognised as an essential element of the right to education, and we need to chart a new and urgent course of action to enable all young people and adults to exercise this right.

2. We reiterate the fundamental role of adult learning and education as laid down during the five International Conferences on Adult Education (CONFINTEA I-V) since 1949 and unanimously undertake to take forward, with a sense of urgency and at an accelerated pace, the agenda of adult learning and education.

3. We endorse the definition of adult education, first laid down in the Nairobi Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education of 1976 and further developed in the Hamburg Declaration of 1997, namely, adult education denotes “the entire body of ongoing learning processes, formal or otherwise, whereby people regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, and improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction to meet their own needs and those of their society”.

4. We affirm that literacy is the most significant foundation upon which to build comprehensive, inclusive and integrated lifelong and life-wide learning for all young people and adults. Given the magnitude of the global literacy challenge, we deem it vital that we redouble our efforts to ensure that existing adult literacy goals and priorities, as enshrined in Education for All (EFA), the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) and the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE), are achieved by all means possible.

5. The education of young people and adults enables individuals, especially women, to cope with multiple social, economic and political crises, and climate change. Therefore, we recognise the key role of adult learning and education in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for All (EFA) and the UN agenda for sustainable human, social, economic, cultural and environmental development, including gender equality (CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action)

6. We therefore adopt this Belém Framework for Action to guide us in harnessing the power and potential of adult learning and education for a viable future for all.

Towards Lifelong Learning

7. The role of lifelong learning is critical in addressing global educational issues and challenges. Lifelong learning “from cradle to grave” is a philosophy, a conceptual framework and an organising principle of all forms of education, based on inclusive, emancipatory, humanistic and democratic values; it is all-encompassing and integral to the vision of a knowledge-based society. We reaffirm the four pillars of learning as recommended by the International

for Action

Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, namely learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together.

8. We recognise that adult learning and education represent a significant component of the lifelong learning process, which embraces a learning continuum ranging from formal to non-formal to informal learning. Adult learning and education cater to the learning needs of young people, adults and older people. Adult learning and education cover a broad range of content – general issues, vocational matters, family literacy and family education, citizenship and many other areas besides - with priorities depending on the specific needs of individual countries.

9. We are convinced and inspired by the critical role of lifelong learning in addressing global and educational issues and challenges. It is furthermore our conviction that adult learning and education equip people with the necessary knowledge, capabilities, skills, competences and values to exercise and advance their rights and take control of their destinies. Adult learning and education are also an imperative for the achievement of equity and inclusion, for alleviating poverty and for building equitable, tolerant, sustainable and knowledge-based societies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

10. While we acknowledge our achievements and progress since CONFINTEA V, we are cognisant of the challenges with which we are still confronted. Recognising that the fulfilment of the right to education for adults and young people is conditioned by considerations of policy, governance, financing, participation, inclusion, equity and quality as outlined in the annexed Statement of Evidence, we are determined to pursue the following recommendations. The particular challenges faced by literacy lead us to place recommendations on adult literacy to the fore.

Adult Literacy

11. Literacy is an indispensable foundation that enables young people and adults to engage in learning opportunities at all stages of the learning continuum. The right to literacy is an inherent part of the right to education. It is a prerequisite for the development of personal, social, economic and political empowerment. Literacy is an essential means of building people's capabilities to cope with the evolving challenges and complexities of life, culture, economy and society.

Given the persistence and scale of the literacy challenge, and the concomitant waste of human resources and potential, it is imperative that we redouble efforts to reduce illiteracy by 50 per cent from 2000 levels by 2015 (EFA Goal 4 and other international commitments), with the ultimate goal of preventing and breaking the cycle of low literacy and creating a fully literate world.

To these ends, we commit ourselves to:

- a. ensuring that all surveys and data collection recognise literacy as a continuum;
- b. developing a road map with clear goals and deadlines to meet this challenge based on the critical assessments of progress made, obstacles encountered and weaknesses identified;
- c. mobilising and increasing internal and external resources and expertise to carry out literacy programmes with greater scale, range, coverage and quality to foster-3-
- d. integral and medium-term processes, to ensure that individuals achieve sustainable literacy;
- e. developing literacy provision that is relevant and adapted to learners' needs and leads to functional and sustainable knowledge, skills and competence of participants empowering them to continue as lifelong learners whose achievement is recognised through appropriate assessment methods and instruments;
- f. focusing literacy actions on women and highly disadvantaged populations including indigenous peoples and prisoners, with an overall focus on rural populations;
- g. establishing international indicators and targets for literacy;
- h. systematically reviewing and reporting progress, amongst others on investment and the adequacy of resources in literacy in each country and at the global level by including a special section in the EFA Global Monitoring Report;
- i. planning and implementing continuing education, training and skills development beyond the basic literacy skills supported by an enriched literate environment.

