



INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY
Initiative in Education & Lifelong Learning

Certificate Programme

International Dimensions of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning

Unit 3

The Role of International Organisations

International Dimensions of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning

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Units of Certificate in International Dimensions of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning

Unit 1 Historical Foundations of Adult Education

Unit 2 Philosophical Approaches in Adult Education

Unit 3 Role of International Organisations

Unit 4 Adult Education Policies in International Contexts

Unit 5 National and Regional Experiences

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Introduction

In the context of adult education, “international” suggests, in addition to contractual agreements, people belonging to a cultural awareness that extends beyond national borders and has the potential to foster mutual respect and, thus, peace. Looking at the development of international awareness in adult education leads to the conclusion that the field acquired an identifiable international orientation early on, first in practice and then in academic theory. The dramatic events of World War II brought to the fore the need to learn to live together in peace. This need raised the awareness of the tremendous role international adult education can play on a global level in fostering qualities such as mutual respect, understanding, sympathy, and solidarity, qualities that flourish with education, are destroyed by ignorance, and are crucial for creating an international atmosphere conducive to peace. Thus, the field of adult education and its international dimension gained more recognition and, with it, momentum. In institutional terms, this translated into the creation of international organisations, or specialised bodies within larger ones, dedicated to the education of adults.

Learning Objectives

After reading this module, you should be familiar with:

- The major international organisations in the field of adult education
- The key roles of international organisations
- The main instruments used to perform these roles

3.1 Major International Organisations and Networks in the Field of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning

There have been numerous forms of institutional responses, both governmental and non-governmental (NGOs), and some of these organisations are described briefly in this module. They were selected according to their prominence and scale of operations and typify internationalist adult education. They include, but are not limited to:

Organisations whose scope includes adult education and lifelong learning:

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO),
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD),
- The World Bank (WB),
- Action Aid, and The Open Society Institute (OSI)

Organisations dedicated to adult education and lifelong learning:

- The International Council of Adult Education (ICAE),
- The Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE),
- The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA),
- The Latin American Council for Adult Education (CEAAL),

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Nicaraguan Literacy Campaign

The Nicaraguan Literacy Campaign or the Sandinista Literacy campaign was a popular movement in Nicaragua that was undertaken under the Sandinista government. It aspired to remove widespread illiteracy in the country. It was also awarded the prestigious UNESCO Literacy Award.

It occurred between March 3 and August 23, 1980. It was essentially participatory and was a success due to the involvement of volunteers from various parts of the country including housewives and government officials.

The following webpages provide a little more detail of the kind of work that this movement aimed at and achieved.

- <http://www.ipsnews.net/2009/04/nicaragua-literacy-campaign-changing-womensquos-lives/>
- <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001460/146007e.pdf>

- The Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (dvv International),
- The International Association Znanie, and
- The Global Campaign for Education (GCE).

UNESCO (1945) is the United Nations (UN) agency dedicated to, among other goals, education. It was created with the ambitious purpose of establishing the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind in order to prevent the outbreak of another world war. Its constitution states that “since war begins in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed” (UNESCO, 2009, p. 1).

As of 2005, the organisation had 191 member states and 6 associate members in the fields of education, science, culture, and communication (UNESCO, 2009). Although not meant to deal strictly with the education of adults but with education in general, UNESCO has been a major contributor to the field of adult education in most countries. It is also important to recognise that UNESCO acts in co-operation with other UN agencies, such as UNICEF (United Nations International Children’s Fund), the ILO (International Labour Organisation), and the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), to work toward common goals.

By 2015, UNESCO plans to have contributed to achieving the following Development Goals of the UN Millennium Declaration:

- Halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty
- Achieve universal primary education
- Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development (UN, 2014)

The **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** (1961) is an economic organisation of 30 countries, which achieves a global reach by maintaining active relationships with some 70 other countries, as well as with numerous NGOs and civil societies. In the area of education, the OECD is best known for its publications and statistics and for individual country surveys and reviews. It also produces policy recommendations and offers a library of documents, such as working papers, guidelines, best practices, and legal instruments, based on its research, as well as a statistical database (OECD, 2006).

