

## Regional Workshop Report “Better ALE data for better ALE governance and policy” for the Arab States



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**REGIONAL WORKSHOP**  
“Better ALE data for better ALE governance and policy”  
for the Arab States



Supported by  
 Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development

Better Data. Better Adult Learning.

**Co-organized by DVV International and the  
UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)**

**January 28–29, 2026 Acropole Hotel – Lac, Tunis**

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# I. Introduction

In line with the commitment to supporting efforts aimed at strengthening the governance and monitoring of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in Arab countries, the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (DVV International – Regional Office for North Africa and the Middle East), in cooperation with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), organized a regional workshop entitled: **"Better Data for Better Adult Learning and Education Governance and Policy."** The workshop brought together representatives from the following **Arab countries**: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and Tunisia. Participants included government officials, national focal points for the Sixth Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE 6), civil society organizations, and other key stakeholders.

## 1. Conceptual Framework (as outlined in the Regional Workshop's Concept Note)

Given the contemporary context characterized by rapid digital transformation, evolving labour market demands, widening inequality gaps, and increasing vulnerability to climate change, Adult Learning and Education (ALE) has become more critical than ever for fostering resilience, employability, civic engagement, and social cohesion.

According to UNESCO (2015), ALE equips individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to exercise their rights, make informed decisions, and participate actively in their communities and the world of work. However, UNESCO estimates (2022) suggest that ALE remains undervalued and under-resourced in many countries, reflecting persistent challenges regarding policy priorities, investment, and systemic coordination.

The centrality of ALE is firmly rooted in international normative and policy frameworks. The Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE, 2015) defines this field as a fundamental pillar of lifelong learning systems, encompassing literacy and basic skills, continuing education and vocational training, as well as liberal, popular, and community education.

The Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA), adopted at the Seventh International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VII), reaffirmed that ALE is a cornerstone for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4. Through the MFA, member states committed to enhancing ALE provision and increasing participation, inclusion, funding, and governance within a lifelong learning perspective.

In a related context, the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE) and the Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA) highlight governance as one of the primary areas of action. Effective governance of the Adult Learning and Education (ALE) sector, in particular, enables the formulation of coherent policies, strengthens cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial coordination, and ensures the inclusive participation of all stakeholders with clearly defined institutional responsibilities. Robust governance serves as the fundamental pillar for ensuring data availability, quality, and utilization—a prerequisite for effective planning, monitoring, and accountability within ALE systems.

Reliable and high-quality data in the ALE sector are of paramount importance for identifying educational needs, addressing persistent challenges, streamlining policy-making, and tracking progress toward Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). In the Arab States, ALE systems are evolving within diverse national contexts shaped by demographic trends, economic shifts, digital transformation, mobility, climate-related factors, and ongoing socio-political developments.

Despite targeted efforts to strengthen ALE policy frameworks, expand equitable learning opportunities, improve quality, and enhance cooperation among stakeholders across the Arab region, structural constraints remain. These include fragmented information and data systems, limited capacities for data collection and analysis, and the insufficient integration of the ALE sector into broader education monitoring frameworks. Such challenges diminish the ability to comprehensively assess participation in ALE, its quality, funding, and equity. This leads to persistent gender disparities in access to education and learning opportunities, especially in conflict-affected areas and displacement settings, where women and girls often face increased barriers to learning—despite the critical role ALE plays in supporting recovery, livelihoods, social cohesion, and reconstruction.

Accordingly, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)—in its capacity as the Secretariat for the Seventh International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VII) and the Sixth Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE 6)—supports Member States in monitoring the implementation of international commitments in this field. The periodic GRALE report assesses global and regional developments in ALE and provides evidence-based analysis of trends and progress. GRALE 6, scheduled for publication in 2027, will monitor the implementation of the Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA) and the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE). In the interim, its data collection process—based on national reports—will rely on effective governance arrangements, cross-sectoral coordination, and the strengthening of national capacities to produce and utilize ALE data.

Here is the professional English translation for the **General and Specific Objectives** section of your report.

## 2. General Objective

The workshop aims to strengthen national and regional capacities for monitoring Adult Learning and Education (ALE), facilitate peer-to-peer exchange on governance approaches, and support the submission of high-quality national contributions to the Sixth Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE 6).

## 3. Specific Objectives

- Identify persistent challenges and available opportunities to improve ALE governance and data quality in the Arab region.
- Strengthen the capacities of national stakeholders involved in the ALE sector to collect reliable and comprehensive data for GRALE 6 and for national monitoring tools specific to the sector.
- Facilitate meaningful dialogue between governmental and non-governmental actors in the field of ALE regarding the role of governance in improving sector data within the region.
- Exchange national experiences, innovations, and challenges across a diverse range of ALE themes.
- Promote a shared regional vision to strengthen the ALE sector as an integral part of lifelong learning systems.