Policy

12. Policies and legislative measures for adult education need to be comprehensive, inclusive and integrated within a lifelong and life-wide learning perspective, based on sector-wide and inter-sectoral approaches, covering and linking all components of learning and education.

To these ends, we commit ourselves to:

- a. developing and implementing fully-costed policies, well-targeted plans and legislation for addressing adult literacy, education for young people and adults, and lifelong learning;
- b. designing specific and concrete action plans for adult learning and education which are integrated into MDG, EFA and UNLD, as well as other national and regional development plans, and with LIFE activities where those exist;
- c. ensuring that adult learning and education are included in the "ONE United Nations" initiative;
- d. establishing appropriate coordination mechanisms, such as monitoring committees involving all stakeholders active in adult learning and education;
- e. developing or improving structures and mechanisms for the recognition, validation and accreditation of all forms of learning by establishing equivalency frameworks.

Governance

13. Good governance facilitates the implementation of adult learning and education policy in ways which are effective, transparent, accountable and equitable. Representation by and participation of all stakeholders are indispensable in order to guarantee responsiveness to the needs of all learners, in particular the most disadvantaged.

To these ends, we commit ourselves to:

- a. creating and maintaining mechanisms for the involvement of public authorities at all administrative levels, civil society organisations, social partners, the private sector, community and adult learners' and educators' organisations in the development, implementation and evaluation of adult learning and education policies and programmes;

- b. undertaking capacity-building measures to support the constructive and informed involvement of civil society organisations, community and adult learners' organisations, as appropriate, in policy and programme development, implementation and evaluation;
- c. promoting and supporting inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial cooperation;
- d. fostering transnational cooperation through projects and networks for sharing know-how and innovative practice.

Financing

14. Adult benefits by creating more democratic, peaceful, inclusive, productive, healthy and sustainable societies. Significant financial investment is essential to ensure the quality provision of adult learning and education.

To these ends, we commit ourselves to:

- a. accelerating progress towards achieving the CONFINTEA V recommendation to seek investment of at least 6% of GNP in education, and working towards increased investment in adult learning and education;
- b. expanding existing educational resources and budgets across all government departments to meet the objectives of an integrated adult learning and education strategy;
- c. considering new, and opening up existing, transnational funding programmes for literacy and adult education, along the lines of the actions taken under the EU Lifelong Learning Programme;
- d. creating incentives to promote new sources of funding, e.g. from the private sector, NGOs, communities and individuals, without prejudicing the principles of equity and inclusion;
- e. prioritising investment in lifelong learning for women, rural populations and people with disabilities.

In support of these strategies, we call upon international development partners to:

- f. meet their commitment to filling the financial gaps that prevent the achievement of all EFA Goals, in particular Goals 3 and 4 (youth and adult learning, adult literacy);
- g. increase funds and technical support for adult literacy, learning and education, and explore the feasibility of using alternative financing mechanisms, such as debt swap or cancellation;
- h. require education sector plans submitted to the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) to include credible action on, and investment in, adult literacy.

Participation, inclusion and equity

15. Inclusive education is fundamental to the achievement of human, social and economic development. Equipping all individuals to develop their potential contributes significantly to encouraging them to live together in harmony and with dignity. There can be no exclusion arising from age, gender, ethnicity, migrant status, language, religion, disability, rurality, sexual identity or orientation, poverty, displacement or imprisonment. Combating the cumulative effects of multiple disadvantage is of particular importance. Measures should be taken to enhance motivation and access for all.