The **World Bank (WB)** (1944) is composed of two development institutions owned by 184 member countries: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA). In the sphere of adult education and lifelong learning, the WB is best known as a source of funding and technical assistance. The IBRD focuses on middle income and credit-worthy poor countries, while the IDA focuses on the world's poorest countries. Between 1995 and 2006, the WB conducted 51 projects in the sector of adult literacy and non-formal education in some 37 countries. In the area of tertiary education, it had or still has 389 projects, and in vocational training, 261 projects, in a large number of countries (World Bank , 2014).

Action Aid (1972), an international development agency, works with local partners in 42 countries worldwide to fight poverty and injustice and to help people gain their rights to food, shelter, work, education, and health care and have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. Action Aid International is a member of over 100 alliances and networks. In the field of adult education, it is best known for its innovative approach called "Reflect," which fuses the theories of Paulo Freire with participatory methodologies. In 2003, the Reflect programme was awarded the UN International Literacy Prize in recognition of Action Aid's exceptional work in the fight against illiteracy. This approach is now used by 350 organisations in 60 countries (ActionAid , 2014).

The **Open Society Institute (OSI)** (1993) was created by investor and philanthropist George Soros to support his foundations in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. These foundations were established, starting in 1984, to help countries make the transition from communism. The OSI expanded the activities of the Soros Foundations network to other areas of the world¹; it now encompasses more than 60 countries. A private operating and grant-making foundation, the OSI aims to shape public policy so as to promote democratic governance, human rights, and economic, legal, and social reform. At the same time, it works to build alliances across borders and continents on issues such as combating corruption and human rights abuses. Most of its initiatives are administered by OSI-New York or OSI-Budapest and implemented in co-operation with Soros Foundations in various countries and regions. These initiatives are grouped around the areas of economic reform, education at all levels, human rights, legal reform and public administration, media and communications, public health, and arts and culture.

In the area of adult education, the programmes and initiatives include:

- Education Support Program — works to facilitate reforms in education and national policy development in Central, Eastern, and South East Europe, the former Soviet Union, and Mongolia
- International Higher Education Support Program (HESP) — promotes higher education within the humanities and social sciences in the same areas as the Education Support Program
- International Policy Fellowships Program — supports research by leaders in open societies in countries throughout the Soros Foundations network
- Middle East and North Africa Initiative (MENA) — operates as a grant programme on issues ranging from knowledge and information to women's rights

¹ OSI and Soros Foundations' geographical areas are: Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Central Eurasia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, South Eastern Europe, Turkey and the Middle East, and the United States.

- Roma Initiatives — focus on improving the social, political, and economic situation of Romani populations in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans
- Scholarship Programs — provide support for fellowships and scholarships throughout the world (Open Society Foundations, 2014).

The **International Council of Adult Education (ICAE)** (1973) is a global partnership of adult learners and educators, and their organisations, and others who promote the use of adult learning as a tool for informed participation of people and sustainable development. The ICAE promotes lifelong learning as a necessary component for people to contribute creatively to their communities and live in independent and democratic societies. The council contends that adult education and lifelong learning are deeply linked to:

- Social, economic, and political justice
- Equality of gender relations
- The universal right to learn
- Living in harmony with the environment
- Respect for human rights and recognition of cultural diversity
- Peace
- The active involvement of women and men in decisions affecting their lives

The **Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE)** (1964) constitutes a network of organisations and individuals involved in formal and non-formal adult education, working with and through NGOs, community organisations, government agencies, universities, trade unions, indigenous peoples, women's organisations, the media, and other institutions of civil society across the Asia Pacific. The ASPBAE's fundamental purpose is to defend and advance the lifelong learning rights of adults throughout the Asia-Pacific region in order to gain control of their destinies.