## 4. Expected Outcomes

- Establishment of a shared regional vision regarding the key challenges and opportunities related to the governance and data of Adult Learning and Education (ALE).
- Strengthening of national capacities in the field of ALE data collection for both the Sixth Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE 6) and national monitoring tools.
- Development of mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation between governmental and non-governmental stakeholders involved in the ALE sector.
- Exchange and documentation of national experiences and promising practices within the field of Adult Learning and Education.



## II. Outcomes of the Regional Workshop

Day 1: January 28, 2026

**Opening Session: Session Facilitator – Mr. Housseem Belhaj**

- **Ms. Esther Hirsch, Acting Director of DVV International**

She questioned the rationale for dedicating time to deepening discussions on the obstacles hindering Adult Learning and Education (ALE) and Lifelong Learning. Her intervention focused on the need to strike a balance between generating knowledge through improved data—particularly “better data”—and fostering stronger coordination among stakeholders and actors across various sectors, including government bodies, civil society, and institutions. The ultimate goal, she emphasized, is to achieve a more effective ALE system supported by high-quality and reliable data.



- **Ms. Isabell Kempf, Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)**

She commended the high quality of the participants, considering it a testament to the commitment of actors in the Arab region to long-term partnership. She noted that this reflects a shared belief in the importance of lifelong learning as a

pathway to societal transformation, fostering cohesion, cooperation, good governance, knowledge development, and innovation. Furthermore, she emphasized that these combined commitments not only facilitate the preparation of the Sixth Global Report (GRALE 6) but also constitute the foundations of any strategic investment in this field.



- Ms. Sara Rayheb, Communications and Project Officer at the African Foundation for Lifelong Learning

She presented the context of the establishment of the African Foundation, outlining its objectives and areas of intervention. She commended the organization of this regional workshop, considering it a valuable opportunity to exchange expertise and experiences, and to strengthen capacities in line with the objectives outlined in the concept note and the strategic vision, as well as with its mission to continue contributing to the preparation of the Sixth Global Report (GRALE 6).



**Session I: Setting the General Framework – Facilitated by Mr. Housseem Belhaj**



**1- Ms. Samah Shalaby, representing the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)**

She provided an overview outlining the nature and objectives of the Sixth Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE 6). She noted that through this report, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) reaffirms its commitment to monitoring Adult Learning and Education (ALE) worldwide as a key driver of sustainable development and as a strategic reference for national policies. She further presented the core areas on which the report focuses—Policy, Governance, Financing, Participation, and Quality—highlighting the various dimensions of the data collected, which center on:

- ✓ Strategic Dimension: Strengthening evidence-based decision-making by enabling policymakers to design targeted and effective interventions, allocate resources more efficiently, and assess the impact of policies and programmes.

- ✓ Diagnostic Dimension: Supporting governments in assessing their ALE data collection systems, identifying trends and gaps, and highlighting emerging challenges.
- ✓ Advocacy Dimension: Providing opportunities to promote best practices and to amplify the voices and needs of marginalized groups.

In the same context, she presented the four main thematic areas that underpin the questionnaire and the GRALE 6 framework, representing key global challenges: Climate Change, Digitalization, Economic Transitions, and Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations. She noted that these themes are the result of extensive consultations and joint efforts.

The intervention further detailed the types of indicators and the essential dimensions required to ensure data quality, namely: consistency, comprehensiveness, comparability, credibility, and transparency. She also referred to the different types of quantitative and qualitative data used, including assessment data to measure learning quality and outcomes—particularly skills—administrative data, census data, and survey data.

She reaffirmed that the ultimate purpose of data collection, as a driver of equity and accountability, is to support societal transformation, notably through evaluating the performance of national lifelong learning systems.



## 2- Mr. Refat Sabbah, representing the Arab House for Adult Education and Development (AHAED)

His intervention focused on monitoring Adult Learning and Education (ALE) within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from a civil society perspective. He emphasized the importance of lifelong learning as an empowering force for social transformation and as a key instrument to support more than 700 million people who lack basic education and skills—63% of whom are women—while noting that only 5% currently benefit from lifelong learning programmes.

He further observed that developing countries continue to face significant gaps in empowerment and social justice, as well as challenges related to the sustainability of education and lifelong learning programmes aimed at “human rebuilding,” in line with the recommendations of the Marrakech Framework for Action and other relevant international conferences. Addressing these challenges, he argued, requires innovative initiatives and a strengthened role for civil society, which is well positioned to design flexible programmes, implement them effectively at the grassroots level, and respond to exceptional circumstances—such as the situation in Gaza, where formal education has been severely disrupted due to the ongoing war.

He concluded that the role of civil society becomes truly effective when strengthened through partnerships with public authorities and national institutions, thereby transforming adult education from isolated training activities into sustainable skills development pathways and long-term programmes. From a more holistic perspective, this approach contributes to shaping policies that position lifelong learning as both a strategic vision and a catalyst for social transformation.





