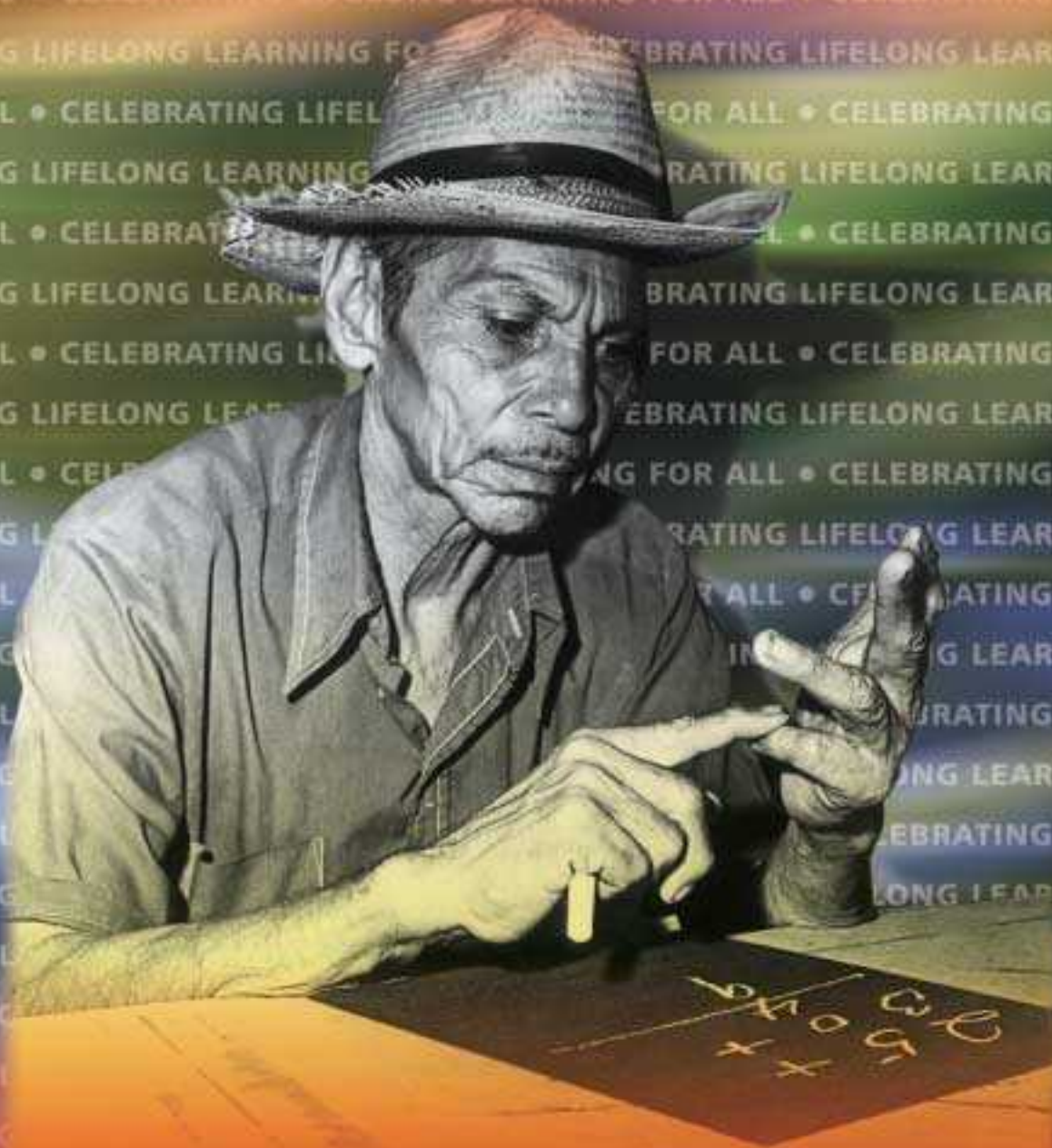


The Learning Festivals Guide



*An internationally-produced communication tool
in support of the launch of the
International Adult Learners' Week*

Foreword

“While there is a growing demand for adult education and an explosion of information, the disparities between those who have access and those who do not are also growing. There is therefore a need to counter this polarity, which reinforces existing inequalities, by creating adult learning structures and lifelong learning environments that can help to correct the prevalent trend.”

