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**Adult Learning and Education:
Active global citizens for sustainable development -
a political, professional and personal account**

Chris Duke and Heribert Hinzen

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Adult Learning and Education: Active global citizens for sustainable development - a political, professional and personal account

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Adult Learning and Education: Active global citizens for sustainable development - a political, professional and personal account

Chris Duke, Heribert Hinzen

Abstract High quality adult learning and education within a full lifelong learning philosophy are essential to attain the Sustainable Development Goals. Being active individually and organizationally in education for sustainable development and global citizenship is an obligation for political, professional and personal reasons. Continuing this engagement lifelong is an endless challenge – and privilege. This article uses a biographical lens to review a few of many interventions in professional life, individually or in partnership. This shows that such work as CONFINTEA, Education for All (EFA), the Sustainable Development Goals and others, insofar as they are led by Governments and Intergovernmental Organisations, must be undertaken jointly with civil society and professional associations. Only thus can change be deeply grounded in communities and embedded in people’s interest and needs. Global processes are otherwise seen as bureaucratic irrelevances to their life, and have limited impact on development.

Keywords: Values, biography, Lifelong Learning, Adult Learning and Education, Sustainable Development Goals, commitments, leadership, organisations, local and global



Abbreviations

AED	Adult Education and Development, journal
ALE	Adult Learning and Education
ASPBAE	Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education
BFA	Belem Framework for Action, CONFINTEA VI
CLC	Community Learning Centre
CONFINTEA	UNESCO World Conferences on Adult Education
DVV	Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband
DVV International	Institute for International Cooperation of DVV
EFA	Education for All
EU	European Union
GRALE	Global Report on Adult Learning and Education
IGO	Intergovernmental Organisation
INGO	International NGO
IPE	International Perspectives in Adult Education
NGO	Nongovernmental Organisation
PASCAL	International Observatory
PIMA	PASCAL International Member Association
RALE	Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education
RTVET	Recommendation Concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Social, Cultural Organisation



Timeline

1945	Founding UNESCO, London
1949	CONFINTEA I, Helsingör
1953	Founding EAEA, Amersfoort
1953	Founding DVV, Berlin
1960	CONFINTEA II, Montreal
1961	Founding BMZ, Bonn
1964	Founding ASPBAE, Melbourne
1969	Founding DVV International, Bonn
1972	CONFINTEA III, Tokyo
1972	Faure Report, Paris
1973	Founding ICAE, Toronto
1982	Founding CEAAL, Santiago
1985	CONFINTEA IV, Paris
1990	World Education Forum, Jomtien
1996	Delors Report, Paris
1997	CONFINTEA V, Hamburg
2000	MDG, Millennium Summit, New York
2000	EFA, World Education Forum, Dakar
2009	BFA, CONFINTEA VI, Belém
2015	Agenda 2030, World Education Forum, Incheon
2015	SDG, UN Summit, New York
2015	RALE, UNESCO General Conference, Paris
2017	CONFINTEA VI Midterm, Suwon-Osan
2018	UNESCO Global Education Meeting, Brussels



Table of Contents

	Abstract	4
	Abbreviations	5
	Timeline	6
1.	Introduction: scope and shape of this paper	8
2.	The individual as basic building block	9
3.	Evolving ALE and lifelong learning – an aide-memoire	15
4.	More on lifelong learning – some reflection on the terms	17
5.	A critical appraisal – circularity and some progress	20
6.	Still active – never too late, always so much to do	24
7.	Conclusion – how to get to be doing better	25
	References	28



1. Introduction: the scope and shape of this paper

What values underpin citizenship? How are they expressed by international government and nongovernmental development (IGOs and INGOs) bodies to make the Sustainable Development Goals achievable? Is the importance of adult learning and education understood? This paper draws on two linked half centuries of work in education for development to reflect on evolving global-level policy and practice from the seventies to today.

Adult Learning and Education takes many forms. The meaning and expectations of lifelong learning vary greatly and have been much reduced for political convenience. They must now be fully restored. Modes and contents of lifelong learning are diverse, closely connected to and shaped by now global as well as national and local political, social and cultural context. What will-power and action flow up and down levels between local and global to what effect?

During the 1990s adult education and lifelong learning came of age in a political sense. But its ambition for all-round human and social development was reduced mainly to education and training for economic and employment purposes. Yet full adult learning and education is more essential than ever. It must be understood and applied across all aspects of civil society and governance.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals span most areas and aspects of development: poverty and hunger, health, education and gender; work, industries and cities; environmental sustainability; better integrated social and economic planning and development; peace, migration, social stability and community integration. Global citizenship centrally values human rights, social justice and equality, including equalities of gender and race. Governments at all levels, civil society, and the private sector including global finance as well as international organizations, must each play a part in development processes and programs.

The complex ever-changing context must be centrally infused by the capacity to learn - and to act on what is learned. Learning includes deliberately planned and provided education but it is also far wider, permeating all of life including work. Yet education and training to support learning remain essential. Without the power of learning realised and built into achieving all development goals these will be difficult or impossible to achieve.

Orientation toward lifelong learning opportunities for all is essential for young people and adults throughout their learning and education: to enhance knowledge, competencies, and skills; but also, crucially, to grow appropriate attitudes, behaviour and values. Is this strongly associated with the lifelong learning aspirations expressed in CONFINTEA, the Belem Framework of Action, the 2015 *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education*, and the Suwon Korea CONFINTEA 2017 Mid-term Review? Can all this be reconciled as we move



toward CONFINTEA VII in 2021, in implementing and monitoring specifically the education goal among the Sustainable Development Goals?

The scope and shape of this paper

In what follows we look first at a fundamental building block for governance and development work: what is it that causes individuals to work together to common purpose? We ask about our own formation and reasons for sustained belief and effort over decades.

We then review steps in evolving understanding and policy relating to adult learning and education and lifelong learning in recent decades; and of the idea and practice of ‘development’, before probing further into the ways that key words are used.

We attempt a critical appraisal of progress from the seventies to the present day, drawing out gains and deficits; what continuing and emergent dominant issues from a lifelong learning perspective will assist or inhibit adult learning and education towards achieving sustainable goals?