The **European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)** (1953) is a NGO with 120 member organisations in 41 countries. Originally known as the European Bureau of Adult Education, its purpose is to link and represent European organisations that are directly involved in adult learning; the majority of them are national NGOs dedicated to adult education, either formal, non-formal, informal, or a combination of these. The EAEA's overall goal is to support and disseminate its members' engagement in activities, partnerships, policy and curricula development, research, and provision of social inclusion and cohesion that encourages democratic participation and combats poverty and discrimination (EAEA, 2014).

The **Latin American Council for Adult Education (CEAAL)** (1982) was formed as an association of 195 NGOs and other civil organisations from 21 Latin American and Caribbean countries. Although the NGOs affiliated with it are free to develop various forms of educational activities, they all have a strong commitment to strengthening civil society. CEAAL is identified with the popular adult education movement throughout Latin America and the Caribbean and as a pillar of civil society in the region. Its principal mission is to foster and strengthen the training and professional development of popular educators and contribute to the building of democratic societies in the region. CEAAL functions as a platform for collaboration and for the launch of policy initiatives (CEAAL, 2014).

The Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (dvv International) (1953) was established as an umbrella organisation for the provincial associations of adult education centres. These centres derived from the historical German Folk High Schools (Volkhochschulen), their roots going back to the workers' adult education movements of the late 19th century; today, they are public continuing education centres. The institute operates both nationally and internationally. Internationally, it co-operates with state, civil society, and university partner organisations engaged in adult education in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Europe. Their broad aim is to enable people to participate more fully in social, cultural, and political life at all levels, from local to international.

To this end, adult education is viewed as an integral part of lifelong learning and as a tool for advancing democracy, combating poverty, and strengthening self-help initiatives (dv International, 2014).

The **International Association (IA) Znanie** (1947) unites republican, regional, urban, and local societies, Znanie, of the Russian Federation.² It inherited the all-union society, Znanie, which was formed in 1947 and eventually boasted 200 million members throughout the ex-Soviet Union; its main purpose was the popularisation of science. Today, it is an international union of about 30 NGOs from around the world and is considered the most authoritative NGO in the field of knowledge dissemination. Its members are educational organisations from the United States, Italy, Japan, Mongolia, China, Vietnam, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and other countries. The activity of the IA Znanie and its member organisations is focused on the popularisation and dissemination of humanities and technical knowledge (International Association Znanie, 2014).

The **Global Campaign for Education (GCE)** (1999) is an international networking campaign to promote education as a human right and to mobilise public pressure on governments and the international community to fulfill their promises to provide free, compulsory public basic education. Although its main focus is on children, adults — especially women and the disadvantaged — are also within its mandate. The GCE is not an organisation in the main sense of the word, but rather a campaign and, thus, a movement. However, given how its membership is conceptualised, it can also be seen as an international network committed to promoting education. Membership in the GCE is open to independent civil society organisations or coalitions, international or regional organisations, and coalitions or networks of national organisations.

² Znanie unites organisations from Azerbaijan Republic, Republic of Armenia, Republic of Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Republic of Moldova, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Uzbekistan, Ukraine, and Estonia

Members, which include Action Aid, CEAAL, and ASPBAE, meet every three years in a world assembly to determine the future direction of the campaign. Tandon (1987) has argued that “a network is the most efficient and flexible mode of sharing information, experiences and ideas across like-minded persons, groups and organisations spread geographically and working on diverse issues” (Tandon, 1987, p. 5).

3.2 Key Roles of Adult Education International Organisations & Networks

The scope of this module includes identifying and delineating those roles that are crucial for promoting and supporting adult education on an international level and that are common to all major international organisations working in the field. In practice, however, no instrument serves only one role and roles permeate and blend to form a unitary working system.

3.2.1 Raising Awareness

A prominent role of any international organisation working to promote adult education is to identify the social needs in this area and then draw attention to them. These needs are always in organic contact with the major social issues of the day, be they the struggle for a more democratic society, for literacy, for human rights, for environmental protection, for gender equity, or against HIV/AIDS. In raising awareness about the educational needs of adults, these organisations also raise awareness about critical global issues and how they interconnect. International organisations give visibility to these issues and may serve as an important advocate for them. Most often, this awareness raising is performed in conjunction with seeking funds for programme support.