**Session 2 : National Experiences in ALE Governance and Data Collection within the GRALE 6 Survey Framework**

**Session Facilitators: Ms. Samah Shalaby (UIL) and Ms. Elsie Wakil (AHAED)**

The work was carried out in breakout groups, structured around targeted questions addressed to national focal points from each participating country, as well as specific questions directed to civil society representatives. These questions were of paramount importance, as illustrated in the table below, given their precision and their direct alignment with the objectives and expected outcomes of the regional workshop.

Questions for National Focal Points	Questions for Civil Society Representatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does your country have formal mechanisms to coordinate adult education between ministries and relevant stakeholders, such as civil society, academia, and the private sector? How did these mechanisms work in practice, particularly in the context of collecting GRALE 6 data? Please provide a concrete example.</li> <li>• What systems or procedures are in place to ensure the consistency and reliability of the adult education data used in GRALE 6?</li> <li>• What are the most prominent challenges your country faced in collecting or aggregating adult education data for GRALE 6 (such as availability, quality, disaggregation by category, or governance mechanisms)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent were you aware of the process of preparing the Sixth Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE 6) in your country, and how was the information related to the questionnaire shared with you?</li> <li>• If your organization had the opportunity to contribute to the GRALE 6 process (such as by providing data, participating in consultations, or verifying information), what was the nature of this participation, and what were the main lessons learned from this collaboration with government authorities or other stakeholders?</li> <li>• If civil society organizations were not involved in the GRALE 6 process, what were the main obstacles that prevented their participation, and what practical mechanisms would you propose to ensure effective and meaningful civil society engagement in future adult learning and education data collection and reporting processes?</li> </ul>

Upon presenting the responses and reviewing the experiences of the participating countries, it became evident that significant disparities exist in the design and implementation of policies integrating Adult Learning and Education (ALE) and lifelong learning into national priorities. Variations were also observed in the adoption of effective coordination mechanisms among government entities, civil society, the private sector, and research institutions.

In some countries, public authorities largely centralize the implementation of limited adult education programmes, while civil society organizations strive to introduce complementary initiatives despite constrained funding. This situation is reflected in the weakness—or in some cases the absence—of coordination mechanisms related to data collection, analysis, and information-sharing in the context of the survey (particularly in Mauritania, Syria, and Iraq, and to a lesser extent, Jordan).



In other countries, coordination tends to be ad hoc and lacks sustainability, despite the existence of separate or joint efforts between government entities and civil society. In addition, some institutions do not respond within established deadlines, and considerable efforts are required to avoid relying on unreliable estimates.

This situation creates challenges in data collection, classification, and utilization for the formulation of strategies, the development of plans and programmes, resource mobilization, and the effective use of available opportunities (notably in Lebanon and Tunisia).

In another group of countries, favourable conditions and political will have converged, resulting in structured cooperation among government agencies, civil society, academic institutions, and the private sector. This environment has facilitated the establishment of a robust framework for cross-sectoral joint

action, with civil society focal points integrated across relevant government sectors through cooperation protocols.

This approach incorporates flexibility in organizing workshops and preparatory meetings, collecting and verifying data, initiating the design of annual national reports, and implementing initiatives to train researchers and work with both quantitative and qualitative data. Despite these relative successes, certain challenges remain, particularly in mobilizing resources for civil society and ensuring access to databases (notably in Morocco and Egypt).

In the context of Palestine, Adult Learning and Education under occupation and during periods of war and genocide is not merely an option to support life, but a vital means of survival. Consequently, all challenges are approached through a crisis-management lens. Palestine has established a national adult education team comprising partners from the government, universities, and an educational coalition of 36 active institutions directly or cross-functionally involved in education—a framework that ensures civil society participation.

Through these structures, work is conducted on training, supporting initiatives, collecting data, and coordinating with the Central Bureau of Statistics, despite limited resources and competing priorities. During periods of conflict, as well as within the narrow windows of peace, civil society plays a pivotal role in fostering innovative initiatives and auditing data.

**Session 3: This session did not take place.**

**Session 4: Cooperation Between Adult Education Stakeholders: Facilitated by Mr. Housseem Belhaj**

The main conclusions were categorized according to an analysis based on highlighting strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adult education programs are linked to people's daily lives, flexible, inclusive, and sensitive to psychological and social dimensions.</li> <li>▪ Adult education programs promote rights and citizenship.</li> <li>▪ In times of war and in contexts of conflict, strife, and crisis, adult</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The trust gap between actors and the weakness in building partnerships at both local and international levels reduce opportunities for sustainability and strategic investment.</li> <li>▪ The absence of an institutional and legislative framework and a strategic vision limits opportunities for financial resource</li> </ul>