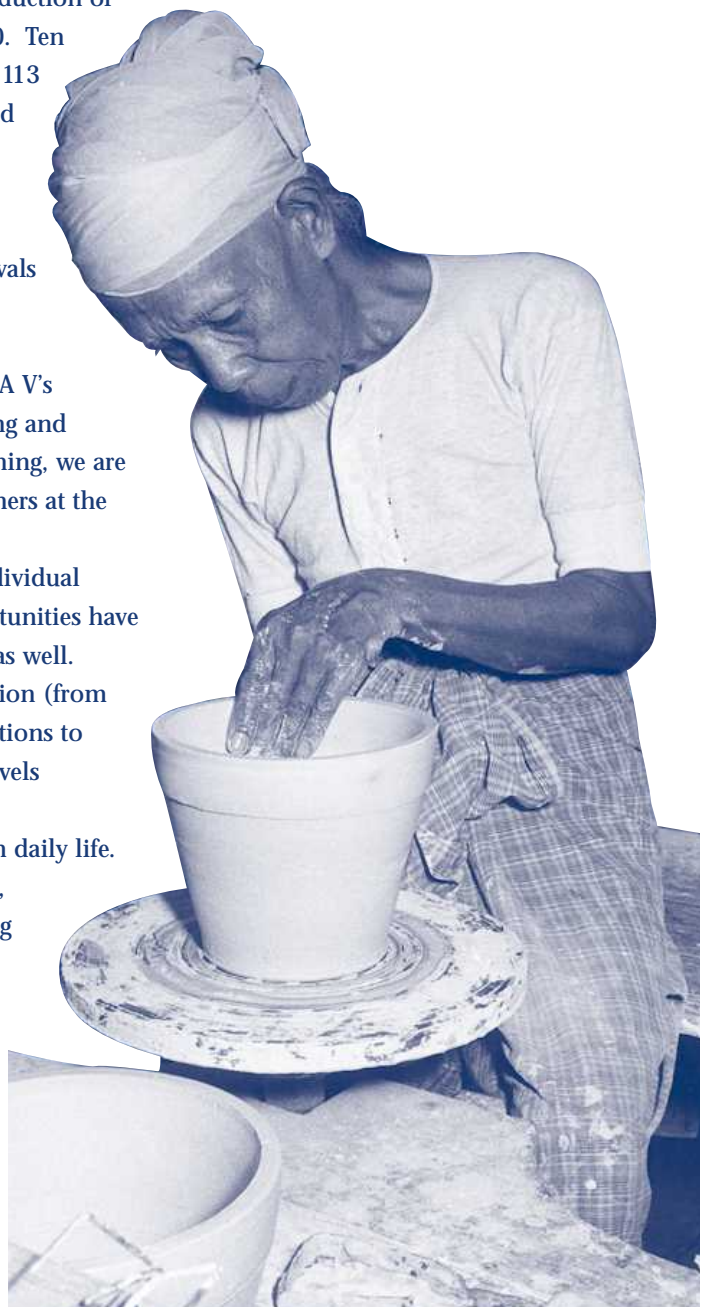
CONFINTEA V Agenda For the Future §16

Transforming educational inequities is a complex and therefore slow process. When governments met in Jomtien for the World Conference on Education for All in 1990, among the goals set were universal access to and completion of primary education by 2000 and reduction of the adult illiteracy rate to one half its 1990 level by 2000. Ten years later, governments met in Dakar to admit that still 113 million children have no access to primary education and 880 million adults, the majority of them women, are illiterate.

It is against this background that we, members of the “family” of adult educators, are organising learning festivals all over the world. We take inspiration from previously-marginalised women and men who have shown us that learning makes a difference. Taking to heart CONFINTEA V’s challenge to facilitate environments conducive to learning and creating structures that widen participation in adult learning, we are pursuing creative and celebratory strategies that put learners at the centre.

One of these strategies is to recognise and honour individual women and men for demonstrating how learning opportunities have transformed not only individual lives but communities as well. Another one is to organise the widest possible participation (from governments to NGOs, from community based-organisations to private corporations, from universities to media, at all levels possible, national, regional or local) to facilitate such environments at the community, at the workplace and in daily life. When done in the spirit of co-operation and celebration, such efforts could pave the way for more dialogue among the stakeholders. Ultimately this will strengthen partnerships between all agencies involved in providing learning opportunities.

When planning for public information, communication and education activities we need to be conscious that our challenge is to reach out, especially to those marginalised because of class,



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gender, race or other forms of discrimination, and promote participation to all types of adult learning. We hope that our efforts will help promote an increase in the range of learning possibilities, not only making them accessible to the learners but also improving their relevance for the learners.

Our long-term goal is to create a culture of lifelong learning where traditional boundaries between basic, vocational and general adult education, between literacy skills and other competencies are replaced by complementarity of all these efforts; where adult learning is considered a right and a tool for equitable and sustainable development; and where adult learning is taken as a crucial component in the creation and strengthening of democratic and productive communities.

We look forward to that learning society where everyone has an equal chance to participate. We need to celebrate as we work and move towards that society which promotes lifelong learning. The learning festivals are opportunities to acknowledge the role of learning in transforming lives, communities and societies.

Carol Medel-Añonuevo
Senior Research Specialist
UNESCO Institute for Education



South Africa (© Kate Malone)

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Introduction

Welcome to the Learning Festivals Guide, an internationally-produced communication tool in support of the launch of the International Adult Learners' Week.

The Guide has several aims:

- ▶ to strengthen International Literacy Day, recognising that the basic learning needs of all people of all ages should be met in each and every developing and developed country;
- ▶ to share the experiences of educators from around the world who have seen the value of using promotional campaigns to encourage learning by all;
- ▶ to inspire more countries to join the movement and contribute to this experience;
- ▶ to foster International Adult Learners' Week.

What is a learning festival?

Festivals and events to celebrate adult learning are not new. International Literacy Day (ILD) has been celebrated since 1967, and has been the focus of learning festivals held over the years by different countries across the world.

Adult learners have been recognised in many ways for their contributions to individuals, communities and societies. The first adult learners' week was organised by the American Association for the Advancement of Education (AAAE) in the late 1980s. The U.S. week focused on a Congressional Breakfast for outstanding adult learners backed by an activities pack for AAAE members. The move to have a global, organised celebration for adult learners was stimulated by CONFINTEA V and now encompasses over 40 countries (see box, left).

What is the International Week?

The adult learners' weeks already developed at national level in several countries around the world serve as a strategy to disseminate information and to raise the curiosity of a wider public, and to encourage and honour innovative approaches to adult learning. Their main goal, however, has been to celebrate learning and to give a voice to learners.

With the resolution adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO during its 30th session in November 1999 to launch the *International Adult Learners' Week* in September 2000, a larger dimension came into being. The aim of the *International Adult Learners' Week* is to bridge the activities during the national adult learners' weeks, to learn from the experiences of other countries, to share the celebration with people in other contexts and to amplify the co-operation between agencies active in the promotion of adult learning at international level.

The launching event took place on the occasion of the World Exposition (EXPO 2000) in Hannover within the Global Dialogue No. 7 entitled "Building Learning Societies - Knowledge, Information and Human Development" (6-8 September). "Building Learning Societies" was a three-day international debate on the growing role of learning, information and knowledge in sustainable development and poverty alleviation. It focused on a central question that corresponds to the very rationale for adult learners' weeks: How to combine the tools of the communication revolution and innovations in learning with the dramatic expansion of information and knowledge resources, against

The following countries have held adult learners' weeks in previous years and in 2000, the year of the first International Adult Learners' Week:

Australia, Austria, Benin, Botswana, Czech Republic, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Flanders, Germany, Guinea Conakry, Hong Kong, Hungary, Jamaica, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Namibia, New Zealand, Norway, Palestine, the Philippines, Portugal, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK.

