

## Issue No. 39, October 16, 2013

TO SUPPORT  [CLICK HERE](#)

### In This Issue:

- **WIA NEEDS YOU!**
- **ADULT EDUCATION & LITERACY: Foundation for Lifelong Learning**
- **NEW IN HEALTH LITERACY**
- **ALSO WORTHY OF NOTE**



### WIA NEEDS YOU!

The National Skills Coalition (coordinator of the Campaign to Invest in the American Workforce, of which CAAL is a member) has prepared a letter to Senators Harkin, Casey, Murray, Alexander, and Isakson about the importance of reauthorizing and reforming the Workforce Investment Act in the current Congress. Because of how vital WIA is to adult education, CAAL is working with NSC to encourage any organization that appreciates the need for WIA to sign onto this letter. To view the letter and/or add your organization as a signatory (no later than October 25th), [CLICK HERE](#). For more information, contact Angela Hanks at [angelah@nationalskillscoalition.org](mailto:angelah@nationalskillscoalition.org)



## ADULT EDUCATION & LITERACY: Foundation for Lifelong Learning

Two recent international reports set the tone, facts and analysis, and even vision for lifelong learning as an essential contemporary educational goal in countries around the world. One is the world report on PIAAC, the Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies carried out by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The other is a new report from UNESCO, its second global report on adult learning and education (GRALE).

Lifelong learning is a requirement for continued and flexible education across a lifetime so that people can acquire for work, college, and community participation purposes the new knowledge and abilities they need to function well in a world constantly in flux because of continual changes in technology, globalization, and the nature and structure of work. In the U.S., many groups have worked for decades to advance lifelong learning, including the Clinton Administration's National Commission for a Nation of Lifelong Learners, which in 1997 turned out a final report titled *A Nation Learning: Vision for the 21st Century*. That Commission was chaired by the pre-eminent international labor leader, Morton Bahr, a member of the National Commission on Adult Literacy.

Adult education and literacy is increasingly recognized as the essential prerequisite for lifelong learning. UNESCO speaks of it as the "one unassailable foundation of all education and learning."

**PIAAC:** There is a good deal of buzz surrounding the October 8th release of the ***OECD Skills Outlook 2013: First Results from the Survey of Adult Skills***. This report (460 pages) presents the overall results of the international assessment of adult competencies (PIAAC) carried out under OECD's general sponsorship. More than two dozen countries participated. In addition to OECD's main report, individual country reports have also been issued by the collaborating countries (the U.S. report will be released when our federal government re-opens).

CAAL will not duplicate here analyses that other groups, such as CLASP, are doing regarding specific PIAAC findings for the U.S. But we should note that although the U.S. continues to perform among the best at the highest levels of education attainment, we rank poorly on many measures and our record at lower levels has worsened since the last international assessment was completed, along with our overall international standing. Even worse, we are among the highest in level of "inequality" -- the predominance of low skill levels among people who suffer multiple disadvantages in our society. Those with low education and low income, the short-term incarcerated, and minorities are disproportionately among the lower-skilled and those adults lacking in readiness for either college or decent-paying jobs.

For a full copy of the OECD report and the individual country reports and other resources, go to <http://skills.oecd.org/skillsoutlook.html>. The American Institutes for Research in Washington is also operating a resource-rich website, the "PIAAC Gateway," to provide PIAAC information and

material geared to U.S. audiences. The Press Release and Pressroom pages of the PIAAC Gateway provide a listing with links to worldwide news coverage and to responses of U.S. organizations. Go to <http://piaacgateway.com>. CAAL is among several groups that have posted initial responses to the PIAAC unveiling. In the form of a blog (<http://blog.caalusa.org>) CAAL discusses the superficial coverage that media has always tended to give Adult Education and how the media could foster needed action by focusing sustained, accurate attention on the skills needs of ADULTS, through the Adult Education System.

**GRALE:** UNESCO's report is issued by its Institute for Lifelong Learning. It is titled [\*\*\*Global Report on Adult Learning and Education: Rethinking Literacy\*\*\*](#). This 161-page report (the second such report to be issued by UNESCO) is based on data gathered from nearly all of UNESCO's 144 member states, and grows out of a longstanding member commitment to advancing adult education as "an essential element of the right to education, fundamental for the achievement of equity and inclusion, for alleviating poverty and for building equitable, tolerant, sustainable, and knowledge-based societies." The report analyzes its data in terms of such issues as adult education governance, financing, barriers to individuals' participation in adult education services, and criteria for ensuring quality in programs. Taking a global perspective, in eight amazingly lucid pages UNESCO summarizes its overall findings and presents recommendations in these and other specific areas for the benefit of its member countries and the world.



