

# VOICES RISING

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GEO/ICAE

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## 1.- ICAE SEVENTH WORLD ASSEMBLY

Nairobi, Kenya.

By Marcela Mazzei  
ICAE



From January 17 to 19, 2007 the **ICAE Seventh World Assembly: "Adults' Right to Learn: Convergence, Solidarity and Action"** was successfully held at the Panafric Hotel, in Nairobi, Kenya.

3 days of plenary sessions, workshops, homage, elections, hard work, and meetings were attended by more than **300** participants, representatives from Africa, Asia, Latin America, Central America, the Caribbean, Europe, North America and the Arab Region. The event was officially opened on January 17th. at 8:30 am with the opening words of Paul Bélanger (ICAE President), Babacar Diop Buuba (ICAE Vicepresident for the African Region) and Celia Eccher, ICAE Secretary General.



There were two plenary sessions: "Revisiting ICAE's advocacy work within the global and regional contexts. State accountability vis-à-vis AE/Adult Learning" and the "Presentation and Debate on Cultural Translation" by Professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos from the Popular University of Social Movements, Portugal.

It is worth mentioning the **Controversy Table**: "Adult Education - culture or structure? or culture and structure? Where should the movement concentrate its focus- on embedding learning in the work of other social movements, or in a focus on structured learning? What risks and what possibilities lie with each strategy?" These and other questions were posed by facilitator Sergio Haddad and the audience, to the panelists: Maria Khan (ASPBAE Secretary General), Alan Tuckett

(NIACE Director), Pedro Pontual (CEAAL President), Sturla Bjerkaker (VOFO Secretary General) and Jennifer Chiwela (PAF Executive Director).



Twelve thematic workshops were held on January 17 and 18:

1. Addressing Stigma and Sexuality: Challenges for Adult Education amidst the HIV Pandemic
2. Environment, Ecology and Sustainable Development
3. Full and Active Citizenship and Adult Education: the Contribution of AE to Increasing Citizens' Participation in Governance and Democratization
4. Migration and Cultural Diversity
5. Adult Literacy for Empowerment: Defining the policy agenda for ICAE
6. Using international agreements to promote better social policies (Social Watch)
7. Adult Education and Solidarity Economy / Social Economy
8. Conflict Resolutions, Peace and Human Rights
9. Adult Learners' Movement and Mobilization
10. Adult Education:
11. Organization and Financing
12. Gender, Poverty and Education (GEO/GCAP-Feminist Task Force)

Throughout these two intense days of discussions and presentations, participants mutually enriched, sharing visions, expectations and challenges and elaborated recommendations for ICAE 2007 – 2010 Strategic Plan.

## ICAE GENERAL ASSEMBLY



The General Assembly took place on January 19, and new members of the Executive Council were elected:

**President:** Paul Bélanger

**Treasurer:** Alan Tuckett

### **Vicepresidents:**

Africa: Babacar Diop Buuba

Latin America: Pedro Pontual

Asia: Maria Khan

Caribbean: Kay Anderson

Europe: Heribert Hinzen

North America: Susan Nielsen

Arab Region: Aicha Barki

### **Ordinary Members:**

Sara Longwe

Sergio Haddad

Sturla Bjerkaker



Soon, we will be sharing with you a detailed report of the Assembly which will be put up in ICAE website: [www.icae.org.uy](http://www.icae.org.uy)

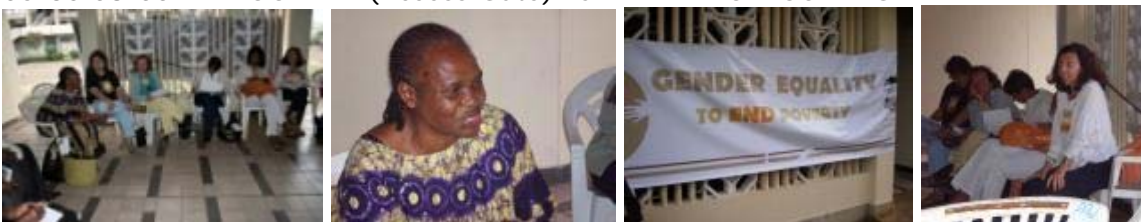
ICAE activities continued after its World Assembly, within the framework of **VII World Social Forum** that was held from January 20-25 at the Moi International Sports Center Kasarani, Nairobi, Kenya.

4 workshops were organized:

**Jan 21 IS LITERACY WORK RELEVANT TO THE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS?**  
08.30-11AM. 18 IN-UPPER 'GATE 18



**Jan 21 GENDER, POVERTY AND EDUCATION: AN INTERSECTIONALITY PERSPECTIVE**  
05:30 08:00 PM ROOM N` (Access Gate): C-2 AREA: OPPOSITE GATE 7



**Jan 23 ADULT LEARNERS' MOVEMENT AND MOBILISATION**  
08.30-11.00 AM. 18 IN-UPPER GATE 18



**Jan 23 LEARNING AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**  
05.30 08.00 PM B4 Opposite gate 12



This year the WSF process moved from “Thematic Terrains” to “Objectives for Action”. The intention was to provide visibility and strengthen struggles, actions and alternatives. The fourth day of the forum was an opportunity for social movements to present their proposals for action that had been debated during the first three days of the Forum. The proposals for action derived from the discussions and reflections held during the self-organized activities, and were articulated by the different organizations, campaigns, struggles and alternatives.

