

Documentation

Adult Education and Development Conference (AEDC)

**“The Power of Adult Education to reach  
the Sustainable Development Goals”**

Weimar 7–8 May 2019

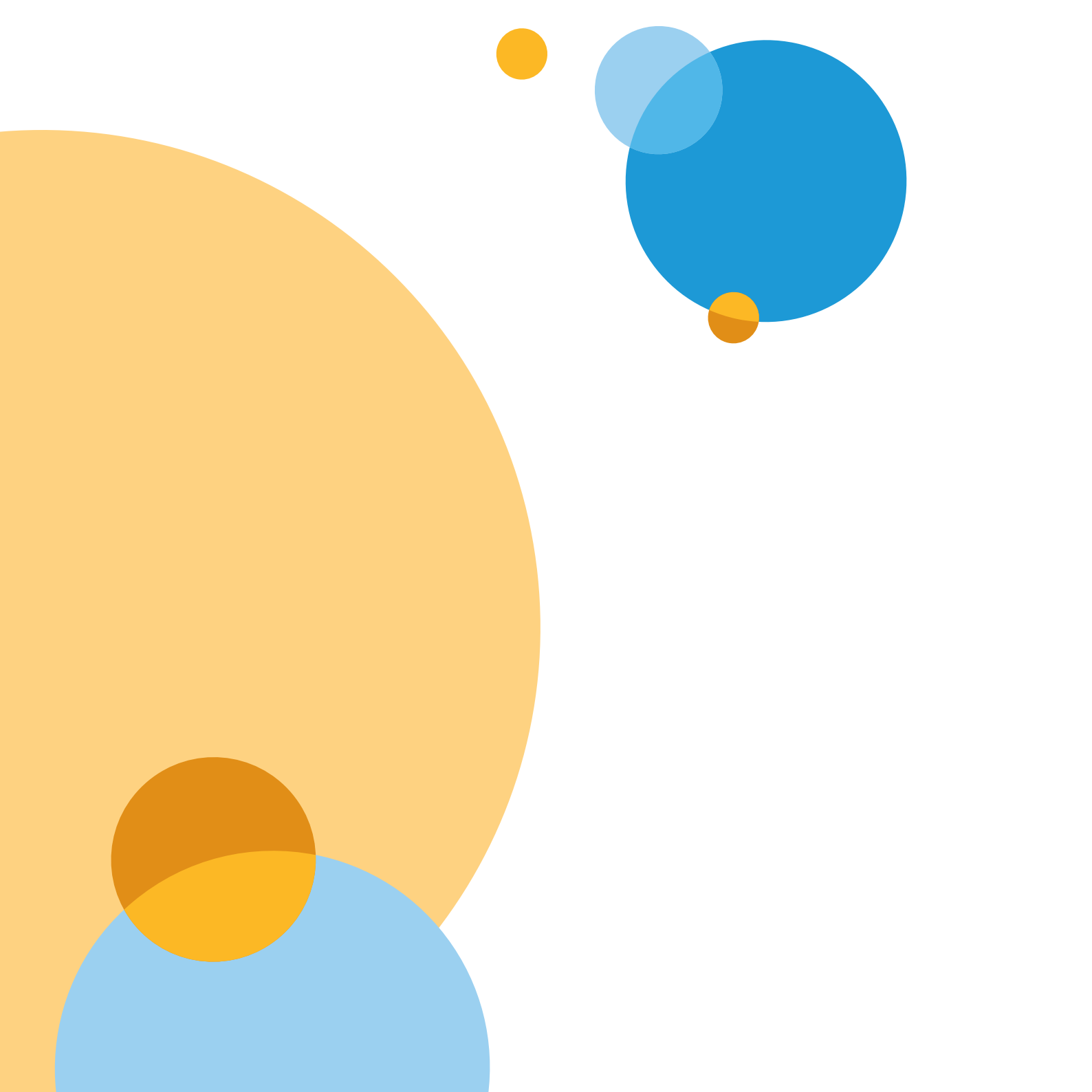
50th Anniversary DVV International

Weimar 7 May 2019

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# Preface



The Adult Education and Development Conferences (AEDC) organised by DVV International address topics of global relevance and strategic importance for the further promotion of adult

education. The sixth AEDC took place in Weimar, Germany in May

2019, and dealt with “The Power of Adult Education to Reach the Sustainable Development Goals”, with special attention paid to the education goal itself (SDG 4) and interlinkages to other goals of the 2030 Agenda. All in all, more than 150 experts, practitioners, researchers and other key stakeholders from DVV’s global network came together to share concepts and insights, and discuss challenges.

The conference topic was selected for good reasons. The international policy dialogue, as reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals and the Education 2030 Agenda for SDG 4, provides more and more importance to the promotion of lifelong learning. Taking the whole lifecycle of learners into account naturally calls for more attention and consideration of adult learning and education (ALE). However, due to its crosscutting and often cross-sectoral character, ALE is not explicitly located in SDG 4 and the 2030 Agenda, but implicitly covered in many targets and strategic documents. Thus, the Conference was meant to shed light on the potential of ALE for supporting the achievement of SDG4 and other goals of the development agenda.