To these ends, we commit ourselves to:

- a. promoting and facilitating more equitable access to, and participation in, adult learning and education by enhancing a culture of learning and by eliminating barriers to participation;
- b. promoting and supporting more equitable access to, and participation in, adult learning and education through well-designed and targeted guidance and information, as well as

- activities and programmes such as Adult Learners' Weeks and learning festivals;
- c. anticipating and responding to identifiable groups entering trajectories of multiple disadvantage, in particular in early adulthood;
 - d. creating multi-purpose community learning spaces and centres and improving access to, and participation in, the full range of adult learning and education programmes for women, taking account of the particular demands of the gender-specific life-course;
 - e. supporting the development of writing and literacy in the various indigenous languages by developing relevant programmes, methods and materials that recognise and value the indigenous cultures, knowledge and methodologies, while adequately developing the teaching of the second language of wider communication;
 - f. supporting financially a systematic focus on disadvantaged groups (for example indigenous peoples, migrants, people with special needs and those living in rural areas) in all educational policies and approaches, which may include programmes that are provided free of charge or subsidised by our governments, with incentives for learning such as bursaries, fee remission and paid study leave;
 - g. providing adult education in prison at all appropriate levels;
 - h. adopting a holistic, integrated approach, including a mechanism to identify stakeholders and the responsibilities of the state in partnership with civil society organisations, labour market stakeholders, learners and educators;
 - i. developing effective educational responses for migrants and refugees as a key focus for development work.

Quality

16. Quality in learning and education is a holistic, multidimensional concept and practice that demands constant attention and continuous development. Fostering a culture of quality in adult learning requires relevant content and modes of delivery, learner-centred needs assessment, the acquisition of multiple competences and knowledge, the professionalisation of educators, the enrichment of learning environments and the empowerment of individuals and communities.

To these ends, we commit ourselves to:

- a. developing quality criteria for curricula, learning materials and teaching methodologies in adult education programmes, taking account of outcomes and impact measures;
- b. recognising the diversity and plurality of providers;
- c. improving training, capacity-building, employment conditions and the professionalisation of adult educators, e.g. through the establishment of partnerships with higher education institutions, teacher associations and civil society organisations;
- d. elaborating criteria to assess the learning outcomes of adults at various levels;
- e. putting in place precise quality indicators;
- f. lending greater support to systematic interdisciplinary research in adult learning and education, complemented by knowledge management systems for the collection, analysis and dissemination of data and good practice.

Monitoring the implementation of the Belém Framework for Action

17. Drawing strength from our collective will to reinvigorate adult learning and education in our countries and internationally, we commit ourselves to the following accountability and monitoring measures. We acknowledge the need for valid and reliable quantitative and qualitative data to inform our policy-making in adult learning and education. Working with our partners to design and implement regular recording and tracking mechanisms at national and international levels is paramount in realising the Belém Framework for Action.

To these ends, we commit ourselves to:

- a. investing in a process to develop a set of comparable data indicators for literacy as a continuum and for adult education;
- b. regularly collecting and analysing data and information on participation and progression in adult education programmes, disaggregated by gender and other factors, to evaluate change over time and to share good practice;
- c. establishing a regular monitoring mechanism to assess the implementation of the commitments to CONFINTEA VI;
- d. recommending the preparation of a triennial progress report to be submitted to UNESCO;
- e. initiating regional monitoring mechanisms with clear benchmarks and indicators;
- f. producing a national progress report for a CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review, coinciding with the EFA and MDG timeline of 2015;
- g. supporting South-South cooperation for the follow-up of MDG and EFA in the areas of adult literacy, adult education and lifelong learning;
- h. monitoring collaboration in adult education across disciplines and across sectors such as agriculture, health and employment.

To support the follow-up and monitoring at the international level, we call upon UNESCO and its structures:

- i. to provide support to Member States by designing and developing an open- access knowledge management system to compile data and case studies of good practice, to which Member States themselves will contribute;
- j. to develop guidelines on all learning outcomes, including those acquired through non-formal and informal learning, so that these may be recognised and validated;
- k. to coordinate, through the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning in partnership with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, a monitoring process at the global level to take stock and report periodically on progress in adult learning and education;
- l. to produce, on this basis, the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) at regular intervals;
- m. to review and update, by 2012, the Nairobi Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education (1976).

Teaching Portuguese in rural communities. Photo: Rikke Schultz



An experience of the global agenda

By Noël Bonam, Director, Capacity Development

It was Thanksgiving Day. It was an unusually sunny day in Portland, Maine for that time of the year. My family had planned an early Thanksgiving meal that day as I was heading to Belém, Brazil that afternoon to attend The Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI).

This was going to be my first CONFINTEA and my first trip on behalf of the Association for World Education. Jakob Erle, a CONFINTEA veteran, had given me some orientation on what to expect and I had found quite a bit on information on the previous CONFINTEA. So, with that knowledge I was Belém bound.

