

Coalition of Lifelong Learning Organizations North America Regional Consultation on *Rethinking Education* Washington, DC, December 3, 2016

The final of five regional dialogues on *Rethinking Education: Towards a Common Good?* — the North America Regional Consultation – was convened by the Coalition of Lifelong Learning Organizations (COLLO) on December 3, 2016. More than 20 representatives of civil society from the United States and Canada engaged in a dialogue on site in Washington, DC, USA and virtually from throughout North America via WebEx.

Included, in addition to members of COLLO's Board of Directors, were representatives from groups such as the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE), the American Council on Education (ACE), the Commission on Adult and Basic Education (COABE), the Correctional Education Association and Proliteracy from the United States and the Institut de coopération pour l'éducation des adultes (ICÉA) from Canada, as well as those from colleges and universities (for example, George Mason University, the University of Arkansas, the University of British Columbia, the University of the District of Columbia, and the Wisconsin Technical College System). Also participating were Katarina Popović, Secretary General, International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) and Carlos Vargas Tamez, Senior Project Officer (*Rethinking Education*), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

This report describes the process participants took part in and conveys their responses to the questions posed to them as well as observations, questions, suggestions and insights related to moving forward in rethinking education.

1. Consultation Process

Before the consultation participants were encouraged to read and review *Rethinking Education* (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/rethinking-education/>) as an essential first step for engagement. Additionally, all received a worksheet with the list of questions that UNESCO and ICAE had provided for the consultation and were also prompted to identify what might be missing from the report from a civil society perspective.

Participating organizations/groups and individuals were asked to prepare initial responses to the questions using a process that they determined best fit their situations (e.g., a statement from the board, focus groups, special meetings, a completed worksheet, etc.). For example, participants in AAACE's Commission for International Adult Education (CIAE) 2016 International Pre-Conference 6-8 November 2016 — after earlier viewing the video *Rethinking Education: Towards a Common Good?* (which included interviews with members of the Senior Expert's Group and UNESCO Assistant Director General) — conducted a half-day dialogue with focus group discussions on each theme.

The consultation provided an opportunity, then, for participants to present their own and their organizations' perspectives and to integrate these with others'. The session was organized into three parts. During the first, a plenary session, virtual and on-site groups, linked via WebEx, participated in introductions and a context-setting discussion.

During the second session, participants split into two groups to respond to questions related to the three themes:

Theme 1: Re-contextualizing the Right to Education of youth and adults in a lifelong learning for all perspective.

Theme 2: Civil Society's role for ensuring equity and quality education opportunities for youth and adults.

Theme 3: Bridges between formal and non-formal pathways of youth and adult education.

The on-site group addressed all the questions in Theme 1 and Questions 2 and 3 of Theme 2; the virtual group all the questions in Theme 3 and Question 1 of Theme 2. Both groups considered what might be missing and possible ways to support implementation of the concepts presented.

The third and final session, again a plenary session where on-site and virtual participants were linked by WebEx, provided the opportunity for groups to share their thoughts and to extend the dialogue.

2. Resulting Dialogue

2.1. *Rethinking Education: Towards a Common Good?* —The Context

The consultation opened with an hour-long session for introductions and for establishing the context of the report and our dialogue. Questions addressed included:

- *Rethinking Education* --- Why is it important and how will it be used?
- Purpose of the consultation—What are the consultation's aims and expected outcomes? How/ why were the questions determined?

ICAE Secretary General Katarina Popović, Secretary General and Carlos Vargas Tamez, UNESCO Senior Project Officer (*Rethinking Education*) provided comments and questions:

- Development during the past two decades has been so fast in many areas including education, science, and technology; sometimes we were caught up into this speed. We were quite busy coping with the challenges but more on an everyday level and on a technical level without having the time to think about the basic concepts, basic ideas that are behind our work and the things that we do. For example, Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals and Education 2030 are oriented to technical issues like indicators, measuring, how to measure progress, how to report about progress. These are important, because they influence also the way we see the things and understand them and the way we do them, but it's very important from time to time to stop and think about the concepts and approaches behind them -- about the philosophy --

especially in education. We take some things for granted and they are not. For example, the values we believe in. Take the Delors report—we still remember learning to be, learning to do, learning to know and learning to live together. And at least in the education field we still believe in it, still believe it is valid. But in many areas of the education field we see that many important elements are lost. So, it's time, to stop, to think about what is in the document, in this set of values, that is still important for us to change the course or to reaffirm those values.

- Rethinking education is an activity of reaffirming or revising the values and concepts that underlie adult education. It speaks to a question of policy and has implications for both policy and implementation.
- Important questions to consider include:
 - What is the relationship between education as "common good" and as "public good?"
 - Who shares in the common good? Who is responsible?
 - What does it mean to call education a "common good?"
 - Is public good utilitarian? Is common good a human right?
 - What does education as a common good mean as it relates to policy?
 - What should be the role of the state in adult education? Direct provision of adult education opportunities? Providing the resources for adult education (financial?). Incentivizing adult education opportunities? Providing regulatory structures for adult education providers?
 - What is the role of civil society? Particularly with the concept of civil society under attack?
- This worldwide series of consultations (policy dialogues) enables us to find out what's common in terms of our understanding of modern education, in terms of challenges we are facing and solutions we are proposing and to see where are the areas of common learning, exchange, and what things do we see that should be worked on at the national level.
- ICAE is finalizing a complete report on these proceedings. We will have a publication that will capture the common areas around the world, what colleagues in lifelong learning around the globe think about if and how the document could be used, what would be the necessary next steps if we think it's good and want to implement it, what should the policy be like, etc. On the other hand, what are the limiting steps and what kinds of policy documents, practical steps, and research are needed and what are next steps. We will include common things and what would be good for the regions. The broader use is as a conceptual framework.

Following this opening session participants divided into two group to consider the three consultation themes and then regrouped to share their work and extend the dialogue. Summaries of their discussions follow.

2. 2. Theme 1

Re-contextualizing the Right to Education of youth and adults in a lifelong learning for all perspective.

1. What are the obstacles to providing education and learning opportunities for youth and adults? What types of obstacles appear to the implementation of ALE policies in the region?

Obstacles run the gamut from a lack of resources for and access to education, to policies on and requirements for school attendance, to perceptual and cultural differences on the purpose and goals of education. Obstacles exist for individual students, adult educators, and public and private providers as well as funding entities (e.g., governments).

- Resources and access constraints exist for individual students, adult educators, and public and private providers as well as for funding agencies. Youth and adults, in addition to facing continuously rising costs for education often, must juggle work and school schedules and time allocation, childcare, transportation, etc. Adult educators' dilemma is to do more, to educate more, more effectively to larger numbers of more diverse people, with decreasing amounts of resources. Public and private providers face mounting financial constraints. Moreover, unlike for K through 12 education, the burden of the cost of education for adults who have left or matriculated from public school systems generally rests with individuals not the state.
- Youth and adults do not get proper assistance in clarifying their goals and picking courses of study related to achieving those goals. Some struggle with alienation, suspicion and lack of trust in education or institution, test anxiety, emotional maturity and lack of academic preparation. Others are independent or atypical learners, artistic, creative, or don't fit mold or thrive in an education system that reflects the norm and rewards those who adapt to the system. While some succeed, many drop out or receive negative labels.
- Requirements for remediation prevent youth and adults from receiving relevant education and training; the expectations of participations are often unrelated to the goals of a program of study. For example, students needing literacy in a second language are required to take high school courses unrelated to their needs and less well prepared students are required to take remediation that is not contextualized before taking relevant courses.
- Learning from non-traditional sources is not validated and recognized by more formal organizations and employers.
- Perceptual and cultural differences present contrasting -- sometimes conflicting -- views on the purposes and goals of education. For example, is the desired outcome cognitive or practical learning, the culmination of schooling and acquisition of a job, or the development of skills for lifelong learning.
- The worlds of work and school are often unconnected.

2. What kind of policies facilitate and ensure the implementation of accessible and meaningful education and learning opportunities for youth and adults?

Those that:

- Provide subsidized learning opportunities and provide services to support and retain students (e.g., counseling, academic preparation).
- Support the development of less costly but effective modes of delivering education and learning (e.g., Khan Academy).
- Provide advising and goal clarification at the beginning of a learner's journey.
- Contextualize remediation.
- Assure there are clear program pathways for learners that lead to important post completion outcomes. For example, develop career pathways encompassing institutions and business/industries (include experiential opportunities and employment).
- Increase options for alternative education (such as charter schools) being mindful of and mitigating risks of taking funding away from public schools and being false solutions.
- Increase "portability" by for example using competence based evaluation and increase validation of learning from non-traditional sources is not and its recognition by more formal organizations and employers.
- Gain consensus on a view of education that encompasses, rather than bifurcates, varying perspectives and includes, for example, a culture of learning that is rooted in our daily life, learning how to create practical skills, as well as wisdom, and that assures access and connection between local community and schools - facilitating connections between work and school.
- Engage multiple actors; consider using the *collective impact* framework (<http://www.collaborationforimpact.com/collective-impact/>).

Note: What seems to be disappearing is a rights based approach where education is viewed as a human right. We need to make sure that the right to education stays at the forefront (e.g., by referring to laws/agreements when advocating).

3. What should be the role of the state* in ensuring opportunities for all youth and adults beyond basic education?

The state's role is to

- Provide resources, funding and subsidized learning opportunities.
- Provide regulations and with regulations provide legitimacy.
- Make equitable access and outcomes part of the data collecting and reporting requirements.
- Focus upon post-learning outcomes for learners and quality control for programs.

- Support the development of open educational resources and the use of technology.
- Act as a convener to bring state and non-state agents (e. g., public and private entities) together to address education issues.
- Provide direct services to the population (e. g., vocational/rehabilitation employment, and veterans affairs services in the United States).
- Report to federal government on federally funded programs (United States).

Note: The word *state* leads to a bit of ambiguity here because it generally means a nation or territory considered as an organized political community under one government (as meant in comments above). In the United States, however, state also refers to a specific level of government. The 50 state governments have specific roles in establishing education plans, legislation and regulations for education within their boundaries, for funding public universities and community colleges and for responding to and reporting on federal government education policies and initiatives. In Canada, there is no federal department of education and no integrated national system of education. In the 10 provinces and 3 territories, departments or ministries of education are responsible for the organization, delivery, and assessment of education at the elementary and secondary levels, for technical and vocational education, and for postsecondary education. In the United States the small state of Rhode Island has 32 school districts all working independently with resources and policies and leadership. The National Center for Education Statistics reported 16, 990 public school districts in the United States in 2011-2012: about 8,300 in rural communities, 3,310 in suburban areas, 2,840 in towns, and 2,540 in cities (Gray, Bitterman, & Goldring, 2013). Each determines education policy, curriculum and services for K-12 education, which includes youth, and many provide services to adults.

2. 3. Theme 2

Civil Society's role for ensuring equity and quality education opportunities for youth and adults.

1. What mechanisms of coordination between the State and non-state entities are required to operate an inclusive strategy/system of lifelong learning?
 - New, affordable ways of recognizing, validating and assessing learning at scale are needed.
 - Some agency or entity should be established to create a "cross walk" between systems.
 - Learning Cities may be a resource for identifying coordination mechanisms and provide examples of approaches.
 - Whatever mechanism is used; a central question is: How do we involve **all** actors in ensuring equity and quality education? Along with the state, actors may include: youth and adults being educated, business and industry, private organizations,

501(3) c [not-for-profit] organizations, foundations, religious educators, ethnic groups, social services, labor parties, unions and incarcerated populations.

Partnerships and collaborative efforts that provide opportunities to coordinate State and non-state entities to foster an inclusive strategy/system of lifelong learning use a variety of mechanisms. Such activities may be studied and expanded.

Some examples are:

- In Quebec, the labor partners—unions, employers' organizations, the education system, and community groups—offering manpower training are re-grouped in an official, state-based mechanism, the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail (CPMT), and they together manage certain laws and programs, public money and define priorities. It is a permanent structure and allows for a permanent ongoing discussion. This is a model for work-based training that ICÉA, has proposed extending.
 - In the United States, some post-secondary institutions are now working with the secondary schools to establish programs in which students graduate with a credential as well as a high school degree. This provides an advantage in their attempt to get bachelor's degrees and helps them to get work, earning money for living expenses and/or further education.
 - Post-secondary school institutions are working to create competency based educational programs with portable credentials, looking more closely at vocationally based programs, and working directly with employers to create learning that speaks directly to the specific competencies that employers want. When students complete these programs, they may have a credential and a degree.
 - Community colleges may play a central role in convening interested parties from business and industry, public and private organizations and schools and higher education institutions to work together to provide access and opportunities to educational opportunities to meet student, business and community needs.
2. How ALE provision as a public good is guaranteed taking into account the diversity of stakeholders involved? What role should play each part to ensure inclusion and equity?
- We concur with the statement: "Given the need for sustainable development in an increasingly interdependent world, education and knowledge should, therefore, be considered global common goods" (*Rethinking Education*, p 11). This perspective might provide the basis of a framework for the education of youth and adults in the future. **Further dialogue is needed.**
 - Adult learning and education, for example, may be viewed as a private, public *and* common good. These three interact (see Figure 1). Rather than establishing a dichotomy between education as a public and/or common good or a continuum that includes the private, public and common good, we suggest an interactive framework that includes all three to be used in making decisions or setting priorities. Education is a commodity; it does serve a private good. Education is an investment; it does serve a public good. Education is a human

right, serving a common good. Recognizing the constant interaction between the three, and the continual balancing among them, is important in defining policy and implementing educational opportunities for youth and adults.

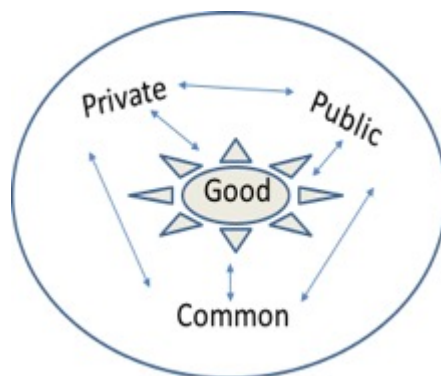


Figure 1. Interacting goods; intersecting interests.

- The goal of an education that addresses these interacting goods and intersecting interests might be *to provide portable credentials of market value that lead to family sustaining wages.*
 - Achieving such a goal would require the active engagement of a diverse group of stakeholders (e.g., youth and adults being educated, business and industry, private organizations, 501(3) c [not-for-profit] organizations, foundations, religious educators, ethnic groups, social services and incarcerated populations). Moreover, many of these entities might contribute to any given individual's ALE. Thus, rather than observing and documenting the results of single, separate stakeholders, the focus would be on the results of multiple stakeholders.
 - The *Collective Impact Framework* has shown to be useful in organizing such partnerships. Important steps to take would be:
 - Engage the youth or adult learners in the process.
 - Define the meaning of the common good to the community involved.
3. How can we monitor and follow-up compliance with ALE existing international agreements (SDGs 4.3, 4.4 and 4.6, Belem Framework for Action), in a context of multiple stakeholders?

Rethinking Education sets forth ways of thinking about education—about its underlying philosophy, purpose and organization. Thus, it does not provide an action framework with specific targets to measure progress against. What may be monitored is the spread of the ideas contained in this document to actions taken related to such initiatives/agreements as SDGs 4.3, 4.4, and 4.6, the Belem Framework for Action and Education 2030 Framework for Action. As these activities are already in progress, outreach to and dialogue with those involved would be required. One approach might be to identify a list of examples of action

that exemplify the concepts espoused in *Rethinking Education* and garner exemplars from the other initiatives.

UNESCO's Learning Cities Network may be a resource for approaches that engage multiple stakeholders and that are consistent with the ideas presented in *Rethinking Education*, and perhaps Learning Cities might implement (or be already implementing) activities consistent with this publication. What actions might UNESCO or civil society take to link and leverage these two separate endeavors?

2.4. Theme 3

Bridges between formal and non-formal pathways of youth and adult education.

1. What bridges are necessary and possible to link youth and adult formal and non-formal education and learning, to allow movement from one to the other?

- This is the main challenge right now because over the years we have built different systems – a very complex learning structure—youth and non-youth, formal and non-formal.
- In some cases, learners can find their way through this complex landscape: e.g., from secondary education to formal or non-formal education. Yet, we need to determine ways to support them so they will not have to find their own way. How could policy or actions help support that process?
- There needs to be a common understanding of what industry needs. Education is the primary path to a quality life, and a common understanding for career needs could help link birth to death education goals. The focus should not be on assessments or rote knowledge but on varied ways of knowing that incorporate computational thinking and holistic learning environments where difference is explored and not dismissed.
- Policy changes are needed if we are going to suggest that much more work needs to be done across the educational landscape to recognize and link learning opportunities that adults and youth engage in. In the North American Region policy making structures are decentralized. In Canada, for example, there is no ministry of education and the Federal role in the USA is based on a lot of local control and decision-making. Starting at the federal or national level is a good beginning to make the point and to try to develop a concerted strategy that could be successful not only at the federal level, but also at more local and even institutional levels.
- In North America, we can use UNESCO's normative instruments like CONFINTEA 6 Declaration and the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education, signed by Canada and the United States, as tools to push our federal, national, provincial state level and local government. They address opening counseling to adults, making policy based on learning demand, etc. Using UNESCO's instruments in Canada or in the United States and even throughout North America could help us build a collective policy-making action to help us have a common language but at the same time locally have a diversity that is breathtaking.
- Improving communication and sharing resources within states would benefit instructors, students and institutions.

2. Does the recognition of prior learning and non-formal education require a validation and accreditation mechanism? Which ones?
 - To bridge existing gaps, official prior learning assessment needs to be validated as an essential tool and made more easily recognized across industries and across organizations and internationally. It needs to be efficient, accessible and easy to use. We might consider such tools as simulations, case studies, work activities for students to demonstrate competence to show what they can do.
 - Recognizing all the different forms of learning is a challenge as people move from one learning space to another. Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) supports mobility very much - through education systems, both vertical and horizontal, and in a geographical sense (in regions) and in professional areas. Strengthen prior learning validation/assessment.
 - In some instances, a third party (e.g., the American Council on Education [ACE]) visits workplaces to validate a learning program and make recommendations about what it would earn for college credit. ACE also examines portfolios. The aim is to validate students' learning and assign college credits, reducing the amount of credits to be earned in college and related costs.
 - A mechanism for PLA is critical (or, badging routines, etc.). In many places, learners do not even see the point of participating in learning opportunities unless a credential is attached because they are in systems that require formalized credentials to either move forward with education or enter the labor market. We need to work as hard as we can to open the opportunities to recognize learning, regardless of where that learning takes place.
 - We need policies based not on the availability of learning but on the learning trajectories of people's lives that incorporate formal and informal learning, online learning, on the job learning, etc.
 - PLA and badges need to be used more effectively internationally. Also needed is a recognized credential internationally
3. What policies or mechanisms are needed to ensure a more fluid approach to education as a continuum? How can they provide more and enhanced opportunities for lifelong education and learning?
 - A policy that respects access where investment is at the national level to equalize education for those without resources and those with but is not forced. Individuals must recognize the need and pursue it and once pursued it can be accessed.
 - Global policies that reflect our national need for knowledge through open forums...not possible with speech laws in many countries.
 - We need to make time (e.g., 24 hours in a day, people work, commute, etc.). The time for people to learn more formally or structurally, is nonexistent. To make bridges possible we need to create time, and policies that do create time are essential.
 - Technology could be part of the solution in creating time but there are many prerequisites, e.g., costs for computers, computer literacy; lack of these could create more inequities.

- Using technology may be a cultural issue to be addressed. In some cases, institutions may not be comfortable with online learning and may or may not consider technology approaches valid or valued. Also, faculty members need to be adept at handling technology and if the culture of the institution does not see the value of providing professional development and support of the faculty to gain that knowledge and skill.
- Access to technology is a big issue for adults who are incarcerated and want to extend their education (post-secondary). Many of the programs are online and there are a lot of correctional institutions that do not allow Internet access. We in North America can learn from others' experience with this and look forward to it.
- *Rethinking Education* notes that we have created several resources. The challenge is how we link them. Adult Learning is formal/ non-formal and encompasses many groups and venues. In Quebec, educators are attacking the challenge of working together and allowing people to move from one setting to another. In one meeting where different actors/organizations met to discuss establishing a learning continuum from preschool through adulthood everyone agreed conceptually, but everyone is managing their part of the story, and it seems so complicated and almost unfeasible to try to create that network of networks.
- A possible strategy is to share compelling stories and examples from different parts of the world in different contexts and settings that show modest ways in which these things can be addressed at the institutional level, at the local level in both formal and non-formal settings. When dealing with such complex issues one way to ground them is to assemble selected examples that represent the complexity of the landscape of youth and adult education. *Whatever comes out of this consultation, there needs to be an effort made to generate more examples of innovations and ways that institutions, governments (even at the provincial or state, regional, local levels) are trying to address these issues in a positive way and a way that is consistent with the overall tone of Rethinking Education.*

3. Facilitating Implementation

Observations, questions, suggestions and insights related to moving forward with rethinking education have been incorporated throughout the report. Here we highlight and make suggestions about items needing additional emphasis or that seem missing. In these areas, civil society may be able to make significant and meaningful contributions.