The final sections ask what to prioritise for a safer, better and happier world order. Where and how do adult learning and education and the Sustainable Development Goals connect? Good governance for better life and a better world order must celebrate a diverse ecology including our own human species. This can be ambitiously optimistic and idealistic; but also fatally venal, short-sighted and destructive.

2. The individual as basic building block

This paper draws on our shared experience to ask what keeps development effort going and on task. As well as needing many kinds of knowledge of policy-making, strategies and practices, enabling sustainable development also means sharing values and a common ethic in life and work as an indispensable basis for success.

We have both worked in adult learning and education for development since the sixties or seventies from different bases, mainly in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. We have each played leading roles in national adult learning and education associations, worked separately and together for 40 or more years in international governmental and nongovernmental (IGO INGO) action, and done scholarly, popular, and promotional writing and dissemination, each with long records of writing and editing about adult learning and education and lifelong learning for development.

Is it self-indulgent thus to review development? – perhaps not. Emotions – of passion, belief and commitment to values – underpin culture and belief. They often exceed the power of reason, logic, and research to determine policy and political conduct. Other emotions and ambitions may provide insuperable obstacles. Two books about ‘affluenza’ illustrate the power of culture as inhibitor or enabler of change (Hamilton and Dennis, 2005; 2018).



Underlying drivers making society what it is – for better or worse – are explored by Steven Pinker (Pinker, 2012; 2018).

So here in brief are our respective confessionals.

Chris Duke worked for 50 years in and from universities in the United Kingdom and Australia as an activist scholar, adult educator, critic and champion of lifelong learning. Academic freedom and self-direction allowed him to hold senior office in international, regional and national professional and civil society organisations for adult learning and education and lifelong learning, building and using informal networks, from 1970 to now. Why?

Childhood years

Looking back reveals what in early years mattered most for later life. Growing up on a farm close by and beneath the London blitz in a pacifist family taught that life is hard and that peace matters; also why it can be hard to stand for what is good, when appeasement fails and the strong bold voice of Churchill provided the nation with essential purpose through the traumatic cultural events of Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain, the Blitz, and on to Victory in Europe (VE) Day. It inspires some English ‘Leave Europe’ campaigners even today. My fringe-dweller playmates, the children of casual farmer-labour gypsies, were also a powerful force: one side of a cultural class schism straddled by a poor scholarship kid going through selective State school to upper middle class Cambridge. Different does not mean better or worse. Diversity is unsettling. It is also enriching and ecologically essential.

A crucial factor looking back was German prisoners of war bussed from prison camp to work on the farm. They befriended this lone bespectacled and toy-deprived little boy, carved him magical toys from boxwood, and in some cases later became post-War neighbours next door. By then the national heroes of Government were not Churchill, man of war, but socially inclined builders of the Welfare State led by dull hard-working Clement Attlee.

Youth

Cambridge gave status as well as equipment: a highly respected history degree, a measure of self-confident ambition to work hard, and a well-trained critical mind. But my ambition was skewed and channelled, thanks to those earlier years and to teenage low-church membership and a similarly value-infused secondary schooling. These led inescapably towards ‘public service’. My ambition was to do good as well as doing well for myself; something less well regarded today but not one hopes undervalued in development work for the Sustainable Development Goals.

Another legacy was from the Low Church in which I grew up. Congregationalism was quintessentially democratic, as suited both my low-church mother and my father who had been a Quaker. Members chose their Minister who was not placed beneath a bishop in a hierarchy reaching down from God. The congregation of people chose how to connect with God: direct accountability in both directions; a recipe for good secular government.



From this grounding came fundamental belief in the ability and authority of ordinary folk. In later working life I was good at ‘managing down’ (enabling and empowering ‘subordinates’), less good at differentially ‘managing up’: deference to authority had to be earned. I was thus better equipped for authentic popular and participatory development than for stasis-seeking hierarchies of control. Civil society and NGO sector networking, animation and leadership were a natural choice. All too often the useful wisdom of farm-workers, gypsies and tradespeople outshone the knowledge, ways and results of owner, manager and foreman. I learned to judge on results more than words.

Working young adult

For a decade I cut my teeth in English higher and adult education, moving from history to sociology and organisational behaviour, and teaching and practising community engagement. I studied and practised access and return-to-learn work: learning multiculturalism with home and overseas second chance students, and community-building with new Caribbean and South Asian immigrants in inner city Leeds. We studied, door-knocked and wrote about ghetto racism in housing practices and took action to counter it: old Adult Learning and Education equity principles from Workers’ Education Association and early university adult education days applied to new disadvantaged communities. I was introduced into relevant national adult education NGOs: the Workers’ Education Association, and the national University Adult and Continuing Education and university teaching and research association and the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education; and the international NGO world of Commonwealth, University Adult and Continuing Education and other international university organisations. I became the Editor of the *International Congress of University Adult Education Journal* at an indecently young age and for twenty years.

As the world of acronyms became familiar I added to my own mix UNESCO, including the Hamburg Institute for Lifelong Learning and later the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, as well as other United Nations bodies involved in adult learning and education as applied to their worlds: notably the International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organisation, World Health Organisation and the World Bank. I assumed an INGO journal editorship which ran a quarter century, and undertook casual-but-serious ‘moonlight’ consulting for these bodies. With the emergent intermediate regional IGO and INGO governance emerging in Europe I added the EU and assisted in the formation of European NGOs for university continuing education and research on the education of adults. Seduction to an ambitious young man, with little time to reflect on what it all added up to, and how the parts connected.

Growing-up global-local

In 1968 Leeds UK Professor and Grand Old Man of the university liberal ‘Great Tradition’ recommended me to direct a new Australian National University venture. The new University Centre for Continuing Education as it became, was an acclaimed and at times controversial ‘lighthouse’ of innovation. It allowed me to lead the national adult learning and education body; and to work for Australian adult learning and education globally through official



Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and UNESCO National Commission channels. The position offered a platform in and beyond Education as Australia found its place in Asia. It was a privilege of academic life in the seventies to be able to work in free spaces both through IGOs and also locally on access, professional updating etc; and to involve Australia on the emergent global INGO Adult Learning and Education map. Through leadership positions with the new International Council for Adult Education founded after the UNESCO 1972 Tokyo Conference (CONFINTEA III), and as Secretary-General of the regional body ASPBAE I met Dr Hinzen. Together we worked to build enduring South-South links and an abiding non-colonist partnership between Germany's DVV and ASPBAE in the new Asia.

