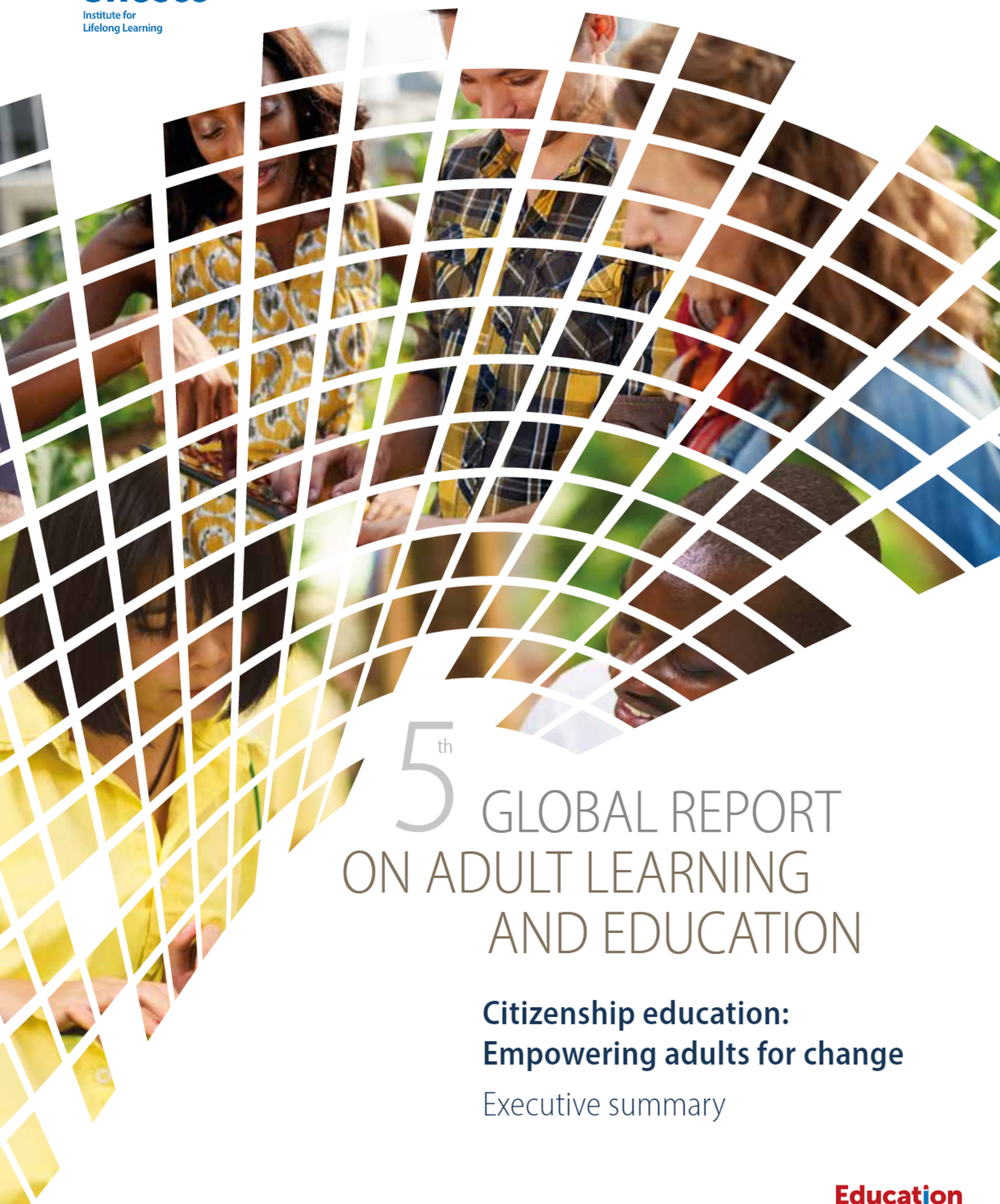




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Lifelong Learning



# 5<sup>th</sup> GLOBAL REPORT ON ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION

**Citizenship education:  
Empowering adults for change**

Executive summary





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# FOREWORD

'Everyone has the right to education.' As Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights emphasizes, education is a right that is both fundamental and universal. Here, universal means in all countries, for all girls and all boys and – as we often forget – at all ages. Lifelong learning is not only a right; it is also a crucial asset in facing the social and economic uncertainty and environmental and digital disruption to which we must adapt on an ongoing basis. It is a culture that we must develop if we are to strengthen social cohesion, equal opportunities, gender equality and the economic vitality of our societies.

