

Professional Development Program for Adult Educators

*Learning Package on*  
PARTICIPATORY ADULT LEARNING,  
DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION  
NETWORKING (PALDIN)

**PARTICIPATORY LIFELONG LEARNING  
AND  
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION  
TECHNOLOGIES**

Course 01

An ALADIN-India Initiative

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**Course 01**



**Group of Adult Education**  
School of Social Sciences  
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New Delhi

## Please Note

It is important that the learner completes all activities mentioned in PALDIN units because much of the learning content is incorporated in 'learning by doing' type of activity sections of each unit of a course. It will not be useful to simply read the various sections of the unit and leave out Reflection/ Activity. Interactivity through all such sections of each unit is meant to give impetus to participatory learning whereby all learners get also the opportunity to contribute to construction of knowledge content of PALDIN units. In addition, learners' feedback to each unit will go a long way to help the revision of the course material.

Participatory approach to learning adopted in PALDIN courses brings home the point that adult educators' training is itself a demonstration of sound adult learning practice. In other words, PALDIN learners need to take participatory approach to their interaction with adult members of the communities during their work situations.

Another point to note is that PALDIN courses and their activity exercises stress in equal measure conceptual understanding of the field, practical skills of participatory learning and not easily perceivable but equally important personal qualities of empathy and rapport. While completing activity exercises of PALDIN units, its learners will find plenty of occasions to discover that adult learning is a social process and adult educators' reflection on social reality influences how they perform their roles in work situations.

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## Preface

Notwithstanding the expansion of Adult Education as a field of practice and a discipline of study, very little attention has been paid to the professional development of Adult Educators. Unlike School Education, which has in India a well designed professional programme of one year duration for the preparation of school teachers, there is no such provision in the field of Adult Education. Hence, a large number of organizations employ untrained personnel or those with minimum training. The attempt to provide on the job training to the staff has been found to be limited in scope. Several research studies have traced the ineffectiveness of Adult Education programs to the poor quality of training of the program staff. Therefore the need for building and strengthening the capacities through appropriate professional development programs for adult educators has been repeatedly highlighted in several forums of the UNESCO, especially Adult Learning Documentation and Information Network (ALADIN) which has about two hundred members in fifty countries.

A Country Study (2004) sponsored by the then UNESCO Institute for Education on *the Status of Adult Learning and Documentation Centers in India* revealed that most of the organizations in India were neither networked nor have the expertise in documenting their activities or dissemination. The majority of the Staff members working in these organizations expressed a desire to acquire relevant training. This idea was seriously pursued by a group of five members, namely, Dr. Mohan Kumar, Additional Director, Directorate of Adult Education, Government of India; Dr. P. R. Goswami, Director, National Social Science Documentation Center, ICSSR; Shri K. C. Choudhury, Chancellor, International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education; Dr. Madan Singh, Secretary, Indian Adult Education Association and Prof. S. Y. Shah, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, who formed ALADIN-INDIA. They organized an International Workshop (2005) with the support of the National Literacy Mission of Government Of India, Indian Council of Social Science Research, International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education and the UNESCO Institute of Education. The participants at the Workshop discussed several issues related to capacity building of the staff members and stressed the need for designing a short duration program of study through open and distance learning mode. Accordingly, the ALADIN-INDIA prepared a proposal. Consequent upon the funding support from the University Grants Commission of India, the work was initiated at Jawaharlal Nehru University. The project team began with a survey of the existing courses in Adult Education and Information Management. Subsequently an International Workshop (2006) was organized and a curriculum was framed and well-known scholars were commissioned to prepare the course material.

The development of a professional programme for Adult Educators is a challenging task not only because of the wide variety of jobs undertaken by them, but also the varying expectations of the different types of organizations which employ them viz., government agencies, NGOs, universities, libraries and information centers.

