TITLE   Making Education Accessible and Available to All Persons
                 with Disabilities. Adult Learning and Groups with Special
                 Needs. A Series of 29 Booklets Documenting Workshops Held at
                 the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education
                 (Hamburg, Germany, July 14-18, 1997).
INSTITUTION   United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural
                 Organization, Hamburg (Germany). Inst. for Education.
ISBN   ISBN-92-82010-89-9
PUB DATE   1999-00-00
NOTE   16p.; For other booklets in this series, see CE 079 178-206.
AVAILABLE FROM   For full text: <http://www.education.unesco.org/uie>.
PUB TYPE   Collected Works - Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE   MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS   Access to Education; Adult Basic Education; Adult Education;
                 Civil Liberties; Developed Nations; *Developing Nations;
                 *Disabilities; *Educational Needs; Educational Technology;
                 *Equal Education; Foreign Countries; Government Role; Policy
                 Formation; Program Development; Program Implementation;
                 *Public Policy; Special Needs Students

ABSTRACT
                 This booklet examines adult education needs and
opportunities for persons with disabilities. It reports on the following: the
changing perceptions and definitions of disability in both developed and
developing nations, the rights of disabled persons, the need for educational
policies for adults with disabilities, and the inclusion of people with
disabilities in the community. The booklet concludes that educational
opportunities for people with disabilities can be promoted only by making all
forms of learning and training accessible to them, fostering institutional
policies that ensure equal access and intervention with appropriate learning
technology, and involving agencies, as well as policymakers, that are
supporting the handicapped. (KC)

97
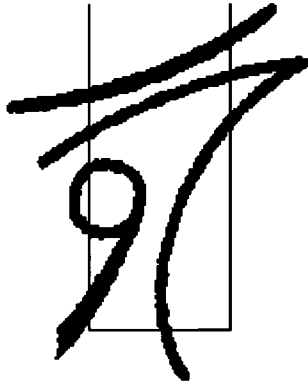
CONFINTEA
HAMBURG
1997

A series of 29 booklets
documenting workshops
held at the Fifth
International Conference
on Adult Education

1

8d Persons with disabilities

Making education accessible and available
to all persons with disabilities

UNESCO

2   BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Theme 8: Adult learning and groups with special needs
Booklets under this theme:
8a Adult learning and ageing populations
8b Migrant education
8c Adult learning for prisoners
8d Making education accessible and available to all persons
with disabilities

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Foreword

In July 1997 the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education was held in Hamburg, organised by UNESCO and in particular the UNESCO Institute for Education, the agency's specialist centre on adult learning policy and research. Approximately 1500 delegates attended from all regions of the world, with representatives of 140 member states and some 400 NGOs. In addition to the work of the commissions and plenary which debated the official documents of the Conference The Hamburg Declaration and The Agenda for the Future, there were 33 workshops organised around the themes and sub-themes of the Conference.

As part of its CONFINTEA follow-up strategy, the UNESCO Institute for Education has produced this series of 29 booklets based on the presentations and discussions held during the Conference. The recordings of all the workshops were transcribed and synthesized over one year, edited, and then formatted and designed. A tremendous amount of work has gone into this process. Linda King, coordinator of the monitoring and information strategy for CONFINTEA, was responsible for overseeing the whole process. Madhu Singh, senior research specialist at UIE, undertook the mammoth task of writing almost all the booklets based on an analysis of the sessions. She was helped in the later stages by Gonzalo Retamal, Uta Papen and Linda King. Christopher McIntosh was technical editor, Matthew Partridge designed the layout and Janna Lowrey was both transcriber and translator.

The booklets are intended to draw out the central issues and concerns of each of the CONFINTEA workshops. They are the memory of an event that marked an important watershed in the field of adult learning. We hope that they will be of use both to those who were able to attend CONFINTEA V and those who were not. We look forward to your comments, feedback and continuing collaboration with the UNESCO Institute for Education.

Paul Bélanger,
Director, UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg
and Secretary General of CONFINTEA

1

Making education accessible and available to all persons with disabilities

Introduction

The workshop "Adult learning for disabled people" held during the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA), in Hamburg in July 1997, examined educational provision for adult learners with special needs. The term "special needs" is often used interchangeably with "special educational needs", "people with disabilities", "people with learning difficulties" or "disabled people". Because the term disabled people is preferred by the disability movement, this is used throughout this booklet.