The 4<sup>th</sup>. day of World Social Forum (January 24) was divided in 3 parts:  
In the morning, with two periods for meetings and self-organized assemblies

In the afternoon, 21 huge assemblies for struggle, alternatives and actions, took place.

Water  
National /International Institutions and Democracy  
Peace / war  
Housing  
Women’s struggles  
Dignity/human being diversity / discriminations  
Human Rights  
Youth  
Food sovereignty/land reform  
Labour  
Education  
Environment and energy  
Health  
Knowledge / Information / communication  
Debt  
Migrations  
Free Trade  
Culture  
Transnational Corporations  
Children  
Alternative economies

**We enclose the Proposal for Action on the issue of EDUCATION:**

## **2.- PROPOSAL FOR ACTION - RIGHT TO LEARN**

**Because** the right to learn is a fundamental right, a prerequisite for all the other rights,  
**Because** all women and men have the right and responsibility to empower themselves, the right to become creative citizens,  
**Because** all our struggles for gender justice, for health for all, against all forms of discrimination including homophobia and racism, for sustainable development, for the rights of migrant and displaced populations will only succeed through the creativity and solidarity of each and all women and men, which is a lifelong learning challenge,  
**Because** the MDGs and the previous commitments made during the UN conferences and summits in the nineties, could not be attained without the implementation of the universal right to learn,  
**Because** the voice of students and adult learners, and of their movements need to be heard,  
**Because** we know that the other possible world that we are building through all our movements, requires informed active citizenship,

**Because** privatization of education runs counter to the exercise of the universal right to education; neither health, nor education are commodities in a free market,

All the education movements need to work together and advocate, with all the social movements, for the full exercise of our right to education:

- Right of children to universal free compulsory primary education and secondary education, for quality education, hence for the continuing education of teachers.
- Rights of young and adults to exercise their entitlement to basic education and to pursue their right to meaningful learning throughout their life
- Right of people to request post secondary and university system meeting universal objectives of higher education, the cultural, social and economic requirements of societies and the aspirations of their population.

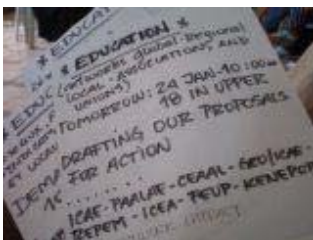
**We** need to reinforce our networks as spaces for dialogue between different models of education and on the role of education for human solidarity.

**We** request the six EFA goals to be implemented insisting on quality education for all.

**We** invite all the social movements and the various education movements to join and enlarge the Global Campaign for Education and its mobilizing activities (The Global Action Week in April; joining the international day of mobilization of the WSF in January 2008; the general assembly of the GCE in January 2008), the World EFA advocacy campaign for the realization of EFA commitments, the World Education Forum (its proposal for a special mobilization on the third week of November promoting alternatives to neo liberal policies and for free education software) and ICAE in the preparation of CONFINTEA VI.

**Adopted by:**

- ACAA EDUCATIVA
- ANAFA
- ANCEFA
- Association Nationale A Defense Des Droits De L'Enfant (Argelle)
- BEAE / ANCEFA
- BIONIC S.H.G. KENYA
- CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF MOZAMBIQUE
- CEFAN / ANCEFA
- CONSEJO DE EDUCACION DE ADULTOS DE AMERICA LATINA/ CEAL
- DVV INTERNATIONAL
- Education International
- ENET PHILIPPINES
- FEDERACION ESPANOLA DE UNIVERSIDADES POPULARES / FEUP
- FLC-GCIL
- GROUPE FRANCAIS D'EDUCATION NOUVELLE (GFEN)
- ICAE
- ICAE/GEO
- INSTITUTO PAULO FREIRE
- KALA/OAIC
- KENYA ADULT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
- NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ADULT CONTUINING EDUCATION ENGLAND AND WALES / NIACE
- NETWORK OF HIV POSITIVE TEACHERS KENYA
- PANAFRICAN ASSOCIATION FOR LITERACY AND ADULT EDUCATION / PAALAE
- REPEM - Red de Educación Popular Entre Mujeres de America Latina y el Caribe
- ROSEN / NIGER
- SOCIAL MINISTRY (KENYA)
- UGANDA WORKERS' EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (UWEA)
- Universidade Popular Dos Movimentos Sociais (UPMS)
- URBAN POPULAR UNIVERSITY
- WORLD EDUCATION FORUM
- ZANEC – ZAMBIA



Congratulations to ICAE on a wonderful World Assembly. It was specially moving for me to be back in Africa having organized the first World Assembly some 30 years earlier in Tanzania. It was

wonderful to see so many delegates from Africa, Asia and Latin America. The participatory process of the General Assembly worked very well. The keynote by Boaventura de Sousa Santos was brilliant and the tribute to Mwalimu Nyerere by hon Nicolas Kuhanga fantastic. The panel discussion on possible directions for adult education on the first day facilitated by Sergio Haddad was one of the best such discussions I have heard.