## NEW IN HEALTH LITERACY

➤ **IHA's Health Literacy Listserv.** A new health literacy listserv was recently launched by the [\*\*\*Institute for Healthcare Advancement\*\*\*](#), a nonprofit organization dedicated to "empowering people to better health." The listserv is an alternative to the LINC health literacy listserv operated by the U.S. Department of Education. The listserv is free and open to anyone who wishes to subscribe, including professionals in the medical and adult education fields. It already has a base of over 1500 subscribers. To join, go to <http://listserv.ihahealthliteracy.org> and register a password. You will then be able to post, reply to, and view messages by email, in much the same way that the old LINC listservs used to operate. The new list is moderated by Julie McKinney, formerly of World Education, at [mjckinney11@gmail.org](mailto:mjckinney11@gmail.org).

➤ [\*\*\*The National Network of Libraries of Medicine\*\*\*](#) is offering "[\*\*\*Health Literacy\*\*\*](#)," an excellent 13-page resource with a wide range of useful health literacy links, and sections on such topics as health literacy in a cultural context, low-health literacy, economic impacts of low health literacy, and health literacy research.

➤ **The Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy** at Penn State University has

released "[Addressing the Health Literacy Needs of Adult Education Students](#)," by Angela Mooney and Esther Prins. This Practitioner's Guide #4 from the Institute is a good basic 9-page primer.



## ALSO WORTHY OF NOTE

▶ **Indiana Chamber Again Leads the Way**. A new study has been released by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, titled "[Indiana's Adult Education and Workforce Skills Performance Report](#)." It examines the types of employment opportunities likely in Indiana in the coming years and the extent to which Indiana's adult population has the skills needed to qualify for those jobs. It concludes that more jobs in the state will require at least a postsecondary degree, but that large numbers of adults 25 and older lack the skills needed to qualify for jobs or college. The new report is a more comprehensive take on a 2005 Chamber publication "*A Demand-Side Strategy to Meet Indiana's Workforce Basic Skills Challenge*." At present, according to the current report, Indiana ranks 41st "compared to other states in the percentage of work-age adults with an associate degree or higher" and "over 525,000 work-age adults in the state have less than a high school diploma," including those who speak English poorly or not at all. Moreover, "652,000 adults are working in jobs today that earn less than a family-sustaining wage." A high-level policy team is already at work to retool current services in the state to better meet adult education and workforce needs.

▶ **First Library of Congress Literacy Awards Given**. With emphasis on children, reading, and alliteracy, the Library of Congress has given its first David M. Rubenstein Award to [Reach Out and Read](#), a program in which thousands of doctors and nurses distribute about 6.5 million books each year to children and parents as a way to help promote early literacy and school readiness. An age-appropriate book is given to each child up to 5 years old at checkup time, and medical personnel give parents guidance on the importance of reading aloud with their children. Some 5000 pediatric practices, hospitals, clinics, and health centers are involved in the program in all 50 states, with focus on centers that serve low-income communities. [Reach Out and Read](#) received a cash award of \$150,000. Other awardees in this first year of the Rubenstein LOC literacy awards are [826 National](#) (The American Prize) and [PlanetRead](#) (the International Prize). Each received a cash award of \$50,000. The former is dedicated to developing writing skills in young people aged 6-18. The latter is a worldwide effort, with a special emphasis on India, to promote reading and literacy among children through songs and music videos presented with subtitles on television, books, and other means.



## WE KNOW HOW TO STRETCH A DOLLAR

With the holidays nearly upon us, we could use your generous gift. We achieve major outcomes on modest means. But like many small nonprofit groups, we're short of dollars to stretch these days. Your dollars in any amount will make a big difference. You can either give online or mail a check to CAAL.

TO SUPPORT **CAAL** <CLICK HERE>

Join Our Mailing List!

Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy ~ 1221 Avenue of Americas ~ 44th Fl ~ New York, NY 10020  
Tel. 212-512-22363 ~ Fax. 212-512-2610 ~ [www.caalusa.org](http://www.caalusa.org) ~ [blog.caalusa.org](http://blog.caalusa.org)