From the end of the seventies this work has evolved on a basis of explicit shared mission and values, straddling levels from local through local-region to national, large-regional and international. New locations, mode and means of collaboration for development evolved as new opportunities and needs arose; the work for development – post-colonialist, balancing social with economic, participatory, for equity and sustainability – continued with unchanged basic principles: is this work good? – above all what is it good *for*? – and how well is it succeeding? My own roles have been diverse and changing: the last 15 years for example built on regional development work with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development to create an INGO ‘Observatory’ part-emulating ACU’s borderless HE approach, through PASCAL and its affiliated membership body PIMA.

Until well into the new millennium I also held senior positions as deputy and then chief executive officer in United Kingdom and Australian universities: organisationally speaking a reality-check on the theories of social change and collaboration about which Hinzen and I frequently wrote. Biting the hands that fed me, I was and often remain critical of universities when practices fall short of high public service principle in the face of tough commercial reality and self-interest is disguised by rhetoric. Recent years of active retirement from paid employment give privileged freedom to reflect more deeply on the tangles of power, networks, roles and pressures that characterise the world of ‘development’; and to attempt to learn more and better about what works well and why. Now to the formation and contributions, including shared years of maturity and self-critical reflection of friend and colleague Hinzen.

Heribert Hinzen. Yes, it is the privilege of those in later life to lean back and try to find the red thread, the knots and the breakthroughs, of what has shaped your biography, and has contributed over time to develop personal passion into professional engagement. However, let us not forget that there is also what German Professor of Adult Education Erhard Schlutz warned of as “idealizing memory” in *My way to adult education*; but where he also encouraged us to see that “...historical self-ascertainment is an opportunity to reconstruct meaning, to seek and confirm one’s personal and professional identity – as part of achieving lifelong personal balance”. (AED 72, 274) This was definitely important for us as individuals: a sort of self-reassurance to be on track at turns, in trying to make the right decisions and take the right steps.



For me, now fifty years away from the start as a student in the mid-sixties and being still around in active retirement is quite a substantial part of that period of life. The challenge is to look at biography-related ideas, experiences and examples of how one found one's way into international education.

At the same time we try to understand better what we mean by "Remember for the future". Colleagues have been using this slogan in the context of the current high tide towards jubilees celebrating 100 years of the end of WW1, 100 years of the end of German colonialism in Africa, 100 years of the voting right for women, and also 100 years of the Volkshochschule, the German version of adult education and community learning centres. We have started strongly to advocate the collective memory of institutions, and the necessity of reflecting the past and its experiences for the present and future. We even produced a handbook on *Jubilees in Adult Education* (Heuer and Hinzen, 2018) to put all the practical activities in preparing the commemorative book or exhibition within a respective conceptual framework.

School – youth – student

There is no doubt that the horrors of the Vietnam War had an impact on my interest in what we called solidarity with the Third World. Already during the mid-sixties while still at school we distributed leaflets in front of the church criticizing the destructive forces of weapons and killing innocent people. In parallel there was an attempt to understand what went wrong during the Weimar Republic as the first democracy in Germany, which led to the Second World War and the Holocaust. A broader range of international politics, especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the anti-colonial struggles, kept awareness high through my student life. And there was also early involvement in educational activities during school and student years: serving as leader in youth groups and later in student life with socially disadvantaged families and their children and youngsters.

Bringing these two roots together was maybe important in turning closer to educational studies in international contexts. I had studied within human and social sciences of the Universities of Bonn and later Cologne, with education as one of the subjects; but suddenly, at an advanced stage I found myself in a seminar on 'Julius Nyerere: African socialism and education for self-reliance', which certainly shaped an interest and engagement for the years to come. Subsequently my doctoral dissertation in comparative studies at the University of Heidelberg was on *Adult education and development in Tanzania*, when my field work was at the Institute of Adult Education of the University of Dar es Salaam.

UNESCO – ICAE

A major eye-opener was participation in 1975 in Kenya in the UNESCO *International Seminar on Comparative Structures of Adult Education in Developing Countries*, along with such key figures in international adult education at that time as Roby Kidd of the International Council for Adult Education, and John Lowe of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Almost as a spin-off I started to use the well-established library and documentation center of the UNESCO Institute of Education, now the Institute of Lifelong Learning (UIL) in Hamburg, and eventually got involved in coordinating an in-



depth study on *The Tanzanian Experience. Education for Liberation and Development*, which was published as part of the Institutes series on systems of educational reform.

Volkshochschulen – DVV International

Full-time work for what is now DVV International started in 1977 on a project in the area of development education, today called global learning. It aimed at serving the local adult education centres Volkshochschulen, which were already running a variety of courses, seminars, lectures, exhibitions, and other activities, in their training and capacity-building of staff, with teaching and learning materials development. I enjoyed this mix of international solidarity in adult education, making use of my experiences. By 1978 my tasks enlarged to become Deputy-Director and Editor in the Institute.

This is not for the first time that I have tried to find roots in my biography, trying to confirm where we have reached institutionally; this included personally also. It became almost a habit with each change of roles and functions during my time in DVV International to close the previous period with a publication reflecting and collecting what I thought would be important to remember. The first such was in 1982 by editing a special issue of the *Adult Education and Development* journal with articles by Paolo Freire, Julius Nyerere and Zacheus Kazapua. *All cultures are different and unique* was translated into several languages. The second was *Giving and taking. Involved in Sierra Leonean Adult Education*; published 1987 at the end of being Country Director there. Number three was writing *Our story and history*, and editing a volume on *25 Years of the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education* in 1994. The fourth was *Hungarian and German Adult Education: European Partnership and International Cooperation* in the year 2000; after the Directorship and service in the Budapest office.