Our Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE), the first edition of which was published in 2009, contributes to this goal by providing international reference data to support and inform public policies. This report underlines that the Belém Framework for Action on adult learning and education, the coordination of which Member States entrusted to UNESCO, has generated real momentum over the past decade.

Indeed, *GRALE 5* reveals some very encouraging trends. For example, it highlights the fact that the number of adults – especially women – participating in education has grown in most Member States since 2018.

However, this report also identifies areas for improvement. Vulnerable populations and minorities, such as migrants, Indigenous peoples, older citizens and people with disabilities, are still, all too often, left behind, when they should be priority groups.

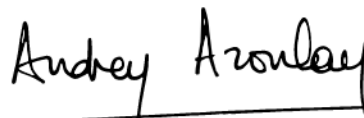
And while the importance of lifelong learning is increasingly being recognized, it suffers from harmful underinvestment. Nearly half of all countries invest only 2% or less of their overall education budgets in this field – even though, as UNESCO firmly believes, it is the best possible public investment for the future.

Our report also reiterates the need to place contemporary challenges at the heart of learning programmes. For instance, climate issues are not yet sufficiently taken into account.

Citizenship education for adults – an additional focus of the report – is another essential topic, for it is this type of education that teaches respect for differences, critical thinking skills and awareness of our shared humanity, while reinforcing civic engagement. In this field, the report shows that, while progress has been made, the potential of citizenship education is yet to be fully galvanized.

In line with UNESCO's recent report on the Futures of Education, *GRALE 5* calls for adult education to be fully included in a culture of lifelong learning – and for it to be recognized as one of the best tools to rise to the challenges of today and tomorrow.

As we prepare for the seventh International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VII), taking place in Marrakech, Morocco, in June, I have no doubt that UNESCO's Member States will commit to advancing the right to lifelong learning. Faced with the challenges of today's world, we must be able to count on education as a global common good – for everyone, everywhere.



Audrey Azoulay  
Director-General, UNESCO

# KEY MESSAGES

## FROM BELÉM TO MARRAKECH

**The abiding challenge for adult learning and education is to reach those who need it most.**

Participation in adult education remains highest among those who have benefited most from education in the past. And while there is welcome progress – notably in the participation of women – disadvantaged and vulnerable groups such as migrants, Indigenous learners, older citizens and people with disabilities continue to miss out.

**Despite increasing recognition of the value of adult learning and education, investment remains insufficient.**

Member States increasingly recognize the economic, social and civic value of adult learning and education. However, while investment in adult education has increased, progress appears to have stalled and it remains below the level judged necessary in the Belém Framework for Action. Much more needs to be done to achieve the level of investment required for adult learning and education to realise fully its contribution to the SDGs, and much more emphasis needs to be placed on the needs of the most marginalized and disadvantaged.

## MESSAGES FROM THE GRALE 5 SURVEY

### POLICY

**The expansion of mechanisms for the recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning and national qualifications frameworks suggests that education systems are transitioning to lifelong learning systems, while increasing policy focus on adult and non-formal education.**

Sixty per cent of countries reported that they had improved policy for adult learning and education since 2018. While Member States reported progress in policy across all fields of learning – literacy, basic skills and citizenship – slightly less progress was reported in citizenship education.

### GOVERNANCE

**Governance of ALE is increasingly shared between different national ministries, local authorities and other stakeholders.**

Almost three-quarters of countries reported progress in governance, a trend most pronounced in low-income and upper middle-income countries and in the sub-Saharan Africa and Asia and the Pacific regions.

Countries reported a strengthening of partnership and cooperation between several ministries, the private sector and civil society, and confirmed the well-established trend towards decentralization. Challenges remain, however, including weak monitoring and evaluation and persistent data gaps.