**Budd Hall**, Office of Community-Based Research, University of Victoria, Canada

### **3.- REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL: FROM OCHO RIOS TO NAIROBI TIME OF RENEWAL**



#### **1. Historical context. ICAE in the global scenario**

Dear friends,

I would like, first of all, to express my happiness because the waves of change and renovation have allowed us to reach this moment, a moment for evaluation, for implementation and for celebration. We want to celebrate, above all, the fact that we are completing a phase in the life of ICAE that has given us a base, allowing us to project ourselves with strength, implementing actions in the global arena. These are actions that contribute towards the exercise of the right to education and other rights for an increasing number of people and also towards the achievement of another possible world, a dream that we can only reach if we start building it now and with the efforts of each and every one.

We are here today, old and new members of ICAE, following what Jeannine Anderson said during the virtual seminar in preparation for this Assembly: "it is important for a network to have a 'network memory' analogous to the 'institutional memories' of structured organizations. The history of ICAE is important to its local members; that is to say, the local histories of ICAE in the various versions that have played out in different regions and different member organizations. The 'network memory' should help a network to maintain its identity through thick and thin, and it should also set limits on the variation that might otherwise occur around program, agenda, policies, public image, and even internal structure. In organizations it is understood that the 'institutional memory' is not written in books or kept in files, but rather it is deposited in the elders of the tribe".

We can say today that the will to change expressed in Manila is becoming a reality in spite of the various obstacles and that the proposals, dreams and wishes manifested in Ocho Rios have started to materialise. One of those dreams, and not a minor one, is that today we open this Assembly in three languages. This is a concrete example of the respect for differences that allows us, among other things, to give the opportunity for equal participation to the members, at least in three languages.

These five years have been a time of constant, tenacious and persistent struggle. During this period a group of members supported us from the very beginning, and it is very good to say that the number has increased over time.

We must remember that when this process of change started in ICAE two key events marked the world context and continued to influence throughout the period:

One of these events is of a positive character and it is the celebration of the first World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre, announcing to the world that "Another World is Possible" and it is not the one proposed by Davos. Let's recall that the WSF is being organised parallel to the Economic Forum from

Davos in order to offer alternatives to the economic neoliberal model that that annual meeting stands for.

The other event, which highlights the horror humanity is capable of, is the 11 of September and all its political consequences at the global level.

Let's also remember that at this moment the immobilisation of social movements and progressive organisations was such that it was not clear whether a second edition of the WSF was going to be possible. The turning point that showed the capacity of the movements to react to this immobilisation was the March for Peace from Peruggia to Assisi, which was a complete success.

Following this event came what we all know, the wars, the World March for Peace proposed at the European Social Forum and called upon by the WSF, the continuation of armed conflicts throughout the world.

In these five years poverty has continued and so have the HIV/Aids pandemic, the displacement of entire populations due to armed conflicts, migrations, illiteracy.

The end of the cycle of UN social conferences and summits, the weakening of the world body and the proposals for reform currently under implementation also marked the period.

The emergence of global forms of resistance to the current dominant model is one of the facts determining our work. The strengthening of global social movements, old and new, has found ICAE in this phase of renewal and we can say that we have been actively involved in this path of convergences and alliances contributing with a perspective that incorporates several approaches, from adult education, gender, non-discrimination, citizenship building, the struggle for the eradication of poverty and for a world of Peace with sustainable development.

## 2. Institutional Renewal

The proposal for the renewal of ICAE started to be implemented within the mentioned external context and with an internal one that had basically no administrative support, no management and accounting procedures and no staff.

This demanded an enormous amount of energy and multiple efforts of organisation once the office was moved to Montevideo. One of the first measures was to count with an auditing that provided us a reasonably clarified basis for our work.

Moving the Secretariat to Montevideo demanded extra efforts and expenses. I must recognise here the work done by Ellen Permatto in closing down the office in Toronto. Setting up the office in Montevideo allowed for considerable savings and for the constitution of a working team, small and efficient, and above all, **committed to ICAE**. This represented a fundamental change for the development possibilities of a network and above all for its renewal. It was also in line with a political trend of moving the headquarters of global networks to the South.

The Finance Commission has been a permanent mechanism for transparency and for support of this new administration. It must be said that at the beginning very few believed in its feasibility.

Setting from the start the objective of achieving financial support was a key decision. It was also key to count with the support of REPEM, NIACE, SIDA and NORAD. In this respect it is important to be absolutely clear and recall the years when the staff received only half salary and there were even some people who performed their tasks without being paid.