During the next decade as Director in Bonn we prepared a commemorative history on *40 Years DVV International* in 2009. Finally, in 2015 at the end of my time Regional Director in Vientiane we published *Sharing for learning in Lao PDR. DVV International engaged in lifelong learning for sustainable development in Asia Pacific*. At the same time DVV International edited *Adult Education in an interconnected world. Cooperation in lifelong learning for sustainable development: Festschrift in honour of Heribert Hinzen*, at the end of my full-time work. I was happy to note that a good number of the authors, including Chris Duke, hailed from those decades working together for a common good. In as much as these reviews were reflections with a personal touch, they were as published materials always intended to take stock and continue to influence national and international policy and practice of adult learning and education: a form of lifelong reflective and public institutional and personal development.

Why is this relevant to global citizenship and development? The leadership of all bodies, public and private, governmental and NGO, down to – and up from – the most local community group, comes from individuals driven by whatever they want and fear; and from the communities and cultures that they grow up with.



Some are driven by ambitions for power, influence, recognition and wealth. Then the places where they work and the bodies that they lead may be very good at doing some things, but not good at achieving the purposes for which they were created. Leadership positions may be stepping stones to greater wealth, power and status, maybe even across organisations with totally different ethical bases or without any. Does attaining institutional targets and winning a bonus matter more than questioning what is working and what will last? Criticising one's superiors, whistle-blowing on corruption, may end a career.

We have observed that collusion among senior personnel across sectors may become a new form of class interest in maintaining the status quo. This leads to distrust of a 'political class', maybe even to social breakdown. Without ethical anchoring what then most matters is one's own and one's organisation's survival. Global citizenship and equitable development are soft and even intangible targets prone to the short vision of the self-preoccupied.

How well do development agencies and other bodies grant-aided to work for the Sustainable Development Goals measure up to such tests? We must always examine the performance of government and IGOs; and as they grow and bureaucratise of INGOs. We might naively not see these as beehives humming with myriad active individuals commanded by a leadership hierarchy. We do not adopt the cult of heroic leader; but we can see disconnects between the many aggregated individual hopes and fears, and the rhetorical flags under which institutions sail. We must probe how different bodies actually work to achieve the ideals set out in the Sustainable Development Goals, and see what kinds of adult learning and education help create self-sustaining better informed strong communities.

3. Evolving ALE and lifelong learning – an aide-memoire

In this thematic we select, to review main processes, four important outcome documents in which UNESCO has played a key role; either directly, via the UIL or within the architecture of the wider United Nations family.

CONFINTEAs, the International Conferences on Adult Education, meet at regular twelve years. They provide excellent opportunities to inform and take stock of achievements and lessons learned. The first in Helsingör in 1949 was dominated by political ideas towards peace and re-conciliation. 1960 saw CONFINTEA II in Montreal, where issues for developing countries newly independent from colonial rule to set the agenda. CONFINTEA III in Tokyo in 1972 was most important for adult education as it sought to become more of a profession. CONFINTEA IV in Paris came at a difficult Cold War. Coherent understanding and compromise were very difficult, yet, pushed by civil society members, a universal 'right to learn' was recognized. CONFINTEA V in Hamburg 1997 opened up to civil society more strongly. It was a milestone for developing adult education within lifelong learning. (Knoll, 2014) CONFINTEA VI in December 2009 adopted the *Belem Framework for Action (BFA)*, a guiding and binding document for the international adult education community today (UIL, 2010; Ireland and Spezia, 2014). The October 2017 CONFINTEA VI Mid-term Review



Meeting ended with the Suwon-Osan Statement, another wealth of valuable reviews and reports.

Education for All (EFA) was proclaimed by the World Education Forum in Dakar 2000. The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) proclaimed by the UN included achieving Universal Primary Education. The timeline was the years 2000 – 2015. A process of looking at achievements and challenges for the future post-2015 then led finally to the *Education 2030 Agenda* of the World Education Forum in Incheon. This was in turn fully integrated as Goal 4 into the 17 Sustainable Development Goals at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015. SDG4-Education 2030 is thus the most recent culmination of a longer and overarching process in which lifelong learning plays an ever stronger role. We frequently see notions of ‘youth and adults’, and ‘all women and men. Adult education as a profession is however nowhere to be seen. (UNESCO, 2015a)

The SDG4-Education 2030 is to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. (UNESCO, 2015a, 22) SDG4- Education 2030, especially target 4.7, takes education for sustainable development and global citizenship education as an overarching thematic concern. It states that “By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire 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.” (UNESCO, 2015a, 48)

RALE, the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education, was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in Paris in November 2015, as was called for during CONFINTEA VI, as a task in the BFA to ‘review and update’, by 2012, the *Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education* adopted in Nairobi (1976). RALE points out the “significant role of adult learning and education in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, acknowledges the Incheon Declaration, and enumerates the last three CONFINTEA conferences as important arenas to look at achievements since 1976. In the Preamble of RTVET, the Recommendation Concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training, is explicitly mentioned in order to underline “the relevance of improving technical and vocational education and training ... which contains specific provisions for continuing training and professional development”. (UNESCO, 2015b, 1)

RTVET, looking at work and life also in a lifelong learning perspective was adopted in the same UNESCO General Conference in 1975. RTVET’s predecessor was the 2001 ‘Revised Recommendation for Technical and Vocational Education’. RTVET reflects findings from the 2004 Bonn Declaration on Learning for Work, Citizenship, and Sustainability, and recommendations from the Third International Congress in Shanghai on Technical and Vocational Education and Training, ‘Transforming TVET: Building Skills for Work and Life’. The concept was much expanded from a limited earlier view on vocational skills. It runs like a thread through RTVET. Learning to learn, the development of literacy and



numeracy skills, transversal skills and citizenship skills are integral components of Technical and Vocational Education. (UNESCO, 2015c, 2)

UIL was clearly part of the process of all the four documents taken up here, but in different ways. It leads in the CONFINTEA process, and was the major institution preparing RALE. It may have had a strong part in bringing in lifelong learning into RTVET and into the SDG4-Agenda 2030 process and its outcomes. With GRALE, the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education, it has created an instrument to monitor and periodically focus attention on important achievements, while pointing to areas needing more support.

The most recent attempt to monitor Belem is the 3rd GRALE (*Global Report on Adult Learning and Education*), published in 2016 under the title *The Impact of Adult Learning and Education on Health and Well-Being; Employment and the Labour Market; and Social, Civic and Community Life*. It is highly important, being based on 139 monitoring surveys from UNESCO member states as a commitment made at CONFINTEA VI in the BFA.