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Each One Teach One

“Each one teach one” is a term that originated in USA during the time of slavery. It was popular among African American slaves who were given no access to education. It implied that every educated slave attempt to teach someone else to help educate and eventually empower people who were oppressed under the system of slavery.

The name has also been associated with the work of Dr. Frank Laubach in Phillipines.

It has also been used to refer to Alternative Schools, i.e. schools that do not follow traditional methods and curricula.

The collaborative work of various international organisations in the sphere of literacy exemplifies awareness raising. Adult illiteracy has been long identified as one of the great social problems of our time. As early as 1946, UNESCO drew attention to this issue at its first General Conference.

At the second World Adult Education Conference, organised by UNESCO in Montreal in 1960, participants put forth a recommendation that led to the launching of a vast campaign against illiteracy in 1964 in Teheran, known as the Experimental World Literacy Program (Belanger, 1995).

During the last few decades, international organisations have employed various instruments to raise public awareness about the basic learning needs of millions of adults and to mobilise financial resources. In 1982, the ICAE proposed an international literacy year; its subsequent awareness raising and collaboration with other international organisations and networks led to an International Literacy Year (ILY) being proclaimed at the 1990 World Conference on Education for All (WCEA), which was organised by UNESCO (Hall, Building a global learning network: The international council for adult education, 1995). This conference was particularly important to the theory of adult literacy because it expanded the vision of literacy from the generic skills of reading and writing, and calculating to include the human right of lifelong learning, thus eliminating the term's stigmatizing connotation. Moreover, the conference participants adopted a programmatic document known as the World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs. Ten years later, the international community met again at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal. Because many countries were still far from reaching the goals of the previous conference, the Education for All (EFA) commitment was reaffirmed and six key educational goals were identified in a document known as the Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments. Since then, UNESCO, as the lead agency, has continued its efforts to mobilise and harmonise international efforts to transform the EFA into a global movement that provides quality basic education for all children, youth, and adults.

In addition to the EFA and the ILY, the most important awareness-raising instruments are:

- International Literacy Day — chosen to be September 8, it is a reminder to the world of the importance of literacy. On this day, events are organised worldwide to raise public awareness and support.

- International Literacy Prizes
- The UN Literacy Decade (UNLD) — under the slogan “Literacy as Freedom,” the UNLD is attempting to achieve a 50% improvement in adult literacy by 2015.
- The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
- The Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) — aims to create learning opportunities for illiterate adults, with a particular focus on women, in 34 countries where the literacy rate is under 50% or the illiterate population is larger than 10 million.
- The Non-Formal Education Management Information System (NFE-MIS)
- The Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Program (LAMP)
- The UN Millennium Development Goals

All of these awareness-raising instruments are strategic frameworks in which various actors co-operate:

- UN organisations such as UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and the ILO member states
- Bilateral and multilateral institutions such as the European Union (EU), the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO), the OECD, and the World Bank
- NGOs and community-based organisations such as Action Aid, African Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA), ICAE, ASPBAE, CEAAL, Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), Education International (EI), and International Reading Association (IRA)
- Foundations and the private sector such as the International Research Foundation for Open Learning (IRFOL) (UNESCO, 2009).

3.2.2 The Normative Role

International adult education organisations also have an important normative³ role. This role involves:

- Making recommendations for the adoption of specific legislation to govern the field
- Advocating the adoption of policy or changes in existing policy
- Creating programmatic designs for the future
- Establishing guidelines for member accountability
- Setting minimal standards of access, quality, and effectiveness and ensuring that these are respected
- Monitoring the application of policies and guidelines
- Public reporting of their findings

As Knoll (2002) has noted, there is no hard and fast distinction between individual academic publications, such as university research papers on adult education, and those issued by agencies of international organisations, since the people involved are often the same. Since numerous professors of adult education continue to contribute academic expertise to adult education international organizations, the major international organisations and networks now constitute centres of excellence. More than that, they have the potential to offer the necessary means for large-scale research, especially on an empirical basis, that cannot be handled by an individual or even by a university. Examples are the statistics on literacy compiled by the OECD from industrialised countries, the DELPHI project in Europe (which investigates the mentality and profiles of adult education and adult educators in European countries), and the literacy statistics compiled by UNESCO. The combination of the two factors offers international organisations the means to provide the knowledge base and the intellectual leadership necessary for policy development. As such, they constitute an “operational medium” for policy development.