When I reached warm and sun-kissed Belém, Jakob Erle (President, AWE International), Rikke Schultz (Chairperson, AWE Denmark) and Kirsten Brunn (one of AWE's representatives at the UN) were already there along with Ana Maria Barros Pinto (AWE member from Porto Alegre, Brazil).

They had been traveling around Brazil offering workshops on civic engagement in democratic systems. This was effectively done by the use of the "Multilayered Democracy Edugame" which is a dialogue tool where participants relate to challenges of everyday life, to political institutions and participation at all levels. Participants learn how to relate to governance levels, from global to local, and how to consider effective courses of action relating to their own issues. At the same time participants will reflect their own context, thereby providing the possibility of dialogue among participants from different cultures.

The Fórum Internacional da Sociedade Civil (FISC) was held over the three days prior to CONFINTEA VI from 28 to 30 November, 2009. FISC provided the much needed platform for advocates and stakeholders,

especially those who are working at the grass-roots level, to come together before CONFINTEA and to have a comprehensive dialogue on priorities and agendas to present at CONFINTEA. I was very impressed by this structure that is quite "informally formal."

The organizers of FISC created several open opportunities for attendees from across the world to provide input on the final list of priorities and recommendations. This also gave participants a sense of the global agenda as defined for practitioners from Pakistan to Canada and from The Fiji Islands to Sweden.

On behalf of AWE International, we (Ana Maria, Jakob, Kirsten, Rikke and I) offered a very successful workshop on the "Multilayered Democracy Edu-Game."

This workshop was well attended and the dialogue that followed was very rich and constructive. Participants explored the role of civic engagement in social change and in the reform process for democracy. They used adult education, human rights and political rights as a backdrop for this conversation.

Then, CONFINTEA VI began. It was hosted by the Government of Brazil in Belém from 1 to 4 December 2009, provided an important platform for policy dialogue and advocacy on adult learning and non-formal education at global level.

The conference brought together UNESCO Member States, United Nations agencies, multi- and bi-lateral cooperation agencies, organisations from civil society,

Edugame for a group of popular educators and researchers.

Photo: Kirsten Bruun

the private sector and learners from all world regions.

There were official representatives of countries such as Ministers, Commissioners, elected officials, career diplomats and country heads of departments and there were official representatives from the UN and from UNESCO.

The objectives of CONFINTEA VI are:

- to push forward the recognition of adult learning and education as an important element of and factor conducive to lifelong learning, of which literacy is the

foundation;

- to highlight the crucial role of adult learning and education for the realization of current international education and development agendas such as Education For ALL (EFA), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), and United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD); and
- to renew political momentum and commitment and to develop the tools for implementation in order to move from rhetoric to action.



There were several very important and educational workshops and plenaries at CONFINTEA VI.

AWE International had presented a workshop on Democratic participation in a globalised world - an innovative and participatory approach to global challenges, with climate and financial crisis governance as examples. The workshop aimed at strengthening the use of innovative and participatory methodologies in adult learning and education to ensure efficient and transparent governance at all political levels. This workshop had nearly 80 participants from over 30 countries that had attended the workshop. The workshop was interpreted in three other languages simultaneously (French, Portuguese and Spanish).

The discussion (that followed) presented very diverse perspectives on global challenges and it also provided the ideal opportunity for dialogue about such challenges and for an

exchange on how such tools could be used to increase civic engagement globally. This thoughtfully planned workshop exposed AWE to many global stakeholders who had not heard of AWE prior to attending the conference.

The agenda that was developed at CONFINTEA VI has been referred to the “Belém Framework for Action” and this framework is a comprehensive summary of all the priorities that were identified, the recommended next steps and the decisions that were taken in Belém.

This Framework will be used both as a plan for action and as a scale to measure progress and success. Further details could be found at www.unesco.org/en/confinteavi/confinteavi

In closing, I must add, I had been to several international conferences in my lifetime but I had never been to a conference of such magnitude and stature. I simply

People from Togo in the FISC's opening session audience. Photo: Jakob Erle





FISC. For the right of Youth and Adult Education. Photo: Jakob Erle

had not witnessed anything quite like it ever before. The herculean effort that goes in to bring such diverse stakeholders together and the significant level of inclusion that takes place is quite impressive.

Though I am thoroughly impressed with the goings on at CONFINTEA VI and thereafter in different regions and globally through the electronic platform, it is yet to be seen how accountability and active follow-up will help these plans of the Framework to become reality and for the action to take place BEFORE CONFINTEA VII.

At this moment, I must confess that I am very hopeful and optimistic about it.