This documentation is meant to share impressions and inform about the main results of the Conference. This also includes a set of key messages, which may be used for awareness-raising and lobbying to promote adult learning and education as one of the key drivers for development in the future.

This sixth Adult Education and Development Conference was a very special one, because it took place together with the celebration of the 50th anniversary of DVV International. Hence, the documentation also informs about the festivities that were attended by more than 250 guests from the global network of DVV International, including high-ranking speakers from the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (UIL) and the German Adult Education Association (DVV).

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all guests and people who were involved in the Conference and the festive commemoration of our 50th anniversary. My special thanks go to the BMZ for its trusting cooperation during the last five decades, to the host of this most memorable event, the City of Weimar, and – last but not least – to the conference team in DVV International’s headquarters.

**Christoph Jost**

Director, DVV International

# Adult Education and Development Conference (AEDC) 2019

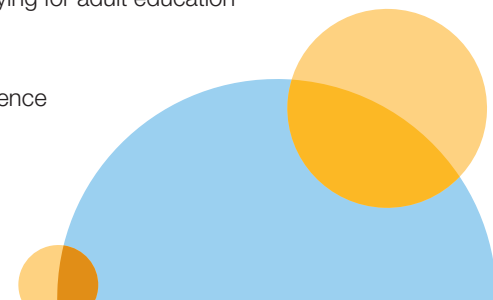
## PROGRAMME

### TUESDAY, 7 MAY 2019

- 9:15 – 10:00 Opening ceremony  
10:00 – 10:30 Introduction and key messages  
10:30 – 11:00 [Coffee break](#)  
11:00 – 12:15 The relevance of adult education for the SDGs:  
Would they even be achievable without adult education?  
► *Panel*  
12:15 – 13:45 [Lunch](#)  
13:45 – 16:15 Linking adult learning and education with selected sustainable development goals  
► *Working groups*  
17:00 [Bus transfer to "Weimarhalle"](#)  
18:30 Festive commemoration: 50 Years DVV International, Weimarhalle

### WEDNESDAY, 8 MAY 2019

- 9:30 – 9:45 Opening  
9:45 – 11:00 Can adult learning and education become a visible contributor to the SDGs?  
► *Keynote*  
11:00 – 11:30 [Coffee break](#)  
11:30 – 12:30 Results from the working groups  
12:30 – 14:00 [Lunch](#)  
14:00 – 15:30 Making use of the potential – increasing visibility and lobbying for adult education  
► *Panel*  
15:30 – 16:00 [Coffee break](#)  
16:00 – 16:30 Feedback on key messages and conclusion of the conference



## Setting the scene

In 2015 the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2030 Agenda is of a holistic nature, seeks to realise human rights for all and covers a broad set of issues including, amongst others, hunger, poverty, health and decent work, as well as questions of sustainable economies and lifestyles. Crosscutting issues such as peace and justice as well as governance, accountability, financing and corruption are equally addressed.

Education is highlighted as a stand-alone goal (SDG 4) which envisages “ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all” and that is also explicitly referred to under other SDGs. SDG 4 follows a holistic understanding of education reinforcing the growing importance of previously neglected areas such as adult learning and education (ALE) by explicitly mentioning the concept of lifelong learning.



Adult learning and education is an integral part of SDG 4 that seeks to promote lifelong learning and contributes to SDG 4 in a number of fields and targets, such as literacy and numeracy, equal access to education, skills for employment or income-generation, education for sustainable development and the training of teachers. ALE is not only a key element of lifelong learning and thus instrumental for SDG 4, but as a crosscutting enabler, ALE also supports many other, if not all SDGs, as well as being a precondition for participation and inclusive processes that allow for broad-based development and pro-poor growth. This is due to its empowering and cross-sectoral nature that allows for substantial contributions in core fields such as health, poverty reduction, local economic development, climate change and the promotion of (gender) equality. ALE fosters participation and democratic processes at community level; it empowers people to claim their civil rights and reaches out to the decision-takers of today.





The implementation of the concept of lifelong learning laid down in SDG 4 clearly requires looking beyond formal education. ALE covers the longest phase of a person's life, preparing learners for fast-changing environments. This complexity and the diverse learning formats (formal, non-formal and informal) of ALE are both assets and challenges. Additionally, the concept and scope of adult learning and education, possible interlinkages and promising programme approaches for development are not always well known outside the ALE community. A particular challenge is often the lack of quantifiable data to show effects and impacts on individual learners, communities and society as a whole.

Thus the “power” of ALE must be better communicated to governments, donors, citizens and other stakeholders. This should especially consider the potential to be effective across sectors and to fulfil key promises of the 2030 Agenda, namely to leave no one behind and to reach the furthest behind first.