The workshop was chaired by Lucy Wong Hernandez, Executive Director, Disabled Peoples International. The panel consisted of the following speakers: Khalfan Khalfan, DPI, Tanzania; Nawaf Kabbara, National Association for the Rights of Disabled People, NARD, Lebanon; Jahda Abu Khalik, Director, NARD-Women and Disability, Lebanon; Bill Langner, Interrnational Centre for Lifelong Learning, USA.

Perceptions and definitions of disability change over time and between cultures and this creates difficulties in obtaining precise world-wide statistics. However it is estimated that there is a higher percentage of disabled people in developed countries than in developing countries. This variation has to do with the fact that disabled people in the developed world have a higher life expectancy and that there is a correspondingly high proportion of disabled people in the older age range.

3

In 1994, to reaffirm the rights of disabled people, the United Nations produced a set of rules or guidelines in an attempt to influence international policy and practice. Many of the ideals embodied in this document reflect the changes in thinking about disability that have occurred over the last ten years. There has been a theoretical shift, though not generally concomitant shifts in practice:

■ from movements for disabled people to movements of disabled people;
■ from a dependencies model to one where disabled people have the same rights and responsibilities as all citizens;
■ from disabled people having to fit into regular society to society changing to include everybody;
■ from following a path on leaving school that is determined by others to one which they determine for themselves;
■ from being seen as a perpetual child to being accorded full adult status.

Lesley Dee and Elisabeth Maudslay.
Adult Learning and People with Special Needs,
Paper produced for the UNESCO/CONFINTEA Hamburg,
Germany July 1997

One of the objectives of the workshop was to discuss the implications of these trends for the adult education service and for disabled people as adult learners. It began by exploring the changing perceptions and definitions of disability.

4

The changing concept of disability

Before we can examine adult learning for disabled people, it is necessary to investigate people's perceptions of disability and how they have shifted in the course of time.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries regarded disability from a purely medical standpoint. The disabled individual was seen as necessarily dependent on others, there was a growth of charitable organisations established to care for disabled people, and as a result education was not considered purposeful or necessary. While this viewpoint is still prevalent today, the latter half of the twentieth century has nevertheless seen a growth in movements of disabled people prepared to voice their opinions and a change in attitude towards their education. The social significance of education, the disabled learners' needs, the content of educational programmes and the training of teachers all now have to be considered.

Society's attitude to disabled people has been unfair in the past, even preventing them from doing what they can do well. While it is true that some disabilities do bar certain activities, most disabled people can perform as well as the non-disabled.

As a consequence of this, disabled groups have begun to point out that barriers facing disabled people are not considered to be inherent in the individual impairment of the disabled person but are socially created by environmental restrictions and social attitudes. Some even stress differences rather than attempting to measure abilities against what is considered "normal", and rather than accepting an imposed ideal of normality towards which disabled people are supposed to aspire, they advocate differentiated assimilation for the disabled.

In the disability debate, individual and social factors are currently opposed. While some maintain that disability is entirely socially created, others stress the need to maintain a balance between factors pertaining to the individual and those pertaining to the environment. However, in practice the legacy of earlier models is still strong.

Because of the dominant voice of the developed world, it is easy to assume that disability is perceived in the same way in all countries and that programmes for disabled people can be automatically transferred from one culture to another, which is far from true. Although this is an under-investigated area, the research there has been shows how different cultures have very different views on what constitutes a disability, what

5

causes it and what programmes are required (Disability Awareness in Action, 1995). The difference is particularly marked when one compares egocentric societies where individual autonomy is seen as paramount with sociocentric ones, where people are primarily considered in relation to others. Many Western programmes for disabled people focus very strongly on developing individual independence, a concept which may be far less important in a strongly sociocentric society.

International and national contexts

These changing perceptions of disability need to be set within a broader socio-economic context. It is necessary to remember that both the United Nations and the European Union have produced policy statements on the rights of disabled people which incorporate many of the theoretical ideas on disability described above. The United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1994) and the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994) reaffirm the rights of disabled people to equal opportunities, full participation in society, and equal partnership in the planning and implementation of those policies which affect their lives.

   The United Nations statement is an attempt to improve the status of disabled people by influencing the custom and practice of nation states. However, it is not legally binding and must be seen in the context of the effects of the global economy. As social policy tries to adjust to the demands of the global market, it is increasingly difficult in this context for individual countries to maintain social justice and equity, even where there has been a strong tradition for this.