Meeti

a strong brazilian

By Kirsten Bruun

In May of 2009, we as a small group of AWE activists found ourselves in the north Brazilian city of Belém, in the Amazon Region.

Originally the trip to Brazil had been planned so that AWE members could take part in a UN Conference on youth and adult education CONFINTEA VI. However, the swine flu scare of early 2009 caused or perhaps rather forced the organizers of the conference to postpone the event to later that same year.

However, we, the group from AWE, had decided to not let a little swine flu scare us off and had decided to go through with our plans to travel to Brazil. Our goal was to meet up with people from locally based organisations working with education and civil rights to get to know more about the specific issues that Brazil has to deal with.

On a sunny Sunday May 17th, we witnessed a big demonstration on the streets of Belém. A crowd of both men and women had gathered shouting Brazilian Portuguese slogans that we did not understand much of. But it looked like workers from both the areas of Education and Health striking together. That situation puzzled us. In the middle of the crowd stood a small but strong 50-year

old woman holding a megaphone leading the demonstration; this was Fatima Figueira da Luz. Curious about the reasons behind the big demonstration and eager to learn more we managed to arrange a meeting with her later at our hotel.

When Mrs. da Luz came to our hotel with the megaphone she was dressed in a smart jacket and sensible shoes. Here was a very professional and serious woman who came to see us to tell us more about the demonstration that she had been a part of arranging.

We had been right when we thought that it was both people employed in the areas of Health and Education who were striking together. In Brazil these two areas are closely linked and the mutual relationship is therefore also one of solidarity. The strike in Belém was a part of a strike going on in the whole state of Para - a protest against the increasingly bad conditions for both staff and patients at hospitals and clinics. Many hospitals and clinics do not have the material or medicine to be able to carry out the services they need to in order to take proper care of their patients. One of the reasons for this problem in Fatima's opinion is that the resources allocated to the health system are



*Kirsten Bruun (left) and Fatima da Luz: understanding in spite of language barriers.
Photo: Rikke Schultz*

unfairly divided between the federal, the state and the municipality. They have to pay private hospitals and clinics but the prices are too low. And they all complain.

Mrs. da Luz does not herself have a background in the health sector. Rather, she is a teacher. This had been her life-long dream, but she was not able to become a teacher until later in life because the low wages paid to teachers would not have been sufficient. That same determination that gave her own degree shines through in her when she speaks on how the health care system in Brazil needs to be changed in order to be more effective.

The language barrier makes it difficult to understand each other, and many times we share a good laugh in our hotel room when the conversation, however serious, turns silly or comes to a halt because of the lack of a common language. But patience and curiosity on all our parts creates a good environment for understanding each other - even when the words are scarce.

Half a year later after our first meeting with Mrs. da Luz, we were fortunate enough

to meet her again when we were back in Brazil to participate in the postponed CONFINTEA conference. With the advantage of having a person within our group who was fluent in Portuguese we could now hear her full story and tie up a few of the loose ends from earlier that year. She told us about how the strike had gone on for a long time and how it had ended; not all demands were met, but still the strike had not been in vain. However, the areas of both Education and Health in Brazil remains underfunded.

Mrs. da Luz now works as a teacher outside Belém, in a region called Santarem, in the most beautiful river shore known as Alter do Chão. It is a dream that came true. She got a pension as health worker and then can be a teacher. She said we are all welcome there.

People and Social Movements We Met in Brazil

By Rikke Schultz

Salomão Hage is a teacher at the university and responsible for Adult Education, Culture and Sports in the Chamber of the State Government of Pará.

The Chamber is also responsible for coordination of activities in remote areas. Salomão was our host and adviser during our two visits in Belém.

He explained the challenges related to a culturally diverse population, where 40% of the population above 15 years has not completed four years of primary education.

Brazil is an emerging economy, and the country is rich in resources, but social inequality is manifest. The problems are not simple: they have different characteristics in an urban area than in rural areas - and also take different forms in the great variety of cultural backgrounds in present-day society in Brazil.

FISC and CONFINTEA VI

Salomão was very engaged in the International Civil Society Forum (FISC, for its Portuguese acronym). FISC is a global event held in Belém, from November 28th to 30th, 2009, to prepare the participation of civil society at the CONFINTEA VI and also to articulate with other movements, networks and civil society organizations that have been working on the right to Youth and Adult Education.

The CONFINTEA gather UNESCO member states, represented mainly by their education ministries, and they intend to establish international guidelines for education policies in the youth and adult education field.

