

# **4<sup>th</sup> world forum: Lifelong Learning for All – a challenge to face, a willingness to share Paris, UNESCO.**

Roundtable on 6 February 2015

## **What are the lines of work? For whom? And when?**

Arne Carlsen, Professor (Hon.) Dr.h.c.mult.

Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

1. In this world forum we have been discussing access to basic skills and competences, to lifelong learning through art and science. Allow me to spend a few minutes on philosophy as well. In some parts of the world, 2,500 years ago, the prevailing philosophy was that if we obtain knowledge about what is the best thing to do, we are compelled to do it. So the main issue was getting access to knowledge – implementation or practice would then follow directly. 500 years later – and for the next 1,000 years – the question being discussed is why, even if we do know what the best thing to do is, we do not do it.
2. The modern version of this issue is how we move from rhetoric to action, how we remove the obstacles and how we strengthen the enablers. How we move from policies to governance and implementation.
3. UNESCO's concept of lifelong learning is that of an organising principle and an overarching framework. It encompasses sub-sectors of education, from pre-primary education, on to primary, secondary and tertiary education, on to post-retirement. It is lifelong and life-wide, encompassing formal school systems, non-formal learning in the workplace and in civil society organisations,

and informal learning in libraries and museums, as well as in the family and amongst neighbours in the local community.

4. There are a number of ways of implementing lifelong learning and moving from rhetoric to action, for instance by building learning societies based on implementation pillars. One example of this is the learning city. More than half of the world's population today live in cities. Mayors and city councils are making lifelong learning strategies for inclusive, sustainable urban development. Another way is making systems for Recognition, Validation and Accreditation (RVA) of the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning, and linking them to national qualifications frameworks (NQFs). We call these systems for RVA, others call them recognition of prior learning. A third way is increasing the wider benefits of lifelong learning in the areas of health and well-being, local community and society, employment and the labour market.
5. Lifelong learning has a big potential for responding to current issues. The demographic trends in terms of population growth, ageing societies and youth unemployment call for adult re-skilling and up-skilling. Social problems related to urbanisation. Migration and immigration. Digitalisation. Sustainable development in a combination of social, economic and environmental dimensions.
6. Today in this Roundtable I represent the Assistant Director-General for Education in UNESCO Mr Qian Tang. The 4<sup>th</sup> world forum is currently being held at UNESCO Headquarters. Let me therefore also mention UNESCO's work in relation to the title of the Roundtable: What are the lines of work? For whom? And when?
7. UNESCO is working towards a new education agenda which is humanistic and holistic. "Ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030". This is UNESCO's answer to the question What are the lines of work? "Ensure

equitable and inclusive education and lifelong learning”. For whom? “For all”. And when? “At the latest by 2030”.

8. The targets include readiness for primary school, completion of primary school, proficiency in youth and adult literacy, skills for work and life, global citizenship, quality of teachers and financing of education.
9. There are strategic objectives such as “Developing education systems to foster quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all”, “Empowering learners to be creative and responsible citizens”, and “Shaping the future education agenda”, including rethinking education, monitoring, and building partnerships.
10. I urge all of you to contribute to this agenda, to building a learning society, to enter into partnerships to ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030.