<p>education is a solution and a necessary tool for training in resourcefulness, spreading a culture of solidarity and prevention, and strengthening resilience as well as psychological, social, and economic recovery.</p>	<p>mobilization and diminishes the role of civil society in implementing initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The lack of coordination weakens the role of institutions and civil society in data collection and undermines systems for evaluation, accountability, and the support of strategic planning.</li> </ul>
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In a related context, emphasis was placed on the importance of linking funding to a strong institutional framework and a solid legislative foundation, guided by a strategic vision that leverages local initiatives and partnerships with international organizations. Funding should be directed toward supporting good practices that ensure the sustainability of Adult Learning and Education, while also prioritizing capacity building and the training of trainers. A notable example is the experience of the National Authority for Adult Education in Egypt, supported by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. This collaboration yielded significant positive outcomes in a digital training program, as well as in the childhood and family learning package implemented under the “Let’s Learn

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community adult learning centres are capable of understanding stakeholders’ needs and contributing effectively to local development and social change.</li> <li>▪ Good practices provide an optimal foundation for strengthening the resilience of local systems and the most vulnerable groups, based on their specific needs.</li> <li>▪ Control and analysis of data enhance influence over decision-making processes.</li> <li>▪ Engaging the private sector ensures burden-sharing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Neglecting data collection and verification weakens compliance with international and national standards, making success a matter of chance rather than the result of planning, evaluation, and accountability.</li> <li>▪ Failing to treat adult learning and education, as well as lifelong learning, as a priority—whether by government authorities or civil society—deprives society of a vital community institution and diminishes its growing role in social transformation and in strengthening resilience.</li> </ul>

Together” initiative, thanks to the qualitative contributions of facilitators working alongside experts.



## Session 5: Emerging Issues in Adult Learning and Education: Facilitated by Mr. Houssam Belhaj

### 1. Ms Isabell Kempf, Director UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

Ms. Kempf reiterated the goals and challenges outlined in the concept note. She highlighted the considerable efforts invested in the preparation of the Sixth Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE 6), involving more than 1,400 technical experts and broad participation from over 80 countries.

She further emphasized that these challenges and stakes are dynamic and continuously evolving:

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** While AI offers opportunities and supports self-directed learning, it also entails certain risks. This underscores the need to design programs, tools, and skills that are adaptable and responsive to evolving labor market demands.
- **Climate Change:** This issue raises numerous questions related to prevention and mitigation. In some cases, a Green Cities Guide has been developed to address the requirements of sustainable communal living.
- **Conflicts and Strife:** These topics are widely discussed and attract both local and global attention. In the context of Adult Learning and Education (ALE), they raise critical issues related to building trust between communities, fostering solidarity, and supporting psychological, social, and economic recovery.

She concluded her intervention by raising several fundamental questions: Which specific areas are currently being addressed in the experiences of the participating countries? What are the priorities and challenges that can be addressed through the lens of Adult Learning and Education (ALE), in a manner comparable to the mobilization and commitments necessitated by the COVID-



19 pandemic?

## 2. Mr. Mohammed Madiyouni, Representative of AHAED (Morocco)

Mr. Madiyouni has presented the critical analysis of the GRALE 6 Report Concept note from the perspective of AHAED. He engaged participants through a critical analysis of the issues and presented developmental proposals related to the Sixth Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE 6). His intervention was grounded in the principle that the topics addressed in GRALE 6 not only shape the content of adult learning and education policies but also influence the governance systems associated with them. He emphasized that previous reports accurately identified challenges but often lacked practical implementation mechanisms—an issue that GRALE 6 aims to address through the active commitment of all participating countries.

Mr. Madiyouni continued by highlighting Adult Learning and Education (ALE), as well as lifelong learning, as a central component in addressing the key challenges identified by the Sixth Global Report. He emphasized that:

- ✓ **Digitalization:** This raises important questions regarding equity and fairness. We are increasingly facing networked governance rather than centralized governance, prompting questions such as: Who controls decision-making? Could the digital divide exacerbate inequality?
- ✓ **Economic Transformations:** These require the reorientation of public policies and the adoption of governance approaches grounded in social justice, ensuring the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups.
- ✓ **Climate Change:** Addressing this challenge demands multi-level environmental governance, ranging from awareness-raising to community empowerment.
- ✓ **Conflict and Crisis Situations:** These contexts necessitate governance that strengthens community resilience, shifting from stability-focused governance to crisis-responsive governance, with a central role for civil society.

In his intervention, he also outlined the following key pillars and proposals:

- ✓ **Human-Centered Education:** This represents a challenge that calls for a “new social contract,” strengthened political awareness, active community participation, and the provision of psychological and social support.

- ✓ **Economic Sustainability:** Focused on skills development, pedagogical innovation, and technological advancement.
- ✓ **Inclusion and Equity:** Ensuring that no one is left behind.

In conclusion, he emphasized that GRALE 6 presents an opportunity to reform governance itself, underscoring that this is not merely an educational choice but a political and developmental imperative.