These monitoring reports are all available on the UIL website, a rich resource for further comparative analysis. So more broadly across all aspects of education and yearly, an EFA Global Monitoring Report is published which looks at different specific themes such as Gender, 2003; Literacy, 2006; Marginalization, 2010; Skills, 2012, and at overall accomplishments and failures so far.

In recent years institutions in the lead like the UNESCO Institute of Statistics and those responsible for regular monitoring like the Global Education Monitoring Report, those with special thematic interests, and those with education-watch functions, all got involved in an attempt to agree on indicators, which was then annexed into the SDG4-Education 2030 document. It was, and remains, a very difficult discussion and decision of what should be the global, regional, national, and thematic indicators, especially as arguably for many countries there are no robust baseline data. Looking wide, we may ask how for the effort to measure, numerically quantify and compare ‘outcomes’ via ‘indicators’ contributes to formative learning development and justifies the high cost of data collection and analysis.

4. More on lifelong learning – some reflection on the terms

The many definitions of lifelong learning are mostly rather similar to one another. The central concept has evolved a great deal from strong and coherent presentation in the UNESCO commissioned Faure Report *Learning To Be* (Faure, 1972), which was broad and visionary. No less visionary was what came from UNESCO almost 25 years later. *Learning: the treasure within. Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century*, identified four ‘pillars of learning’: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together. (Delors, 1996) This was already a time when the ICAE was invited as the joint voice of civil society in adult education to contribute its perspective. It was a small group of five people that came together in Toronto, including Rosa Maria Torres and Heribert Hinzen to work on a submission called *Adult education and lifelong learning:*



Issues, concerns and recommendations for the International Commission which had the statement: “*The code of conduct of our profession asks for a lifelong perspective in the training of trainers, teachers, and organizers involved in adult education. They have to update their knowledge, to improve and broaden their skills, and learn to cope with frustrations on the job long before burn-out occurs.*” (ICAE, 1994, 421)

Rethinking Education. Towards a global common good? was published by UNESCO in 2015, written in parallel with development from EFA 2000 to SDG4-Education 2030. (UNESCO, 2015d) This concise and concerned text reflects issues in current global, national and local development especially related to the right to education as a common good, and concern for education in a sustainable world.

Another relevant term was introduced by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in the early 1970s as a strategy for moving towards lifelong learning: *recurrent education*, meaning the alternation and other combinations of formal study, between education and training, full- or part-time, paid employment and perhaps other activity, throughout one’s life. This not only followed initial compulsory education; it might reach back into the secondary and upper secondary years, to be better engaged and connected with life outside school. (OECD, 1973)

Looking more closely there are claims that the Bible and the Koran, Confucius and Comenius, have proverbs from many ethnicities and share the common understanding that “learning starts in the womb and ends in the tomb” (Mende). As a modern policy concept lifelong learning was shaped in the second half of the 20th century in the economically and politically dominant North. With globalisation it has since been transported worldwide, and is being adapted, reinterpreted and applied in different countries and regions to engage with different traditions and ways of learning and knowing. It is important to combine ‘indigenous wisdom’ with lifelong learning policies and strategies driven by the global agencies of governments and civil society. Education systems must be holistic: across all ages but also life-wide and in terms of how people actually live and learn. It should also be life-deep, to connect with the life and culture of different communities in different ways.

In 2013 UIL proposed as a working definition:

Lifelong learning is rooted in the integration of learning and living. It covers learning activities for people of all ages (children, young people, adults and older adults) in all life-wide contexts (families, schools, communities, workplaces etc.) and through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal and informal) which together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands. Education systems that promote lifelong learning adopt a holistic and sector-wide approach involving all sub-sectors and levels of education to ensure the provision of learning opportunities for all individuals.

The use of keywords has often been inexact, compromising the concept and weakening policy discourse. We should use *learning* to refer to what people do (consciously or unaware, assisted or unaided); and *education* (and *training*) to refer to deliberately provided teaching, with a curriculum, intended objectives, and learning outcomes. Learning may benefit from



the help of facilities and teachers or facilitators. Without these resources it does not make sense to speak of *education*, although education can be given in novel and virtual ways such as distance education and Massive Open On-line Courses.

It is important to be clear. Education and training require resources. Usually they also require monitoring and accounting for expenditure: for efficiency, good outcomes, value for money, and maybe also in order to conform politically. Speaking only of learning may seem to suggest total self-direction needing no budget, teachers or other help. In fact lifelong learning means seeing learning as a life-thread from the earliest years throughout and to the end of life. Subjects, methods and priorities vary through the life-stages. Implementing lifelong learning requires an educational policy and resourcing strategy through all ages and stages of educational provision. This includes support for individuals' own different places and ways of learning, individually or collectively. Ways to support learning may be provided for, assessed and examined in different ways.

In practice lifelong learning today refers mainly to regularly provided education and training with specific objectives and 'learning outcome'. Structures to support learning focus on defined purposes for and by youth and adults of all ages as well as school-age children. What we call training, and sometimes work-based learning, prioritises competencies, skills and knowledge having economic value leading to employment, often a main part of today's lifelong learning curriculum. It is too narrow: even 'employment' has diverse or almost no meaning in different place. It is important also to rescue the wider and richer meaning of 'informal' learning, and look also to attitudes and values.

The older language of lifelong learning is inspiring, ambitiously broad, and optimistic. It may refer to quality of life, healthy living, strong local communities, and sustainability. With resources scarce, especially for post- and out-of-school education and training, the *practical* meaning tends to be narrower while the rhetoric persists, for example in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development countries and the EU region. Policy-makers advocating lifelong learning should keep these wider needs and learning arrangements in sight when literacy and technical skills demand priority.

Learning takes place in many ways and places throughout life. A secure local community and workplace environment make possible many kinds of confident 'natural' learning. It is not easy to count and measure the outcomes. The community and workplaces provide many natural learning environments and opportunities. Adopting a really successful lifelong learning philosophy and policy is highly complicated. Ministries of Education are involved: but many other Departments of State must collaborate to create good learning environments and foster a real learning society.