   International bodies have sought to safeguard the rights of disabled people, one of them is the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons:

Disabled persons have the right to medical, psychological and functional treatment, including prosthetic and orthetic appliances, to medical and social rehabilitation, education, vocational training and rehabilitation, aid, counselling, placement services and other services which will enable them to develop their capabilities and skills to the maximum and will hasten the processes of their social integration or reintegration.

Article 6 Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons. Proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 3447 (XXX) of 9 December 1975

7

In most Western countries recent social policy has been characterised by centralised policy formation with decentralised implementation. The changing view of disability has led to corresponding changes in thinking on adult education provision for disabled people as well as on policy and practice issues including the role of disabled people in formulating policies and practice, equal opportunities, inclusion, transition and adult status.

Adult learning

Adult learning takes place, both formally and non-formally, in many different contexts which themselves vary from country to country. Learning is not necessarily limited by age or setting, but can occur at any stage in a person's life and in the work-place, in the community or in formal educational institutions. Adult education may include vocational training as well as opportunities for personal, social and cultural development and it therefore has the potential to empower disabled people, to increase their autonomy and economic self-sufficiency and to reduce their dependency on others. However, there is also a need to provide special support learning services such as libraries for the blind, special clubs for the deaf and centres where people with special needs could receive food, clothing and other forms of help.

A need for policies for adult learning for people with disabilities

The second part of this century has seen a shift from movements for to movements of disabled people. There is an increasing demand for people with disabilities to be seen as equal partners in the formulation of policies and in determining provision. Policies must give birth to new laws for disabled people.

The lobbying by the disability movement has certainly had some effect in influencing legislation. However, legislation which specifically pertains to adult education for disabled people is still rare. A 1996 UNESCO survey shows how only a quarter of countries surveyed had any policies for vocational education for young disabled adults beyond school leaving age. However, even in countries where laws for disabled people exist, they are not always applied. Despite the growing world-wide movements of disabled people, their involvement in policy formulation still appears to be rare.

Many projects have succeeded in empowering disabled people. One project in Mexico, for example, almost entirely staffed by disabled people, functions as a source of advice to neighbouring states and offers training courses throughout Mexico and South America. Such a project serves as a model for all.

Many disabled young people leave school with few or no qualifications and have limited access to improve their situation. As provision for dis-

9

abled people is now generally being discussed in terms of equal opportunities based on the belief that all people should have equal rights, even if they may have different needs, this means that the disabled should have equal access to information and equal opportunities for participation, opportunities which are often denied to disabled people, particularly women (UNESCO 1994). Recent developments in new technologies as well as accessible buildings, re-designed materials and adapted curricula can be especially beneficial in this respect to certain disabled people.

Existing legislation supporting the participation of disabled people in adult education is based on a variety of models. In some countries, the law still considers the disabled person as a socially disadvantaged person who requires special measures. In contrast, there are other instances where the law supports a social concept of disability based on the notion that all people have equal rights to access mainstream provision and that it is not a person's impairment but the physical environment and social attitudes which create barriers.

In terms of organisational practice, provision varies between countries and also within individual countries. In some countries, disabled people have full access to adult education provision and every attempt is made to eliminate environmental and social barriers. But, in some other places, disabled people, particularly those with more complex disabilities, are either excluded from adult education altogether or are only allowed to participate in certain designated programmes. Irrespective of legislation, the actual quality of adult education for disabled people is ad hoc with the best provision dependent on committed individuals rather than a matter of right. Adult education for disabled people must be seen within a context of equal opportunities as it is exposed in article 2 of the above mentioned declaration.

Placing disability within an equal opportunities context moves it away from a dependency model, as disabled people are seen as people who have both equal rights and equal obligations.

Inclusion of people with disabilities in the community and adult learning

Adult learning is one of several complementary services working with disabled people and its role is to support their full participation in the community by offering education and training. Inclusion means making fundamental changes in society so that all disabled people become equal participants. It is necessary, however, to make a difference between the inclusion of disabled persons and their integration. Integration is generally accepted as a process enabling people with disabilities to live and work alongside others without disabilities in mainstream settings. Inclusion is regarded as a wider concept and focuses on the changes needed within society to end the exclusion of certain groups so that all citizens are accorded full human rights and equal status. For education, inclusion implies the need for changes in every aspect of the education system to create environments where all who wish to do so can learn.

The UNESCO's 1995 survey of special needs education for school age pupils reported that 92 % of countries had policies on integration, although not necessarily legislation. A subsequent study (1996) on integration legislation distinguishes between pedagogic and socio-economic integration, the latter being likely to have more relevance for adult education. Twenty countries have objectives related to integration into the labour market, health, leisure and cultural activities as well as education.