We have arrived to this Assembly having done a slow but uninterrupted work; generating credibility among donors, something that does not happen overnight but as a result of successive activities like

for example the IALLA, first global course for educators, and of presenting the corresponding narrative and financial reports, in order and transparent.

The financial difficulties are still there but in these five years we have been able to demonstrate two basic things:

1. That with collective action it is possible to move forward towards the objective of having a solid financial base, appropriate for the strategic plan. We have not reached the goal yet but we have certainly made important progress.
2. That it was possible to position ICAE at the international level in spite of the scarce resources through solidarity and alliances with networks and social movements.

During these years ICAE has consciously looked for a position as a global role-player in the advocacy for human rights and especially for the right to education.

This was not done just in any way; rather, we explicitly stopped using that unfortunate sentence of being “the voice of the voiceless” and worked towards the construction of real respect for differences. Because as Rigoberta Menchu has said, we do have the voice, what we need is to be heard.

This constitutes an important emphasis in the renewal of ICAE, in its way of operating in the global arena and in how it has developed its capacity to respond fast and efficiently to the global challenges as in the case for the advocacy for CONFINTEA V.

We started monitoring CONFINTEA V + 6 through the preparation of the “ICAE Report”. This was the only published report presented at the conference. It was done collectively by a team formed by researchers from all regions who defined indicators by consensus. It is not just a written report for the conference. It was used in the various countries where the research was undertaken for the purpose of local advocacy. In this way, the follow-up on education in relation to the several UN conferences done by GEO for many years was taken up again.

It is within this line of work that we have contributed to the construction of the WSF, working on its International Council and on various commissions, and to GCAP, coordinating the Feminist Task Force and being part of its International Facilitation Team.

It is important to highlight also our active participation in the cycle of UN social conferences, in particular the Conference Against Racism, CONFINTEA V + 6, the process of Financing for Development (FFD) and in the various advocacy and monitoring events in relation to the MDGs.

ICAE is taking up again its participation at UNESCO and it has continued to exercise influence to guarantee the visibility of the right to education of adults in the global campaigns for the right to education, for the eradication of poverty and for the reform and democratisation of the United Nations.

### **3. Policies and strategies**

What can be more pertinent to talk about policies and strategies than to quote Paulo Freire, ten years after his death, with that famous phrase in which he says **learn the word to read the world?**

It is also important to highlight that the development of policies and strategies during these five years has been guided by the struggle for the right to education throughout life, not just any type of education but one that contributes to eradicate poverty, to fight against racism, homophobia, xenophobia and any other form of discrimination; an education that allows us to recognise the richness that lie in the differences; that allows us to understand and support cultural translation as Boaventura de Sousa Santos has said; that contributes towards the strengthening of social movements and of the full and active exercise of citizenship.

We have worked actively in the building up of alliances with social movements, with global and regional networks and we have promoted at all times the coming together of organizations and networks working in the field of education.

These processes are slow and difficult and demand high levels of patience testing in many occasions our ability to deal with frustration. But the balance is positive and we are reaching, especially with this Assembly, a new stage in terms of challenges and struggles. We reach this stage with an increased support and with the recognition of ICAE by the most important spaces of global civil society.

A pending task for the next period is to make a call, through ICAE, for a global alliance for the right to education for all. We are already challenging our regional and national members to become the engines of this initiative.

#### **4. Actions**

Looking back at the minutes from Ocho Rios we can say that the main proposals were implemented, according to the availability of funds. Some of them were:

- The participation in processes of decision making on the side of civil society, promoting creative and democratic governance.
- We have been involved on various fronts in this respect but the work at the WSF during this five years not only demonstrates the possibility for developing a space for learning and building-up of alliances but it has also been a wonderful exercise for the recognition of diversities and it implied a great effort of understanding and translation among global networks, movements and other organisations.
- There was participation at the events of the WSF with panels that took up again several of the themes proposed at Ocho Rios such as Education for non-Discrimination, Education and HIV/AIDS, as well as intersectionality of the agendas and recognition of multiple identities as an essential component for understanding an inclusive education proposal. This is an area that was mainly worked by GEO.
- The process of aggregation with networks, organizations and movements within the WSF around the themes of the Right to Education, Water and Health.
- The follow-up to several conferences including the Conference Against Racism, the MDGs and of course CONFINTEA V with the monitoring done first by GEO and later by the whole of ICAE that culminates with the ICAE Report already mentioned.
- The participation of ICAE in the "Chapter on Transparency and Accountability" of the international advocacy organisations, IANGO, and in the internal debate process in relation to this issue suggested first at the Executive Council and now at the Assembly for its consideration.
- Participation at Civil Society Forums such as the ones from AWID and CIVICUS, among others.
- Participation at Learning Festivals, among them the ones in Norway (Oslo) and the one in Spain.
- Participation in GCAP and in the Global Campaign for Education.
- Participation and coordination of a panel at the V Iberoamerican and Global Environment Meeting in Joinville, Brazil, and in the First Experts Meeting on Environmental Education of the Plata Basin in Foz de Iguazu, Brazil.
- Membership in the technical secretariat of the University of Social Movements.
- Participation at the UNESCO Consultations with NGOs about EFA.
- And today we are part again of the preparatory commission towards CONFINTEA VI
- We have not only monitored the agreements and worked for their implementation; we have also promoted analysis on advocacy and have published it under the title "Pause for thought. Lessons learnt and ways forward for women's human rights advocacy". This publication, prepared by GEO together with REPEM at the end of the control year of the MDGs, has lead the way in the discussions currently taking place.
- With respect to information technology we can say today that we finally have –and for the first time in the history of ICAE- a web page that is being updated in three languages; we are working actively to improve its position. In two years the number of entries has increased by 50%.