Civil society organizations try to do advocacy in the different stages of CONFINTEA, with a view to exert influence on the final document and the commitments assumed by governments in this space.

But CONFINTEA's importance concerns the necessity of committing all governments to supporting popular education and the social work of the NGOs.

Popular Education

Salomão stressed that adult education in the Para region is based largely on the theories of popular education of Paulo Freire, for example, that popular education should meet the needs of the specific groups of people involved.

His classification of different groups with different kind of problems include: the river people; descendents of slaves; the indigenous people; the landless people; mining workers; unskilled workers in outlying areas; and criminals.

Popular education to face violence.

Photo: Rikke Schultz.



Movements



*The struggle of landless people.
Photo: Jakob Erle*

He had offered to organize for us visits to various programs in the region about Belém so that we could experience first-hand this reality and see with our own eyes some of the conditions that underlie.

May 2009:

Adult education: Mova and NEP

Literacy is an important issue when it comes to mobilization of the civil society in Brazil, and we visited schools for adult education in two favela's in Belém and in the river area close to São Domingos do Capim – a smaller city south of Belém.

MOVA is a public adult education movement and NEP (Núcleo de Educação Popular) is a civic organization. Both organizations are in the business of literacy programs based on the ideas of Paulo Freire.

MOVA provides schooling equivalent to primary school level, which is important because passing the primary school exam (level 5) is necessary starting any kind of registered private business officially.

However, this is not the only reason for participating in MOVA. Everyone had a particular motivation and goal in mind.

One of the students we spoke with wants to continue education in the health sector, while others are there just to educate themselves and become part of the community in the evening classes. Wagner Magno - their teacher - emphasized the importance of enlightenment and empowerment. “Everybody needs to see the possibilities for improving their own life, nobody benefits from sitting and waiting for the government to do something for them. We need to find our own way out of poverty and oppression”.

It is the same attitude we found when we travelled in the rainforest Saturday morning, where we met the volunteers working with literacy in the river region around São Domingos do Capim.

Pascal, one of the volunteers is organizing landless people and he is educating himself as teacher in the NEP - Literacy program.

“I am here because I need to know more about the society and about how various issues are related”, he stressed.

“But the school is also a refuge, where you can enjoy a moment of community, a place of sharing knowledge and where everybody can participate”.

Sergio Corrêa is coordinator of NEP-

Quilombolas in Itancoã. Photo: Ana Maria Barros Pinto



activities in the area. He is born in São Domingos do Capim, he has studied at the university and he is a member of Salomão's research team (GEPERUAZ). He knows the importance of a sustainable development of the rain forest. But he blames the University for doing too little research about how people can improve their daily way of living.

There is money enough in research about intensive exploitation of the forest where big companies are involved, but when it comes to small-scale development, there is no interest or resources for research.

But there are some positive developments, too: land claims have been easier for the cooperative movements to acquire, and the parliament has now decided, that only 20% of the forest can be used for development on big scale.

December 2009

Movimento dos Sem Terra: Land to landless people

"Sustainable" is not a positive word for MST (Movement Sem Terra). In their opinion, sustainability smells of capitalism, and based on the idea of restoring and preserving the capitalism.

MST is a strong and revolutionary movement representing about one million people in Brazil. While they work for agro-ecological food production in the rainforest, their main purpose is to work for land rights for families and small farmers and laborers and against the exploitation of the natural environment by big agribusiness industry.

Teofila is an independent woman who lives in Mosqueiro, a land occupation of

Evening classes with Mova.

Photo: Rikke Schultz



Learning to drive a boat. Photo: Ana Maria Barros Pinto

3000 ha of land, not far from Belém. She is a teacher, and she has been part of the movement for more than 20 years.

The people of Mosqueiro face many challenges to improving their lives. The biggest challenge is improving rates of production, but they need education for more efficient production methods, training with modern tools and machinery, and development of new and more marketable products. In addition, learning about processing and marketing is another of the biggest challenges.

The university has supported them with training, but as for the development of higher rates of production, processing and marketing what they grow, up to now the people of Mosqueiro are on their own.

Black Movement: How to become black inside

"It is about becoming black" says Leila Magalhães, when she tries to explain the ideas behind Black Movement.

"You need to have a black soul and to be proud of what you are. You need to dress like a black woman, to dress your hair in a black manner and to prepare African food. This is the only way to reclaim your soul".