Adult learners' weeks held for the first time in or around September 2000:

Bosnia, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran, Madagascar, Mali, the Netherlands, Niger, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Swaziland and Zambia.

Canada (Québec), India, Togo and Thailand have developed promotional campaigns around the annual International Literacy Day.



the background of the increasing marginalisation of large segments of populations.

On the afternoon of 8 September, the concluding session of the event, “Platform for the Future” provided the stage for the celebration of International Literacy Day and for the official launch of the *International Adult Learners’ Week* by the Director-General of UNESCO. UNESCO’s resolution equally called for *International Adult Learners’ Week* being brought to the attention of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, so that all member states of the United Nations finally join this initiative.

The launch of the *International Adult Learners’ Week* was the first highlight in a process which had been started some time before. On the initiative of NIACE, the National Organisation for Adult Learning (England & Wales), a group of adult learning co-ordinators from various countries and backgrounds met in the spring of 2000 to begin the process of producing a toolkit in support of the launching act. The ensuing work became a process which is both collective and international, and was helped tremendously by the “veteran” countries sharing their experiences. The present guide is the first output of this process which is understood as being in the beginning stage, and meant to continue and amplify - not the least by means of an internet forum which will constitute an ongoing mechanism of communication, exchange and joining efforts in the future.

International Forum

An e-mail forum has been established for national co-ordinators and others involved in the organisation of Adult Learners’ Week in their country. The purpose of the forum is to facilitate the exchange of ideas for organising Adult Learners’ Week and nurture the development of the Week as an international event. You are welcome to subscribe. By doing so, you will receive all messages sent by other subscribers; likewise they will receive any messages you send. All messages are archived, so once you join you will also be able to view previous messages.

The forum is hosted by Adult Learning Australia.

If you would like to join the forum, please send an e-mail to [alw-international-list-request@ala.asn.au/](mailto:alw-international-list-request@ala.asn.au). **Please leave the subject line blank and write only the word `subscribe’ in the message section.**

Any enquiries, comments or suggestions about the forum should be sent to [alw@ala.asn.au/](mailto:alw@ala.asn.au).

We welcome your participation, and hope you find it useful.

Celebrating lifelong learning for all!

International Literacy Day and Adult Learners' Week are used as mobilisation initiatives in many countries already. Where activities are developed they are becoming a key element of national adult learning policies, promoting wider access to adult learning by celebrating learners' achievements, individual and collective, and using their experiences to stimulate a demand for learning elsewhere.

In this section we give an outline of experiences of a few of our partners worldwide of planning and staging a successful "festival of learning".

Australia

Tony Brown, Director of Adult Learning Australia, said: "When a Week embraces a literacy afternoon in Texas, Queensland; an open learning online exchange linking Barcardine, Charters Towers and Charleville; electronic banking courses in Kojonup, Western Australia; a pasta-making course conducted by an Italian seniors group in Mildura, Victoria; Education Ministers presenting learners awards across Australia and the Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Council in Queensland holding an open day on the importance of lifelong learning, then it is truly a national community event."

Benin

The objective of Adult Learners' Week in Benin (1998) was to renew the adult literacy national programme in the framework of post-literacy and lifelong learning, to assess other adult learning needs and to mobilise local communities and non-governmental organisations (NGO).

Representatives from four neighbouring countries attended the series of events that took place in the capital and in all the departments of the country.

Bosnia

For the first time, on 8 September 2000, a Learning Festival was organised in Bosnia. The theme of this event was *Bosnia: From the war-trauma to the Learning Society*.

The focus of the festival was on the further education of Bosnian adults who work with people traumatised by war.

Botswana

The capital city of Botswana has twice hosted Adult Learners' Week, organised by the Botswana Adult Education Association. In 2000 the Week was organised in two places - an industrial town in the north-central part of the country and a remote small town on the western edge of the Kalahari, where the Ministry of Education's Department of Non-Formal Education took the leading role.

Flanders (Belgium)

In the mid-nineties, the adult education organisation VCVO was inspired by other countries to organise an adult learners' week in Flanders. The goal of the week was to promote non-formal adult education. Making people aware of the importance of taking part in both education and society is the main reason to organise adults' learners' week annually. The activities undertaken focus on the identity of non-formal adult education.

Germany

This year the nation-wide "Lernfest 2000" was held as a initiative of the federation and the "Länder" (countries of Germany) and co-



Australia



Flanders

ordinated by the Adolf Grimme Institut. The launch was held on 8 September during EXPO 2000 in Hannover.

The whole spectrum of further education and learning - from language skills to the field of workplace challenges, mainly through IT as well as politics, culture and arts - can be shown at the "Lernfest". The Lernfest offers the opportunity to enhance debate and develop effective policies to keep adult learning issues to the forefront.

Hong Kong

Hong Kong's Lifelong Learning Festival in January 2000 had as its theme *A Learning Renaissance - Challenge and Opportunity for the New Millennium*. Its organisers said:

"In view of the significance of lifelong learning as a worldwide movement in general and as a means to enable people to face the challenges of rapid change in particular, the Lifelong Learning Festival aimed to make the case for the development of a culture of lifelong learning for all in Hong Kong."

New Zealand

In New Zealand Aotearoa, Adult Learners' Week is also called He Tangata Matauranga. This recognises the partnership between indigenous Maori and the Pakeha (Europeans) within "The land of the long white cloud". The Week has been celebrated officially since 1998 throughout the country. One of its major aims is to foster collaborative and co-operative networks and pathways among those who share an interest in adults' learning. Thus, it has been exciting to watch the event grow bigger each year and to involve more and more organisations, individuals and government agencies working together in harmony. An emerging focus for The Week is to raise awareness of the social injustices that create barriers to adults' learning. This complements our commitment to encourage more adults to access learning opportunities and can make a really useful contribution to the lives of adult learners, educators and providers.

