

COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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COMMITTEE ON OUT-OF-SCHOOL EDUCATION

First meeting
(20th-23rd March 1962)



COE013659

Study Group II
POPULAR EDUCATION/ADULT EDUCATION

FINAL DRAFT REPORT

We adopted our agenda and embarked upon Point III which concerned the title and scope of the work with which this study group is concerned, Adult or Popular Education being only a provisional title. To aid ourselves towards this end each delegate gave a short account of the content of the organisation and administrative structure of Adult/Popular Education in his country. It was clear that:

1. The content and organisation of Adult/Popular Education varied considerably from country to country for historical and geographical reasons. For example, in some countries,

it included a certain amount of work which would more properly be the concern of those responsible for academic or technical education.

2. Nevertheless Adult/Popular Education in all the countries had a predominant field of work which was common ground for all.
3. This consists in educational work and activities undertaken voluntarily and in their leisure-time by students of any age who are capable of an adult attitude and it has the aim of promoting the personal, cultural, intellectual development of the individual and also his social responsibility.

In view of this area of work common to us all it was agreed that no further attempt at definition should be made. It was however important that we should express our assent or dissent to the alternative phrase suggested in Doc. CCC/EES (62) 5, Chapter 5 "Cultural activity and out-of-school education".

With admirable logic we proceeded from Point 3 to Point 4 - ways in which our work can be furthered by international co-operation within the framework of the Council of Europe.

The representative of the Secretariat reminded us of the methods of mutual aid which the Council could promote - publications, research and studies, the exchange of experts, working groups, stages d'étude, stages d'information, experimental pilot work, international juridical agreements, collaboration with private organisations.

Each delegate then gave a resumé of the outstanding problems and difficulties which confront adult education in his or her country. Many of these were common to all or a majority, and in particular, the following:

1. The need for raising the prestige of adult/popular education so that it is regarded as an integral part of the educational system with as valid a claim on public esteem, public funds and the attention of governments as academic and vocational education.
2. The lack of a sufficient number of adult education workers who are suitably qualified, academically and personally. The need to establish attractive conditions of work, status and in-service training.
3. The need for sociological and pedagogical research into the nature and extent of the need for adult education and the best techniques for attracting and educating adult students in the modern world.

4. The need for purpose-built premises for adult education, whether in separate buildings or in adaptations to buildings which also serve another purpose.
5. The need to find ways of counteracting the debasing influences of mass entertainment and mass advertisement.
6. The need in certain countries to intensify and improve the campaign against illiteracy.
7. The need to give education in the concept of citizenship of Europe and the cultural unity of Europe.
8. The need to establish a principle whereby governments are prepared to finance adult education with a minimum of control over its content and methods.

Their problems were then reviewed in the light of the possible means of co-operative action in a CCC framework.

It was resolved that a recommendation concerning the status and prestige of Adult/Popular Education should be laid, via the CCC, before the meeting of Ministers of Education in Rome. A small working group was charged with producing a text of this resolution.

In connection with the lack of Adult Education workers and the need for training it was decided to explore the possibilities of invoking the aid of the European Bureau of Adult Education. The CCC would undertake an enquiry into the conditions, qualifications and status of Adult Education workers and would, in this connection, consult the European Bureau of Adult Education and other bodies.

It was projected that the Extra Scolaire directorate should concern itself with:

1. A consideration of the best techniques in Adult/Popular Education and the possibility of bringing together study groups of pedagogical experts. This would involve also a survey of the pedagogical materials available in the various countries.
2. Consideration of the European idea as a part of the content of adult education and the consequent need to revise the training curriculum of adult education workers.

Courses

The past and projected courses were noted and approved.