Christoph Jost,  
Director of DVV International



## AEDC Opening ceremony

The Adult Education and Development Conference (AEDC) was officially opened by Peter Kleine (Mayor of the city of Weimar), Gabi Ohler (State Secretary, Free State of Thuringia), Dirk Schwenzfeier (Head of Directorate Civil Society, BMZ) and Prof. Dr. Rita Süssmuth (Honorary President, DVV).

Peter Kleine and Gabi Ohler welcomed the participants to the historic city of Weimar. Peter Kleine underlined the special role of Weimar for the development of further education in Germany. The Weimar Constitution of 1919, for the first time, called on all levels of government to support adult education and Volkshochschulen in particular. This triggered a wave of foundings throughout Germany.

Dirk Schwenzfeier pointed out that educational promotion efforts are of particular importance for his ministry and emphasised the long lasting cooperation between BMZ and DVV International. Prof. Dr. Rita Süssmuth stressed the importance of adult education for international cooperation and greater social participation.



Peter Kleine,  
Mayor of the city of Weimar



Dirk Schwenzfeier, Head of  
Directorate Civil Society, BMZ



# Opening panel: “The relevance of adult education for the SDGs: Would they even be achievable without adult education?”

The panel opened the debate, beginning from an institutional point of view on the SDGs, their integration into political processes, to practical application and considerations by representatives from non-governmental organisations. It brought together experts from the fields of adult education, education and the SDG process, who exchanged ideas on the power of ALE and discussed whether or not we make use of it sufficiently – especially with regard to the SDG process.

Panelists Werner Mauch (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, UIL) and Paul Comyn, (International Labour Organization, ILO) pointed out, that adult education is not only part of SDG4, but is represented in many other SDGs and especially in the indicators. Evereste Tumwesigye (Ministry of Education, Uganda) underlined that, “ALE facilitates the attainment of other development goals, be it in health, in environment, in gender, in all aspects of life – because impact has to be made at household and community level. And in households and communities, adults are making the decisions. They have to be informed, they have to be educated, and they have to be empowered to take responsible actions to improve their situation. That is the importance of ALE.”

Esther Hirsch,  
Deputy  
Director of DVV  
International  
together with  
panelists Paul  
Comyn (ILO), Celia del  
Socorro Solis Sanchez  
(INEA) and Abdul Bashir  
Khaliqi (ANAFAE)



Concerning the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Celia del Socorro Solis Sanchez (National Institute for Adult Education, INEA, Mexico) and Abdul Bashir Khaliqi (National Association for Adult Education, ANAFAE, Afghanistan) stressed that many people cannot participate in these processes, and especially adults are often not considered. Thus panelists and the audience agreed that, considering the overarching motto of “leaving no one behind”, more encouragement is needed. ALE is a necessity, not an option.

## Working groups: “Linking adult learning and education with selected Sustainable Development Goals”

The global education community is advocating for the paramount importance of education as key for progressing with the 2030 Agenda, in particular by analysing and emphasising (reciprocal) interlinkages with other SDGs. This is also to be seen in light of the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), which is the UN's central platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. The 2019 HLPF reviewed SDG 4 for the first time, together with other selected goals, namely SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 16 (peace, justice, strong institutions). Thus, the conference key messages and working groups focused on interlinkages of SDG 4 with these four specific goals.

SDG 17 on partnership for the goals is considered every year.



### Working group on SDG 8: Adult learning and education for employment, economic growth, decent work

One could assume that the importance of ALE for employment, economic growth or decent work goes without saying. However, a lot still has to be done by experts, practitioners and policy-makers from the education field on a global level to recognise the power of ALE and to really put it on the international SDG agenda. Especially, there is still the challenge of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training). ALE reaches the most vulnerable: the working poor, informal sector workers and the unemployed. Through apprenticeships and non-formal training, ALE provides those in need with on-the-job experience and prepares them for the needs of both formal and informal labour markets.

With the help of selected examples from Armenia, Kosovo and Cambodia, members of the working group learned from relevant experiences and reflected on the potential of ALE in achieving SDG 8, especially through long-term cooperation and links between different stakeholders to move forward the agenda of ALE and the SDGs.



### Working group on SDG 10: Creating inclusive societies through adult learning and education

The aim of the working group was to learn from good practice cases how ALE contributes specifically to SDG 10.2 and to identify strategies for its effective implementation because key ALE target groups are people from the poorer strata of the population, including the most disadvantaged and marginalised. ALE is one of the keys for reducing inequalities and the 2030 Agenda's principle of leaving no one behind.

The panelists from Indonesia, Uganda and Latin America gave examples of practices on the micro (curricula), meso (institutional) and macro (policies) level, showcasing the impact of ALE on the empowerment of learners, on social transformation and the role of effective policy implementation in creating a positive and affirmative frame. The panel analysed examples of educational activities and barriers for social, economic and political inclusion of all adults in situations of risk in their countries and contexts. The working group agreed that a forceful ALE narrative has to be created, which empowers learners to have a strong voice and to take responsibility.