When we ask Leila about her greatest challenges, there is no doubt in her mind: to be black, poor, and a woman. She was born in a ghetto of Quilombolas - the official name for former slaves' places in Brazil.

They have fought for and now achieved rights as well as the indigenous people. But Leila's personal way out of poverty is by reading, reading and reading. She has studied in school and she has used the public libraries as a base for gaining knowledge.

She has graduated as a teacher from the university, she has had post-graduate

training, and she is working with teachers' in-service training in Belém City.

Quilombolas - roots as slaves

Leila Magalhães is our guide, as we visit Itancoã, an area of 80 ha owned by a community of Quilombolas, one hour distance by water from Belém. They are the remaining members of the Quilombo communities recognized as the legitimate owners of the lands they occupy, for which the State shall issue the respective title deeds.

The Quilombola question has recently acquired much greater visibility, having been raised by the black movement in the 1970s as part of the fight against racial discrimination.

In formal Brazilian history, the Quilombos were the communities created by runaway slaves, which had a strong ethnic identity. They established a relationship with the land based upon common ownership, a situation that has continued into our days.

The remains of Quilombo communities

shall be characterised on the basis of self-definition and testimony provided by the community itself.

The history of the Quilombola movements begins in the 17th Century with a rebellion among slaves in the state of Alagoas, in Northeast Brazil. Zumbi who was the leader of the Quilombo dos Palmares, a self-sustaining republic of slaves escaped from the Portuguese settlements in Brazil, a huge region in Bahia.

At its height, Palmares had a population of over 30,000. Forced to defend against repeated attacks by Portuguese, the warriors of Palmares were expert in capoeira, a martial arts form that was brought to Brazil by Africans.

On the 20 November 1695 Palmares was attacked and nearly eradicated by the Portuguese, and Zumbi was murdered. He became a national hero. That's the reason 1.000 Quilombolas were gathered in Itancoã on this date in 2009, as it happens every year

The brazilian Leila Magalhães and her daughter Ana Rebeca: "You need to have a black soul and be proud of what you are."

Photo: Jakob Erle



all over Brazil. The trace of this celebration is still visible when we're in Itançoã, where 30 families live and which was made legal in year 2000.

The community has its own electricity, school, churches, cantina, Asai plantation and fish breeding system. Production is for the local market in Belém: Asai products, Manioc, fish and charcoal.

The river people: Roger's family collective

Roger's real name is Rogerio, but as a 19 year student in English at Belém Business College Roger cannot become white enough. His face is covered with white powder, when we meet him at the local harbor in Belém, the trade center for products from the forest to the local market.

The Roger's family are local producers and traders who have their own boat for transporting goods between the River people and the harbor: Manioc, Açai, charcoal, rice, beans, all kind of fruits, blankets, wine, fish,

scrimps and other local products.

Their settlement is by the river and his family is so large, nobody really knows how big it is. It's a kind of traditional family of the region: many people living together as a community.

His mother received us at the river bank, where the family hosts a little shop and a church building. She has 10 children of which Roger is the youngest, and the first one with ambitions as a student.

Most of the other children live in the settlement of 11 well built standard houses by the river bank together with their wives, husbands, children and grandchildren. They are involved in many different income generating activities: cropping, fishing, fish and animal breeding (including breeding of exotic birds), trading, transportation etcetera.

Their success can be measured. One of the standard houses is a family house with a 32" color TV.

Roger with his family: mother, brother and a nephew. Photo: Ana Maria Barros Pinto



“We need to democratize the University and the education as a public good.”

Salomão Hage **Interview**

Salomão Hage is a teacher at the University and works in Chamber of the State Government of Pará responsible for Adult Education, Culture and Sports.

By Ana Maria Barros Pinto

Pará is the second biggest state in Brazil but it has only 12 million people living there. It belongs to the less developed regions in Brazil facing huge problems. Education is one of them. That’s what Salomão is talking about in this interview.

Busy, happy and lively guy, he has been a teacher of many grassroots people the AWE team met in Belém: researchers, activists, and teachers.

For the first time Brazil is hosting the CONFINTEA. How do you feel as a host of all these educational peoples and experiences?

SH: An International Conference on Adult Education being held in Brazil, in Latin America and the southern hemisphere is a real privilege for us in Belém, especially



Happy to host AWE people. Photo: Jakob Erle

because of the influence of Paulo Freire, grassroots movements and educators and inspired teachers in popular education who have made significant innovative experiences in adult education.

The CONFINTEA VI is performing a diagnosis of the role of adult education in the world, and of public policies and educational programs on the various continents.