But, although there is widespread international commitment to the integration ideal, variations exist in how integration is interpreted in practice and the extent to which policies and practice are becoming more inclusive. In spite of national commitments, evidence suggests that in reality, much local practice continues to target support at individuals rather than at changing the general education system. For example, there appears to be a need for an holistic approach to curriculum for young disabled persons in which vocational training and basic skills can be emphasised. The OECD/CERI (1986) project report on the transition of disabled adolescents from school to adult life identified the failure of many countries to manage this transition effectively and made a number of far-reaching proposals. Transition is defined as both a phase and a process. It is the phase between childhood and adulthood which is marked administratively by the end of secondary schooling, a period of vocational or academic study and the start of employment. It is also a

psycho-social process during which a young person develops from a dependent child to an independent young adult. The research recommended that if transition is to be managed effectively, states require a nationally agreed concept of transition, a legal framework, co-ordinated and coherent services and an accessible system of post school education and training.

At the moment, however, there is no uniform cross-cultural agreement on the characteristics of adulthood since each society has its own 'markers' although the OECD proposed in 1987 the following indicators of adult status:

- employment, useful work or valued activity;
- personal autonomy and independent living;
- social interaction and community participation;
- adult roles within the family.

It should be noted that these indicators are influenced by Western values, for in many societies adult status is not always accorded to disabled people, who may be kept in a state of perpetual dependency. In recent years, though, more emphasis has been placed on employment and in many countries, various kinds of sheltered workshop or schemes to support disabled people in regular employment have been established. For successful inclusion into the workforce, however, the workplace itself must undergo change.

While inter-agency collaboration has not been the subject of extensive research, inter-agency projects, or other forms of partnership, may be a good way of responding to the holistic needs of disabled people.

A project was developed in the late 1970s by the World Health Organisation (WHO). It was a response to the growing number of disabled people living in the community due to the closure of long stay institutions. WHO formulated the concept of Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR), whereby the families of disabled people and community personnel could be trained to deliver basic care. Despite enormous variations in the actual delivery of programmes and many problems in their implementation, the ideals of CBR present both a commitment to furthering the rights of disabled people and a belief that this must occur through involvement of, and changes within, the community. The success of this community-based project is now raising world-wide interest.

12

14

Conclusion

From the discussions at this workshop it was clear that educational opportunities for people with disabilities and integration into society can only be promoted by:

■ making all forms of learning and training accessible to them and ensuring that the learning and training matches their educational needs and goals;
■ fostering institutional policies that ensure equal access, services and vocational and employment opportunities, with appropriate learning technology;
■ involving agencies who are supporting the handicapped including pharmaceutical firms, car manufacturers as well as policy makers.

It was also suggested that international co-operation should be enhanced to avoid people becoming disabled, through education for peace programmes and by working to change public opinion. The main consensus of the workshop was that disabled people have the same right to adult learning as other people, do not need special education, except in special circumstances, and should have the same right of access as the non-disabled.
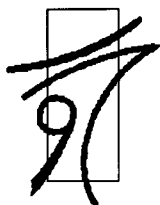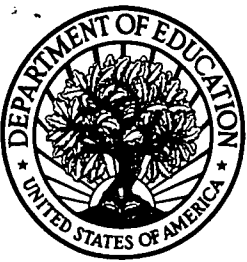
The CONFINTEA logo, designed by Michael Smitheram
of Australia, represents the lines on the palm of a hand.
These lines are universal and yet different for each
subject. They celebrate cultural diversity and the joy
of learning.

Theme 8

Adult education and groups with special needs

Booklets under this theme:
a Adult learning and ageing populations
b Migrant education
c Adult learning for prisoners
d Making education accessible and available to all persons with disabilities

REPRODUCTION RELEASE
(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title:	CONFINTEA V. Adult Learning and the Challenges of the 21st Century. A series of 29 booklets documenting workshops held at the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education.

Author(s):	

Corporate Source:	Publication Date:

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

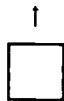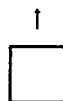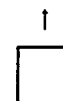| The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents
PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 1	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE. AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 2A	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 2B
Level 1 ↑ ☐	Level 2A ↑ ☐	Level 2B ↑ ☐
Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) *and* paper copy.	Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only	Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination In microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here,→ please

Signature: C. A. McIntosh	Printed Name/Position/Title: C. A. McINTOSH Head Publications
Organization/Address: UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg	Telephone:	FAX:
	E-Mail Address:	Date: