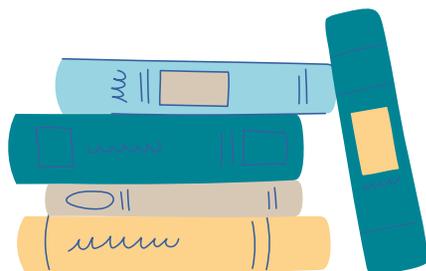


10

Nonetheless, libraries are often forgotten or taken for granted: even in countries with well-supported libraries with strong adult learning and education offers, official strategies too often simply forget to mention them. This can lead to missed opportunities, or giving responsibilities without the resources and support to fulfil them

CONFINTEA VII is an opportunity to take stock of what is and is not working in adult learning and education, and to set a course for more effective policies and strategies in future. In particular, it is a chance to integrate key principles from the United Nations 2030 Agenda and beyond, not least the need for partnerships, integrated provision, and an approach based on rights and leaving no-one behind.

In this context, we hope that it will also be a time to send a strong signal in favour of making the most of the potential that libraries have to support effective and inclusive adult learning and education.



Read the full report: <https://bit.ly/3NLnEwX>

Attend the workshop: In Substance and in Spirit: Achieving the SDGs through Lifelong Learning in Libraries, 9:30-10:45am, 16 June

Contact: stephen.wyber@ifla.org

Realising the Potential

Integrating Libraries into Adult Education Strategies



In many countries, the initial development of adult education and that of public libraries were one and the same thing. Giving the possibility to people outside of the formal education system to learn, discover and build their skills was – and continues to be – at the heart of the mission of libraries, not least as highlighted by the UNESCO-IFLA Public Library Manifesto.

Public and community libraries represent a dense global network – on a very conservative estimate, there is one such library for every 16 000 people, and many more in some countries. They are staffed by trained and dedicated professionals, have strong brand recognition, and often organised into systems at the regional or national levels, providing opportunities to scale up interventions.

However, is this potential being realised? While library policies themselves often accentuate the function of supporting learning, are policies for adult and lifelong education doing the same? Research prepared by IFLA suggests that national laws and strategies may be under-valuing, based on the prevalence of references to libraries and their role.

However, it also highlights models to follow – policies that recognise the role that libraries can play, and which look to make the most of this to the benefit of adult learners.

Key points

1

Libraries are a cornerstone of literacy strategies: a number of national strategies, both in developed and developing countries, highlight the place of libraries both in developing and consolidating literacy amongst learners of all ages

2

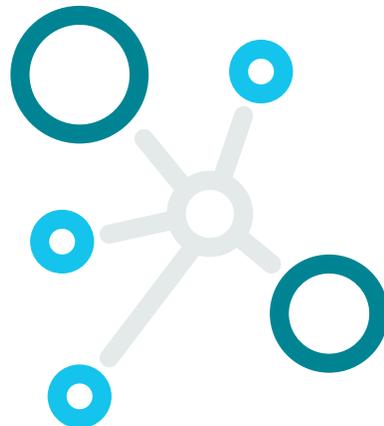
Libraries are a pillar of broader learning environments: many strategies, without going into detail, nonetheless cite libraries as being part of wider efforts to promote lifelong learning, often alongside other cultural institutions

3

Libraries overcome barriers to access to learning resources: creating libraries is seen in some strategies as a means of strengthening learning provision through offering access to resources. In some cases, specific materials are generated and disseminated through libraries.

4

Libraries have unique potential to reach out into communities: a few strategies name libraries as examples of community learning centres, either on their own or through hosting local skills antennae. This gives them an ability to reach potential learners who might otherwise be left behind.



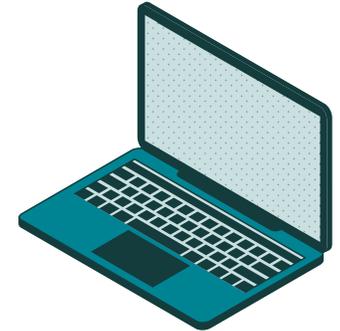
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5

Libraries can be useful partners for other ALE providers: working with libraries is underlined as a priority in some strategies, recognising their unique characteristics – not least their breadth of provision – that can combine with those of other actors in the field.

6

Libraries can be distance learning centres, or simply portals towards other provision: internet-connected libraries can provide a more human means of engaging in online learning, as well as promoting possibilities that other operators offer



7

Libraries can contribute to adult learning and education system design: in some countries, national libraries, library services, and library associations are consulted formally on adult learning and education policy reform and ongoing governance

8

Librarians are sometimes seen as adult learning professionals: there are good examples of strategies that recognise what library staff can achieve, and so invest in giving them the status, training and support necessary to deliver

9

School libraries can also be key community resources: some countries do look to make the most of what school libraries can offer as spaces and collections of material in the heart of communities

3