### FINANCING

**Most countries reported a diversity of funding models, including public funding, public-private partnerships and co-funding with international cooperation agencies, the private sector and learners themselves.**

Almost half of countries reported plans to increase public spending on adult learning and education. However, past experience suggests that these good intentions do not always translate into actual increases in funding, especially given the constraints most countries now face as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is wide divergence in terms of public funding devoted to ALE, with 22 countries spending 4% or more of their public expenditure for education on adult learning and education, and 28 spending less than 0.4%. Illustrating the data gap, 40 countries reported that they did not know how much public support ALE receives.

## PARTICIPATION, INCLUSION AND EQUITY

### The expansion of online distance learning brought adult education to a broader range of learners.

Over half of countries reported an increase in participation in ALE since 2018. The reported participation rate was highest in sub-Saharan Africa.

While participation of women and youth has considerably improved, the picture for older adults is mixed, with 23% of countries reporting an increase in their participation and 24% reporting a decrease.

About 60% of countries reported that the participation of prisoners, people with disabilities and migrants had not changed since 2018.

## QUALITY

### Effective teacher training and the development of professional standards for adult educators are driving progress in quality.

Most countries reported progress in relation to quality of curricula, assessment and the professionalization of adult educators. Over two-thirds reported progress in pre-service and in-service training for ALE educators, as well as in employment conditions, though this progress varied considerably by region and income group.

## CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION WITHIN ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION

### GRALE 5 indicates significant progress in citizenship education since 2018.

Members States' responses reflect an increasing policy attention to citizenship education compared to the situation three years ago (GRALE 4). Close to three quarters (74%) of countries indicated that they are developing or implementing policies in relation to citizenship education.

### Citizenship education is a key tool in the global response to contemporary challenges.

Responding to contemporary challenges, such as the mass movement of populations fleeing war or environmental disaster, climate change and digitalization, demands populations of engaged, active, critical citizens who recognize both their shared humanity and their obligations to other species and to the planet.

### Adult learning and education can play a significant role in shaping the future in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The *GRALE 5* survey documented the synergy, within ALE, between global citizenship and sustainable development. While ALE curricula tend to focus on specific issues of environmental protection, such as climate change and biodiversity, in some countries they do cover the overarching theme of sustainable development in its entirety.

## THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION

### Most countries reported rapid transitions to online/digital and distance learning (including television, radio and telephone) or modification of in-person learning arrangements.

The widespread adoption of digital technology during the COVID-19 pandemic has supported educational continuity for millions during lockdown.

There are many examples of countries responding innovatively to the crisis to ensure the continuation of adult learning and education provision, such as through the adoption of new policies and regulations to support this process or adjustments to quality standards and curricula.

However, it has also left some regions and population groups even further behind, particularly in parts of the world where resources and infrastructure are scarce.

# INTRODUCTION

## ADULT EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP: THE MISSING PIECE

As the *Fifth Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE 5)* was being drafted, people across the world became increasingly aware that they were living through a time of great uncertainty, exemplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of the pandemic on education has manifested itself in many ways, exposing glaring inequities in access to quality schooling and non-formal education. The pandemic also revealed an increasingly interconnected world that is nonetheless failing to address adequately issues of inequality and social justice.

As the world emerges from two years of immense disruption to social, economic and cultural life, we must ask ourselves what we have learned from this experience. On a positive note, humanity has demonstrated its ability to adapt and collaborate in response to a short-term threat. But the pandemic has also exposed many of the fault lines in our societies, among them a deficit of trust in political processes, the fragmenting and polarizing potential of information technology, the persistence of ‘us versus them’ narratives, and growing inequality within and between countries.

The collection of data for this report coincided with the start of the pandemic. Since the *GRALE 5* survey focused on developments since the previous report in 2018, it was not possible to explore the immense changes in adult learning and education (ALE) provision that occurred in response to the pandemic. However, the survey included some questions designed to gauge the pandemic’s early impact on ALE. Most countries reported rapid transitions to online/digital and distance learning (including television, radio and telephone) or modification of in-person learning arrangements. Some countries adopted new policies and regulations to support this process or made adjustments to quality standards, curricula and assessment. The pandemic also exposed the digital divide that prevented many people from continuing their studies as physical learning spaces closed.