3.1. Pursue “Breakthrough” Ideas

Rethinking Education provides the grounding for reconsidering the purpose and organization of education in a world of increasing complexity, uncertainty and contradiction and presents the re-contextualization of education as a common good. To facilitate implementation, we need to seek out and implement innovative breakthrough ideas that quickly and dramatically advance learning and development for youth and adults.

Some examples are:

- **The Khan Academy** (<https://www.khanacademy.org/>). Started by an individual, the academy is a non-profit educational organization created in 2006 by educator Salman Khan with a goal of creating an accessible place for people to be educated. The organization produces short lectures in the form of YouTube video, and courses are free.
- **Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)** (<http://www.edpartnerships.org/gear-up>). This is a competitive grant program of the U.S. Department of Education that increases the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education by providing States and local community-education partnerships six-to-seven year grants to offer support services to high-poverty, middle and high schools. For an example of the program in the Los Angeles, California (USA) school district see GEAR UP 4 LA (<http://home.lausd.net/apps/news/article/407202>), which works with all stakeholders – students, parents and school site staff – to provide services. This includes strong academic counseling; financial literacy awareness; extended learning programs; professional development; early college readiness tests; college visits; and mentoring.
- **The Collective Impact Framework.** This is premised on the belief that no single policy, government department, organization or program can tackle or solve the increasingly complex social problems we face as a society. The approach calls for multiple organisations or entities from different sectors to abandon their own agenda in favour of a common agenda, shared measurement and alignment of effort. Unlike collaboration or partnership, Collective Impact initiatives have centralized infrastructure – known as a backbone organisation – with dedicated staff whose role is to help participating organisations shift from acting alone to acting in concert. (<http://www.collaborationforimpact.com/collective-impact/>)

3. 2. Hear the Voices of Youth and Adult Learners; Understand to Engage Them

What seems missing in *Rethinking Education* are the voices of the people whom we are planning for. Where are their actual voices? What about having the voice of communities throughout the world involved in the discussion about developing the programs we say they need and about pursuing lifelong learning. UNESCO should be the forum.

Rethinking Education addresses providing quality educational opportunities for all youth and adults. Yet some may not be inclined to take advantage of opportunities, because they are independent learners -- able to think, act and pursue their own studies autonomously, without the same levels of support you receive from a teacher at school. While some succeed, many drop out or negatively labeled. We may assume that they are atypical learners (artistic, creative, etc.) that don't fit mold. Other youth or adults may not be motivated to learn, be alienated or feel disenfranchised. It is incumbent on us to seek to understand and engage such learners to provide avenues for learning. One way is to conduct research to better understand the conditions for learning needed by each of these different types of learner. Another is to seek ways to integrate them and their learning experiences into pathways leading to literacy or credentialing (e.g., by determining ways to validate self-directed learning) or higher education. Including youth and adults as well as other citizens of the community in policy, planning and implementation decisions will increase participation and engagement.

3. 3. Focus on Higher Education

Rethinking Education calls for the social contract that binds higher education institutions to society at large to be redefined mentioning universities' traditional role in training for research and through research. It refers to the transformation of higher education's landscape by such factors as the diversification of structures and institutions, internationalization, development of MOOCs, the culture of assessment of learning's quality and relevance and growing public-private partnerships. Focusing public dialogue on the future purpose and organization of higher education—and all its permutations – is critical.

According to Budd Hall, Co-Chair, UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility, "The report, in spite of some very good work on schooling and adult education suffers from a very out-of-date and inadequate analysis of higher education" (2016, para. 4). Hall noted:

The report has missed completely the emphasis coming out of the 2009 UNESCO International Conference on Higher Education which is one of social responsibility. No mention of the Communiqué of that conference nor surprisingly of the UNESCO related *GUNi World Report on Higher Education 5: Knowledge, Engagement and Higher Education Contributing to Social Change*. A mention of MOOCs and the concern about the misuses of global rankings are about all that the report has to contribute. (para. 4)

3. 4. Incorporate Adult Education and Adult Educators

Although there is a strong focus on lifelong learning in *Rethinking Education*, mention of Adult Education, as a field of research and practice different from that education for youth or children, is missing from this report. While the document refers to Neuroscience and its findings, it does not cite education sciences, per se, including the scientific disciplines that deal with adult education (e.g., psychology, andragogy, sociology, cognitive sciences, educational technology, etc.). *The voices of adult educators and research findings from the field need to be considered.*

Adult Educators work in a wide variety of settings (private and public universities, community colleges, community-based education centers, government, businesses and industry, professional associations, etc. They design and conduct formal and non-formal learning activities, face-face and online learning programs. They are positioned to implement concepts espoused in *Rethinking Education*. Moreover, the concepts are consistent with adult education practice, for example, with linking humanistic education perspectives and vocational or management learning objectives in workforce training. There is a wide and growing body of research on methods, approaches, technologies, etc., for practitioners to draw on.

