



CALL FOR ACTION **DEFENDING THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION** **OF YOUTH AND ADULTS**

Towards the Midterm Review of CONFITEA VI

Lima, August 17th, 2017

Context

Although some progress has been made in advancing the right to education, there are still many challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The Lima Declaration, signed by ministerial authorities of the region in 2014, recognized the need for increased progress in coverage, access and relevance of education in LAC, and committed to overcoming bottlenecks as well as liaising with UNESCO and civil society organizations to this end. These commitments were reaffirmed in 2015, when Member States of the region adopted the Education 2030 Framework for Action. In all these international commitments, Youth and Adult Education (YAE) was highlighted.

The International Adult Education Conferences, in particular CONFITEA V and CONFITEA VI, have given relevance and content to the right to education of youth and adults, which recently gained further strength with the approval of the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (2015) by UNESCO, giving normative force and new impetus to this field of education.

Affirming the right to YAE is fundamental, especially in a regional context of growing inequalities, weakening democracies and regressions in the field of human rights and gender equality. There is also a significant increase in migratory flows and a production and consumption model that leads to unsustainable exploitation of nature and depletion of natural resources.

Committed to overcoming these regional challenges and recognizing the importance of YAE towards this end, we launch this Call for Action in the context of the midterm review of CONFITEA VI and of the implementation process of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Youth and Adult Education as a right

Youth and Adult Education is an integral component of the human right to education and a specific field of knowledge and practices, which cannot be perceived as a merely compensatory, remedial or assistentialist modality.

We must address the right to education of young people and adults from an ethical, political, social and cultural perspective that promotes a holistic, comprehensive, transformative, emancipatory, intercultural education focused on peace, well-being and a harmonious and sustainable relationship with nature; which recognizes the contribution of formal, non-formal and informal education and the value of a social, community and cooperative education; which perceives learners as historical subjects of human rights, with significant life trajectories and diverse knowledge, overcoming negative and stigmatized perceptions of YAE learners and advancing towards other semantic fields, nourished by the tradition and contributions of popular education that characterizes the Latin America and the Caribbean region.

Popular education, from its political pedagogical approach, is linked to the development of social actors, is built on interdisciplinary, dialogic, solidarity and cooperative processes, and incorporates the subjectivity and interrelation of social actors with their context. It is an education based on ethics, which seeks personal and social transformation, and nurtures participatory democracy.

Recognizing and strengthening the contributions of popular education is of paramount importance in the consolidation of an education paradigm that contributes to a democratic and inclusive culture and to the autonomy of people, and which responds to economic and social models that seek well-being, justice and human dignity. In this sense, it is essential to leave behind instrumentalist, utilitarian and restrictive conceptions of education, which define YAE from an economicist perspective, oriented by market values and dynamics, and to promote structural changes in the economic and social model of our societies.

YAE is a fundamental human right, enforceable and justiciable, and lays the ground for the realization and greater enjoyment of other rights such as health, decent work, gender equality, as well as for the reaffirmation of fundamental freedoms and human dignity.

The full exercise and enjoyment of the right to education of young people and adults, in the context of lifelong education, implies recognizing the responsibility of the States. This requires that YAE be under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, while establishing links with other Ministries, with legal, political and financial frameworks, as well as mechanisms for the monitoring and evaluation of public policies. It also requires the production of

reliable data in order to build qualified statistical information, as well as increased research to deepen and advance this field of education.

A pertinent institutional framing of YAE must allow for the necessary articulation of integral, inclusive and integrated public policies, which are intersectoral and interdisciplinary, and which take into account social dialogue with the State as well as the full participation of all the actors and subjects of this field of education.

The promotion of justice

The human right to education, which includes YAE, is central to overcoming inequalities and multiple forms of discrimination, as well as to promoting justice. On the other hand, in a system based on the production of human capital, which values people according to their economic rate of return, YAE becomes a structurally discriminated field, since its learners and educators are attributed diminished value, essentially contradicting the very notion of human rights and ignoring their key contributions to the achievement of the SDGs. It is urgent that YAE learners and educators be valued and given more visibility within society, ensuring they are able to participate and advocate within this specific field.