*GRALE 4* focused on the fact that not everyone has the same opportunities to learn throughout life, to enjoy meaningful and rewarding work, to develop their potential and to contribute to their communities;

in other words, to be active citizens. The survey of Member States conducted at that time revealed that the issues of active citizenship and community cohesion were largely ignored by adult education policy-makers. A key recommendation of *GRALE 4* was that more investment is needed in active and global citizenship education. To further explore this, the thematic part of *GRALE 5* focuses on citizenship education.

## THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL RELEVANCE OF ADULT EDUCATION

As economies and societies change, ALE will need to extend far beyond responding to labour market needs. Opportunities for career change and reskilling need to connect to broad education-system reforms that emphasize the creation of multiple, flexible learning pathways. Rather than being reactive or adaptive (whether to change in labour markets, technology or the environment), adult education must be reconceptualized around learning that is truly transformative. We know that the nature of employment can change dramatically over the span of a single lifetime. Civic and political life is also changing rapidly, and similarly requires flexibility, critical thinking and the ability to learn.

## THE GROWING RELEVANCE OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

In an increasingly interconnected world, global citizenship education enables individuals to care about each other, embrace other perspectives and experiences, and engage in responsible practices towards the planet. Technological solutions alone will not achieve these ends; they must be accompanied and undergirded by a radical shift in how we perceive each other and our place in nature. Thus, global citizenship education must be about changing how we think (better understanding the world), feel (to empathize with others) and act (to change our behaviour for the better). As the twenty-first century progresses, the organization of education systems and policies based on a learner’s age will seem increasingly meaningless. In future, the key characteristic will be the openness of learning systems and their capacity to bring about personal and social change.



# AN OVERVIEW

## THE BELÉM FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION AND THE GRALE REPORTS

The aim of the five GRALE reports compiled since 2009 has been to provide baseline data on the state of adult learning and education globally for policy-makers, professionals and the public. The first report was designed to inform discussion during the sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) in 2009. That conference produced the Belém Framework for Action (BFA), which set out an agenda for the future monitoring of five key aspects of adult learning and education: policy, governance, financing, participation and quality. *GRALE 2* in 2013 focused on adult literacy, which the BFA identified as a foundation for lifelong learning. *GRALE 3* in 2016 analysed the benefits of ALE for health and well-being, employment, and social, civic and community life. *GRALE 4* in 2019 looked at opportunities and barriers to ALE participation, and, for the first time, reviewed progress in ALE in terms of the three domains of adult learning defined in UNESCO's 2015 Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE): literacy and basic skills; continuing education and vocational skills; and liberal, popular and community education and citizenship skills.

During the past 12 years we have entered what many now refer to as the fourth industrial revolution, driven by quantum leaps in IT and artificial intelligence (AI). This revolution is having a huge impact on all aspects of ALE – but particularly on quality and participation. In that context, the GRALE reports have shown that teaching continues to drive the quality of learning, and it is by supporting and professionalizing ALE educators that a sustainable increase in quality (as measured, for example, by learning outcomes) is possible.

## KEY FINDINGS OF THE GRALE 5 SURVEY

The Belém Framework for Action was not a binding agreement, but a 'guide' to help Member States 'harness the power and potential of adult learning and education'. It also set out the terms by which the GRALE reports would monitor progress in Member States. The ultimate aim of the GRALE reports is to increase awareness of ALE across the globe among many different stakeholders and to stimulate more active interest among policy-makers. They provide examples of innovation and good practice and an evidence base for evaluating international progress.

In line with this mandate, the purpose of *GRALE 5* is three-fold: it serves as a monitoring mechanism; it opens up in-depth discussions of key themes in adult education; and it lays the groundwork for CONFINTEA VII, which will take place in Marrakech, Morocco, in June 2022.