- The usefulness of the virtual seminars is a given fact. Several of them have been organised around a variety of themes and as consultation mechanism with very high levels of participation.
- It is also important to mention the weekly electronic bulletin, Voices Rising, which is receiving increased recognition.

ICAE's actions were not limited to the proposals of Ocho Rios; new proposals started emerging and among them the one with the highest significance for its commitment with the renewal of the leadership at the global, regional and local levels has been IALLA, organised for two consecutive years.

There were other proposals that came out of Ocho Rios which were not possible to implement, basically due to the lack of financial support.

The preparatory process towards this Assembly started at the end of 2005 and it led to an increase in the commitment and participation of the regions and of the national members. Various meetings led by several regions bear witness to this process.

The themes of the Assembly were defined at the virtual seminar in May with participation of all members. In June took place the Montevideo Seminar that brought together a select group of educators from diverse regions and its results contributed towards the preparatory process.

The papers presented at the Assembly were included in a special issue of Convergence published for this occasion. It is very pertinent to say here that the continuity of Convergence might seem like a miracle. But those of us who know that the Three Wise Men are the parents can affirm that it is not a miracle but the direct result of the continuous support from NIACE and the editors as well as from the invited editors, all of them volunteers.

We face the next stage of ICAE with a multiplicity of inputs from this Assembly, inputs that come from collective efforts, with national, regional and global expressions and which give us the possibility to define the orientation for the next years as a result of what has been accumulated by participants. During this phase we worked closely with several global networks with which we have coordinated tasks and collaborated in various levels and they also participated at the Assembly, such as Social Watch, Action Aid, Civicus, "La Tribuna de las Mujeres".

## **5. Looking forward**

We are clearly coming to the end of a phase that has generated multiple possibilities for the future of ICAE. This Assembly will be a milestone in the process of change. We are ready to renew our energies and define the ways in which we will put into action the proposals coming from the commissions.

This is the moment to define the lines of action for the next period and also the commitments for the densification of this global network. This must be done on the basis of a mode of work and thinking based on networks, that will empower us and allow us to contribute, from the field of education, towards the construction of another possible world with social justice.

## **6. Acknowledgements**

Each time we think in acknowledgements we believe it will be difficult to include them due to the eternal fear of forgetting someone unjustly. But it is also unjust not to publicly thank some of the member networks and organisations that have given us their support and solidarity throughout this period. Therefore, and at the risk of forgetting some, I want to thank firstly all the ICAE member organisations, especially:

- REPEM
- NIACE
- VOFO
- UIL

- DVV
- The School Buskerud
- Swedish National Council of Adult Education
- AONTAS

Finally, it is also with great satisfaction that I can say after 16 years that this management work was done with fluent communication and coordination with the compañero President Paul. I think that we have both known to laugh and work together and also to be very patient with each other. Thank you very much

Celita Eccher

Montevideo, January 2007

#### 4.- VII WORLD SOCIAL FORUM: NAIROBI JANUARY 20 - 25 2007

By Fanny Gomez  
President  
REPEM

The VII World Social Forum was launched on January 20th. with a rally that ended up in Uhuru Park in Nairobi, capital of Kenya, under the slogan: "Peoples' struggles, peoples' alternatives: Another World is possible", where Kenyan activists said: *"We are telling the world, and particularly the rich people in America and in other parts, that instead of fighting and buying arms, they could provide food, and water, clean water for women from the villages and even from the city outskirts"* and *"World Social Forum intends to give voice to the voiceless and to tell the people in Switzerland that this is the world we want to build, a world that has to be there, another world is possible. A world where social justice, equality and rights are exercised"*. The Forum took place just before the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.



Based on the usual consultation carried out for this Forum in June and August 2006, among organizations and people interested in the forum, 9 objectives were identified and the activities proposed by the organizations that participated in WSF, were organized based on them:

1. Building a world of peace, justice, ethics and respect for diverse spiritualities
2. Liberating the world from the domination of multinational and financial capital
3. Ensuring universal and sustainable access to the common goods of humanity
4. Democratizing knowledge and information
5. Ensuring dignity, defending diversity, guaranteeing gender equality and eliminating all forms of discrimination
6. Guaranteeing economic, social and cultural rights, especially the rights to food, healthcare, education, housing, employment and decent work
7. Building a world order based on sovereignty, self-determination and rights of the peoples
8. Constructing a people-centered and sustainable economy

9. Building real democratic political structures and institutions with people's participation on decisions and control of public affairs and resources

This Forum introduced an important novelty: while the first three days were devoted to activities self-organized by several participating organizations, the fourth day was devoted to 21 assemblies or forums that gathered articulations, struggles, coalitions, convergences, campaigns and common agendas, to agree on a "Proposal for Action" on 21 issues for the World Mobilization Days to be held in January 2008 and others throughout this year, where the World Social Forum will not take place as such.

Quoting Cándido Gzybowski, another cofounder of the Forum, who is part of the Brazilian Secretariat: *"The great strength of the World Social Forum lies on its innovative nature. It is an initiative from the emerging world civil society that aims at valuing struggles and citizens' participation in different societies, and to give a world dimension to the proposals deriving thereof"*.

**What have we attained in Nairobi?, what has been the good of another World Social Forum?**

Now that World Social Forum 2007 has ended, it is a good time to talk about some of the results:

. The Forum has managed to gather, for the seventh time, different social movements around the world, in search of a better world, and this has to be celebrated once more. The 3 first Forums, in 2001, 2002 and 2003 took place in Porto Alegre; in 2004 it moved to the city of Mumbai, in India; in 2005 it went back to Porto Alegre and in 2006 a Polycentric Forum was held in three different places: Caracas (Venezuela), Karachi (Pakistan) and Bamako (Mali).

. It was very important to make it in Nairobi. In an interview for local newspaper "La Jornada", Brazilian Chico Whitaker, one of the cofounders of the WSF, said that taking WSF to Africa had been a great victory for all because "many obstacles and resistances had been overcome", thus, organizers felt it "very gratifying". He admitted that the seventh forum had had some deficiencies and flaws but he added that everybody had to learn from them for the future; however, none of those flaws can cloud the main achievements of this event, particularly, the most important one which was the involvement of African countries in collective actions of the world struggle against the neoliberal globalization. "The African continent will start to live new experiences after this event on account of the relationships they forged here"

. Some 1.200 activities took place throughout those six days and great personalities such as Nobel Prize winners, Desmond Tutu, Shirin Ebadi and Wangari Mathai, the former French First Lady, Danielle Mitterrand and Mary Robinson.

. Another achievement was the attendance. How many people attended? The official figure has not been confirmed yet. While some people talk about 10 to 15 thousands, others say 70 thousands. But the figure is not so important, though it might reflect the difficulty or the lack of interest of several organizations in ensuring attendance to this kind of events. The reasons owe to economic difficulties but also to the fact that the possible actual results of the Forum are questioned.

. The self-organized activities of the WSF and those co-organized by the people from the African organizing committee, ended after several presentations that revealed a common or similar vision of the present situation, across the world: the neoliberal capitalism leads not only to the worst injustices known by humankind, but also to the destruction of life on the planet. However, the Forum, as such, cannot take specific initiatives to revert this situation.

. Despite the good objectives of the Forum, and in spite of the fact that it was developed in a continent with big problems and in a city that has thousands of poor people and one of the biggest "misery belts" in Africa, the attendance of "poor people from Nairobi" has been minimum. Why? Because of the registration fee (for Africans, 7 dollars is equivalent to a weekly wage), the food and

the distance. Has World Social Forum left aside the poor people ...? Those were the questions heard in the Forum, posed by people from Nairobi.

.. Likewise, the great variety of languages, music, colors, smells, flyers, slogans (sometimes opposing) and faces that increase a sense of confusion but, at the same time, represent a hopeful ode to life and provide visibility to struggles and alternative actions.

. However, the WSF in Nairobi has been much more than a huge African party. During those 5 days, vital issues were dealt with such as power, not only patriarchal power that subordinates and turns women's contribution to society, invisible, taking over their bodies so that they cannot make decisions on important aspects such as reproduction and sexual pleasure ... but also the power of arms that provokes stupid wars or the power of great economic corporations that puts hurdles to food sovereignty, fair and equitable trade, and policies for the promotion of economic justice.

. The 90 proposals for main actions arising from the 21 assemblies/forums held on the 4<sup>th</sup>. day, which are starting to be disseminated through the internet, were neither discussed nor approved by the Forum as an entity. They do not constitute either a Plan of Action of the World Social Forum, said Chico Whitaker, and added: In view of the new approved procedure, it was agreed that they would apply only to those who proposed them, and those organizations have to put them in force in the coming months.

### **Some impressions on the everyday aspects of the Forum**

Around Kasarani Stadium, where World Social Forum was held, people become aware of the "organized chaos" that represents this Forum. Every day we saw people rallying around the stadium, among handicrafts, Indian saris, African traditional customs, water, fruits, food, slogans, proposals, music from different places and dances.

After a rally for the rights of the adivasi population in India, came another rally "against fundamentalisms" where we, women, were the protagonists, who also claimed the right to take our own decisions in relation to our body and our sexual and reproductive rights. There is a prevailing "market" of ideas, concepts, and alternative experiences, from the most radical ones to the most moderate and surprisingly conservative ones. As in any big market, you will find stands from social movements, cooperation agencies, churches, religious communities and even pro-life groups.