It has been observed that in most of the adult learning organizations, especially in small organizations, one person is expected to undertake various types of work, such as project management, project documentation, information management, networking and dissemination of information. While those who work in libraries and information centers may have some knowledge and expertise related to information organization and management, they often lack the knowledge and skills required to plan, manage and document adult learning activities. In the same way, most of the adult educators, while possessing relevant knowledge and skills related to their area of work, may lack the expertise related to the classification and cataloging of documents. Invariably, it has been observed that many adult educators have very little idea of process documentation and how to manage information. Although there are separate courses of 6-12 months duration either in Information Management or in Adult Education, there is no comprehensive short term professional program of study for adult educators, covering adult learning, project documentation, information dissemination and networking.

The present learning package on *Participatory Adult Learning, Documentation and Information Networking* (PALDIN) is an attempt in this direction.

S.Y. Shah



## Acknowledgements

The professional development program on *Participatory Adult Learning, Documentation and Information Networking (PALDIN)* has been undertaken with the active cooperation of several experts and financial support from a number of organizations, namely, University Grants Commission of India, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), National Literacy Mission (NLM) and International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education (IIALE). Of the several individuals who have shown great interest in this project and encouraged it, I would like to record my gratitude to ALADIN Co-coordinator Ms. Lisa Krolak, Head of Documentation at UILL, Dr. R. K. Chauhan, Additional Secretary of UGC, Dr. Bhaskar Chatterjee, the former Member Secretary of ICSSR, Mr. Jagan Mathews, the former Director General of NLM and Mr. K. C. Chaudhury, Chancellor of IIALE.

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Professor Shobhita Jain (Senior Consultant) deserves special thanks for helping me in coordinating the project and shouldering the main responsibility of finalizing the draft by meticulously going through the entire manuscript, copy editing, rewriting certain portions, putting them in ODL format and checking again and again several versions for errors. Dr. Manasi Mishra (Research Associate) provided excellent academic support throughout the project. I would like to acknowledge the services of Ms Arvinder Chawla and Mr Kamal kumar, who designed the book and its cover.

My heart-felt thanks are due to all the participants of the International Workshop, held in March 2006 at the India International Center, New Delhi, for finalizing the syllabi of the two courses of PALDIN. Annexure 1 on the next page gives the names of the participants. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support of the authorities of Jawaharlal Nehru University for granting me permission to undertake this project and providing all the facilities.

S.Y. Shah

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# Introduction to the Professional Development Program of Study in Participatory Adult Learning, Documentation and Information Networking (PALDIN)

Shobhita Jain

The project team of PALDIN courses development extends a warm welcome to PALDIN learners. This introduction to PALDIN, a professional development program of study consisting of two courses, familiarizes you with its target group, aim and objectives and provides a brief description of its courses and their relevance to your profession. Next follows an account of the special features of the courses' contents that have been developed with the help of a wide range of academic resources.

Let us clarify at the outset that our attempt to build capacities of adult educators and thereby value of their profession does not in any way refer to professionalism that gives rise to exclusiveness, elitism and all too familiar gap between educators and learners. PALDIN courses have been prepared in the spirit of discourse between equals, with no sense of compulsion and encumbrance of examination and grading. This is a self-transforming learning package, advancing belief in participation and open dialogue. In our perception every adult is an adult educator as well as a learner.

## Target Group

PALDIN courses will be of interest to the program staff of different types of adult learning setup, namely, State Resource Centers (SRCs), University Departments of Adult Education, Documentation Centers, and NGOs-run Centres. They will be able to use PALDIN courses developed in open and distance learning format as per their convenience of time and place.

## Aim and Objectives of PALDIN

PALDIN is an innovative open learning program with the aim of capacity building of adult educators.

Objectives of the program are to

- ❖ Provide its learners a conceptual understanding of the various roles of adult educator in the context of contemporary socio-economic life that requires a continuous stream of lifelong learning for adults.
- ❖ Offer the learners the ways to learn various skills pertaining to documentation, dissemination and networking.
- ❖ Give adult educators opportunities to apply what they learn in each course so that they are both reflecting on their new learning and applying the same in their day-to-day work situations.

## Duration and Delivery of the Courses

As mentioned above the learning package on Participatory Adult Learning,

Documentation and Information Networking (PALDIN) comprises two courses, each of which would notionally require a minimum of four hundred and eighty hours of study and practical work. In terms of open and distance learning mode, you can say that this much of workload completed will entitle you to earn sixteen credits of an advance level learning. You work out the same in terms of months and visualize the workload of 2 months @ 8 hours work each day or of 4 months @ 4 hours each day or of 8 months @ 2 hours each day. This is only a notional scheme. You can, of course, work two hours one day and four hours another day and take a break of few days to resume the work later. As per availability of time you can complete the courses at your own pace. You can study both simultaneously or one after the other. The flexibility available to learners includes the facility of going through the course material any time of day or night and at any place of your choice. If you prefer to read the printed text, you opt to use the books. In case you like to read it on your personal computer, you can use the single compact disc that contains the entire course material.

### **Brief Description of the Two Courses of PALDIN**

The two courses of PALDIN come to you in the form of two books. The book on *Participatory Lifelong Learning and Information and Communication Technologies* outlines the global, regional and national scenario on literacy and discusses policy on adult and lifelong learning. Then it traces the philosophical roots of current forms of adult learning and sensitizes its readers to the need of critically looking at them for acquiring conceptual clarity. This leads to the concept of and working with the community. Focusing on the processes of participatory learning the book dwells at length on participatory training and evaluation. Finally, the book provides very useful inputs on the role of information and communication technologies in education and development and ends with their uses in literacy and lifelong learning. For further details of the book see the introduction to the course.

The book on *Documentation, Dissemination and Networking* deals with the processes of documentation and dissemination of information and then it elaborates with the theme of networking for obtaining better linkages between those documenting and disseminating information relating to adult learning. All this culminates in knowing how to manage adult learning setup, including its library-related resources. Communication and organizational behaviour are two pillars of management strategies explained in detail so that adult educators may apply the same to their work. Introduction to the course provides more details about the various themes discussed in the book

PALDIN course material is now ready for pilot testing in the field. Feedback from the first batch of its learners will be the basis of its final version that will go to the larger community of adult educators.

The two courses will also be available in a compact disc (CD). Each book has a certain number of units, which sensitize learners to critically approach the various themes and sub-themes. The course material is designed to facilitate learners to increase efficiency and effective functioning in their work situations because each unit of both courses requires application of what has been learnt. Thus in a cumulative manner, step-by-step learners increase their skills to obtain better outputs in their professional work.

At all levels in your career, understanding your roles enables you to hold on to your job, to succeed in getting further promotions and above all to effectively take part in decision-making processes that exist in your profession. There is currently a growing demand for professional adult educators to carry out lifelong learning programs. The reason for such a demand is linked to the fact that the global spread of industrialism coupled with information and communication technologies has vastly expanded the scope of lifelong learning by all adults. Such programs of study as PALDIN strive to upgrade knowledge and skills of adult educators and thereby empower them to carry out their roles in an efficient and effective manner.

For pilot testing of the two courses, some select adult learning institutions will accept to run them and the first batch of learners will basically study as well as evaluate the course material.

### **Special Features of the Presentation of PALDIN Course Material**

A reading of the special features of designing lay-out of the course material will help PALDIN learners to devise their own strategies to go through the course content according to their particular interests and choices.

### **Language and Style of Writing**

PALDIN course material has been consciously prepared in gender-sensitive language, that is, it addresses equally both women and men learners. Further throughout the courses there is use of clear and simple language and captions appear to indicate systematically numbered figures, tables, boxes and activities etc. Style of writing reflects a learner-friendly conversational format that indicates a relationship of equality between the learner and the developer of the course content. All efforts have been made to avoid the use of words like 'should' or 'must' because such words reflect a tendency of offering commands to learners.

### **Aide-memoir**

Each unit comes to you with a clearly stated structure that informs in advance its coverage and the order of discussion of each theme and sub-theme. Similarly stating clearly the learning objectives prepares you to systematize your reading of the contents in terms of outputs of your efforts. The learning objectives spell out what you would achieve after reading the unit and completing all its activities. You can use the learning objectives as study tools to review your preparation for problem-solving situations at work.

The introduction of each unit states the theme and elaborates how the theme develops. It outlines the roadmap of your learning of a particular theme. The introduction also links the particular theme with the unit that precedes and succeeds the unit you are reading so that you keep a firm grip on how the subject matter develops through various units. At the end of reading each unit, you are hopefully ready to apply in practical life what you have learnt. This is the main objective of PALDIN. So you are advised to take this part of learning seriously and systematically if you wish to derive full advantage of this learning package.

### **Additional Information**

In systematically numbered boxes, you will find additional information about concepts/ processes/ events mentioned in the text. Serial numbers of boxes pertain to the

unit they belong to. Similarly, illustrations, elaborating the points made in the text, have systematic numbers and captions. We have avoided the practice of inserting footnotes to the main text. Our practice is to explain the term or concept when it appears for the first time in the text.

All references to the works cited in the text of each unit appear in alphabetical order at the end of the book. We have followed the Harvard system of referencing both in the main body of the text and the list of references at the end of each book of PALDIN. References include all the sources that developers of the units have cited in the text. They include also the books suggested as Further Reading. References help those learners who wish to explore further into a particular theme or sub-theme discussed in PALDIN course material.

### **Experience-based Learning through Reflection and Activity Exercises**

Through reflection and activity exercises, PALDIN units have incorporated the constructivist principles of learning in the design of your learning environment. Often formal classroom teaching is not embedded in learners' everyday experiences and this is why learning tasks do not carry much meaning and relevance for them. Most learning is often confined to the sole aim of passing the examination and obtaining a degree. Our aim in PALDIN is to make learning tasks embedded in adult learning-based contexts and here the learner's situation requires her/ him to possess the knowledge and skills for solving day-to-day problems in adult learning setups. The reflection and activity exercises encourage you to hold discussions with other learners and thus experience the benefits of collaborative learning. These exercises offer you the choices to identify issues of your interest and relevance. The focus is on situations wherein you experience interaction through authentic tasks and thus you go through the process of knowledge construction. In this approach the emphasis is on how to learn, how to construct and rebuild new meaning that is more important than the outcomes in terms of knowledge for its own sake. Our expectation is that PALDIN learners would take this approach to learning to their field and apply it while dealing with adult learners. We have endeavored to include a higher order of thinking about one's own thinking and problem-solving ways. You may call it a process of reflexivity that has a strong potential for problem-solving. This approach allows the scope for generating alternatives with more effective strategies. In a nutshell, the whole process involved in reflection and activity exercises is to facilitate PALDIN learners' movement from their initial state of understanding to the abstract levels of understanding. We take the so-called "mistakes" as steps in learning through a natural and productive process. Our attempt is to build this dynamic process of learning into the reflection and activity exercises of PALDIN units.

### **Evaluation Methodology**

As per the above learning process, this learning package has a system of continuous assessment of its learners' performance. PALDIN learners need to complete all exercises and the process of completing the exercises comprises the act of learning by doing. Each PALDIN learners is to submit to the institution that runs PALDIN courses a written proof of completing all exercises in a systematic and neat fashion with clearly stated the learner's name, date and place of the work, serial number of the activity etc.



# Introduction to Course 01: Participatory Lifelong Learning and Information and Communication Technologies

Anita Dighe

## Need and Rationale

National governments of a majority of developing countries have tended to marginalize adult education policies and programmes as well as the training of adult education functionaries. A study undertaken in 2002 by the UNESCO Institute of Education (now known as the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning) showed that in most countries, despite the large number of adult education functionaries who need training, only a small percentage get trained due to paucity of resources, both human and financial. The training methodology is mostly top-down; it is reduced to knowledge transmission and is not conceived as multi-dimensional, learner-centered and participatory. In most cases, the training programmes are organized in a perfunctory and ad hoc manner. As a result, there is not only transmission loss, the adult education functionaries are often ill equipped to meet the challenges posed by their work and the professional commitment required of them. Undoubtedly, there is a need to improve the quality of training that adult educators receive. Likewise, it is important for policy makers to think of new approaches to training adult education functionaries.