It is a daunting task to survey the state of adult education and learning globally. Many countries lack the means to consistently monitor and evaluate the wide spectrum of adult learning services, covering everything from professional education to literacy and basic education. As a field, ALE receives often inadequate support or is neglected in terms of budget and planning. Because its governance is fragmented and its financing dispersed, it is hard to keep track of who spends how much for what and where.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the *GRALE 5* survey yielded some important and encouraging findings. Globally, ALE provision continues to expand as the digital revolution brings distance learning and open educational resources out of the shadows and into the mainstream of educational policy and practice. ALE is no longer seen merely as a stopgap for those who were left behind in childhood or youth. It is for everyone, not least because rapid technological and social change means that reskilling and upskilling are now routine, and the ultimate twenty-first century skill is the ability to learn throughout life.

The findings of the *GRALE 5* survey make clear that, even though most countries are a long way from realizing the vision set out in Belém, most appear to be on the right track. On all five indicators set out in the BFA, countries report considerable progress. And even in those areas where progress has been slower, the data provided in this and previous *GRALE* reports gives us a better grasp of the roadblocks.

### **Policy**

Though there is still much ground to cover, education systems are starting to transition to lifelong learning systems, as evidenced by the global embrace of policy mechanisms such as national qualifications frameworks and systems for the recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal learning (RVA). Some areas remain neglected, particularly the provision of dedicated ALE opportunities to vulnerable and marginalized groups. Citizenship education is no longer a marginal element of ALE curricula: 74% of countries reported that they were developing and implementing specific policies in relation to citizenship education.

### **Governance**

The survey findings show that the trend towards decentralization accelerated and that there is growing involvement of non-state stakeholders such as civil society and development partners. Challenges remain, including weak monitoring and evaluation. The great diversity in ALE modalities makes monitoring challenging for most countries. Moreover, governments tend to use ALE as a policy instrument to reach a variety of goals (e.g. social inclusion and empowerment of vulnerable groups) rather than making ALE available for all.

### **Financing**

There are wide disparities between countries in how much public funding is devoted to ALE. Twenty-two countries reported that their spending on ALE comprises 4% or more of public spending on education. At the other end of the spectrum, 19 countries reported public spending on ALE equivalent to less than 0.4%. Forty countries reported that they did not know what proportion of public education spending is devoted to ALE. Most countries reported diverse funding sources and models – including public funding, public-private partnerships and co-funding with international cooperation agencies, the private sector or learners themselves. Almost half of countries reported plans to increase spending on ALE.

### **Participation, inclusion and equity**

Funding is a key driver of quality, which, in turn, is the main driver of participation. Participation in ALE has increased significantly since 2018, mainly due to the expansion of online distance learning. Other drivers of increased participation include more relevant curricula

with materials tailored to learners' interests and needs and produced in local languages. The highest increase is among women, with 56% of countries reporting an increase in their participation. The next highest increase is for youth, reported by 49% of countries. Less than a quarter of countries reported an increase in the participation of older adults (23%) and Indigenous people (24%). Around 60% of countries reported that the participation of prisoners, people with disabilities, and migrants had not changed since 2018. Finally, 24% of countries reported that the participation of older adults in ALE had declined since 2018.

### **Quality**

More relevant curricula, better trained and paid educators, improved assessment methods and more flexible modes of access are key markers of quality; most countries reported progress in these areas. Three-quarters of countries reported progress on improving the quality of ALE, through curricula and learning materials and the use of information and communication technology (ICT).

## **GRALE 5 and citizenship education**

The *GRALE 5* survey data showed that the concept of citizenship education is understood in quite different terms from country to country. Yet, most of them reported that their ALE curricula included elements and topics that align with citizenship education, including civic education, critical thinking, environmental protection, human rights, and media literacy. Hence, while countries lack a common definition and understanding of citizenship education, most ALE curricula seek, in the words of the former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, delivered at the launch of the Global Education First Initiative in 2012, 'to cultivate an active care for the world and for those with whom we share it'.

## **GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: A PATH TO HUMANISM**

### **What is citizenship?**

Different legal, cultural and historical traditions have created a diversity of competing meanings of citizenship. Some understandings have taken citizenship to be something bestowed from above, while others have considered that it must be claimed from below. Some have focused on rights, others on responsibilities. T.H. Marshall's influential work on citizenship defined the concept in terms of three core categories: civil, political and social. The civil element entails the freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude contracts, and the right to justice. The political element entails the

right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a political body or as an elector of such a body. The social element entails a right to fundamental economic welfare and security, the right to share in social heritage and to live in society according to prevailing standards. While it is no longer the case that property is a precondition of citizenship, political and social influence are still largely predicated on wealth. It is important, therefore, that we ask, 'What role can education play in transforming social structures that privilege ownership into sustainable post-growth societies animated by a vigorous global citizenship?'