The large schedule of activities showed the themes of the workshops, informing whether there will be interpretation or not, excluding some people from participating in these discussions. Some workshops had well-known panelists and took place in big spaces, while anonymous people told their own experiences in small spaces.

If you crossed the city when you went or returned from the stadium, you could see many people coming and going on the streets and we asked ourselves: Do these people know that the Forum is taking place? And do the people from Kibera, one of the biggest and more densely populated popular neighborhoods from Nairobi, where 1.000.000 people live without access to basic social services nor drainage (they barely have water) know about this? This daily coming and going from and to the stadium, helped us see the great disparities of this city, symbolic of the disparities we see in our world today. Marginal areas lying next to huge and luxurious buildings, hotels and houses. This concern was accompanied by a feeling of hope in the small workshops where people from different races, countries and speaking different languages shared experiences, concerns and presented alternative actions to problems affecting humankind; small workshops where people who agreed and disagreed, shared the feeling of not being alone in the construction of another world that is not only possible, but necessary.

A violent incident took place when a group of children, rushed into the Moi International Sports Center, around the stadium, and into the food stands of the five-star hotels: Norfolk, Windsor Golf and Country Club that had inexplicably set there (while most stands were run by modest suppliers)

and started to scream "we want food", running towards the tables making participants who were having lunch run away while waiters chased them out of the stands.

What is left is the hope and the energy of the social movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the solidarity of people from different places, and the wish to build a more humane world jointly with people who have so different ideologies, religions, spiritualities, cultures and social status.

### **And where was REPEM?**

Before World Social Forum, the World Assembly of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) was held from January 17-19: Adults' Right to Learn: Convergence, Solidarity and Action. During the Assembly different workshops took place where REPEM participated as an ICAE member and contributed to the organization of some workshops:

\* Full and Active Citizenship and Adult Education: the Contribution of AE to Increasing Citizens' Participation in Governance and Democratization? With the participation of Ximena Machicao, General Coordinator of REPEM

. . Adult Education and Solidarity Economy / Social Economy, coordinated by Iliana Pereira  
. Conflict Resolutions, Peace and Human Rights, coordinated by Fanny Gómez.

Workshop debates took place on issues such as equality, poverty eradication, gender justice, identification of needs and particular contributions of indigenous peoples, lesbians and gays, bisexual and transgender people, people with disabilities, migrants, women, youth, ethnic minorities, among other historically disadvantaged groups, highlighting the specific contribution of Adult Education / Adult Learning in overcoming various forms of discrimination.

Based on discussions and debates, each workshop elaborated a series of recommendations that shall be used as input for the future ICAE Strategic Plan, and they will be soon published in ICAE website. Back to back, the **Feminist Dialogues** took place and Ximena Machicao attended them. More detailed information can be obtained from the website of Articulación Feminista Marcosur on documents that were discussed within the framework of these Dialogues as a "Criticism to Democracy", "An interactive space for feminists", "The feminist Charter of Principles for the African feminists", among others, which give a clear idea of the debates carried out.

During the Forum, we participated mainly in 3 thematic spaces/terrains:

- a) **Education**, we participated in the workshops organized by ICAE and, in articulation with the World Education Forum, we proposed the Plan of Action for 2008 and,
- b) **Alternative Economy**, its Plan of Action for 2008 was debated with Ripes.
- c) **Women's struggles**, these documents shall be soon published in LA RED VA.

## **5.- DECLARATION DE REMERCIEMENT DES EDUCATEURS AFRICAINS A ICAE**

Le mouvement africain des éducateurs d'adultes organisés au sein de la PAALAE, remercie le Conseil International d'Education des Adultes (ICAE), d'avoir choisi en ce début du troisième millénaire, de célébrer son trentième anniversaire dans le Continent qui l'a vu naître.

Le choix est significatif à plus d'un titre. Notre continent regroupe à lui tout seul, plus de la moitié des 850 000 000 d'analphabètes recensés dans le monde. Plus de la moitié des pays africains risquent de ne pas atteindre les objectifs du millénaire et de l'éducation pour tous en 2015. En matière de santé, les populations africaines restent principalement victimes du paludisme et du VIH/SIDA.

Malgré les difficultés multiples, les populations pauvres et les militants du développement à la base ne cessent rendre des initiatives endogènes hardies de lutte contre la pauvreté, l'analphabétisme et l'ignorance.

Le choix de Nairobi, comme celui de Dakar sur l'éducation six ans auparavant, prouve l'intérêt que le secteur mondial de l'éducation attache au développement de l'Afrique. C'est là un défi que nous devons relever.

Berceau de l'humanité et donc des civilisations, mais aussi de l'ICAE, l'Afrique a historiquement participé à la constitution des autres continents.

Avec l'Europe, la colonisation a laissé place à une coopération entre les peuples et nous continuons la lutte pour que cette coopération soit équitable.