This encourages Governments and civil society to take the commitments already included in existing legal frameworks which safeguard the right to lifelong education of all human beings.

What’s the impact of the FISC there in the region?

SH – The International Civil Society Forum in Brazil has been a great opportunity for gathering local organizations and grassroots movements and teachers involved in adult

education with the international civil society movement for both youth and adult education.

Through the IFCS we have been able to get to know and interact with our Danish friends and their educational experiences, which have been built through civil society; we were able to hear reports from various continents on the reality of adult education; we have had a chance to live with campaigners from all over the world that have affinities with us, and that are engaged in common struggles for emancipation of disadvantaged, impoverished, minorities, the oppressed, those who are discriminated because of their condition of class, race or ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, region, territory.

It is very difficult to express our feelings about it. For sure, the moments and emotions

educational processes should be guided by a factual, intercultural and emancipatory perspective that affirms their cultural identities and ensures their empowerment and the continuation of their existence so that they can contribute to the expansion of knowledge produced by humanity.

This is the role that will fit in Pará and popular education in the Amazon: feeding utopia, strengthen our dreams, empowering our organizations and grassroots movements and bet in potentiality equality and difference between peoples and between persons.

How does popular education communicate with grassroots movements in the region?

SH- Popular education has been created with the participation of the grassroots movements and contributes to its creation, strengthening

Salomão Hage Interview

that we have experienced during the Forum, the images produced and shared, the relationships we have established will be in our memories forever.

So the agreements established, trusted, fellowship...and we hope that the world can be much better than it is today and that people can be happy, and much more, all this depends in large measure our organization and engagement.

What is the contribution of popular education in the general learning process in Pará?

SH- Popular education has given a great contribution to the educational processes in Pará. Inspired by Paulo Freire's educational conception, many innovative experiences have been found to be effective in public schools, with pedagogical proposals which are really sensitive to the socio-cultural diversity that defines the populations of the Amazon in Pará.

We have a strong contingent of indigenous people, river people, remaining quilombolas - descendents of the slaves -, fishermen, squatters.

To attend to this diversity of people the

and engaging in the social struggles of our time.

We are living in a time when civil rights, human and social are already guaranteed under existing educational laws. However, to guarantee the fulfillment of these rights is still a major challenge faced especially by impoverished population of our region and our country.

Popular education contributes to the understanding of this reality and, and the population's commitment to be assumed as subjects of rights, seeking to build another world. We say another world is possible, more human, more diverse and happier.

All through the years you've been working with popular education have you noticed an increase in awareness of the people?

SH- Yes, there are many places and experiences of popular education today which contribute greatly to the expansion of the awareness of oppressed and excluded people.

Today we have the World Social Forum, the International Civil Society Forum, the World Congress of IDEA 2010, Viva diversity Viva! and Embracing the Arts of Transformation. There is the National

Education Articulation of the countryside, with emphasis on the participation of Landless Movement (MST), which in recent years have been fighting for agrarian reform and a popular design development for the country.

In our state we created the Pará Forum for Education in the Countryside, which in the past six years has united the movements and social organizations, universities and representatives from various governmental spheres. The aim is to ensure the preparation and implementation of public policies that guarantee the right to education and the recognition of the social diversity in the Amazonian Pará region.

How is the process of popular education at the University REALIZED? Tell us about your research group called GEPERUAZ.

SH- The Federal University of Pará has increasingly expanded its activities and strategies with the purpose of an actual and transformative educational conception, either in the field of education and research.

The Group of Study and Research in Education in the Countryside (GEPERUAZ) is a great expression of these actions: in the last eight years it has been bringing together undergraduate and postgraduate researchers, intervened in the construction of Paraense Movement Education of the Countryside and mobilizing the population of Pará, and in particular the people of the countryside, to affirm the social and cultural configuration of the Amazon region.

We have conducted educational projects and educators' training together on municipal public networks, other schools – river communitarian schools, quilombolas, with young people, adults and children.

Anyway, with all the popular segments of Pará society. We have made a great effort to put the University and academic production at the service of a popular design of education and social development that enhances a dialogue between academic knowledge and the accumulated knowledge of traditional societies, knowledge accumulated by the peoples of the forest and the rivers.

The aim is to democratize the University and education, as a public good, and to make it accessible to all people.

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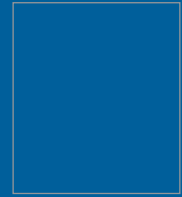
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