

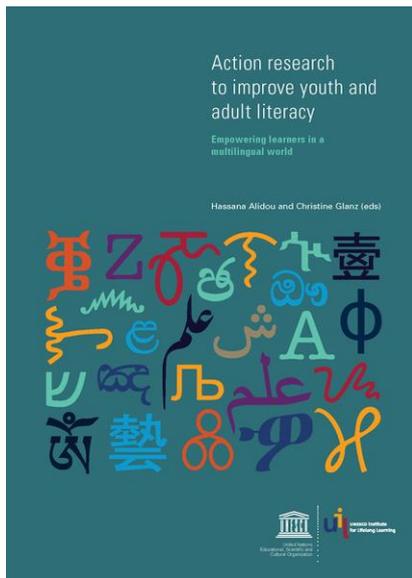
## **Action research to improve youth and adult literacy in multilingual contexts**

One of the greatest challenges in education today is to adapt and respond to a linguistically and culturally diverse world, and to combat social disintegration and discrimination. Participatory and collaborative action research represents an empowering and emancipatory approach to this challenge because the 'target groups' become involved as equal partners.

In the African and Asian regions, high-quality youth and adult literacy and non-formal education make use of the principles of participatory and collaborative action research. In order to share findings on how action research can contribute to the development of youth and adult literacy education and learning in multilingual and multicultural contexts, UNESCO has now published a guidebook which can be used in study programmes and for self-study. The book is entitled *Action research to improve youth and adult literacy: Empowering learners in a multilingual world*. It clarifies key features of participatory and collaborative action research and illustrates how it can be used to develop context-led, relevant learning opportunities. Three case studies from Ethiopia, Niger and Senegal illustrate its effective use for curriculum development, creating a multilingual literate environment and developing training modules for trainers. The case studies are written by specialists from these countries who were involved in the respective cases.

Sharing insights from research on the question of what constitutes good quality literacy education and learning, this book also aims to inspire action researchers working in multilingual and multicultural contexts. For this purpose, the authors developed a frame of reference based on UNESCO Member States' vision and mission to promote social justice and peace. The guiding question was what barriers need to be lifted in order to create a flow in individual and collective learning processes to empower marginalised populations and to enhance social development in a context-led manner. The frame of reference is based on five guiding principles which emerge from practice and theory: (i) inclusion; (ii) lifelong learning; (iii) literacy in a multilingual and multicultural perspective as an essential aspect of the human right to education; (iv) a multilingual ethos; and (v) sustainability (of what is being learned, of youth and adult education, and sustainable development). In addition, the frame of reference highlights central fields of analysis for an enabling learning environment for youth and adults. The central fields of analysis are (i) a multi-sectoral policy environment; (ii) a multi-sectoral educational environment; and (iii) the home, community and work environments in relation to a multilingual and multicultural context. An analysis of good practices in youth and adult literacy and non-formal education and learning shows what kind of quality criteria emerge from practice when we look at the guiding principles and fields of analysis. The authors underline that a frame of reference is not a finished or static tool, as we evolve in our understanding, further principles and criteria are identified.

Adult education training institutions can make use of this book in different ways in their curriculum. They can use it as study material, using certain chapters or the whole book, looking at one or both themes, i.e. participatory action research and the quality of youth and adult literacy education and learning in multilingual and multicultural contexts. Each chapter ends with a 'Point for reflection' which guides learners in reflecting on the content and making use of it. Each 'Point for reflection' builds on the previous ones and the last Point for reflection invites the learner to get started with an action research project in his/her own context. The book could also be used in a more general way to inspire reflections on developing a training programme on participatory and collaborative action research.



Hassana Alidou and Christine Glanz (Eds.). 2015. **Action research to improve youth and adult literacy: Empowering learners in a multilingual world**. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

This book provides guidance for trainers of youth and adult educators and for those who manage non-formal education and curriculum development programmes in youth and adult literacy. It is also aimed at publishers and authors who want to improve their services and products by collaborating more closely with their readerships.

Available in English for free download:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002322/232243E.pdf>

The translation to French will be available soon

Hard copies can be ordered at [uil-pub@unesco.org](mailto:uil-pub@unesco.org)

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