### Citizenship education and ALE

The results of adult learning – along the dimensions of knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviours – enhance the capacities of adults to know, claim and enjoy their right to education, as well as other civil rights, such as the right to work and to participate in community life. ALE is, therefore, intrinsically rights-oriented and ALE programming content should be explicitly linked to human rights education. Citizenship education may be seen as a natural extension of 'civic education'; namely, knowledge and critical understanding of civil rights and responsibilities, the cultivation of civic, social virtues, economic virtues and political virtues, and the ability to engage in transformative dialogue, negotiations and interactions.

Citizenship education intersects with key aspects of ALE. Adult education typically values the personal experience of learners, promotes active learning, critical thinking and problem solving, and supports self-directed learning and the co-production of knowledge. These aspects reflect characteristics of citizenship education that are commonly associated with lifelong learning, such as the centrality of the learner, the emphasis on process learning, and the collective, cooperative and collaborative nature of learning processes.

### Global citizenship education

Global citizenship is not an alternative to national citizenship. Rather, it reinforces the democratic social pact of representative and participatory democracies worldwide and creates another layer of support for a model of citizenship based on principles of liberty and equality for all, thereby helping to shore up the traditional model of citizenship. In other words, global citizenship adds value to national citizenship.

The idea of global citizenship has been a key element of UNESCO's vision for education, right from the organization's inception. It has been conceptualized in three flagship reports: *Learning to Be* (the Faure report) published in 1972, *Learning: The Treasure Within* (the

Delors Report) in 1996, and, more recently, the report of the International Commission on the Futures of Education: *Reimagining our Futures Together – a New Social Contract for Education* (2021).

UNESCO calls for active citizenship related to four areas: human rights, environmental issues, social and economic justice, and cultural diversity. It proposes that global citizenship education should be transformative, building the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that learners need to be able to contribute to a more inclusive, just and peaceful world. The overall goal of global citizenship education is to empower learners to 'become proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world'.<sup>1</sup>

## KEY THEMES IN GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

This report explores several themes that link adult education to global citizenship education. Together, they offer insights into the multifaceted nature of ALE.

### Citizenship and literacy

Paulo Freire memorably described literacy as 'an effort to read the world and the word'. As people become more literate, they are better able to engage with the world beyond their own village and community. This process reflects the goal of global citizenship education, 'to empower learners to engage and assume active roles both locally and globally to face and resolve global challenges.'<sup>2</sup>

There is ample evidence that literacy learning correlates with positive citizenship outcomes. For example, the UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006 showed that participation in adult literacy programmes and the practice of literacy produced benefits such as improved self-esteem, empowerment, creativity and critical reflection. Similarly, almost three-quarters of the countries that responded to the *GRALE 5* survey reported that literacy programmes make a significant contribution to active citizenship.

1 UNESCO, 2014. *Global Citizenship Education: Preparing Learners for the Challenges of the 21st Century*. [online] Paris: UNESCO, p. 15. Available at: <<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000227729/PDF/227729eng.pdf.multi>>.

2 Ibid.

### Citizenship education and migration

Global citizenship education plays a pivotal role in protecting and supporting migrants. Three areas of intervention are particularly important: civic education to prepare host populations to receive immigrants in a spirit of tolerance and compassion; civic education for migrants that helps them adapt to unfamiliar cultural, social and political norms and become active in their new homelands; and interventions that give special support to vulnerable and marginalized groups within immigrant communities to facilitate their socio-economic integration.

Citizenship education in multicultural societies must help foster a twin sense of national unity and global responsibility. In this respect, global citizenship builds competences to recognize, respect and value multiple identities and cultural diversity.