### Working group on SDG 13: Responding to the challenge of global warming by inform- ing and preparing adults

Climate change concerns both the global South and North, thus adults in both hemispheres of the globe need to be addressed. The working group highlighted contributions of community learning centres on how to deal with climate change in Germany (Volkshochschule) and in Mali (Mali-Folkecenter) and explored how adult education can help to address an issue which is becoming more and more relevant for the survival of humankind. Resilience to deal with the consequences of climate change and community engagement are both essential when it comes to sustainable and responsible living. Climate skills, capacity building, awareness, as well as consciousness-raising on "climate action" are all needed.

Combating climate change begins with public information, informed citizens and practical action at the local level. Non-formal education approaches and methodologies are vital to provide climate change-related skill sets needed for inter-generational public engagement and support.





## Working group on SDG 16: Adult learning and education – pathways to peace, justice and strong institutions

In many countries ALE is an important tool for fostering peace and social cohesion and thus the working group reflected on various ALE approaches from all over the world: prevention of religious extremism in Central Asia, reconciliation after conflict in the former Yugoslavia, and learning for a multicultural society in Germany's VHS. As shown by an example from South African townships on the reduction of violence, public information, informed citizens and practical action at the local level is how combating climate change begins. In order to provide climate change-related skill sets needed for intergenerational public engagement and support, vital non-formal education approaches and methodologies are needed.

The working group concluded that structures for social transformation on the micro-, meso- and macro-level are essential to increase the perception of ALE as contributing to SDG 16. The impact and role of ALE need to be strengthened and the benefits of ALE also need to be made visible.

## Keynote:

# “Can adult learning and education become a visible contributor to the SDGs?”

The keynote presentation by Aaron Benavot, the former Director of UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM Report) and Professor at the University at Albany, State University of New York, informed participants, among other things, about monitoring progress on ALE-based international indicators and discussed reasons for the still insufficient visibility of the sector.

Many forms of ALE have been visible to policy-makers in the past due to government or civil society support and oversight. These include, for example, literacy campaigns, adult basic education, second chance education, farmer held schools and community learning centres. In recent years, however, information about the increasingly diverse forms of ALE is either lacking or of uneven quality and inhibiting effective policy formation. In international circles in particular, the relative invisibility of ALE is a profound liability. This is confounding because the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development contains references to ALE and its influences on sustainable development, both explicitly and implicitly.



Aaron Benavot,  
Professor at the University  
at Albany, State University  
of New York

Further, the keynote speech referred to the questions on how countries are meant to review and monitor progress on the 17 SDGs and their 169 targets. Aaron Benavot believes that it is important to look at the global indicators since this is where the monitoring begins. In this regard he introduced the audience to SDG accountability frameworks (through voluntary national reviews and compilations of data) and to three crucial 2030 Agenda indicators which are essential for the monitoring of adult education and learning:

- Indicator 4.3.1: Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months;
- Indicator 4.6.1: Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional literacy and numeracy skills;
- Indicator 4.7.1: Extent to which global citizenship education and education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in national education policies, curricula, teacher education, and student assessments.

Aaron Benavot further reflected on the fact that the continuing dearth of systematic and comparable information and research on ALE undermines policy enactment and implementation as well as government funding; it effectively marginalises adult learning and education for another generation. Concerted and

innovative efforts are needed to build up a comparative and international database on ALE and LLL (lifelong learning), which could be used to shine new light on key issues and challenges facing ALE.

The keynote speech concluded with the observation that the adult education community needs to think strategically about the purposes of measuring ALE and should be more proactive in order to ensure that ALE is presented in (national) statistics, to have increased impact on the reporting. Mr. Benavot believes that “to achieve the SDGs, we have to transform the hearts and minds of adults. We have to think ‘outside the box’ now, otherwise we will end up in 2030 where we were in 2015 and this will be a missed opportunity.”





## Closing panel: “Making use of the potential – increasing visibility and lobbying for adult education”

The closing panel of the conference looked at future prospects on how to improve international lobbying for ALE along the ongoing SDG processes. It discussed how visibility can generally be increased and how intra- and inter-sectoral dialogue can be fostered with key stakeholders, governments and donors. Panelists shared experiences and good practices regarding successful communication strategies and other promising instruments facilitating political attention, agenda-setting and policy support for adult education.

Katarina Popovic, Secretary General of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) believes that “DVV International had already implemented the Sustainable Development Goals before they were even created. But the good work we are doing worldwide is today no longer enough. We have to make it even more visible and let our results and experiences flow systematically and in a structured way into global lobbying work.” Maria Khan, Secretary General of ASPABE, also agreed that there is room for hope because as more ministries get involved in SDG, the better the understanding of the multi-sectoral importance of ALE will become evident.