It is important to stress that multiple forms of discrimination exist in the context of YAE, in particular regarding gender, persons deprived of their liberty and in conflict with the law, the elderly, migrants, people with disabilities, the LGBTI population, indigenous people and those living in rural areas. The discrimination and stigmatization suffered is a serious violation of their human rights.

To face this scenario, urgent visibility must be given to this problem and both universal public policies of YAE must be strengthened as well as affirmative actions must be put in place to address and repair these historical and structural discriminations. The right to equality and equity in education is an ethical imperative.

Participation

It is of paramount importance to create institutionalized and permanent spaces for the participation of the YAE educational community, in particular educators and learners, as well as actors of civil society organizations in decision-making processes regarding YAE, which

affect their lives and the political, social and environmental context that surrounds them. In this sense, such participation should encompass issues and decisions at all levels, including laws, policies and educational practices of YAE. A favourable political environment for their participation should be ensured and all the obstacles identified and removed.

Political-pedagogical processes

It is imperative to have curricula and pedagogical processes that recognize YAE's specificities and which acknowledge the life trajectories of educators and learners as well as their needs and expectations. In this sense, their previous learning, knowledge and experiences must be recognized and mobility from one field of learning to another facilitated. Their differentiated and non-scholar-centered trajectories must be valued, so as to ensure that principles of relevance, flexibility, adaptability and quality steer YAE policies and practices. This will contribute to contextual pedagogies, where territoriality is a core element, and to more inclusive, egalitarian practices that foster overcoming inequalities, including gender inequalities.

The professionalization of educators, including their training, salaries and working conditions, is a prerequisite for the fulfilment of the right to education of youth and adults. This implies policies and programs of initial and continued training, sensitive to the context, age, needs and interests of the learners, as well as good working policies and conditions that foster their professional development.

Having relevant educational materials, adequate infrastructure and sufficient equipment is also fundamental for the exercise of the right to education of youth and adults. Furthermore, the organization, structure and management of educational institutions in the field of YAE must respond to a democratic and participatory perspective.

Financing

The concept of YAE as a human right implies that the State as guarantor of this right must take charge of its financing, ensuring that public resources are invested in public education and that the decisions of YAE's policies are the result of democratic governance and active participation of its subjects in debates and decision-making processes.

There is an urgent need in Latin America and the Caribbean to overcome the limited allocation of financial and budgetary resources devoted to YAE- a reality that is present throughout the region and reflects the low priority given to this field of education. It is also necessary to ensure quality, public and transparent information on budgetary allocation and execution, ensuring the possibility of participatory processes in the definition of the budget, where YAE subjects have a role.

The implementation of tax justice is an urgent and pending priority, which would ensure sufficient resources for YAE and the right to education as a whole, in addition to other human rights.

We are concerned with the lack of reference and recognition of YAE in the framework of international cooperation, including in the Global Partnership for Education and the Financing for Development Conferences. Similarly, we are concerned that the few cooperation agencies that financed YAE are withdrawing from this field, as is the case with several international non-governmental organizations, with few exceptions. We must denaturalize this growing deprioritization of YAE, continually challenging it at the national, regional and international levels.

WE MAKE AN URGENT CALL FOR ACTION FOR THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION OF YOUTH AND ADULTS!

The CONFINTEA VI review process and the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean should provide an opportunity to address the profound life and educational gaps of youth and adults.

It is urgent for governments to make an effort to prioritize and guarantee the right to education of youth and adults in the context of lifelong education, committing to a relevant, transformative, and critical education, geared to the promotion of human dignity and social, economic and environmental justice.



Campaña
Latinoamericana
**por el Derecho
a la Educación**

Av. Professor Alfonso Bovero, 430, sala 10
01254-000 São Paulo - SP Brasil
Phone/Fax: (55-11) 3853-7900
campana@campanaderechoeducacion.org
www.campanaderechoeducacion.org