Slovenia

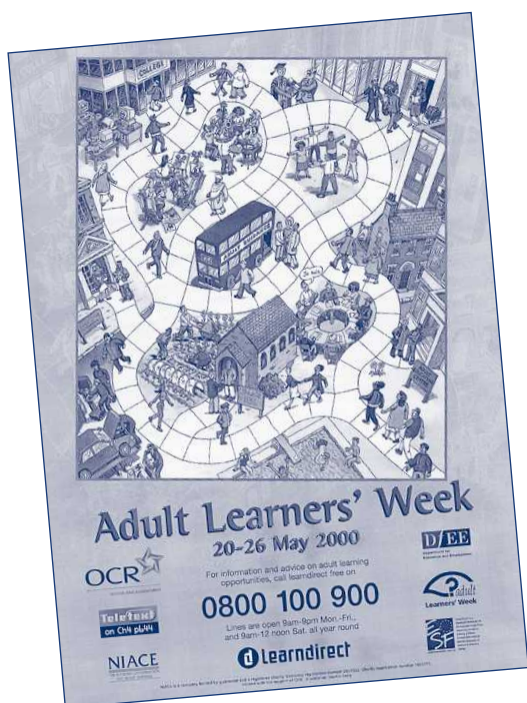
Slovenian Lifelong Learning Week has been organised since October 1996. It was designed to contribute to the practical and theoretical development of lifelong learning, and to bring to life the slogan, "Slovenia, a learning country".

The Week attempts to stimulate people's curiosity, expanding the availability of learning opportunities and motivating new learners. Better conditions for establishing partnerships have been created and the Government has become the major stakeholder and general sponsor.

United Kingdom

Adult Learners' Week in the UK has been organised since 1992. It is a partnership of learners, politicians, policy makers, broadcasters and providers of education and training.

Every year the UK week offers over 5,000 local events and more than 100 awards for adult learners and organisations. There is coverage by TV, radio, newspapers and magazines. The Week is backed by a freephone helpline, learndirect, staffed by adult guidance specialists from all over the UK.



UK

Guide to Holding a Festival

While countries may approach the mechanics of a learning festival differently, there are common themes to its organisation.

Many organisers plan learning festivals to fulfil one or more of the following objectives:

- ▶ **inform** the public about opportunities in learning
- ▶ **build on** literacy programmes, and **enhance** lifelong learning strategies that exist already
- ▶ **encourage** participation - using real-life practical examples to speak to new target groups
- ▶ **stimulate** working partnerships
- ▶ **give** learners a 'voice'
- ▶ **act on** the issues which affect the ability of adults to learn; influence public policy and raise awareness among adult learners, educators and providers of the barriers to participation
- ▶ **show** the political position of adult education, and
- ▶ **make** learning fun.

In the following sections we outline what we consider to be the key aspects of organisation, with illustrations from countries which have experience of that particular feature.

The importance of learning to Jamaica's economic and social future was highlighted in a national Church service, part of the island's 1997 Adult Education Week. The Week was a mixture of dance, song and poetry, interwoven with plenary sessions and debate.

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1: Planning Events

Organisers of adult learners' weeks use public events to raise awareness of the importance of learning and generate media coverage.

Events help to

- ▶ highlight role models
- ▶ mobilise people to learn
- ▶ celebrate the joy of learning, and
- ▶ foster a spirit of collaboration across all educational sectors.

Questions:

Who do you want to reach, and how are you going to do it?

Who?

You may want to raise awareness of the benefits of adult education among those who make or contribute toward decisions. An audience in this instance might consist of training organisations, councils, business-, community- or religious leaders, policy-makers or politicians.

Community organisations and local activists and/or citizens' authorities will want to see how your ideas can benefit the greater community. Business leaders will be interested in the economic benefits brought to the area.

If your objective is to increase participation, you could target groups who are under-represented.

People who are unemployed might want learning to help them gain confidence and new skills, workers to improve their wages and standard of living, retired people to enjoy new hobbies or to make new friends - and everybody to discover the possibilities for social interaction and responsibility.

How?

You may be working for a small organisation planning to run a small number of high-profile events, or for a large institution with the means to activate independent organisations around the country to plan and stage their own activities.

In either case culture-orientated practices influence participation, and it is often helpful to work with something that is already established and recognised. Location also counts. Many of the most successful events take place in venues that adults find accessible, friendly and familiar, such as cafes, bars, community centres, on public transport, sports grounds or in village halls. You could even consider taking a

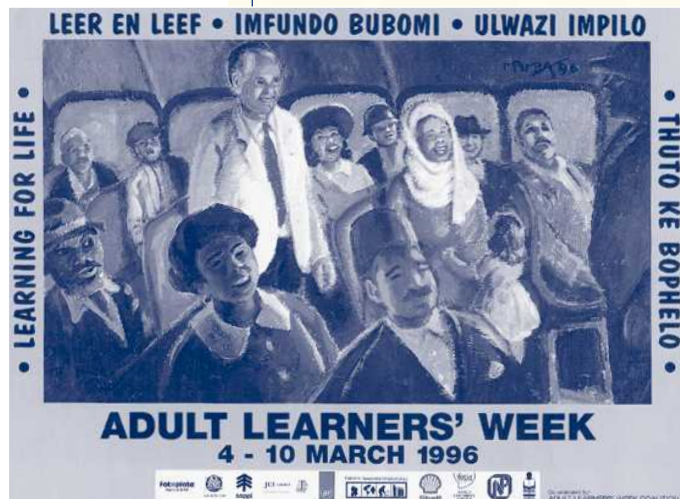
'learning bus' or mobile library into rural villages, housing estates or parks.

To help, we've listed a few examples of events that have been held for adult learning festivals across the world.



© Robert Merry

- ▶ During Australia's Adult Learners' Week (1999) 'Seniors Online Day' aimed to encourage older people to get online, perhaps for the first time, and to show that using the Internet could benefit their lives. Libraries, adult and community education centres, seniors organisations and online users were encouraged to introduce older people to the net.
- ▶ A Learning Lorry travelled Benin for a month, bringing help and advice about learning, literacy and skills to remote parts of the country.
- ▶ Russia's first Week of Adult Education in January 2000 took place on a train travelling from St Petersburg to Vladivostock. The train visited 15 towns in 12 regions, using this huge cultural potential to contribute to learning knowledge. Teachers, representatives of educational establishments and students met to exchange experience while debating subjects such as skills development and retraining.
- ▶ In the Western Cape Province, South Africa, adult learners had the chance to visit the Robben Island Museum where they could attend training courses in first aid, housing subsidy, "starting your own business" and information technology. South African organisers have also harnessed the popularity of football and other sports by holding learning rallies in stadiums and celebrate using marches reminiscent of the struggle against apartheid.