### Citizenship education and new technologies

The conditions for enacting active and global citizenship have been transformed by the digital era. The concept of *digital citizenship* has emerged in tandem with a concern about citizens' capacities to participate in society as the information, resources and services that underpin citizen rights and responsibilities move online. If new technologies are to be accessible to all and enhance rather than endanger citizenship rights and civil participation, then, in addition to broad access to digital devices and internet infrastructure, large-scale investment is required to provide opportunities to acquire digital skills to all. Digitized learning materials that are contextually relevant are essential to enabling adult participation, whether in citizenship education or other forms of ALE.

### Citizenship and gender

Women continue to be under-represented in political and other forms of decision-making institutions and processes. A central goal of global citizenship must be to recognize women as autonomous citizens and support them in setting and reaching their own goals. To that end, citizenship education must recognize all genders as agents of change, understand the ramifications or benefits of intergenerational learning and critically engage in dialogue about the complexities of citizenship values.

### Indigenous citizens

In recent decades there has been a shift of emphasis in most countries with significant Indigenous populations from assimilation to democratic inclusion and participation. This shift, while a clear improvement on earlier policies, has created a new challenge to reconcile citizenship and Indigenous identities. Indigenous communities have also been increasingly recognized for their contribution to local and global development, especially to planetary sustainability and

cultural diversity. Many concepts inspired by Indigenous worldviews, such as *Sumak Kawsay* and *Ubuntu*, have also found their way into the discourses of sustainability and global citizenship. Accordingly, sustainable global citizenship involves understanding these principles and fostering, through ALE, a sense of care for oneself, others and the planet. Recognizing the wisdom of Indigenous knowledge is part of our responsibility to others, future generations and the planet.

### Adult educators and citizenship education

The professionalization and training of educators is inextricably linked to the issue of quality in education. The BFA states that 'the lack of professionalization and training opportunities for educators has had a detrimental impact on the quality of adult learning and education provision'.<sup>3</sup> UNESCO articulates the role of the educator in global citizenship education as follows: 'The main role of the educator is to be a guide and facilitator, encouraging learners to engage in critical inquiry and supporting the development of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that promote positive personal and social change.'<sup>4</sup> Adult educators, therefore, have a critical role in creating environments for citizenship education that are safe, inclusive and effective,<sup>5</sup> and their professionalization should be developed accordingly, particularly with regard to the engagement of marginalized and disadvantaged groups.

### Higher education and citizenship education

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are increasingly expected to be economic, social and cultural contributors to their local environment. Global citizenship education and civic engagement in higher education have been subsumed under the term *third mission* (in addition to the traditional missions of teaching and research). Third-mission activities typically involve community projects and volunteering, intergenerational learning opportunities, cultural events and collaboration with cultural institutions, economic development activities and partnerships with local business, and advocacy work. Commitment to the third mission and the promotion of citizenship education varies across institutions and around the world;

3 UIL (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning), 2010. *CONFINTEA VI, Belém Framework for Action: Harnessing the power and potential of adult learning and education for a viable future*. [online] Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, p. 13. Available at: <<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000187789>>

4 UNESCO, 2015. *Global Citizenship Education: Topics and Learning Objectives*. [online] Paris: UNESCO, p. 51. Available at: <<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000232993>>

5 Ibid.

while some regions have a long history of citizenship education in higher education, it is a new phenomenon for others. HEIs must continue to develop this aspect of their work and achieve a better balance between their three core missions if they are to realize their potential contribution to enhancing global citizenship and civic engagement.

### **Citizenship and employability**

Active citizens internalize democratic values and take an active role in their communities, working to create peaceful, inclusive, tolerant, fair and sustainable societies. Yet, the skills inherent in active citizenship also greatly enhance employability. For example, cognitive and metacognitive skills such as adaptability, creativity, the ability to learn and self-reflection are highly valued by employers but also fundamental to the development of civic participation. Communication and cooperation skills, essential to fulfil the role of citizen, are also an increasingly important part of the contemporary workplace, where collaborative work is the norm, alongside intensive communication in more than one language and higher degrees of autonomy. Active and global citizenship implies that individuals are self-aware, self-questioning and capable of making complex and ambiguous decisions. It also means that they are sensitive to cultural difference, capable of communicating and cooperating with others in a diverse environment and conducting themselves in an ethical fashion. These are also increasingly sought-after skills in the more dynamic, flexible and collaborative workplaces of today. This sort of engagement implies a high degree of autonomy and self-regulation, that employees need increasingly to possess, and employers must foster.