Lifelong learning means learning *in and by* communities as well as in classrooms and by individuals. The growth of Community Learning Centres (CLC) illustrates and may recognise and support this. It is true for ALE which still demands physical resources, forms and opportunities despite rising global and digital tides. A recent international conference on "Adult Education Centres as Key to Development – Responsibilities, Structures, and



Benefits” concluded with *Key Messages for policy, legislation and financing*. Looking ahead, we ask how CLC, still rather few and at an early stage of operation in many countries, can help to fulfil the larger lifelong learning agenda as well offering individual skills training.

5. A critical appraisal – circularity and some progress

We see variable progress over decades of rapid change and deepening globalisation. The values of global citizenship have become more clearly and sharply expressed. Similar beliefs informed by similar values are expressed in different not always compatible ways. Progress based on sound evidence is slow. Party-based politics tend to devalue evidence and drive policy. The influence and use of research is often very weak.

This paper sees *commitment to personal values as a source of sustained energy* for real, balanced, sustainable development, whoever and wherever the agent. Finding what works at different levels from village and local neighbourhood to global as policies and practices evolve is messy and unending. Without honesty and the willingness to err, admit, learn and try again, progress towards a celebratory 2030 year of development will fail.

What high-level efforts really help development in places of need, as well as being done well in themselves according to agencies’ own criteria? The ideal can be hampered by the personal and organisational needs and dynamics of different players at all the different levels.

Take some examples during the past four decades where processes and documents described above influenced our work, and where local work may have helped shaping the international agenda of adult learning and education and lifelong learning for development. It is impossible to look at all the details over these decades; better to choose a few where CONFINTEA and EFA plus Sustainable Development Goals processes converge in trying to improve both adult learning and education and lifelong learning. Three areas of professional engagement are conferences as convener, presenter, moderator or participant; publications as writers, editors, publishers; and global, regional, and national consultations.

A number of these contributions to conferences, publications and consultations related to those processes are listed here to show all three: political, professional and personal commitment. We start with the two most prominent:

- CONFINTEA: We have a track record since 1985 of participating in and being commissioned with related tasks shaping inputs and outcomes: in CONFINTEA IV as rapporteur for Commission 2; most prominently in the process of CONFINTEA VI on the Consultative Group and in the pre-conferences for Europe and Asia Pacific in 2008; as member of the Drafting Group of the BFA in 2009 and in the 2011 post-conference for Asia Pacific; the mid-term review in 2017, and again in the Drafting Group for the Suwon-Osan Statement in 2017, where a call was made for 2021: “CONFINTEA VII should highlight the contribution of adult learning and education to sustainable development.” (UNESCO, 2017a)



- EFA and Sustainable Development Goals: As national delegation member participating in 2000 in Dakar and in 2015 in Incheon in the World Education Forum. Dakar produced *Education for All*. Subsequently we published two volumes of *Adult Education and Development (AED)* as well as *International Perspectives in Adult Education (IPE)*, and for several years joined the Editorial Board of the Global Monitoring Report on Education for All, writing a background paper on “Basic and Continuing Adult Education Policies” (Duke and Hinzen, 2006) for the Global Monitoring Report. Later we were deeply involved in the post-2015 process advocating “Lifelong learning for All – a potential global goal for the post 2015 education and development agendas!” (AED, 81), which was important, for going on to Incheon where the SDG4 Education 2030 was prepared.

At an early stage we helped bring the CONFINTEA and EFA processes together, as the ALE component was not strong enough in the post-Dakar period. Only primary education had made it into the Millennium Development Goals; so, adult learning and education got very low attention by Governments, international organisations, and funding agencies. In civil society circles the acronym EFA was translated into ‘Except for Adults’. This was a real danger. At least two those attempts of counter interventions were we involved ourselves should be mentioned:

- UIL and DVV International partnered to convene a larger conference on *Lifelong Learning in Europe: Moving towards EFA Goals and CONFINTEA V Agenda* in Sofia, Bulgaria, already in November, 2002. (UIL, 2003)
- *Knowing more, doing better. Challenges for CONFINTEA VI from monitoring EFA in non-formal youth and adult education* was based on fifteen country case studies, and several comparative and reflective papers, all in the context of the work of the *Global Monitoring Report on Education for All*. (Duke and Hinzen, 2008)

The UNESCO Regional Office for Asia Pacific based in Bangkok was a leading partner, together with UIL, convening numerous conferences to share information on achievements and failures, and together with others to take the policy debate forward. DVV International got fully involved especially through its Regional Office for South and Southeast Asia. From civil society came, ASPBAE, the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education acting also as the regional arm of the International Council for Adult Education. This following small sample and timely sequence of activities in which we got also involved shows how the agenda was shaped as skills were related to work and life, learning cities and regions won attention, and global citizenship education was introduced:

- UNESCO Third International Congress on TVET: Building Skills for Work and Life. Shanghai, China, 13-16 May, 2012
- UNESCO Regional High-Level Expert Meeting: Towards EFA 2015 and Beyond. Bangkok, Thailand, 9-11 May, 2012
- Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Regional Thematic Consultation in the Asia-Pacific. Bangkok, Thailand, 28 February – 1 March, 2013



- International Conference on Learning Cities. Lifelong Learning for All: Inclusion, prosperity, and sustainability in cities, Beijing, China, 21 – 23 October, 2013
- UNESCO Forum on Global Citizenship Education: Preparing learners for the challenges of the 21st century, Bangkok, 2 – 4 December, 2013

DVV International also convened several regional conferences together with partner and ensured dissemination of outcomes through publications like:

- *At the Sunset of MDG and EFA: Lifelong Learning, National Development and the Future. Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All. Outcomes from Three Interwoven Conferences.* Vang Vieng 2014
- *Education and Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Development. Asia-Pacific Regional Consultations,* Vientiane 2015
- *On the Eve of EFA and MDG – Shaping the Post 2015 Education and Development Agendas: Contributions to the Debate and a Collection of Documents.* Vientiane 2015

After Incheon two volumes, one for national and for international levels were published on *Agenda 2030 – Education and Lifelong Learning in the Sustainable Development Goals* (IPE, 75). They were deepened through follow-up of shorter interventions on “Knowledge, skills and competencies” and on “Inclusion and Diversity” as key to active and global citizenship in subsequent issues of AED for the years 2015-2017.