Avec l'Amérique Latine, le Pacifique et les Caraïbes, la population d'origine africaine est à la base d'un développement culturel extraordinaire. Nous travaillons avec la diaspora africaine de cette région, pour la renaissance de notre continent.

L'Amérique du Nord a fini d'être un continent de formation de nos élites, d'accueil de nos intellectuels et autres émigrés, et nos associations respectives ont tissé un réseautage fécond dans le sens de leur développement organisationnel.

L'Asie est l'alliée historique de l'Afrique dans le Tiers Monde et dans le Mouvement des Non-Alignés. Ce continent, berceau des grandes religions monothéistes, accueille chaque année des milliers de pèlerins africains, toutes religions confondues.

Les populations autochtones d'Australie partagent avec celles de l'Afrique, les mêmes difficultés, victimes des mêmes préjugés.

L'Afrique est donc naturellement au coeur de toute initiative de développement au service de l'homme. A ce titre, nous lançons un appel solennel à ICAE afin de :

- préparer adéquatement le CONFINTEA VI en organisant six mois avant cette rencontre, une réunion d'harmonisation des positions africaines afin de permettre à la Région Afrique d'y participer efficacement,
- s'engager dans la promotion du dialogue et de la culture de la paix à travers le monde pour moins de guerre et de violence entre les peuples,
- travailler à la promotion des nouvelles technologies dans l'objectif de supprimer la fracture numérique entre le Nord et le Sud.

Un grand patriote africain, Thomas Sankara disait que l'Afrique ne doit jamais laisser l'initiative entre les mains de ses ennemis d'hier et d'aujourd'hui. Forts de cela, nous devons être proactifs et faire une lecture lucide de notre environnement afin de prendre une position adaptée au contexte du moment.

Nous prenons un engagement ferme, en tant que citoyens africains, de participer activement au mouvement de la renaissance africaine dont l'éducation des adultes constitue l'épine dorsale.

Nairobi, le 19 janvier 2007

## **6.- GCAP Message**

Viva Foro Social Mundial Viva!  
Viva Foro Social Mundial in África Viva!

Habari Mzuri Sana  
Friends, comrades, amigas, amigos, rafiki,

We live in a world that is not poor. It's a world diverse and rich in human and natural resources, in knowledge, in culture, in creativity. There is enough to provide for the well-being for human beings in our common planet. In spite of that, there is increasing injustice and inequality. The poverty resulting in this is a violation of human rights in a massive scale.

We are bombarded with impossible projects and programs that are supposed to lead to the eradication of poverty. But in fact, the major threat to our well-being is not poverty. It is the concentration of wealth and the perpetual search for profits.

Those leading this deception want us to believe that if they privatize water, land, knowledge, education, health, if they put patents even on living cells and crops, economic growth will expand and the benefits of capitalism will spread to everyone.

We are presented with the promise that market lead economic growth is the response to the difficulties millions face around the world.

Sio sawa sawa.

Economic growth is not sustainable. The only thing sustainable is solidarity. It's caring for each other, it's taking responsibility for what we consume knowing that our lifestyles impact on the conditions of millions around the world, and on future generations.

The only societies that are sustainable are those that guarantee the exercise of the rights to their populations in their full diversity, without discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, abilities, HIV status, language, caste or any other condition; societies that guarantee the right to education and learning to all girls and boys and men and women throughout life.

Sustainable are societies that do not embark on war and do not force others to embark on war. And sustainable are societies that are hospitable, that welcome the stranger even without knowing their name or language but rejoicing in the richness and experience that every human being brings with her, with him, wherever they go, even if they arrive in handcrafted boats that cross the Mediterranean.

So yes, there is another possible world but it is not a dream for the future. It is happening. We see it; we experience it in the practices of grassroots, in women's organizing, in social movements. GCAP is part of this movement and committed to strengthen it. This year it will unite again under the White Band symbol. We will be out in force and on the streets demanding action on extreme poverty and inequality. We will come together for days of global action: on March 8<sup>th</sup>, International Women's Day, June for the G8 meeting in Germany, 07.07.07., date for the midterm review of the MDGs, around UN General Assembly in September, all building up to the Global White Bay Day 2007, October 17<sup>th</sup>, International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

We call for gender equality to end poverty.  
We call for an economy at the service of human beings.

Because, another world is not only possible---it is absolutely necessary and it is happening.

Viva Foro Social Mundial, viva!  
Asante sana.  
Gracias.

Nairobi, 20 January 2007

Photo: Claudia Ferreira – Marcela Mazzei

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**PLEASE TAKE NOTE**

One of the objectives of Voices Rising, the on line magazine from ICAE (International Council for Adult Education) is to democratize the access to information. Although Voices Rising believes that the information it receives is of trustable sources and before publishing it measures are taken to ensure that it is reliable, the possibility is always there that we can make a mistake or that we can be surprised by ill intentions. Therefore, and with the aim of protecting the interests of all our subscribers and readers, VOICES RISING recommends that you take all necessary precautions before taking significant decision in relation to the published information.

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