## **THE ROLES OF ALE AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN MEETING THE 2030 AGENDA**

The concept of global citizenship implies a shift towards a broader understanding of citizenship. The classical view of citizenship as linked to a nation and to local realms of action has been rendered largely obsolete by information technology, which has created communities of interest and impact that span the globe; by global economics that link human communities, from village to metropolis, through complex chains of supply and demand; by the emergence of global challenges such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic; and, perhaps most visibly, by the physical movement of human beings across the globe at an unprecedented speed and scale. The classical citizenship values of responsibility and care have thus expanded to encompass not just our fellow countrymen and women, but also those living on other continents, future generations, all species and the planet itself.

The *GRALE 5* survey confirmed the link within ALE between global citizenship and sustainable development. However, ALE curricula tend to focus on specific issues of environmental protection, such as climate change and biodiversity protection, rather than the overarching theme of sustainable development. The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development explicitly highlights the importance of global citizenship education through Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 4.7, which states that 'all learners [should] acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development'. Target 4.7 thus promotes a humanistic vision of education, and calls for this to be reflected in policies, programmes, curricula, and teacher training. It also emphasizes the important role of culture and the (inter-)cultural dimensions of education for peace, social cohesion and sustainable development.

SDG 4 aims at ensuring that people of all ages develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to address global challenges, including the existential threat of climate change. Furthermore, it emphasizes the role of humanistic education in cultivating peace, social cohesion, intergenerational solidarity, social mobility and justice. By explicitly linking global citizenship education, education for sustainable development and lifelong learning, Target 4.7 suggests that the way to balance the needs of planet, people and prosperity is by fostering, through education, the kind of citizenship that will allow our most truly human and humane values – of love, care and responsibility – to emerge.

## **CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AT CONFINTEA VII**

CONFINTEA VII provides a unique opportunity to consider how the concept of active citizenship has been embraced by adult education systems, and how global citizenship education might fit into the new social contract for education advocated by UNESCO. The Futures of Education report<sup>6</sup> states that this new social contract 'must be grounded in human rights and based on principles of non-discrimination, social justice,

<sup>6</sup> ICFE (International Commission on the Futures of Education), 2021. *Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education*. [online] Paris: UNESCO. Available at: <<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379707/PDF/379707eng.pdf.multi>>

respect for life, human dignity and cultural diversity, [that] it must encompass an ethic of care, reciprocity, and solidarity' (p. iii) and that it 'must unite us around collective endeavours and provide the knowledge and innovation needed to shape sustainable and peaceful futures for all anchored in social, economic and environmental justice' (p. 2). It also highlights the transformative role of education in building global citizenship and sustainability, stating that 'rather than being reactive or adaptive (whether to change in labour markets, or the environment), adult education needs to be reconceptualized around learning that is truly transformative' (pp. 114–115).

The vision of global citizenship outlined in *GRALE 5* echoes that articulated in the Futures of Education report. One of the key messages of *GRALE 5* is that ALE has a strong and measurable impact on active citizenship, political voice, social cohesion, gender equality, diversity and tolerance, and therefore supports the common good. It also has a positive impact on learners' lives in terms of health, well-being and

employment. Making the most of that contribution means clear political commitment, effective ALE policies and adequate resourcing, as well as a focus on quality and equity.

The greatest challenge in ALE remains reaching those who need it most. In all countries, participation in ALE is highest among those who already have a solid educational base and income, while those who have benefitted least from education continue to get least. As a result, too often, ALE policies have contributed to deepening inequality and have failed to bring about social transformation. Yet, this and previous *GRALE* reports offer considerable grounds for hope, with overall participation rising, and a particular spike in women's participation. The reports have shown that it is not enough to merely make ALE available, it must be accessible, gender-responsive and relevant to the broadest possible spectrum of the population. The success in reaching women is commendable. The lessons learned from this must be extended to migrants, people with disabilities, Indigenous learners, older people, and other neglected or marginalized groups.