The session fostered active participant engagement on strategies to address global challenges related to the core themes of GRALE 6. The concept of a “new social contract” for Adult Learning and Lifelong Learning was highlighted—a domain of significant societal interest but limited governmental response. Drawing on the methodology of UNESCO and the work of the Arab Institute for Human Rights on the new education and learning contract, Mr. Abdelbasset Ben Hassan, President of the Arab Institute for Human Rights, clarified that this new education contract serves as a framework for initiating work rather than as an end in itself.

At the close of the session, Ms. Isabelle reaffirmed that the Arab region’s adult learning and education sector requires a shared educational vision—one that prioritizes exploring innovative approaches to adult learning alongside the development of formal education, while leveraging the flexibility offered by lifelong learning to address challenges and support strategic planning.

Mr. Madiyouni further observed that ongoing efforts to engage government authorities and position adult learning and education as a political and developmental priority benefit all stakeholders. He emphasized that responsibility does not rest solely with government bodies; civil society must also revisit certain assumptions and focus on strengthening local systems to build resilient community structures.





## Day Two – 29 January 2026

At the start of the morning session on the second day, a summary of the first day's activities was presented, highlighting the key recommendations related to the main discussion themes, as outlined in the regional workshop program.

In presenting the recommendations, Mr. Shaker Selmi, Rapporteur of the regional workshop, emphasized that the final compiled report will present all presentations and discussions with the required depth and precision.



**Session 6: Panel Discussion on Policies, Quality, and Participation –  
Facilitated by Mr. Hussam Belhaj**

**1. Opening Presentation: "Strengthening the Coordination of Adult Education Policies," by  
Mr. Jawad Al-Qassous DVV International Jordan.**

He noted that coordinating policies in the field of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) is a complex task in Jordan, due to conceptual challenges and the gap between the Ministry of Education’s vision for adult education and that of civil society. Although both refer to the same benchmark—the UNESCO definition—the Ministry of Education approaches this field from a technical perspective, whereas adult education encompasses numerous challenges that demand flexibility and innovative initiatives, including digitalization, labour market alignment, and other factors.

To address conceptual discrepancies, a multi-sectoral action plan was implemented, based on a policy paper approved at a dedicated conference. This paper was subsequently used by the Higher Committee for Adult Education to develop a national framework and conduct a study aligned with the pillars and axes presented in the conceptual note of this regional workshop. The study revealed that many sectors have a role in this field, even if they are not formally linked to the national Adult Education program; however, their work often lacks adherence to a unified conceptual and reference framework. Notably, the number of institutions providing services and programs in adult education, skills development, and labour market preparation exceeds 6,000.





Mr. Jawad Al-Qassous emphasized that the work spanned a period of two years, broadening the base of participation to include universities and multiple stakeholders. This effort culminated in the development of a national framework, which subsequently guided the drafting of legislation. The initial draft focused primarily on literacy, but it was later revised to explicitly incorporate Adult Learning and Education (ALE) and lifelong learning. The reform also involved reorganizing and expanding the mandate of the Ministry of Education, which became the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, with adult education formally integrated into its responsibilities.

**2- Second Opening Presentation: Delivered by Mr. Zahi Azar from Arab House for Adult Education and Development (AHAED) – and the President of the Arab Network for Popular Education (Lebanon) on *Renewing Approaches to Improving the Quality of Adult Education and Participation in It.***

Mr. Zahi Azar opened his intervention by emphasizing the importance of starting from the reality we face at all levels—a reality that is both complex and exceptional. He stressed that understanding this reality within the contexts of education and Adult Learning and Education (ALE) is crucial for determining how

to leverage it in educational and developmental efforts, particularly in the Arab region.

He explained that our vision must encompass a structural and comprehensive analysis of the various roots and historical milestones that have contributed to the current disconnect—a situation unprecedented since World War II, after which we became part of a new global system and, socially, were subject to the forces of the global market.

In the early stages, discussions focused on comprehensive development—economic, political, and educational—and we benefited to some extent from this interdependence, with limited space for free initiative.

According to him, we are now witnessing the end of this approach. Indicators suggest that the West, once relatively unified, has become a space of both open and hidden conflicts that will have implications for the Arab region, particularly in relation to the labour market and the challenges of education and lifelong learning.

In light of this reality, a fundamental question arises: What opportunities exist, and what role can be played in the formation of an educated elite? He noted that current conflicts no longer primarily concern consumer societies. The Western world has developed new mechanisms of control, and the global market is shaped by forces that sometimes seek to undermine the role of the United Nations and perpetuate conflicts—a highly dangerous situation that establishes new values guided by interests that do not respect accumulated knowledge and achievements.