UIL invited Hinzen to an important and timely “Think Tank Meeting on Lifelong Learning. Lifelong Learning in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Implications for Policy and Practice” in Hamburg in September 2016. The occasion was also chosen to award UIL Honorary Fellowships to colleagues who had been active in the CONFINTEA, EFA and Sustainable Development Goal processes and in preparation for the CONFINTEA VI Mid-term Review a year later where all UIL Honorary Fellows were invited to share their work presenting, moderating, drafting, and reporting.

During that decade a huge number and variety of ALE, lifelong learning and development-related issues on literacy and livelihoods, training in higher education, poverty reduction policies and trends, migration and integration were taken up and followed through. Here are a few where we were involved in one way or the other:

- *Skills and literacy training for better livelihoods. A review of approaches and experiences.* This was a commissioned study to DVV International by the Human Development Sector, African Region of the World Bank, published in 2002.
- *Training of adult educators in institutions of higher education. A focus on Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe* was the compilation of documents from *A Research and Conference Report*, University of Pecs, Hungary 2003.
- *International conference on adult education and poverty reduction: A global priority* was co-sponsored by DVV International and the World Bank in Gaborone, Botswana in 2004, with a report published in *Adult Education and Development*.



- *TEACH - Teaching adult educators in continuing and higher education* was a project carried out by the University Torun, Poland with fifteen partners from ten countries, to develop new modules within ERASMUS, funded by EU 2005.
- *Adult education trends and issues* was a European Association for the Education of Adults study by restricted EU tender to review the situation of the sector in European Member Countries. It helped to develop in 2006 the EU Communication *It is never too late to learn; the Action plan. It is always a good time to learn*, followed.
- *Adult Education for Learning Societies – Asian and European Perspectives for a Globalized World* in Beijing, October/November 2006 brought together as partners ICAE, ASPBAE, European Association for the Education of Adults, DVV International and Chinese colleagues.
- *Adults' Right to Learn: Convergence, Solidarity, and Action* the International Council for Adult Education World Assembly in Nairobi, January 2007 prepared early for CONFINTEA VI; its flagship journal *Convergence* followed with a special issue.
- *The right to education in the context of migration and integration* was the theme of an international conference in 2007 to inform and prepare for programmes to train those involved in policy and practice.
- An international conference, *Financing Adult Education for Development*, was held in Bonn Conferences on Adult Education and Development in June 2009. DVV International's major partners were UIL, the International Council for Adult Education and ASPBAE. It was a bold attempt to follow up an earlier Addis Ababa conference on Financing for Development, and Financing Education for Development, which took place in the Philippines.

We have taken one important thread in the long story of work for development led mostly from UNESCO and UIL with many different IGO, INGO and local partners. Central themes include the importance of partnership across government and civil society; the need for continuity and staying power; the capacity of different kinds of bodies to work at different levels with different sectors, and to contribute from different positions and strengths from global to very local. With different circumstances and kinds of power to influence and deliver, restricted resources and organisational regulation, partners must work together and rely on high trust and clear long-term purposes.

Other intergovernmental players have also been important: the World Bank, other sectoral UN agencies; and especially for us the ever more significant civil society organisations which enjoys deeper local reach and stronger anchorage than many government instrumentalities. Our story is incomplete. We must make mention of diverse national and sub-national associations and pressure groups. Duke has operated principally in the civil society arena with bodies like ICAE and ASPBAE, and in more recent years with new civil society and higher education networks like PASCAL and PIMA, using annual conferences, workshops and consultations, publications ranging from monographs and scholarly articles to manuals, guides and lobbying papers. This work has closely supported, foreshadowed, field-tested and reached out beyond the UNESCO Global Learning Cities Network, constantly pressing the education and university sectors to look outward and engage with the multiple crises



confronting civilisation. Adult learning and education, like lifelong learning, needs to energise and be driven bottom-up from local community knowledge, needs and resources; using and counterbalancing the top-down policy formation and leadership of each level of government.

6. Still active – never too late, always so much to do

Good global policy-making is important. So is productive high-quality local practice. This has been our understanding throughout professional life and beyond, now in the most active of retirements. After all, societies cannot afford to let older adults go to waste: there are more of them than ever, with extended life expectancy, and fewer people of regular working age. There are ever more opportunities to get involved in key processes by providing knowledge, expertise and experience to partners now in the driving seat, who may still want some support. Most especially ‘western’ governments tend to reduce their field of activity, leaving more to the private and civil societies to guide and perhaps to contest.

We were happy therefore to support a research project on the *Wider benefits of Community Learning Centers* of the National Institute of Lifelong Education (NILE) in the Republic of Korea, started with and the UIL Hamburg in 2015; and to write the *Synthesis Report on the State of Community Learning Centers in Six Countries: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Thailand, and Vietnam*, based on country reports prepared by in-country institutions and authors. Then in 2016 the Ho Chi Minh City-based regional Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization Centre for Lifelong Learning (SEAMEO CELL) tendered for support the *Development of a Lifelong Learning Agenda for the ASEAN countries*. We undertook this, again a full workload commenting on the 11 country case studies, looking at specifics of best practice – like gender mainstreaming, skills for the future, second chance education, learning society, community learning centres – and helping with a synthesis report.

Third, the European Union in 2016-17 funded “Enhancing Lifelong Learning through Modernizing the Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education Systems” in Macedonia. This tender, went to a British Council-led consortium with DVV International and local Lifelong Learning Centre as partners. We prepared *Development of a National Strategy for Lifelong Learning* which at the time of writing is before the new Macedonian Government. This calls for embedding lifelong learning into all levels and elements of a national education system.