Indeed, in the North American Region, where decision-making responsibility for educational opportunities for youth and adults is so fragmented and decentralized, adult educators may be the most likely champions to spur dialogue on the concepts proposed - in graduate programs in adult education, during professional development, within professional associations and at the workplace. Also, practitioners and researchers in the field are poised (or already acting) to further explore new approaches to organizing and

presenting adult learning and are motivated to share their findings, accelerating implementation efforts.

3. 5. Further Explore the Concept and Implications of Education and Knowledge as Common Goods.

Rethinking Education proposes that education and knowledge should be considered global common goods. This is an intriguing notion that might shape the way we think about learning and knowledge for years to come. Hall (2016, para. 2) noted:

The biggest shift that the document proposes is a shift from the use of the public good to the common good as the ultimate goal of education. “The notion of common good goes beyond the instrumental concept of the public good in which human well-being is framed by individualistic socio-economic theory.” The common good concept reaffirms, according to the document, the collective dimension of education as well as a shared social endeavor.

While intriguing, the concept is new and nuanced and may be difficult to grasp. We approached it by considering the common good in the context of the private, public *and* common good (see Figure 1). Education is a commodity; it does serve a private good. Education is an investment; it does serve a public good. Education is a human right, serving a common good. Recognizing the constant interaction between the three, and the continual balancing among them, is important in defining policy and implementing educational opportunities for youth and adults.

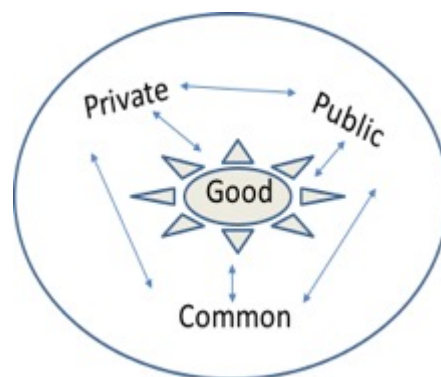


Figure 1. Interacting goods; intersecting interests.

We suggest continued widespread dialogue and discussion of the concept, accompanied by examples and metaphors and an exploration of the many issues and questions it brings up.

Among the questions: What is the relationship between education as "common good" and as "public good"?

- Who shares in the common good? Who is responsible?
- What does it mean to call education a "common good"?
- Is public good utilitarian? Is common good a human right?
- What does education as a common good mean as it relates to policy?

Hall (2016, para.3) raised the question of whose common good was included and shared a map of the world that illustrates the unequal production of knowledge (see Figure 2).

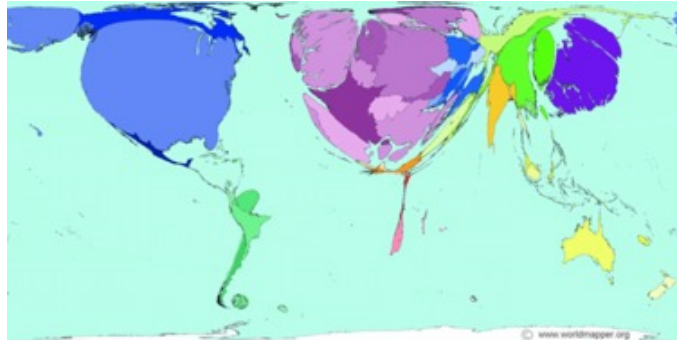


Figure 2. Unequal production of knowledge (<https://62e528761d06853#3476809>).

While Hall admits, “The shift from the idea of the public good to common good is a worthwhile debate”....., he contends that “a similar shift from knowledge society to knowledge democracy would help to draw issues of equity and action into much sharper focus” (2016, para. 5) – an important consideration moving forward.

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Appendix A
Participants in the North America Region Consultation on *Rethinking Education*
Conducted by Coalition of Lifelong Learning Organizations (COLLO)
December 5, 2016

On-site Group

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Thomas (Tom) Sork, Ph.D., Professor Adult Learning and Education and Senior Associate Dean, International and Administration, University of British Columbia

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Guest Speakers

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