Regarding data, Mr. Zahi Azar emphasized that it is not neutral, as it is often employed to serve the interests of “empires of indifference.” He stressed that this should not be accepted and that data must instead be used as a tool to empower communities, support participatory planning and analysis, and guide informed decision-making. He expressed hope that GRALE 6 will function as an educational tool aligned with this approach, promoting transformative education and helping address fundamental questions within specific contexts.

In conclusion, he highlighted that the challenges of oppression and knowledge fragmentation can be tackled through a human-centred educational approach, with Adult Learning and Education (ALE) serving as the key arena for action—particularly given the ongoing retreat of formal educational institutions in many societies. Achieving this requires reinforcing participatory collaboration among all empowered stakeholders.

### **3. Presentation by Ms. Maha Ben Yahmed, Representative of the Tunisian National Women’s Union**

She presented the founding context, objectives, and role of the Tunisian National Women’s Union (UNFT) in skills development and training, highlighting that over 130 training centres have been established, including 70 dedicated to Adult Learning and Education (ALE), some of which are recognized as model centres.

Through these centres, the Union provides training tailored to the specific needs of each region. One example is the “Chabda Model Center,” founded in 1995, covering 15 hectares and including a farm, poultry and beekeeping activities, vegetable cultivation, and medicinal herb distillation. Through these initiatives, more than 480 women have been trained, and 55 small projects have been launched.

The Union also focuses on the economic and social empowerment of women in rural areas, giving special attention to school dropouts, children, and vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities across multiple governorates.

To support and monitor these initiatives, a Social Work Office was established at the Union’s central headquarters, serving over 800 cases annually and providing services such as listening, legal guidance for women victims of violence, and accompaniment.

The Union has further adopted integrated approaches in supporting craftswomen by establishing development complexes that allow them to control production costs and market their products. Within the framework of the

“Lammat” and “Lalla Hadhika” projects, supported by DVV International, 105 beneficiaries received training and support, an online sales platform was established, and a core economic support centre was created to manage documentation and mobilize resources for financing.

In conclusion, she emphasized that the Tunisian National Women’s Union, as a partner of government authorities and numerous networks of associations and organizations, is committed to addressing contemporary challenges, ensuring the sustainability of Adult Learning and Education, and contributing to the collection of high-quality data.



Building on the three previous presentations and experiences, participant discussions focused on sharing good practices and reaffirming the importance of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) and lifelong learning in addressing the needs of broad segments of the community and enhancing conditions for civic participation.

In this context, Mr. Abdelbasset Ben Hassan presented the experience of the Arab Institute for Human Rights and its field-based approach in the neighbourhoods surrounding the Institute’s headquarters. A training and outreach space was established, along with human rights and citizenship clubs, to educate children on human rights and civic culture within schools and youth and cultural centres in the Hilal and Sayda neighbourhoods—areas characterized by high population density and significant vulnerability.



As the experience matured, the Arab Institute for Human Rights became a focal point not only for children but also for illiterate women seeking to engage in Adult Learning and Education (ALE) programs. This growing interest presented a challenge for the Institute, leading to the development of activities progressing from basic literacy to skills training through a rights-based perspective, supported by the Ministry of Social Affairs, which assigned social education teachers to the Institute.

The Institute was encouraged by the pivotal role of children participating in the human rights and citizenship clubs, who helped introduce the activities to their families and wider social networks. At the same time, the Institute identified the limited capacity of social education teachers in understanding and applying a human rights approach within adult education activities. To ensure sustainability, the Institute partnered with the Ministry of Social Affairs to launch a large-scale program to train social education teachers.

Key lessons from this experience include the Institute's strengthened field presence and enhanced engagement, facilitated by the active participation of children, women, and youth. This demonstrates that a human rights approach is not merely an additional component of ALE programs; rather, promoting and training in human rights—while considering the needs of vulnerable groups and valuing their experiences—enriches program content and supports the development of relevant pedagogy. As a result, the Institute has cultivated a cohort of empowered female learners.

Mr. Ayman Khalil from Syria, highlighted the shared responsibility for ALE between government representatives and civil society. The government representative noted that the main challenge lies in securing funding and

resources to support plans, strategies, and project sustainability. Meanwhile, the civil society representative emphasized the importance of valuing adult learning and education on par with formal education. Indeed, in times of war and conflict, ALE becomes a critical solution for children and families to maintain spaces for civic participation and ongoing learning.



From Mauritania, the civil society representative reported the existence of a national platform for monitoring youth and development activities and called for the creation of a similar platform dedicated to monitoring adult education and skills training.

From Egypt, the civil society representative welcomed Mr. Zahi Azar's call to address challenges through a human-centred approach that restores the value of schooling and supports dropouts who have fallen into illiteracy and been deprived of skill acquisition. He raised questions regarding the development of a framework for the use of "liberated" data and the training of teachers, students, and stakeholders to utilize it effectively.