Several important initiatives that affect educator training, however, have been taken in international policy arena in recent years. UNESCO has played a significant role in this regard. Of the various international conferences, the 5th International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) proposed a vision of adult learning which cuts across a variety of sectors and is firmly rooted in a framework of human development and social justice comprising elements such as democracy, critical citizenship, cultural diversity, social inclusion, human rights, peace and gender equality. The *Hamburg Declaration and the Agenda for the Future* reflected a strong commitment for promoting the right to education and learning and to the creation of a learning society. Taking place within the context of intensifying processes of globalization, CONFINTEA re-established the importance of adult education as an essential component of the education system and stressed the centrality of the adult learner and of learning as a lifelong process. It stressed the importance of quality training that would enable adult educators to acquire theoretical understanding, hone their practical abilities and improve the personal qualities needed to perform their roles effectively.

The second major initiative at the international level was the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) at which the commitment and resolve for investing in quality education for children as well as for adults was reiterated. UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report on Literacy (2006: 35) considers adult educators as key actors in the process of 'creation of rich and dynamic literate environments'.

While the traditional or conventional modes of training have been inadequate, the rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the advent of the internet, e-learning and virtual classrooms are now providing opportunities to ensure that adult educators continually update their knowledge and skills in an increasingly globalized knowledge society. Developing ICT-based distance education and e-learning provides opportunities for training adult education functionaries, both across geographical areas and to sections of the population hitherto unreached. It is for this reason that the initiative taken by the Group of Adult Education (GAE) at the Jawaharlal Nehru University to develop an e-learning programme to improve the overall quality of training of adult educators needs to be commended. Course 01 on Participatory Lifelong Learning and Information and Communication Technologies is a collective contribution by its writers to facilitate the professional development of adult education functionaries. While it is envisaged that in the next phase it would be converted into an e-learning programme, the present endeavor is to put together a course consisting primarily of print materials that would be offered initially as a mix of on line/off line/face-to-face modes.

Though keeping the open and distance learning (ODL) format in mind, there is a breaking away from the usual ODL approach by emphasizing the participatory approach in the development of Course 01. Bringing the learner center-stage is still not the hall-mark of the ODL system; while in developing Course 01, it is envisaged that the participatory approach would ensure a user-friendly and sustainable learning package. The learning package includes a blend of theory and practice and it is hoped that much of the learning would take place through activities.

### Course Design and Thematic Structure

**Course 01: Participatory Lifelong Learning and Information and Communication Technologies** deals with the themes of current significance in the development of concepts and processes in the field of adult and lifelong learning. It comprises fourteen units. These were written on the basis of the interests, expertise and experience of each of the contributing writers. Thematic structure of the course revolves around the concept of participatory approach to adult learning and its sequence develops from an introduction to prevailing scenario on literacy, policy issues, philosophical foundations to understanding the concept of community. From this juncture the course turns to developing the materials for adult learners to participatory approaches in the work of adult educators. Finally, the course highlights the importance of introducing information and communication technologies in the field of adult and lifelong learning.

Let us now look at the content brief of each unit. This will provide you with some foretaste of what you are going to receive while reading the content of Course 01.

### Content Briefs

**Unit 1: Global, Regional and National Scenario on Literacy** attempts to build a perspective on literacy by capturing some of the theoretical debates, as well as the international initiatives, particularly those of UNESCO, in influencing and shaping the discourse on literacy. The attempt here is to egg the PALDIN learner on to understand that there is need to go beyond the traditional definitions of literacy

and to appreciate its complex, interdisciplinary nature and its close link with development. While examining literacy statistics at the global, regional and national levels, the learner will need to question his/her understanding of the nature and meaning of literacy and to work a definition of literacy that would be relevant to his/her interest and background, field experience, and area of work.

**Unit 2: Policy on Adult And Lifelong Learning: International and National Perspectives** deals with the international and national perspectives of the policy on adult learning. It is the international policy discourse that has shaped the national policies on adult education in a large number of developing countries. While the international policy discourse has been progressive and has tended to evolve with the social, economic, political, technological changes that have taken place, at the national level there has been a knee-jerk response, as well as a lack of sustained and concerted effort to deal with the national problem of adult illiteracy. This has led to the marginalization of adult education programmes.