Refat Sabbah, President of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and Monica Novillo from REPEM encouraged the adult education community to be active and a social movement in order to gain more attention, in particular in decision-making processes. Aaron Benavot reminded the audience of the importance of thinking politically and being more strategic; in particular about evidence, research and data in order to convince decision-makers. This necessity was also seen by Anja Thöne from DVV International, who reported on a current global initiative to better position adult learning through branding. The panel agreed that the adult education community should expand its thinking and that it needs a comprehensive perspective of ALE.

Panelists with Uwe Gartenschlaeger (middle),  
Regional Director Southeast Asia



# Conclusions, key messages and the way forward



Conference participants agreed that a lifelong learning approach toward SDG 4 provides a potentially broader playing field for ALE. Yet, they also concluded that the complexity and diverse learning formats

(formal, non-formal and informal) of ALE are both an asset and a challenge.

It was noted and discussed that the concept and scope of ALE, possible interlinkages and

promising programme approaches for development are not always well known outside the ALE community. A particular challenge is often the lack of quantifiable data to show effects and impacts on individual learners, communities and the society as a whole. Thus participants stressed that the “power” of ALE must be better communicated to governments, donors, citizens and other stakeholders. This should especially consider the potential to be effective across sectors and to fulfil key promises of the 2030 Agenda, namely to leave no one behind and to reach the furthest behind first. Furthermore, participants acknowledged that the role civil society and non-formal settings can play to promote the SDGs has to be even better elaborated. Eventually, it was stated that

ALE is not a one-size-fits-all solution for development but rather a crosscutting enabler and a precondition for participation and inclusive processes that allow for broad-based development and pro-poor growth.

## Key messages

Conference participants and stakeholders agreed on a set of key messages which lay down core aspects of ALE with regard to the 2030 Agenda. They were developed on the basis of the conference’s findings, on the outcomes from the four specific conference working groups and with the involvement of the global network of DVV International. They are intended to provide guidance and support advocacy by decision-makers, practitioners, stakeholders, and donors at national and international policy levels.

The key messages are divided into six thematic blocks, starting with the overall role of ALE for the 2030 Agenda, followed by its contributions to the educational goal SDG 4 and further focusing on the interlinkages to the four other SDGs under review at the HLPF 2019. Thereafter, interactions and interlinkages are laid down to highlight the relevance of ALE for reducing inequalities, for conflict prevention, promoting climate action and assuring decent work and better employment opportunities for all.





## 1. ALE as crosscutting enabler and key to empowerment for the 2030 Agenda

### ● Overall benefit to the SDGs

ALE is closely interlinked with many development fields. It provides for measurable contributions to all Sustainable Development Goals by supporting people to acquire knowledge, skills, competences, values and attitudes most relevant to the 2030 Agenda and its respective targets.

### ● Methodological approach

ALE is a mobilising, empowering and transforming process. This inherent methodology is its particular asset, producing measurable benefits for individual learners, communities and the wider society, thus supporting the 2030 Agenda across the board.

### ● Preventing and reducing marginalisation

People most in need are a core target group of ALE. Through its learner-centred approach, ALE addresses and empowers marginalised groups and thereby keeps the promise of leaving no one behind and of reaching the furthest behind first.

### ● Poverty reduction

There is a close link between adult literacy rates, national wealth indicators and poverty headcount ratios. By increasing the literacy rates of adults and further empowering them with skills and competences through ALE, all dimensions of poverty, including participation, sustainable livelihoods, decent work and the exercising of rights, are addressed.

### ● Civil society

Using a human rights-based approach, ALE empowers youths and adults to be citizens of an active civil society. An active civil society is not only a prerequisite for development but it can also be a constructive and critical dialogue partner of governmental actors.

### ● Health promotion

There is a large body of evidence that education levels are linked to the status of people's health. High attention should be paid to the education of youths and adults with low levels of education to take advantage of the benefits of ALE in terms of preventive health education, awareness-raising, physical and mental health and general well-being.





## 2. SDG 4 – ALE as a key element of the Education 2030 Agenda

- **Lifelong learning opportunities for all**

ALE is indispensable for securing the human right to education. As it caters for a central and extensive phase of people's lives, it is a key component of the concept of lifelong learning. Through its comprehensive nature, ALE can prepare learners across all ages for a fast-changing environment, as demanded by the Education 2030 Agenda.

- **Education of future generations**

Investing in ALE means preventing children from growing up in an illiterate environment and, thus, ultimately investing in an educated population for the generations to come. Evidence shows that every additional year of their parents' education has a positive effect on the school career of children.

- **Literacy and numeracy**

As substantial elements of SDG 4, literacy and numeracy are a pre-condition for success of any education initiative. Integrated approaches cater for improvements in fields such as income generation, vocational and life skills and development of democratic values alongside strengthened literacy and numeracy competences.