South Africa

- ▶ Fathers and kids boarding a special tram in Bern during Switzerland's second **Lernfestival** (1999) had the chance to read and learn together, the dads picking up tips about their role as educators. Participants reflected on the "one-hour-a-day" motto, which aims to demand one hour a day for learning as everyone's right and duty.
- ▶ In the UK during Adult Learners' Week, shoppers at a Midlands market could pick up careers information from market stalls, a top supermarket chain hosted learning sessions at the front of its stores and workplaces organised lunchtime learning sessions for their employees. There were music festivals, basic skills workshops and street carnivals.



Switzerland

You may want to maximise the impact of International Literacy Day by planning related events before, on or just after.

One of the best ways to get inspiration is to visit a country which already organises a festival like Adult Learners' Week. You might like to consult the International Forum for more advice and information.

2: Media

“Jamaica has a 24% rate of illiteracy. This figure dropped in the 70s through vibrant campaigns. The current figure is a result of the cuts in programmes, particularly radio and television. The usage of radio and TV is primarily due to adults in Jamaica not wanting to display their weakness of not being able to read and write to their children.”

Gloria Salmon, Adult Learners’ Colloquium, Robben Island, South Africa, March 1998

Learning festivals increase the profile and status of lifelong learning and encourage more and different adults to participate.

One of the best ways of getting people to hear about your festival or campaign is through the press and broadcast media. Stories presented to the media can increase the visibility, status and accessibility of adult learning opportunities.

But it has to be a story that really grabs their attention.

You could offer images of outstanding adult learners...

35-year-old Tracey had no reading or writing skills and had to identify goods in the supermarket by the colour of tins. She attended a basic skills summer school and is currently working towards an Open College English certificate and plans to write a book. She says, “Learning - I never want to stop.”

...or ideas that could be adapted elsewhere...

“A disused factory has been converted into a basic skills centre for unemployed people in the town of...”

Facts and figures can work too. How many people are involved in learning? Who isn't being reached? Are there regional differences?

If you can channel publicity through the media, it is useful to identify which papers, newsletters, radio or TV programmes influence your target audience.

- ▶ Find out what papers they read, what radio programmes they listen to. If there are free weekly newspapers distributed on a regional basis, ask them to include something about your organisation and events you are holding.
- ▶ Factory or shop-floor workers may tune in daily to a particular local radio station. Businesses, trade unions or community organisations may have their own in-house newsletter to which you can ask to contribute.



© Nick Hayes

TV companies may be willing to broadcast documentaries or short community service announcements. Newspapers might agree to produce a special supplement, although in some cases they may expect you to pay for this through advertising. If this happens think about approaching local colleges, training organisations or businesses for financial support.

Sometimes adult learning issues get direct support from programme makers:

- ▶ Slovenia organisers see a debate, “The Media and Lifelong Learning” organised in 1998, as a milestone in the process of encouraging the media to take the promotion of adult learning seriously. The event was jointly organised with the national television broadcaster and succeeded in strengthening co-operation. Evaluation has shown that media interest has an impact on visitor levels at events and also encourages more events to be organised, to take advantage of marketing opportunities.
- ▶ A literacy storyline was woven into Brookside, a popular UK drama. The programme was backed up with free information packs and local learning centres where people could go to improve their reading and writing. Over 10,000 people enquired about literacy courses in response to the programme. Agnes, a 70-year-old from Belfast who couldn’t write her own surname, went along to a learning centre and now has achieved qualifications. She said: “If I can do it, you can do it!”



Slovenia

Community Service Announcements: case study

Australian organisers produced three short television advertisements for ALW 2000 based on the ‘Faces of Adult Learners’ Week’. In each case the person spoke to camera with cutaways to some visuals. One adult learner profiled was Peter Finegan:

“I didn’t really take to schooling, so I became a crane driver and a rigger. In 1985 I got sacked and a group of Aboriginal people got involved with a training company - they were looking for unemployed Aboriginal people. I started doing Aboriginal arts and crafts, all mediums. After 12 months I ended up becoming the trainer.”

3: Learners' Voices

"Learning is given such a bad rap in our communities. I am going to speak out for adult learning from now on because it has empowered me so much... even my colleagues say I am different."

South African adult learner

Harnessing the voice of the learner has proved a powerful tool for widening participation.

Using a successful learner as a role model can

- ▶ change attitudes - both of policy-makers and of adults "turned off" by learning
- ▶ show that barriers can be overcome
- ▶ highlight the ways of reaching new audiences
- ▶ motivate other people to take part or seek more information
- ▶ attract the media.

The successful adult learner is the best advocate for adult learning.

Several organisers have a system of awards by which achievement is recognised in a very public way and through which the positive experiences of learners can be easily passed on.

Awards-type events should always be appropriate to the context of each country, and should take into account the nation's institutional make-up, politics, social agenda and funding mechanisms.

In Australia, ministers have been inspired by the stories of adult learners that are told through the Adult Learners' Week awards. Media coverage is virtually guaranteed because the organisers link the theme to topical issues. "Awards Change People's Lives" was linked to national stories of reconciliation with native Australians, but the theme could be linked to that of the current International Year, or indeed anything that the media is likely to pick up on.

The Australian organisers have found that, rather than focusing on the awards system itself, making as much as possible of the learning stories themselves, and what they tell us, gains greatest success with the media.

Another way of highlighting the benefits of learning is by way of Learners' Forums, debates which the learners themselves organise (with the help of tutors, practitioners etc.) and to which they can contribute their own concerns, ideas and solutions. In the UK, learners' forums have been attended by ministers of state and have helped to influence public policy on adult learning issues.