**Unit 3: Philosophical Background of Adult and Lifelong Learning** and **Unit 4: Philosophical Trends, Theories of Educational Intervention and Adult Learning** introduce the learner to an understanding of educational problems and issues in a broader framework. The underlying objective of these two units is to introduce the learner to the educational theories and to the contributions made by some of the great thinkers of the last century so that he/she can not only critically analyze educational theories but also relate to them by applying them in real life contexts. Unit 3 focuses on the meaning and importance of lifelong learning and then introduces the various philosophical traditions that have a bearing on adult education and lifelong learning. Unit 4 deals with the specific theoretical contributions of those thinkers/educationists who have significantly influenced adult education theory and practice. While capturing the essence of the work of Piaget, Dewey, Gramsci, Freire and their relevance to adult education theory, the contributions of Gandhi and of Tagore assume significance because of their relevance in the Indian context.

**Unit 5: Sociological Background of Adult Education** discusses the use of sociological theory and method in analysis of education with particular reference to adult and lifelong learning systems and processes. Keeping in mind re-orientation from psychology-dominated perspective to a more sociological view of adult learning, the unit deals with some of the main currents of thought in sociology that have led to better grasp of issues and concerns of adult education.

**Unit 6: Understanding the Community** focuses on the importance of community participation. One of the underlying principles behind developing PALDIN is that the thrust has to be learner-centered and context-specific. Likewise, the educational program needs to be owned by the community, or else it is not likely to meet with any measure of success. Unit 6 describes the different types of communities and stresses on first understanding the community in which one is working. Elaborating the processes of assessing community needs and mapping community assets, it highlights the power dynamics that are operative at the community level.

**Unit 7: Reading Material for Neo Literate and Semi-literate Adults** highlights the complexities of writing materials for neo-literate and semi-literate adults and focuses on building capacities of individuals and institutions in developing materials

that are gender-sensitive and relevant to the needs and interests of rural communities. The PALDIN learner gets in Unit 7 an opportunity to analyze existing material that is available so that he/she can develop a critical perspective on mainstream reading materials. While raising issues relating to the politics of language, the unit highlights certain principles that need to be taken into consideration in writing for adult readers.

**Unit 8: Participatory Research, Unit 9: Participatory Evaluation (PE), Unit 10: Participatory Training, Unit 11: Learning Environment of Participatory Training, and Unit 12: Participatory Training Methodology and Materials** are based on PRIA's useful training material in participatory approach to adult learning. PRIA is one of the pioneering institutions in the country that has systematically worked over the years on Participatory Research, Participatory Evaluation, and Participatory Training. The five units are therefore reflective of the accumulated knowledge base that PRIA has built on the basis of its field experiences as well as those of its network partners. The units spell out the steps involved in undertaking participatory work, whether in training, research, or evaluation.

**Unit 13: Role of ICTs in Education and Development: Potential, Pitfalls and Challenges** provides an overview that examines the meaning of ICTs, weighs the strengths and weaknesses of ICTs, examines some of the common myths that surround them, and highlights the lessons learnt on the use of ICTs to enhance learning. While the impact of globalization on adult education has not received the attention it deserves in the PALDIN units, Unit 13 focuses specifically on the role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and to their use in education, with particular reference to the developing countries.

**Unit 14: Use of ICTs in Literacy and Lifelong Learning** examines the use of ICTs in literacy and lifelong learning programmes. While discussing the current use of ICTs in literacy programs in a large number of E-9 countries, the unit gives specific attention to the use of ICTs in the Indian context and highlights the analysis of these experiences to delineate the role of ICTs in promoting literacy. Strategies are then spelt out if ICTs have to be used as a tool for achieving Literacy Decade Goals.

### **Expected Outcomes**

A perusal of the fourteen units will reveal that there are some gaps in the areas covered. Some of these include the political economy and economics of adult education, planning and management issues relating to adult education programmes, and the like. While it was envisaged that gender would be a cross-cutting issue, it is apparent that gender did not receive concerted attention from all the unit writers. Likewise, there is no inclusion of the changing development paradigm and its impact on adult education. However, despite the gaps, Course 01 has been put together. It would be field-tested and then modified and improved upon. In other words, the last word has not been written for this course. After the course has been put together in the light of feedback, the expected outcome of the course can be defined as providing a useful resource to adult educators' general awareness of current developments in adult learning.