³ It refers to something that needs to be done according to a value position, that is related to the making of norms.

The major international organisations described earlier in this module have proven to be prolific laboratories of ideas that were seminal to the subsequent development of theory and practice of adult education. Examples are the ICAE's contribution to the concept of popular education and participatory research, Action Aid's "Reflect" concept, and UNESCO's view on literacy and lifelong learning. In these ways, they have contributed to the field's philosophical foundation through policy and its general advancement through research.

Other examples of normative instruments are:

- UNESCO's Fauré Report (1972) and its Recommendation Concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace, and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted in 1974 (Belanger, 1995)
- The Right to Learn Declaration, adopted in 1985 in Paris at the fourth World Conferences on Adult Education (WCAE)
- The Hamburg Declaration, from the 5th International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) in 1997
- The Dakar Framework for Action, from the World Education Forum in 2000 in Senegal
- The Lifelong Learning Programme developed by the EAEA for the 2007-2013 period and adopted in October 2006 by the European Parliament; it is built on four pillars — the Comenius, the Erasmus, the Leonardo da Vinci, and the Grundtvig programmes — and united by the "transversal" programme

3.2.3 The Role of Technical Co-operation

Several functions — programme development, the training of adult educators, support for regional and national programmes, advisory services, the development of conceptual tools, financial support, action research, pilot projects, evaluation, and monitoring — can be grouped under the term "technical knowledge."

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All or some combination of these constitute a significant and resource-savvy role of international organisations, a role that may facilitate co-operation among them in these areas.

During the 1960s and the 1970s, the technical aspect of adult education had less a collaborating aspect and more the character of one-way assistance. Many organisations from the industrialised and rich countries stepped in to try to help newly independent countries start their adult education programmes. Financial aid was provided mainly by UN organisations, bilateral government efforts, the World Bank, church organisations, and NGOs; these donor agencies also developed programmes, established guidelines and then trained and sent out staff to carry out these programmes. In short, they wanted to be responsible for the expenditure of funds and accountable for programme evaluations. This philosophy of aid has since made way for a new approach: collaboration. It is now recognised that not all innovative programmes and methods implemented by industrialised countries are necessarily successful and that developing countries are an equally rich source of expertise and valuable ideas. In the words of Benner-Cassara:

Where “aid” has been given in a spirit of collaboration in the development of ideas, methods, solutions to problems, etc., all parties have learned from each other to the benefit of education for adults in the North and the South. (Benner-Cassara, 1995, p. xi)

In 1975, Canadian Roby Kidd, a founding member and the first secretary-general of the ICAE, went so far as to question the usefulness of “overseas” training for adult educators on the grounds that people learn best where they have the opportunity to try out and practice specific skills under conditions that are exact or similar to what they will meet in the professional world for which they are to be trained (Hall, Building a global learning network: The international council for adult education, 1995). A 1988 study that observed the experience of students from Ghana, Kenya, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania who had attended adult education training courses at five U.K. universities identified two main groups of adult educators: those whose main business was education (teachers,

organisers, administrators) and those in sectoral development (e.g., in health, agriculture, or engineering) whose work included an educational component (Fordham, 1988). The study itself was an early international collaborative research effort, because it was conducted by a team drawn from the five countries who adopted “a totally international and cross-cultural approach” (Fordham, 1988, p. 402). The researchers adopted what came to be called a “crossover” model, whereby the African members of the team conducted the U.K.-based research and vice versa; they found some merit in the overseas training.