© UNESCO

4: *Publicity*

Publicity materials can be distributed on or before your event to provide maximum colour and maximum coverage.

You could consider producing

- ▶ a campaign logo - to give a common branding and image
- ▶ posters or flyers
- ▶ newsletters
- ▶ kits & how-to guides for local providers and committees
- ▶ t-shirts, caps, fridge magnets, balloons.

Logos, images and photos raised in one year can be re-used in future years.

Posters are among the simplest ways of reaching people and are common to many of the Adult Learners' Weeks around the World. In South Africa, posters have generated a large response among learners and practitioners. But there are potential pitfalls:

- ▶ if developing a poster then allowances need to be made for distribution and mailing costs
- ▶ contact telephone numbers should be prominent
- ▶ images & slogans must be acceptable to the 'field' of practice and other partners
- ▶ where reading and writing skills of the target audience are negligible or absent, a poster will need to work visually.

In one year learners from South African villages came together for an annual feast - bringing their own banners. This is a great way of engaging the target audience directly, but needs some careful orchestrating.

If you are printing your own publicity materials there are one or two things you can do to keep costs down:

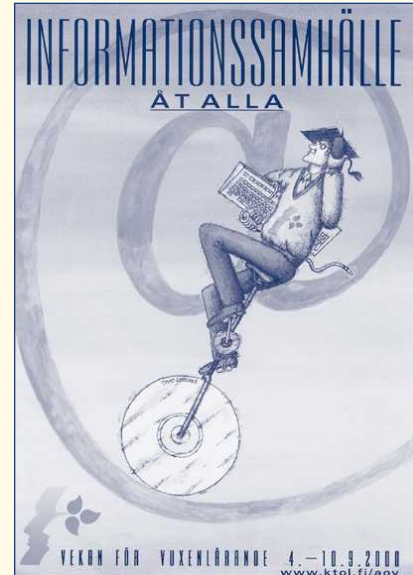
- ▶ print in one or two colours only
- ▶ find out what methods are available and at what prices
- ▶ plan how posters and leaflets are to be distributed, and how many you need
- ▶ shop around for designers and printers, and always get estimates and quotes
- ▶ ...or if you can, get someone else to pay! (see Section 7, Sponsorship)



Credit-card information leaflet (UK)



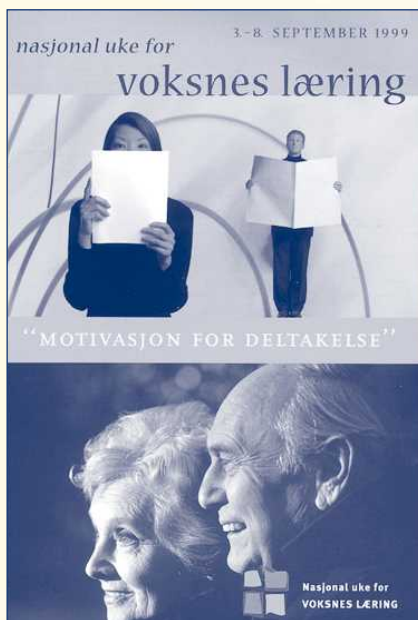
Postcards (Australia)



Poster (Finland)

5: Partnerships

A Nordic Baltic Network project will be set up to develop Adult Learners' Week. All the Nordic States (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and to some extent Iceland) are planning or have already had an Adult Learners' Week. This is also the case in the Baltic States of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. The Network will allow for member states to exchange experience and evaluate activities together.



Norway

You may decide that you want to organise an Adult Learners' Week with the help of one or more partners. Partnerships can be formed on a local, regional or national basis and have a variety of benefits.

Why a partnership?

Partnerships engage a wider range of people, enable a bigger choice of activities, pool the experiences of specialists, and set on the table the concerns of adult learners from different backgrounds.

Choose your partner...

Partnerships can be formed from

- ▶ private or public sector
- ▶ Government sub-sections (including opposition parties)
- ▶ NGOs and voluntary organisations
- ▶ trade unions
- ▶ churches and religious groups
- ▶ indigenous groups
- ▶ community-based organisations
- ▶ educational institutions (schools, colleges, universities etc.)
- ▶ open learning centres
- ▶ funding agencies outside the Government
- ▶ clubs and associations
- ▶ the media
- ▶ galleries, museums and libraries
- ▶ advocacy groups
- ▶ learners.

Persuade them it's a good idea...

- ▶ involve them in an activity from the outset
- ▶ show off the benefits of partnership through good PR and advertising (the "what's in it for me" scenario)
- ▶ use beneficiaries and learners to speak, publicise, lobby, and influence
- ▶ supply all potential partners with sufficient information
- ▶ involve sponsors in activities (national and local) that are organised for the Week.

If you can encourage well-known people (celebrities) to act as patrons for your cause, this will help sell the idea.

Helping out - free of charge

Many people are willing to give their time free to help initiatives that help other people.

Volunteer events organisers could be invited from

- ▶ senior citizens' groups
- ▶ mentoring projects
- ▶ new tutors
- ▶ clubs, associations, voluntary organisations
- ▶ church groups.

There are some issues to bear in mind if you intend to use volunteers...

- ▶ there may exist social problems depending on the social or cultural experience
- ▶ travel expenses may be needed
- ▶ volunteers may have training requirements
- ▶ volunteers should find the experience of benefit to themselves
- ▶ using very successful volunteers as “learning champions” can sometimes intimidate rather than encourage.

What about policy makers?

Harnessing the support of key policy makers can be done through a mixture of lobbying and PR tactics, e.g. through learners’ stories, but the benefits should always be explicit...

- ▶ a learning festival widens participation
- ▶ motivates new learners
- ▶ enhances social and cultural developments
- ▶ leads to economic modernisation, and
- ▶ gives politicians opportunities for good public relations.

In the UK a reception for policy makers and MPs is held in Parliament. All MPs are also issued with a challenge to learn something new for Adult Learners’ Week!