From Morocco, Mr. Saeed Doukali praised Mr. Zahi Azar's philosophical and forward-looking vision, recommending that his intervention be highlighted in a dedicated section of the final report of the regional workshop, given its value as a foundation for developing and renewing approaches.

**Session 7: From Data to Policy – Using Adult Learning and Education Data to Improve Policies**  
**Presented and Facilitated by Ms. Samah Shalabi and Mr. Safouen Alayet**

The session focused exclusively on the process of preparing GRALE 6 and its associated survey. During the first phase, it was noted that representatives from countries that had submitted their reports and made amendments could access the platform. In the second phase, all participants were invited to share the challenges they had encountered in completing the survey.



The main observations and challenges raised included:

- ✓ Difficulty in compiling data within the 300-character limit.
- ✓ **Question 5 (Definition of “Adult”)**: This was a closed-ended question; some of the provided options do not allow for expressing specificities in certain countries, such as Morocco.
- ✓ **Question 56**: Concerns topics related to Adult Learning and Education (ALE), but the answer options focus on institutions rather than broader aspects.
- ✓ **Question 23**: Requires further clarification to avoid misunderstandings between local or regional bodies and local or regional authorities.
- ✓ Age groups should be disaggregated by gender to inform future analysis and the design of programs targeting specific populations.

- ✓ It is necessary to refine the age categories for adult learners and include open-ended questions to describe data management in countries lacking legislation on adult learning and education.
- ✓ The survey is primarily quantitative and provides limited space for strategic thinking or analysis.
- ✓ The survey should include an introductory section defining Adult Learning and Education and lifelong learning to help respondents engage effectively with the questions.
- ✓ A question matrix should be developed to address the specificities and contexts of each country, taking into account the realities of adult learning and lifelong learning.
- ✓ Experts from Arab and African countries should be involved at this stage of GRALE 6 preparation to contribute to strategic thinking, address challenges, and inform future global reports.

In response to questions and suggestions regarding the survey and the GRALE 6 preparation process, Ms. Samah Shalabi noted:

- **Question 65** allows respondents to provide comments on the survey questions.
- It is possible to submit a supplementary document via email to provide additional information for the survey.



- She emphasized that data collection involves 160 countries, which necessitated framing general questions. Regarding qualitative data, it is

possible to work with observations and incorporate them. She also noted that diagnostic exercises and past experience have shown that qualitative data are often lacking in most Arab countries.

- She highlighted that the survey is accompanied by a glossary of terms, which constitutes a significant strength.

At the conclusion of this session, participants discussed the gap between the timing of the Global Report and the 12-year cycle of CONFINTEA. Ms. Samah Shalabi explained that UNESCO will adopt GRALE 6 as it did with previous global reports and the Marrakech Framework for monitoring progress. These changes require a reasonable time frame to take effect. Looking ahead, GRALE 6 will be published in 2027, the Millennium Goals will reach their target in 2030, and CONFINTEA will be held in 2032. These timelines are considered appropriate for monitoring the impact of adult learning and evaluating lifelong learning.

Regarding the preparation of a case study for the Arab region—both quantitative and qualitative—reference was made to a similar initiative in which GRALE 5 was accompanied by a regional report. For that purpose, collaboration involved approximately 476 associations across various Arab countries within the framework of AHAED activities, alongside participation from government entities.

It was also confirmed that the AHAED journal, to be published in April 2026, will be dedicated to the contexts of Global Reports 1–5 and the preparation of GRALE 6.

The open discussion in this session focused on the following questions:

- ✓ What existing frameworks or tools can be leveraged—or newly developed—to strengthen regional cooperation in adult learning and education?
- ✓ How can countries in the region benefit from one another, for example, through communities of practice or the exchange of best policies?

The discussion highlighted:

- ✓ Leveraging existing frameworks: Participants emphasized the importance of benefiting from existing frameworks to develop and sustain Adult Learning and Education (ALE) activities. The UNESCO Institute's experience was presented, specifically the platform [UIL Learning Hub](#) has been created, which allows each Arab country to select the priority area they wish to work on. Participants were encouraged to activate this platform in collaboration with the AHAED network and its partner associations to coordinate efforts and enhance the sustainability of ALE.
- ✓ Recognition and integration: Efforts should focus on matching qualifications and recognizing non-formal education certificates, developing joint reintegration plans and programs, and adopting flexibility between formal and non-formal education to create inclusive policies.
- ✓ Strengthening collaboration: Exploring ways to develop joint methodologies and expand the network of stakeholders involved in ALE, including those engaged in knowledge sharing and dissemination.
- ✓ Developing tools to meet challenges: For example, Radio Al-Sayeda, established by the Arab Institute for Human Rights, broadcasts across the Arab region and produces recordings from highly knowledgeable experts, enriching the communication landscape and competing with other media outlets.
- ✓ Bridging gaps: Reducing the gap between practitioners of popular education and the requirements of data collection by designing a dynamic platform that provides real-time access to experiences and good practices.