- **Education for sustainable development**

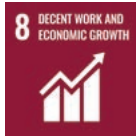
Education for sustainable development has a long tradition in the ALE community. In both formal and non-formal settings, ALE raises the awareness of sustainable production, consumption and lifestyles of the generation currently in power and it prepares people to be globally responsible citizens.

- **Professionalisation of ALE teachers**

The postulated increase in the supply of qualified teachers must also embrace efforts to professionalise educators in non-formal settings and equip them with a comprehensive set of youth and adult education methodologies, including digital and media literacy as well as decent salaries.

- **Equal access to education**

ALE makes valuable contributions to ensure equal access for all women and men on various levels. Second chance education programmes support youths and adults who dropped out of the formal system and wish to re-enter it; further, non-formal education and training provide literacy and numeracy as well as vocational skills for the labour market.



### 3. SDG 8 – ALE promoting productive employment and decent work

- **Informal sector**

In many countries, the informal sector provides more employment than the formal sector. It is a particular strength of ALE to reach this sector. It provides people with vocational as well as entrepreneurial skills, substantially supports micro-enterprises in getting access to and managing financial services and facilitates access to the formal labour market.

- **Decent work**

On the road to decent work, vocational skills and workers' empowerment are indivisible. ALE reaches out to the most vulnerable and offers learning opportunities that combine vocational training with education on decent work, labour rights and collaborative action.

- **Benefits for the economy**

ALE benefits the economy as a whole. Microeconomic studies assert that ALE trainings enhance productivity and product value at company level, while macroeconomic analysis finds a positive correlation between training and education and productivity and economic growth.

- **NEET – addressing people Not in Employment, Education or Training**

ALE reaches the most vulnerable: the working poor, informal sector workers and the unemployed. Through apprenticeships and non-formal training, ALE provides those in need with on-the-job experience and prepares them for the needs of both formal and informal labour markets.

- **Correcting mismatches**

Despite good qualifications, many graduates fail to find employment due to mismatching qualifications and competencies. ALE substantially contributes to closing the gap between young people's skills and knowledge and the demands of employers and it further supports learners and the job market through validation and recognition of prior learning.

**Sles Nos,  
Vice Minister of  
Education, Youth and  
Sport, Cambodia**

*"It was very interesting for us to learn which implementation measures for SDG 4 and adult learning and education are being taken in other countries. The conference helped us to reflect on our own situation compared to other countries and to identify where and how we can better contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals."*





## 4. SDG 10 – Reducing inequalities through ALE

### • Human development

A higher Human Development Index (HDI) ranking generally correlates positively with higher equality. ALE has the potential to raise all HDI components of a given country – life expectancy, the status of people's health, education level and per capita income and thus ultimately raises this key development indicator.

### • Social cohesion

Community and adult education centres are intercultural meeting hubs. They play a vital role for the integration of migrants and the reduction of potential tensions with the host population. A wide range of ALE initiatives such as literacy, language courses, skills training and social activities foster social cohesion and reduce inequalities.

### • Awareness raising on discrimination

SDG 10 aims to ensure equal opportunities for all by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices. Related ALE programmes such as awareness-raising and educational campaigns are instrumental for well-informed citizens to be able to deconstruct the systems that reproduce various kind of inequalities and discrimination.

### • Reducing gender gaps

In the spirit of gender mainstreaming, ALE practitioners systematically reflect the impact of their programmes on the life of all genders. Reducing inequalities also means reducing gender inequalities. Many ALE activities specifically address girls and women with the aim to inform them about their rights, empower them and raise their educational level.

### • Leave no one behind

Key target groups of ALE are those from the poorer strata of the population, including the most disadvantaged and marginalised people. ALE is one of the keys for reducing inequalities and the 2030 Agenda's principle of leaving no one behind.

#### **Oscar Hugo López Rivas, Minister of Education, Guatemala**

*"In Guatemala there are about 2.4 million adults who have not finished school or are illiterate. We need to make this problem visible and offer educational programmes that respond flexibly to the needs of these people. We have been working with DVV International for a year now to develop good models and methods and will soon open our own Vice-Ministry for Alternative Education. We look forward to learning more about the experiences of other countries in this area."*





## 5. SDG 13 – ALE supporting climate action

- **Recognised relevance**

SDG 13 explicitly mentions education, awareness-raising and the strengthening of human capacities as part of its targets and means of implementation. Concepts such as lifelong learning and education for sustainable development will be crucial for taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

- **Disaster risk reduction**

Although governments have the overall responsibility for reducing disaster risks, policy frameworks stress the importance of other actors such as civil society and community-based organisations. ALE activities contribute to disaster risk reduction, including prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery and resilience.

- **Complementing technology**

Climate change and disaster risk management need technology-based monitoring, early warning mechanisms and further detection and response systems. ALE complements these solutions through awareness-raising, public information and active participation as well, like in cases of technological failure.