Germany

Lernfest organisers in Germany have co-operated with partners and supporters of other institutions because they believe that weak or inconsistent network structures do not best serve the interests of adult learners. The **Lernfest** is a reason to plan and talk together to develop long-lasting and needs-orientated provision. Because of this the systems for further education can be stronger in relation to other sectors of education.

New impulses through practical education work can develop new initiatives. In Germany, many of these initiatives have already been developed.

In the Netherlands the national co-ordinating office has organised a number of national events and mobilised the support of local agencies. Schools had access to free posters and toolkits and over 40 cities prepared learning activities.

Around 60,000 Austrians took part in 393 activities organised by 289 institutions.

In Estonia all 14 counties took part and the greatest impact of the campaign has been at grass-roots level. Many people, especially those living in rural areas, have had the opportunity to get information about adult learning.



Austria



6: Helplines

learndirect

The UK Helpline - **learndirect**, 0800 100 900, is set up to take calls all year around. The helpline is paid for by the Department for Education and Employment and all calls are free and confidential. Calls requiring specialist advice are referred to a team of experienced careers advisers.

Since 1997 the BBC has promoted the same number on its ICT and, lately, numeracy campaigns that support Adult Learners' Week. These broadcasts invite people to take advantage of a free taster session at one of a number of centres set up in partnership with independent organisations such as libraries, businesses and colleges. Information about the centres is available from **learndirect**, which is advertised on benefit cheques sent to unemployed people.

learndirect is also promoted by the ITV network and Channel 4, as well as by radio, in newspapers and magazines, and on thousands of items of promotional literature.

Thanks to these various routes of promotion the helpline received more than 70,000 calls during Adult Learners' Week 2000, with 34% of these callers registered as unemployed.

An evaluation of helpline data has shown that interest generated in education in Adult Learners' Week in May has been turned into action by the start of the new academic year in September.

People ring a helpline to get instant information. Many organisers who have used helplines in learning festivals have found them a useful part of the campaign. (We bear in mind, of course, that not everyone has easy access to a telephone, and you may not consider it an appropriate element of your strategy.)

You might want to use a helpline to

- ▶ advise unemployed people
- ▶ give general advice and guidance
- ▶ give information about scholarships or courses
- ▶ draw attention to activities taking place during Adult Learners' Week.

But what about...

- 1. Cost** If your helpline is a free service, try to find a sponsor willing to finance the set-up and running costs. The Flemish Adult Learners' Week helpline service, which was not free, had a very low volume of calls. The Swiss service was sponsored and free to the caller, but the organisers still had to pay a trained counsellor to take the calls.
- 2. Database** Compile a database of addresses, telephone numbers, main contact names, courses etc. for relevant organisations. Information about disability access, crèche facilities etc. should also be considered.
- 3. Automation** Preferably calls should be handled in person, not by an answering machine. But you may wish to use an automated service at times when the line is busy, or to direct calls on if you want to provide the service in more than one language.
- 4. Call handling** You may decide to arrange for callers to speak to a trained operator who notes basic details such as name, telephone number and query, and passes the details onto an adult education counsellor or adviser. The counsellor then rings the caller back. Alternatively the initial call can be taken by the counsellor. This cuts out the delay from query to answer, but the problem may be finding enough experts to provide an adequate service - especially if your advertising has been good and your helpline receives hundreds of calls.
- 5. Confidence and impartiality** Callers may want to be reassured that the advice given is unbiased and that their details won't be passed to outside parties.
- 6. Disability** You may want to consider arrangements for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.
- 7. Extra support** You might want to produce and distribute a booklet to provide extra information about courses or financial support.

8. Promoting the service You could consider advertising the number on posters, leaflets and newsletters, via TV or radio programmes, or in newspapers. Media advertising needs to coincide with good call-handling - if there are problems either the caller won't call back, or the broadcaster won't want to repeat the advertising.

9. Having more than one number? Swiss organisers found that having one telephone number for the whole country worked much better than having several.

Other hints

- ▶ If your country already has an existing helpline service you could think about modifying it. Dutch organisers are considering adapting an existing literacy freephone service to cope with extra calls during Adult Learners' Week.
- ▶ Within the publicity material, include details of helpline opening times.
- ▶ Consider using volunteers or unemployed people (remember to give them basic training) to help staff a call centre.
- ▶ Talk to organisers who have run a helpline to get some idea of the pitfalls involved.

Instead of - or to complement - a helpline you could organise information and guidance tents or stalls during an event, staffing it with trained advisers and learners who can talk positively about their experiences. You could also organise a radio phone-in: the advice is free, the caller gets help, and other listeners are inspired.

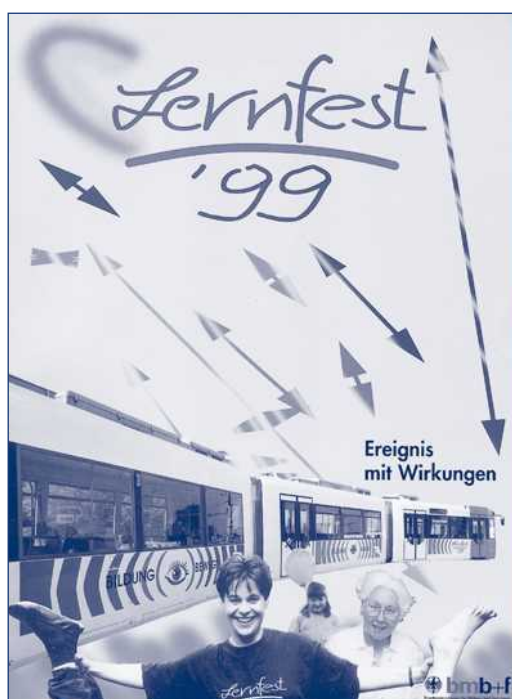


7: Sponsorship

Sponsorship is a commercial exchange between two parties. Whoever you are applying to, you will need to outline what you need it for. Is it for core costs, or to enlarge the festival regionally? Or is it for promotional and sundry items such as invitations? Do you want cash or in-kind services?

After identifying your needs, arrange a meeting with a representative to outline the strategy and goals of your campaign.