- ✓ Attention to older adults: Giving special attention to aging populations and integrating ALE within the circular economy, including retraining retirees for alternative roles that leverage flexibility for community benefit.
- ✓ Building on workshop outcomes: Investing in the role of focal points and civil society representatives in each country to improve reporting and data collection.
- ✓ Valuing the role of DVV International: Acknowledging achievements in Tunisia, Jordan, and Morocco through DVV International's support, and calling for a meeting of adult education officials and associations to launch an open discussion. This meeting could be organized within the framework of Tunisia–Jordan cooperation.
- ✓ Progressive capacity building: Gradually training and qualifying experts at the Arab, regional, and international levels in adult learning, education, and lifelong learning.





### III. Supplementary Recommendations

- ✓ Develop a new educational framework: Design a framework for Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in partnership with multiple stakeholders, initiating the preparation of a guiding document and an operational action plan alongside efforts to prepare GRALE 6.
- ✓ Strengthen partnerships: Foster collaboration between civil society, government entities, and functional institutions to transform ALE from limited instructional activities into skills training and sustainable programs.
- ✓ Mobilize financial and private sector resources: Secure necessary funding and ensure private sector engagement as part of corporate social responsibility, enabling lifelong learning to actively contribute to informed action and social change.
- ✓ Design integrated monitoring mechanisms: Establish systems to collect and disseminate both quantitative and qualitative data effectively.
- ✓ Ensure learner involvement: Promote active participation of learners in enhancing ALE programs.
- ✓ Leverage digitalization: Utilize rapid technological advancements to encourage self-directed learning and capacity building.

- ✓ Recognize civil society's role: Consider dedicating a specific section to civil society in the survey, making it mandatory and assigning clear responsibilities for follow-up and implementation in GRALE 6.
- ✓ Build civil society capacity: Train civil society organizations in data collection tools, transforming them into credible and reliable sources for gathering, analysing, and using data for development and awareness-raising.
- ✓ Integrate human rights principles: Embed human rights in ALE and lifelong learning programs to reinforce learners' rights to participate and contribute to the humanization of education.
- ✓ Strengthen evaluation and accountability: Enhance evaluation systems and transparency, particularly within civil society, to support strategic planning.
- ✓ Disseminate outputs: Promote the sharing of results from this regional workshop, which will be included in the GRALE 6 synthesis report and published in the AHAED journal.



**Note:** It should be noted that Ms. Jalila Jouini, representing ALECSO, joined the regional workshop towards the end of the proceedings. She explained that her late participation was due to prior professional commitments, and she emphasized her eagerness to contribute to this effort. She reaffirmed ALECSO's commitment to supporting this strategic direction and expressed readiness to collaborate at various stages, particularly in data verification and the development of future partnerships.

## IV. Closing Remarks



### 1- Mr. Nazaret Nazaretyan, DVV International – North Africa

considered the regional workshop—with such a high-quality presence and active participation—as an excellent opportunity for learning and mutual benefit. In his remarks, he questioned what more the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning could do to address the issues and challenges raised during the workshop. He emphasized that, although perhaps not all that could be done has been achieved so far, it is essential to strengthen cooperation with governments through national focal points and with civil society, which plays a leading role in advocating for priorities.

Regarding the GRALE 6 survey, he noted that collecting data from diverse sources is extremely important, and that data processing is even more complex. He expressed confidence that both tasks can succeed through such dedication, highlighting his personal experience in 2008 during the preparation of the first GRALE report (GRALE 1) in Armenia, when coordination was established with both the government and civil society. At that time, adult learning was still a new concept in the country, and he acknowledged that the task was indeed challenging.

In closing, he thanked all participants for the depth and richness of the discussions, their commitment, and their efforts to travel to attend. He noted that this workshop was preceded by preparatory discussions in Rabat in 2025. He praised the contributions of experts and network representatives, and offered a special acknowledgment to Ms. Samah Shalaby, as a representative of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and as an expert from the Arab region who joined the committee. He also recognized the pivotal role of the AHAED network, despite its logo not appearing on official documents. Finally, he expressed gratitude to the DVV International team in Tunisia and Jordan, the regional workshop facilitator, the general rapporteur, the translators, and the Tunisian media.



## **2 Ms. Isabell Kempf, Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)**

**Ms. Kempf expressed her gratitude to all participants for their contributions in making the workshop productive, noting the depth of the discussions and the quality of the recommendations. She highlighted the positive developments and strengths emerging in various countries in the field of adult learning and lifelong learning.**

**She stressed the importance of building on the enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated during the workshop, maintaining communication, and sharing expertise—particularly through the AHAED network—despite the challenges inherent in collecting quality data. She emphasized that high-quality data will lead to meaningful outcomes and that these efforts will have a lasting impact in the future.**