- **Climate skills**

Combating climate change begins with public information, informed citizens and practical action at local level. Non-formal education approaches and methodologies are vital to provide climate change-related skill sets needed for intergenerational public engagement and support.

- **Climate literacy**

Many countries are by now affected by climate change and threatened by natural catastrophes. Community-based learning centres are the most convenient settings in these countries for integrated approaches that address literacy gaps and, at the same time, create awareness and familiarise learners with aspects of climate change.



## 6. SDG 16 – ALE preventing conflicts and strengthening accountability

### ● **Community Empowerment**

In the form of community learning centres or other local structures, ALE is a key source of community empowerment and mobilisation. It helps adults to become active citizens who can take part in more transparent, inclusive and effective decision-making processes and supports refugees in their social, cultural and economic integration.

### ● **Reduction of violence**

ALE brings people and communities together. Through its sensitive and learner-oriented methodology, it helps to prevent conflicts by focusing on commonalities rather than differences between people, groups and communities, helps in the recovery of conflict-affected areas and thereby promotes sustainable peace and conflict transformation.

### ● **Accountability**

ALE empowers people to hold institutions and political actors accountable who then in turn feel the need to become more trustworthy and responsive to people's needs. Increased accountability, transparency and trustworthiness will contribute to strengthening the rule of law, reduce corruption and enhance people's access to fundamental freedoms.

### ● **Access to information**

Information on relevant social, economic and political processes in their direct environment is a dire need for active citizens. ALE provides both citizens as well as institutions with the needed skills and competences to interact, share and interpret information, thereby ensuring constant availability of key knowledge and an exchange on it.

### ● **Participatory budgeting**

Participatory budgeting is a (mostly) non-formal adult education and learning process that allows for the active inclusion of (non-elected) citizens in the allocation of public finances. It strengthens citizens' access to public decision-making, information on policy-making and reduces corruption through enhanced transparency.

The key messages focus on the added value of ALE and address challenges, requirements, and recommendations, are put forward for further attention and discussion and thus stakeholders are encouraged to support the dissemination of the key messages.

With these key messages and more, DVV International will strengthen further debates through its regional offices, its membership in education networks and committees around the globe. Along with its partners, DVV International will search for opportunities to deepen the understanding of the diversity of ALE and how it can contribute to the achievements of the SDGs. Particular attention will be paid to the scope and need for lifelong learning, the potential of integrated, cross-sectoral approaches and possibilities to reach out to the most marginalised people, thereby leaving no one behind. DVV International can foresee

how conferences and other events at the national, regional and global level can follow up on the role of ALE in the SDG context by further systematising its potential, contributions, impacts and good practice examples as well as by analysing possible interlinkages with other sustainable development goals.

“Only if adults too receive adequate education will it be possible to implement the 2030 Agenda”, said Christoph Jost, Director of DVV International. “We need adult education for all people, worldwide, in order to be able to successfully walk the path to a globally just and peaceful society.”

**Angela Cutasevici,  
Secretary of State for  
Education, Ministry of Education,  
Culture and Research, Moldova**

*“For the Republic of Moldova, lifelong learning is a new concept. We introduced it in 2014 when a new educational code was published and put into practice. We are currently developing a national Lifelong Learning Policy. During the conference, we were able to learn from the good practices of Germany and other countries. One of the lessons learnt for us is the importance of non-formal adult education in addition to formal education. This could become one of our priorities.”*



# 50 Years DVV International

DVV International anniversary  
celebration in Weimar





## PROGRAMME

### TUESDAY, 7 MAY 2019

- 18:30 Official Start of the Event  
*Musical interlude – Fagott Trio “Austros”*
- 18:40 Opening Speech by Dr. Ernst Dieter Rossmann, Chairman of DVV
- 18:50 Speech by Dr. Gerd Müller, Minister of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
- 19:15 Welcoming address by David Atchoarena, Director of UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
- 19:20 *Musical interlude – Fagott Trio “Austros”*
- 19:25 Rita-Süssmuth-Award for vhs international  
(under the auspices of the German Association of Cities)
- 19:55 Thanks by Dr. Ernst Dieter Rossmann, Chairman of DVV
- 20:00 *Reception*



## Festive commemoration of DVV International

Alongside its sixth Adult Education and Development Conference, DVV International celebrated its 50th anniversary with a festive commemoration in the “Weimarhalle” – attended by approximately 250 guests from Germany and from more than 30 countries.

The Chairman of DVV (German Adult Education Association), Ernst Dieter Rossmann, welcomed the guests and took this occasion to look back at how the Institute was established in 1969 as a small department for adult education in developing countries. The commitment to adult education was already being pursued beyond the nation’s borders – long before globalisation. It all began with training seminars for African adult educators at German “folk high schools” (volkshochschulen) in the 1960s, and was shortly followed thereafter by the first projects in Costa Rica, Colombia, Ethiopia and Somalia. Through founding and active participation in international advocacy associations, adult education has been and continues to be supported worldwide to this day by DVV.

The Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association currently operates in more than 30 countries, on four continents, with over 200 employees and a global network of state, civil society and academic organisations and professional associations. Its work is as diverse as the field of adult education itself, from promoting bilingual language courses for indigenous groups in Latin

America, the professionalisation of adult education centres in transition countries in Europe, the professionalisation of teachers and prison education in Asia, vocational training and social cohesion measures in the Middle East, to literacy activities in Africa, closely linked to the promotion of agriculture and small businesses.

DVV International stands for the urgently needed strengthening of social structures in its partner countries, the promotion of youth and adult education in the context of global challenges, and a culture of learning that is characterised by mutual respect and partnership on an equal footing. The commitment of DVV International – just like the work of the adult education centres in Germany themselves – stands for providing access to education for all, regardless of origin, gender, social class or religious orientation.



# Ceremonial speech and welcoming address

In a ceremonial speech, Dr. Gerd Müller, German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, congratulated DVV International on its continuing commitment to international cooperation and to promoting adult education as a key instrument for human development.

Adult learning and education plays a decisive role in achieving not only SDG 4, but all SDGs, and is thus essential for developing the skills and competences required for promoting sustainable development, peace and global citizenship. In his ceremonial address, Dr. Gerd Müller paid tribute to the Institute's decades of successful commitment and emphasised the considerable significance of ALE for development: "Lifelong education forms the basis for reason, tolerance, equality, conflict prevention, peace at home and between people. The world needs education more than anything." The Minister stressed the importance of adult education for development and brought out the exceptional achievement of DVV International in Afghanistan, where nowadays more than twenty learning centres provide people most in need with education opportunities. Further in his speech he emphasised the strategic importance of Africa and asked DVV International to substantially expand its engagement in this region.

David Atchoarena, Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), also underlined DVV International's support in these regions of the world, notably in Africa, but also in Southeast Asia and the Arab countries. He remembered that within Europe, DVV International contributed to the creation of national adult education structures in Southeast Europe in the context of the end of the cold war and, later on, during the enlargement of the European Union. The UIL Director sees DVV International as an influential player in the international adult education community, and thus a key partner for UIL in helping countries to promote adult education within a lifelong learning perspective. The cooperation between UNESCO and DVV International is instrumental in promoting the right to education throughout life and therefore "UNESCO is looking forward to continuing its cooperation with DVV International, especially in this crucial phase of the 2030 Agenda. We wish DVV International all the best for the next 50 years too."



Dr. Gerd Müller,  
German Federal  
Minister for Economic  
Cooperation and  
Development



David Atchoarena, Director of the  
UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

## Rita-Süssmuth-Award for vhs international

In the framework of the festive commemoration, the “Rita-Süssmuth-Award for vhs international” was presented for the very first time under the auspices of the Association of German Cities. The award honours adult education centres which use internationally oriented strategies, concepts and ideas to shape their communities in a forward-looking manner, integrate international and intercultural references into their programme offers and organisational culture, as well as international partnerships, field trips, advocacy and other activities to promote the exchange of knowledge among adult education centres worldwide.

An independent expert jury selected three winners from among the submitted applications: the adult education centres in Bonn, Hanover and Ulm, which devote themselves to the topic of internationalisation, and for their international orientation of educational

work at the local level. The award ceremony was under the motto “Living together. Keeping together.” and Prof. Dr. Rita Süssmuth, Honorary President of the German Adult Education Association (DVV), presented the award named after her, together with Klaus Hebborn from the Association of German Cities. As jury representative, Werner Reuß from ARD-Alpha delivered the laudation for the winners.

Prof. Dr. Rita Süssmuth, Honorary President of the German Adult Education Association (DVV) together with Klaus Hebborn, Association of German Cities.



Prof. Dr. Rita Süßmuth was President of the German Adult Education Association (DVV) for 27 years and continues to champion adult education issues in national, European and international contexts.

After final remarks by Dr. Ernst Dieter Rossmann, the anniversary issue – which reports on the worldwide commitment of DVV International during the last five decades – was officially handed over to the participants and honourable guests.

The official ceremony was rounded off with a festive reception, including celebratory music, and an encouragement toward further discussions and networking.

The award winners from vhs Bonn, Hanover and Ulm together with Prof. Dr. Rita Süßmuth, Klaus Hebborn and Werner Reuß







# Literature and material

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## Thöne, Anja:

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You can download the material or order a print version under

[www.dvv-international.de/en/materials/](http://www.dvv-international.de/en/materials/)

DVV International is the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (DVV), which represents the interests of approximately 900 adult education centres (vhs). DVV International cooperates with more than 200 partners in more than 30 African, Asian, Latin American and European countries.

**[www.dvv-international.de](http://www.dvv-international.de)**

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