In the case of government organisations you could apply for an audience with a minister, go direct to local members of parliament, or to local/regional officials close to adult education.



Germany

- ▶ All 1,200 local events in the German Lernfest were paid for by regional and local governments and organisations.
- ▶ Sponsors for learning festival events in Hong Kong include banks, hotels, ministries, the media, and cultural and private organisations.
- ▶ The European Social Fund, the SOCRATES programme and other development programmes have provided monitoring and dissemination help to countries in the southern hemisphere.
- ▶ During the UK ALW unemployed people were paid through the Government to work at the national helpline.
- ▶ Tying into the UN's designated International Year can also help secure funding.

Other organisers have obtained staff directly through labour market programmes and universities.

With the private sector, select a few well rather than a lot indiscriminately, and research their interests. They may have supported similar initiatives in the past, or have interests in literacy, or improving the well-being of socially-disadvantaged groups.

- ▶ It is better to ask for money for specific items rather than for core administration costs. You could ask for support to cover the costs of producing promotional materials, or renting a hall for local events/award ceremonies, or holding a competition.
- ▶ TV companies might agree to sponsor local awards if they think it will make interesting viewing.
- ▶ If you have a theme, use it. Sportswear clubs or manufacturers may support in venue or in kind if you are helping adults learn through a sports or fitness theme, while industry may agree to fund the production of literature on the benefits of gaining work-placed skills.
- ▶ Instead of providing financial assistance businesses might offer services or products (design and printing expertise, used equipment etc.).
- ▶ Organisations may distribute materials for you to their clientele/employees or customers.

You can speak to a range of organisations and firms like supermarkets, banks, breweries, publishing-companies, ICT companies. The theme of learning can be interesting for everyone.

8: Evaluation

Evaluation helps an organiser clarify aims and objectives. You will have better evidence that the project has performed well (good news for you, your stakeholders and your sponsors) and you'll have ideas and tips that can be shared with others.

It should be clear from the outset of the project that the needs of the target group will be met by the activities, and there should be an objective measure to tell if the activities have met those needs.

Evaluation needs to be built into project plans from the outset and includes

- ▶ identifying performance indicators or success measures prior to the event
- ▶ sharing evaluation methods/ideas with partners involved in the Week
- ▶ evaluating the key elements of the week, e.g. award schemes, telephone helplines, research, involvement of national organisations, press cuttings, media coverage
- ▶ evaluating how the regional activities support the national initiative.

Identify evaluation indicators

For example:

- ▶ how many people took part in an event or rang a helpline
- ▶ how many were unemployed, unskilled or retired
- ▶ how many men and women took part
- ▶ how much media attention and press coverage the festival gained.

You might also want to record qualitative information: did regional/local event organisers find your publicity material helpful? Did adults attending the events feel they had gained something? Can you link the results to enrolments?

Keeping a record of articles in the press (newspapers, magazines, journals) or features on the TV or radio will contribute to the overall picture of success of your campaign.

Questionnaires

Keep questions simple and to the point, and give some thought as to how you are going to analyse the results.

Examples:

If you produced leaflets and information sheets, how many were distributed?

Which of your activities would you recommend to others?

You can decide beforehand who will carry out the evaluation. This could be the national co-ordinating body, a professional researcher, regional and local project managers, or an independent company commissioned to do the work.

Questionnaires can be filled in by the events organiser or handed out to participants for self-completion. Postage-paid return envelopes encourage return, but you could also offer entry to a prize draw or use some other incentive to improve the response rate.

In Austria evaluation forms were sent to all institutions which took part in the week of Adult Education, "Woche der Erwachsenenbildung". The response rate was over 25%. There were responses to (among others) the following areas: resonance to the Week, contentment with the date, results of PR, and wish to repeat the Week.



The Netherlands

A national survey on adult learning was launched for the Dutch Adult Learners' Week 2000. The survey canvassed the opinions of adults - what do they want to learn, what are barriers, what are the current levels of participation. As well as providing material to develop adult learning policy the survey was used to increase media interest.

For an “exit interview” gather information from participants as they leave an event.

Telephone surveys can be carried out by ringing a sample of your audience and asking them questions over the phone. You could do this straight after the event and track the sample by ringing again six months afterwards.

If you haven’t organised a questionnaire or survey before, why not seek help from someone who has? It may help you decide which questions will best suit your goals.

Instead of a questionnaire you could organise one-to-one interviews or focus groups with adult learners.

Getting the best out of the evaluation

You could use the information you have gathered to provide feedback to key players through

- ▶ written reports or newsletters
- ▶ bullet points on your web site.

Understanding what didn’t work is as important as understanding what did, and will help refine your work for future campaigns.

(Some of the material in this chapter has been adapted from The World Mental Health Day Campaign Guide 1999)

9: Ten top tips to getting started

There is no obligatory framework to organising an Adult Learners' Week. Different things work for different people. Nevertheless a few ground rules should help ensure you have a firm foundation on which to build a successful and long-lived campaign.

1. Analyse your situation.
2. Try to recognise areas of potential conflict (and equally, consensus).
3. Decide on a central message.
4. Identify specific goals, and tasks necessary to achieve those goals.
5. Identify target groups for the week's activity. For example, who do you want to work with? Who do you want to reach?
6. Decide how to reach your target groups.
7. Select your instruments: you might want a media-driven campaign, or decide that a festival works best in your situation.
8. Set a concrete schedule.
9. Evaluate the outcome.
10. It's a celebration, so enjoy it. Have plenty of food and drink at hand, and don't forget the dancing!



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Important web sites

- ▶ UNESCO Institute for Education
<http://www.unesco.org/education/uie>
- ▶ The Forum for the International Adult Learners' Week can be accessed at **Adult Learning Australia's** site at <http://alw.ala.asn.au/mailarchive/index.html>
At this address you will also find contact details and websites for national co-ordinators of adult learners' weeks.
- ▶ CONFINTEA (The Hamburg Declaration):
<http://www.unesco.org/education/uie/confintea>
- ▶ EXPO: <http://www.expo2000.de>

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