The University of Iasi, Romania, and the Moldova State University in Chisinau, were jointly hosting the international conference on “Education for values – Continuity and Context”. Both authors were involved in the preparation, and presented *Good at what? Good for what? Higher education values in an age of discontinuity* (Duke, 2018) as well as *Skills and values in adult education and lifelong learning. Comparing commitments, documents and recommendations at global level* (Hinzen, 2018). The conference created a good opportunity to follow-up discussions which we were involved on the global level into countries of



Central-Europe, formerly part of the Eastern bloc. Already in 1993 Hinzen had been coming to Moldova for the first time while visiting the DVV International office in Bucharest with the intention to explore options to start an office in Chisinau also. However, that had to wait for some time. During this stay Prof. Hinzen gave a public lecture on “Adult and higher education as lifelong learning for sustainable development – with some biographical reflections on receiving the Doctor Honoris Causa title from the Moldova State University”.

A rich experience most recently was the PASCAL Conference in Suwon in September 2018, and the Lifelong Learning Distinguished Scholars Forum at Ajou University. They had just been successfully completed when a small group of international colleagues were invited to join just another meeting before leaving later that evening. We were confronted with the idea of a smaller research project looking into the idea and practice of study circles. The background is that the NILE is interested in cases from other countries where such study circles help adults successfully to continue their education and learning. Findings could then be used to advocate for Government support to provide professional, financial or technical services to run such study circles complementary to all the other lifelong learning programs and activities on provincial and local level. The discussions between Korean and international colleagues started with some clarifying of terms and understandings, followed by some experiences and then resulted into special sort of study circle which is now exchanging and communicating via E-mail and WhatsApp. It seems that following a common format for presenting the cases we are collecting examples from a number of countries including Australia, England, Italy, Norway, Sweden, and Scotland. If all goes well then we shall have this collection of cases ready only a few months after Suwon, and a more analytical part can begin, maybe resulting in some sort of synthesis report that can be presented to NILE for further discussion. As such it would be a valuable spin-off effect of a larger international gathering (Duke and Hinzen, 2018).

Another outcome of joint PASCAL and PIMA activities is a report *Towards Good Active Ageing for All in a Context of Deep Demographic Changes and Dislocation* (Kearns and Reghenzani-Kearns, 2018). The Special Interest Group of PIMA on Learning in Later Life has been working on this for some time, and with more than fifteen case studies from different countries and continents as well as a presentation of a conceptual framework and conclusions it may contribute to bring higher attention to an important aspect of changes in our societies – as well as in this life span and biography of the two authors writing.

7 Conclusion – how to get to be doing better

What in this mass of detail do we see of wider importance? There has been significant progress: not only in greater awareness and deeper understanding of development needs, but about what is needed to turn policy onto action. Recognition of and greater stature for ALE as a means to development and an individual human right has improved: from post-World Two creation of the United Nations system, especially of Education within UNESCO, UIL within that, to the original later revised UNESCO Recommendation of 1976, and the asserted Right



to Learn in 1985. From the minuscule place of ALE and lifelong learning in the Millennium Development Goals to its greater prominence in the Sustainable Development Goals, GRALE provides a means of regular monitoring. The twelve-yearly global CONFINTEA reviews keep adult learning and education on the United Nations agenda. Illiteracy has been reduced along with absolute poverty; and ‘development’ no longer means following always many steps behind wealthy old post-colonial nations.

A chronic problem remains. Education is a vital element of social systems and structure, but commonly fails to connect with other elements of social life and governance. Like other sectors and levels of government it tends to become semi-closed: an internally self-referencing system more preoccupied with internal system affairs than with the changing needs of society.

Universities and higher education are a most publicly observed now much criticised example. They seek to play globally for prestige and resources, and turn away from seemingly less prestigious more local realities. Their function is to conserve and transmit existing as well as to create new knowledge. Likewise the function of school and college education is to reproduce social structure as well as to equip students as new members of the society to take required and often as yet unknowable roles. ‘Development’ is about change rather than reproducing present structures and power relations. The failure of a higher education system to connect well with fast-changing needs exposes it to fundamental questioning.

Big systems tend to look inward rather than out into the context of society. ‘Learning’ means learning by all kinds of cities and regions, communities and networks as well as individuals. Educational institutions must be able as open systems to be learning organisations able to absorb data, reflect and adapt. Learning is evident if behaviour changes.

Likewise for development-oriented organisations from the United Nations system: and elements like UNESCO and within that UIL down to the lowliest INGO and local NGO: all need to search their hearts and records for what makes them tick, and how far their own organisational survival and career concerns puts mission and public service at risk.

Organisations involved in development need likewise to scrutinise performance in terms of open collaboration and partnership across ‘borders’: between levels of government; between public, private and civil society bodies; across separate governmental sector responsibilities like health and agriculture, social security and industry. Collaboration is essential to achieve sustained development; if they work alone the Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved.

Specifically apropos adult learning and education and the Sustainable Development Goals, every goal and sector needs to build into its culture and daily conduct support for learning throughout life in all areas of activity: to teach fishing, not just to provide fish. Individual responsibility for learning does not absolve government of the duty to support the right to learn by means of formal and non-formal education and training provision. It does not remove the State’s duty to build support for adult learning and education into core



infrastructure, and to provide resources to sustain learning through adult learning and education.

The well-meant shift of language from ‘education and training’ to learning was meant to democratise education: putting the learner at the centre and reminding us what our business is. But it has also confused, with unintended consequences. Making each person’s learning central has weakened a mandatory legal requirement to provide education and training: as if learning happens in all ways and places anyway so why pay for what comes naturally? Any such argument must be decisively refuted.

More difficult still: all those involved in development, with whatever influence and power they possess, need to work in, on and through their different organisations and cultural settings to sustain the values and directions that the Sustainable Development Goals demand. This can mean at least whistleblowing, and political and civil action to subvert any misguided, ill-conceived or wrong policies and deeds that undercut different Sustainable Development Goals. There is here a personal dilemma; and a need for moral courage that confronts office-holders in many kinds of organisations, public, private and civic, global and local. How to weigh up a principled stand that may cost a job and even liberty or life, against ambiguously nuanced temporising that ends up first losing direction and then entirely losing the plot?

On top of this personal dilemma there is a dilemma in reality: full international support for education is either lacking, or at least too small. The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015 states that “the Dakar pledge that no country should be thwarted in achieving the EFA goals due to lack of resources has been one of the biggest failures of the EFA period”. (UNESCO, 2015, 279) So far there is no firm indication that Belem and SDG4-Education 2030 have a better future in respect of international financial backing.



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