

How adults learn



James Robbins Kidd

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James Robbins Kidd, "Roby," adult educator, internationalist (b at Wapella, Sask 4 May 1915; d at Toronto 21 Mar 1982). Founder and first secretary-general of the International Council for ADULT EDUCATION (ICAE), Kidd was a leader in the movement to recognize adult education as an important field of endeavour in Canada and abroad. Kidd's own formal education was completed while he worked for the YMCA (1935-47) in Montréal, Ottawa and New York, and he was the first Canadian to hold a doctorate in adult education, awarded by Columbia University in 1947.

He joined the Canadian Association for Adult Education in Toronto, in 1947, and worked there 13 years, the last 10 as director. During this period, Kidd was also first executive secretary of the Canadian Film Awards and the Canadian Radio Awards (1947-58). In 1959 he founded the Overseas Book Centre (now Canadian Organization for Development through Education), and in 1961 the Overseas Institute (now Canadian Council for International Cooperation).

The ICAE was incorporated in 1973, with 26 countries as members; more than 70 national and regional associations were members in 1984. Kidd was the first chairman of the department of adult education (OISE) from 1965 to 1972 and continued as professor from 1972 until his death; he participated fully in international activities, notably as chairman of the Second Unesco World Conference on Adult Education at Montréal in 1960, and as chairman of the International Committee for the Advancement of Adult Education, 1961-66. He defined the central goal of education as "learning to be, learning to become, learning to belong." His best known book, *How Adults Learn* (1952, rev 1973), has been translated into 14 languages.

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