An international organisation that has distinguished itself in the technical cooperation role is the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (dvv International). With financial assistance from the Ministry of Economic Cooperation of the ex-federal Germany, the dvv International works in partnership with various adult-education actors from Africa, Asia, and Latin America in the development of:

- Initial and further training programmes for adult educators
- Institutional forms of adult education in urban areas, with emphasis on vocational training
- Basic education in rural areas, with particular consideration given to agricultural production, marketing, and income generation
- Radio work as a low-cost form of mass media
- Programmes to produce teaching and learning materials
- Programmes on basic health, such as hygiene, nutrition, and preventive and curative medicine
- Functional literacy activities
- Publication of the journal *Adult Education and Development* in English, Spanish, and French, which constitutes a forum of communication and information exchange (Dolff, 1988).

The dvv International remains active, and the majority of these programmes are still functioning. The recent actions of the dvv International and its partners in the region triggered by the tsunami disaster in Asia during Christmas 2004, followed by the severe earthquake that shook the islands of Sumatra in Easter 2005, are noteworthy. In response to the tsunami, ASPBAE called for donations from its members and coordinated aid activities. Many ASPBAE members, especially those in India, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia, took immediate action after the tsunami, providing emergency assistance and then making a commitment to long-term socio-economic reconstruction, using methods that included adult education. In India, the dvv International collaborated with its four partners: SAHAYI Centre for Collective Learning and Action, which offered practical assistance in the most damaged district of Kerala; UNNATI Organisation for Development Education, based in Gujarat, which helped to prepare applications for assistance from various donors; Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), which donated one day's wages to the victims of the disaster and gave support to an NGO called Rural Organisation for Awareness and Development (ROAD); and NIRANTAR, the Centre for Women and Education, which co-founded the Delhi Tsunami Relief Committee and raised funds for people affected in the regions of Tamil Nadu and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Schindele, 2005).

Working closely with ASPBAE, dvv International also contributed to helping women who were victims of the tsunami in Sri Lanka. In Indonesia, the Indonesian Society for Social Transformation (INSIST), an NGO based in Yogyakarta, Java, consisting of a network of 14 member organisations and part of a coalition of 21 NGOs from Sumatra and the rest of Indonesia, also partnered with dvv International to set up emergency aid. Two other important NGO partners in Indonesia are the Women Headed Household Empowerment Programme (PEKKA), based in Jakarta, which helps single mothers and their children to escape poverty, and PESADA, based in the Batak region of Sumatra, which works with disadvantaged population groups, especially women and children (Schindele, 2005).

3.2.4 The Role of Promoting International Co-operation

The commandment of learning and the aspect of solidarity require the field of adult education and lifelong learning to develop into a global effort in order to realise a fairer world, improve global governance, and attain the goals of poverty alleviation, sustainable development, and the reduction of global unemployment (EAEA, 2014). International adult education organisations provide fecund soil for promoting international co-operation; through small, medium, or large meetings, seminars and conferences, and publications, they expand their networks and alliances, exchange experiences, disseminate good practices, build new partnerships, and create knowledge. Organisations such as UNESCO recognised the risk of restricting travel to those individuals, institutions, and governments able to afford it, which had led to a tendency toward unilateral intellectual co-operation between regions and cultures, and through international co-operation contributed to the reversal of this tendency (Belanger, 1995). For instance, the EAEA placed international co-operation within its core organizational functions, giving the same prominence to it as it did to influencing public policy.

In the field of international co-operation, the ICAE has distinguished itself by linking the field's most important international actors to attain a true global scope. Currently, the council not only represents more than 700 literacy, adult, and lifelong learning associations but also has national and sectoral members in over 50 countries and has united 8 regional member organisations, specifically, the North American Alliance for Popular and Adult Education (NAAPAE); the Caribbean Regional Council for Adult Education (CARCAE), CEAAL, EAEA, the Arab Network for Literacy and Adult Education (ANLAE), the Pan-African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (PAALAE), ASPBAE, and the Chinese Adult Education Association (CAEA). A recent example of international co-operation at work was the ICAE's 7th World Assembly, which took place January 17-19, 2007, in Nairobi, Kenya, with the theme of Adult's Right to Learn: Convergence, Solidarity and Action.

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